

THE ONE-TANK HOLIDAY

Submitted by Jim Martin

Cheryl and I recently took a little 4 day holiday trip to southwestern Ontario, a lot of it along the north shore of Lake Erie. This was a leisurely trip that we made up as we went along. A minimum of planning was required. This is not a turn-by-turn telling of our route. Instead it is a concept...The One Tank Holiday.

Along the way I noted the excellent gas mileage being delivered by our MG. When you think about it, our LBCs were the original green automobiles, offering 30+ mpg when most domestic makes were managing only 15 mpg, give or take. Our MGB is a torquey little beast, and it will happily and lazily cruise the back roads at between 13-hundred and 2- thousand rpm. Add in the overdrive and we were amazed to realize we were getting more than 33 miles per Imperial gallon. The car is British, so only Imperial gallons will do.

By the time we got to Eagle, on the way to Blenheim, the odometer was touching the 200 mile mark and we still had a half tank of gas left. That was the morning of day three of our mini holiday. Adding in the extra distance to Blenheim, our ultimate destination, and the dash back home in the rain on our 4th day, and our overall travel distance was 490 miles on one and a quarter tanks of hi-test.

That got us to thinking there must be an endless variety of little, mid-week holidays we retired club members can take on about a tank of gas. How about Grand Bend by way of Punkydoodle Corners, The Halton Hills, or the Erie Canal route in Western New York? Food for thought.

Anyway, with no specific directions, this is how our trip unfolded:

Day 1

-From Wainfleet via the lakeshore to Dunneville.

-The River road to Cayuga and then to Caledonia (quilt shop).

-Highway 6 to Hagersville (quilt shop).

-Highway 9 to Waterford (quilt shop).

-Route 24 to Simcoe (quilt shop). At Simcoe we had a picnic lunch and hiked part of the rail trail to Port Dover. Like our motor trip we had to figure where to turn our hike around so that **we** wouldn't run out gas.

-South from Simcoe to Port Dover (quilt shop). At Dover we played tourist, had supper at the Fisherman's Catch and stayed the night at the Erie Beach Hotel. The accommodations were somewhat Spartan for the price, but we got to stay at a piece of history. Parked beside an Alfa Spyder but never got to meet the driver.

Day 2

-Rule of the day...head west and hug the lake with occasional "No Exit" side trips to see what's there: Port Ryerse, Port Rowan, Long Point, Port Burwell (lunch and conversations with a touring U.S. Mercedes Drivers club. They liked the Mercedes Blue on our car), Copenhagen, Sparta (one of the antique shops has vintage Road & Track magazines with articles such as how to swap a Willys engine into your MG), and into Port Stanley.

At Port Stanley, afternoon drinks, shopping, supper, and an excellent room for the night.

Day 3

Rain off and on in the morning. Bacon and Eggs at a family diner then West along the lake to Blenheim to see what's there. A pleasant enough drive but not as scenic as the previous day. Coffee at Tims and a decision to head back.

Back through Ridgetown, Rodney and Fingal to Port Stanley and up to Sparta and a fine lunch at a locally renowned tea house.

North to St Thomas to visit the rail museum, find some vittles and a hotel room. That evening we take in the Ron Howard movie *Rush* before retiring for the night.

Day 4

Thunderstorms and pouring rain easing off as we drive east along highway 3. Back to Simcoe (the same quilt shop) then north to Brantford to visit with some good friends, and home

Recommended Stops:

- Caledonia, Waterford and Port Dover are scenic communities with interesting shops. At Dover you can walk the pier to the lighthouse and visit the marine museum. Also check out Fred Eaglesmith's store, Hobo Records
- Port Rowan has an interesting little main street with a heavy emphasis on dollar stores if that is your thing.
- Port Burwell has a marine museum, historic lighthouse and most recently the Canadian Navy submarine HMCS Ojibwa that is open for tours.
- Sparta is a Quaker village with a history of prohibition and riots over same. A number of Antique shops. Just north east of the village, hidden away in the trees, is the Pinecroft...log cabins, tea room, pottery and gift shop. Reservations are recommended.
- Port Stanley is very scenic with a tourist railway, and upscale lodgings and shops. Two exceptional values in our estimation are the Inn on the Harbour and the YMCA gift shop. The Inn has a habourside deck, and the rooms come with king beds, fireplaces and dvd players as well as views of the harbour. The YMCA gift shop has hand crafted gifts from around the world at very reasonable prices.