

# *Das Herz von Dixie*



*Jan 2026*



Christmas Dinner at Valley Hill Country Club, Huntsville, AL

## Club Executive Committee

President – Jim Cambron

Vice-President- Jack Harding

Treasurer – Ed Stone

Secretary – Dane Tkacs

Past President – Dave Schroetter

## Club Board of Directors

Nominating Committee Chair – John Nord

Membership Chair – Steve Ward

Social Committee Chair – Melanie Nord

Publication Chair – Mike Stokes

Webmaster – Greg Reese

Historian & Equipment Chair – Jim Cambron

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COVER PHOTO CREDIT: MICHAEL STOKES

## President's Prologue

Jim Cambron



For the Annual Business Meeting (ABM) we used the Land Rover/Jaguar (LR/J) showroom (surrogate Porsche Showroom) for our ABM while the Porsche Dealership is upgraded (again) to the latest Porsche Cars North America (PCNA) standards. Actually, the LR/J Showroom is much

nicer and better equipped than the previous Porsche Showroom.

I've been the Club President for three periods (2006-12, 2015-18, and this time since 2021). These comments are limited to the last 5-year period. Our membership growth has been 130 new members (25.9%) in five years. Membership and attendance at the ABM and Holiday Dinner during this period:

- **2021:** 435 total members with 71 ABM/63 Dinner (16.3%/14.5%) in attendance.
- **2022:** 468 total members w/61/54 (13%/11.5%) in attendance.
- **2023:** 503 members w/65/71 (12.9%/14.1%) attendance.
- **2024:** 535 members w/68/72 (12.7%/13.5%) attendance.
- **2025:** 555 members w/74/87 (13.3%/15.7%) attendance.

It's interesting that ABM attendance has not increased at the same rate as membership growth (27.6%). ABM attendance from 71 in 2021 to 74 in 2025 is a growth of 4%, while the Holiday Dinner attendance from 63 in 2021 to 87 in 2025 is a growth of 38%, however normalized for membership growth, ABM attendance went down from 16.3% in 2021 to 13.3% in 2025, a drop of 3% and the Holiday Dinner attendance went up from 14.5% in 2021 to 15.7% in 2025, an increase of 1.2%. So, what do I make of these statistics? I don't, the numbers speak for themselves, or, I guess we could say regardless of the club membership, we have about 70 at our ABMs and the Holiday Attendance has increased from an average of 65 members (2021-2024) to this year's 89 paid and 87 in attendance.

**Holiday Dinner, Valley Hill Country Club.** We broke our attendance record with 89 paid attendees. Each attendee paid just \$20 and the Club subsidized the remaining \$38.13 for each meal. Maybe word has spread that Valley Hill Country Club is a great dinner venue; choice of two entrees, outstanding side dishes, delicious desserts, and great servers. I received accolades about this year's Dinner, thank you for attending. We are hoping for 100 members in attendance at the upcoming 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner at the same venue.

### 2026 Four Elected Officers.

- **Ed Stone**, Treasurer 2025, remaining in that position for 2026.
- **Jack Harding**, Secretary 2024-25, moved up to Vice President.
- **Dane Tkacs** was elected as Secretary.
- **President**, Region Bylaws, Article V, states: Elected Officers can be re-elected for a maximum of four consecutive one-year terms in the same elected position, or until a suitable replacement is found for that position.

2025 was my fifth consecutive term as **President**, waiting for a suitable replacement to accept the position. When that happens, that person will run unopposed as I step down as President. Until then, I will continue to lead the Club to the best of my ability for as long as I am able. Likewise, **Dave Schroetter** remains the last active Past President for as long as I am President.

### 2026 Six Appointed Standing Committee Chairs.

We are blessed with a full roster of competent Committee Chairs:

- **Greg Bayuga** accepted the position of **Driving Tour Coordinator** (including the **Insurance and Safety Chairman**). Thanks, Greg, for an outstanding job as Membership Chairman for five terms (2021-25) and interim Vice President the last four months. Greg is not only the “do it all” chairman but leads the most Driving tours.
- **Steve Ward** assumed the position of **Membership Chairman** from Greg Bayuga in August and continues in that position in 2026.
- **Melanie Nord** continues a third year (2024-26) as the **Social Committee Chairperson** (the HARDEST job in the Club scheduling Pit Stop Breakfasts and Monthly Membership Dinner Engagements, plus other duties as assigned, like the Holiday Dinner and 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner).
- **John Nord** continues a second year as the **Nomination Committee Chairman**—find me a replacement John!
- **Mike Stokes** continues a second year as the **Newsletter Publisher** and submitting region news articles for the “**From the Regions**” section of **Panorama**.
- **Greg Reese** is appointed as the new **Webmaster**, replacing **Scott Witt**, serving five years as Webmaster and three years as Newsletter Publisher.

**Enthusiasts for 2025.** We held 52 events this year and **Jack Harding** won the Enthusiast of the Year by attending 37 of them, winning a \$200 Porsche of Huntsville Gift Certificate, had his name inscribed on the EOTY plaque, and was awarded an engraved walnut plaque of recognition. **Greg Bayuga** attended 36 events and won a \$100 Century gift certificate, **Steve Ward** attended 35 events and won a \$60 gift certificate, **Melanie Nord**, **Beth Carlile**, and **Regan Carlile** attended 33 events and won \$40 certificates each, **John Nord** attended 32 events and won a \$20 certificate. So, in addition to having a lot of fun, sometimes it does pay to come to our events! Thanks so much to Porsche of Huntsville for donating a total of \$500 in Gift Certificates. Also, thanks to our attending couples: Carlile’s winning \$80 and Nord’s \$60.

**Additional Community Support.** Thanks also to everyone for bringing the wonderful Toys for the Tots and honoring the USMC Sargeant in dress uniform. Thanks, Dave Bender, for arranging the Toys for Tots participation and delivering the toys after the event!

Thanks, Rita Ferguson and assistant Dave Bender for collecting 1,232lbs of food and \$80 cash in support for the North Alabama Food Pantry. Thanks to all who gave and especially Rita and Dave for managing the effort.

- 1) **Heart O’ Dixie (HOD) Region 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration; April 25, 2026, Valley Hill Country Club.** Most PCA Regions celebrate their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with award of an Anniversary Flag, Letter of Congratulations signed by the PCA President, and a celebratory party attended by a member of the PCA National Staff and the Zone Representative. However, on March 28, 1986, our Club was in its “third Dark Ages of Inactivity” and there is no record of any type of celebration. Our first Anniversary Celebration was held April 2, 2011; our Golden Anniversary. A past Presidents walnut plaque was commissioned with brass plates naming each President and their Porsche. In addition to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Grill Badge, the original 1961 Tri-states Grill Badge, and 1982 Fuchs Wheel badge were minted for all attending members. Attendance included the then current and past PCA President, six past Zone 3 Representatives, 8 of our 26 past Region Presidents representing 17/50 years, and attendance by 11 of 14 Zone 3 Region Presidents.

The celebration started with 192 members at a complementary Lawler's Barbecue lunch on the grounds of the 1859 Cedars Plantation, Limestone County. Lunch was followed by a 105 vehicle Parade from the Cedars to the Huntsville Marriott with vehicles arranged in ten-year groups from 1959 to 2011, led by a Homewood Police 996 Turbo with a full Police flashing light rack. That afternoon a multi-media presentation was presented by Leonard Turner, PCA Panorama photographer. That evening 138 members attend a subsidized dinner at the Marriott where the featured speaker was the PCNA Southeast Sales Manager Domenic Calkins, and a scripted presentation of the Heart O' Dixie history presented by the six Zone Reps.

The Region celebrated its 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2016 by minting another Anniversary Grill Badge for all attendees, reminting and offering for sale the '61 and '82 Grill Badges, and minting for the first time the 1969 "Heart in Dixie" Badge. A 116 Porsche Car Show and complementary Lawler's Barbecue lunch were held at John Hunt Park for 167 members. Each Porsche received German Flag colored ribbons with 1<sup>st</sup> place Gold, 2<sup>nd</sup> place Silver, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Bronze medallions for the Porsches and six walnut plaques for lass winners.

The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2021 (during COVID) offered another Anniversary Grill Badge, re-minting the '61, '69, and '82 badges, and featured 54 Porsches in show at the Old Town Pottery parking lot with six walnut plaques presented by our Club sponsors to class winners.

Our 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will feature a highly subsidized dinner (\$70 meal only \$30 per person) at the Valley Hill Country Club with Porsches displayed by model in the parking lot.

A complementary Anniversary Grill Badge will be presented to the primary members and a Crested Sports Shirt for only \$20.

Family members get the Sports Shirt for \$35 and Grill Badge for our cost of \$42. Plus, all attendees will enjoy the Anniversary cake and open bar for a one-hour Dinner Reception.

Members are encouraged to submit their registration forms between March 1<sup>st</sup> and March 17<sup>th</sup>. Dinner is limited to the first 100 members to register.

What a deal:

- Discounted dinner for \$30
- Crested Sports Authority Sports Shirts
- 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Grill Badge and Decals
- 65<sup>th</sup> Grill Badge crested Anniversary Cake
- Open Bar Reception

## **2) 70<sup>th</sup> Porsche Club of America Parade, Lake Placid, New York, June 14-20, 2026.**

Registration for Porsche Parade is in two parts:

- **Phase I Registration for Housing** opens **Wednesday, January 28<sup>th</sup> 11:00 CST.**
- **Phase II Registration for Events** opens **Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> 11:00 CDT.**

Phase II includes Competitive Events (Concours, TSD Rally, Autocross, Gimmick Rally, Historic & Technical Quiz), Driving Tours, Sim Racing, Parade of Porsches, technical presentations, and Banquets.

Based on the number of PCA members living within 600 miles of Lake Placid, Parade attendance is forecasted to surpass all previous Parades, but housing will be in short supply, spread among ten hotels. There is no central hosting hotel, the Hospitality Room, nightly dinners, and other events (Art Show, Sim Racing, Goodie Store, Parade Kids, etc.) will be located at the center-of-town Olympic Training Center (OTC). Previously, attendee priority was the quality of rooms in the hosting hotel, this year it will be for the proximity of the hotel to the OTC. Hotel locations range from directly across the street to several hundred yards distance. An additional complication is the lack of parking at the OTC so you will have to walk or catch the shuttle to events. More information to follow; just be prepared to log-in the very minute Phase-I Parade Registration opens on the PCA website.

### **From the Editor Mike Stokes**



I hope all members of the Heart O' Dixie Region had a Merry Christmas with your friends and families. I think without a doubt the best event this quarter was the Christmas Dinner held at the Valley Hill Country club with 87 members attending. We have some exciting proposals for

BOD for approval that will have an impact on future newsletters if the BOD agrees, so stay tuned for more news on that!

We have two member articles this quarter: The first is from Matt Odle on his experience with a 992 GT3 Simulation Racing System owned by Dave Sentel. The second is part two of three article series by Jim and Carol Wachter titled “MACAN-ing Across America.”

I am thrilled to announce that “Ladies Who Lunch” is making a fabulous comeback in our region. Many of you fondly remember Susan Fowler’s popular pre-COVID gatherings – elegant lunches filled with laughter, stories, and that special comradery we all cherish as Porsche enthusiasts.

Thanks to Marcia Elkins, we’re reigniting this beloved tradition. Mark your calendars for our kickoff event:

**Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>**

**11:30AM**

**Terra Italian Restaurant & Bar**

4925 University Dr NW, Suite 178, Huntsville

(It’s in the shopping center that once housed Chili’s and Newk’s – but don’t let the familiar exterior fool you!)

Step inside Terra, and you’ll be transported to a sleek, warm, Italian oasis; think crisp white tablecloths, flickering candles, and an ambiance perfect for lingering conversations. This modern gem features handmade pasta, thin-crust Roman-style pizzas, fresh salads, seafood, and signature cocktails that pair beautifully with a leisurely lady’s lunch.

Come reconnect with old friends, make new ones, share your latest Porsche adventures (or even triumphs), and savor delicious Italian flavors. Let’s kick off with style, sisterhood, and great food—because we deserve it.

Please RSVP by texting Marcia at 256-783-6519 so we can reserve the perfect spot for our group.

We can’t wait to see you there!

In closing, Jim Camron recommended Macan owners check out this interesting => [video](#) <= illustrating 15 hidden features of your Porsche.

Ed Stone recommended this Haggerty insurance video => [video](#) <= --Mike

## 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Events

- **Oct 4<sup>th</sup>**, Pit Stop Breakfast at the Mason-Dixon Bakery with 29 members and guests.
- **Oct 9<sup>th</sup>**, Membership Dinner Meeting at the Full Moon Barbecue, with 25 members.
- **Oct 18<sup>th</sup>**, Joe Still’s Driving tour to Western Sizzlin’ Steakhouse, with 20 Porsches, 29 members and guests.



- **Oct 25<sup>th</sup>**, Century Collision Center Heritage & Horsepower Coffee with 47 members.
- **Nov 1<sup>st</sup>**, Pit Stop Breakfast at Little Libby’s with 30 members and guests.
- **Nov 8<sup>th</sup>**, Dom Genovese Driving Tour on the River, Chattanooga, 12 Porsches and 19 members and guests.



- **Nov 13<sup>th</sup>**, Membership Dinner Meeting at Ted's Barbeque, with 23 members.
- **Nov 29<sup>th</sup>**, Porsches and Coffee at the Flying Biscuit, with 12 Porsches and 20 members.
- **Dec 6<sup>th</sup>**, Pit Stop Breakfast at Cracker Barrel, with 32 members and guests.
- **Dec 7<sup>th</sup>**, Porsches of Huntsville Annual Business Meeting and Christmas Dinner at Valley Hill Country Club, with 74 members at the ABM, and 87 members at Dinner.
- **Dec 11<sup>th</sup>**, dinner at Jonathan's Grille, with 18 members and guests





- **Dec 27<sup>th</sup>**, Cambron hosts Porsches and Coffee at Big Little Donuts

## Member Articles

### 992 GT3 Simulation Racing System

By Matt Odle

I have been involved in sim racing and tracking my Porsche for a couple of years: it's my passion. Jim Cambron posted a story in a recent weekly email encouraging members to reach out to past VP Dave Sentel to try his motion sim. I will admit my expectations of the simulator were low but I love trying new kit no matter what. I have tried motion platforms before (two that I can recall) and several rigs without, and felt that, in those cases, the motion was more of a distraction than a helpful tool. In one case it somewhat added to the immersion feeling a bit but again still kind of distracting.

Oh! man was I mistaken. Maybe it was a setup or tuning issue with the first two or maybe Dave is just that good at setup but, WOW! He put me in the 992 GT3 cup car, which is a specialty of mine, and chose the Road Atlanta venue where I also have extensive seat time. As I exited turn one and started up the hill if felt as if the entire cockpit lifted from the ground several inches and tilted me "uphill." I was surprised and immediately could tell this was a different motion than I had experienced. It felt so real! I could feel the curbs, dips, bumps and even the annoying asphalt patch in turn 12 (yes, I felt the patch in my seat). At one point I pushed a bit too hard in the esses and spun. What a ride. When I settled to a stop facing entirely the wrong way, one of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) "bots" was coming toward me at

about 70 mph and it felt for a moment I might actually die.

All I can say is this is a different beast than the average "slide around" motion pad. Dave has built something very cool, and I encourage anyone in the area to take the opportunity and give this a try, even if you haven't been in a sim or tracked before.

If Dave is unavailable, I also have a decent setup (minus the roller coaster effect) if anyone wants to reach out and give it a try. I recently added the Moza active pedals so I can electronically adjust throw, pressure (up to 200kg), input curve and vibration from ABS, engine and road effects. I love sharing this hobby with anyone who will give me the time and wants to talk about it.



Figure 1 Matt's Simulation System

### MACAN-ing Across America. The Northern Exploits By Jim & Carol Wachter

**1<sup>st</sup> four States: Alabama (of course), Tennessee, Kentucky & Indiana** – Well good morning, we said to each other with wide grins and excited eyes as September 2<sup>nd</sup> finally arrived! Jinjer (yes, we name our Porsches) was already loaded and fired-up with her signature growl...Tally Ho as the Brits would say; in the early morning light, we were heading north on a highway we've come to truly appreciate: I-65 to Nashville. These interstates, as opposed to the always enjoyable back country mountain roads, were made for our Macan! The high hills and sweeping turns are actually exciting when exercising Jinjer's long legs at any speed I chose!

Our first day's goal was Indianapolis, and the weather couldn't have been better! Traffic was very light but slowed a lot as we approached Nashville. Still, it never stopped! Opting to have our first breakfast on the road, we stopped at Liz's Kitchen on the north side of Nashville. When traveling, we like to be nourished by local eateries with full meals rather than just getting fast food (or junk food as Carol calls it). She was surprised here as fried catfish was offered with her eggs (not something you normally expect on the breakfast menu). Our drive north continued as Tennessee and Kentucky melded together with great roads through lush, forested hills!

However, passing through Louisville, the scenery abruptly changed as we crossed the Ohio River into Indiana. At first, a few low hills which quickly transgressed into the flatlands of America's breadbasket that continued all the way to Indianapolis. Being a bit spoiled as seniors, we also like to stay at very plushy modern hotels with all the amenities and a hot breakfast. Sonesta Essential Indy Airport served that purpose for our first two nights. It was also close to the Indy 500 Racetrack & Museum where we pulled in the following morning.



Figure 2. Jinjer in front of INDY 500 Museum

Since this was our first time at the museum, I have no perspective on how it looked before the extensive remodel that was just completed in April. But the current presentation of cars, drivers, and teams is nothing short of exceptional! Numerous racers in pristine condition along with so many interactive activities and exhibits provided everything I hoped the museum would be! There was even an Indy car mock-up that you could sit in to have your picture taken either by your own camera or an on-hand professional. Of course, we did it! And Carol took pictures of everything else! Although I've always considered myself capable of being a very successful race car driver, I lacked two things to ever make it

happen. No competitive ego to pursue it as a real career is probably the most important, but my stature at 6 plus feet would make getting comfortable in any of the cars I saw at the museum nearly impossible!

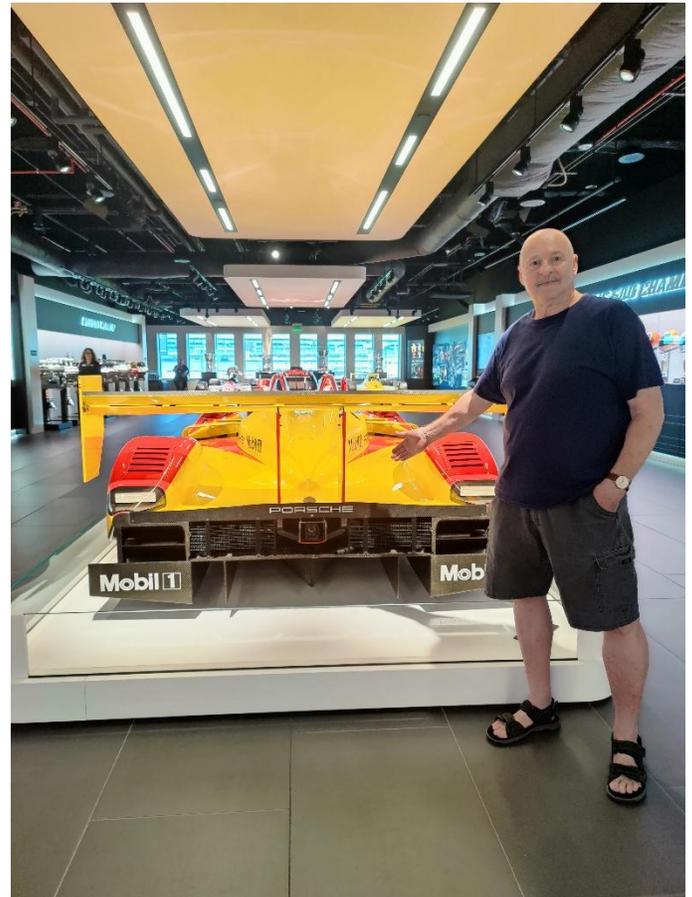


Figure 3. Jim with yellow Porsche

**5<sup>th</sup> State: Illinois** – Continuing north through Indiana and into Illinois provided no change from the low and flat lay of the land; BORING, as Carol put it. She's always blunt and to the point whenever the need to express her feelings is given. Yet, as we approached Chicagoland and transitioned onto I-90, civilization gave us a new look. Carol had chosen a hotel in the suburb of Glenview about an hour north of the city. I was a bit nervous about getting through the city itself because there are so many toll roads and one wrong move could get us lost in a hurry. However, traffic was much lighter than expected as we traversed the complex of interchanges without incident. She chose this place to stay because Glenview was an upscale area with no crime reported and free parking. Parking at any of the downtown hotels usually requires a hefty payment and mandatory valet service!

With three days here, our next task was how to get downtown to catch the Hop-on-Hop-off bus tour that

Carol had booked for us the following day. After looking at all the options, we tried Uber for the first time! It wasn't too complicated (for Carol) to reserve the trip online with several drivers and prices to choose from. The next morning, we were waiting outside our hotel and our driver was right on time. George had a minivan and with me in the front seat, a lively three-way conversation began with this Chicago born native asking us where we were from and what brought us to Chicago. He was a part-time driver who also sold insurance and was taking classes to be a financial advisor. That expanded our chat to cover a wide array of subjects including city history, politics, economy, retirement planning, food, climate and historical sites we passed. The hour drive passed quickly, and as we pulled up to our destination in front of the Trump Tower, he told us that although Illinois has all four seasons, in reality the city itself has only two . . . WINTER & CONSTRUCTION!

The double-decker open-top bus tour takes two hours to make a full loop. It was cool so we opted to sit inside and take one full turn before getting off to explore on foot. The city is quite impressive architecturally blending the old with the new and ever taller buildings. Since Carol wanted to see a specific sculpture called The Bean, on the ensuing round we got off at Millennium Park to get her photo. The park is huge and filled with many types of art sculptures with museums and a planetarium close by. With my hiking days pretty much over, we got back on the next bus and waited for the Navy Pier stop to get off again. We had planned on having lunch here to try the famous Chicago deep-dish pizza! But it was not to be with a 40-minute wait to be seated!

It seems anyplace that serves deep-dish charges double what the same size thin crust pizza costs, and we agreed that the charge for extra dough was not a great value. So, Carol ordered another Uber trip back to our hotel. Our next driver arrived in 15 minutes, cost a bit more than George, and was much quieter which allowed us to just relax! Back at the Best Western hotel, we saw Rosati's Pizza across the parking lot. This was also a Chicago staple since 1946 . . . and was excellent! For our third day, we opted to relax, repack for the following day's drive and had a fine lunch at the Long Ann Asian restaurant.



*Figure 4. J&C finding the Bean in Chicago's Millenium Park*

**6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> States: Wisconsin & Minnesota** – As perfectly sunny Wisconsin; huge farms with two-story homes, barns and weather continued, our drive north revealed just what I expected as we crossed into silos! Still flat and recording the coolest temps of the trip in the low 50s. Eastern Minnesota seemed to be just an extension of Wisconsin as our direction turned westward. Carol had our next stop reserved at the Econo Lodge in Rochester, MN with one of our fast-food meals at Arby's (I needed a Jamocha shake!) on the way and dinner at Twigs when we arrived. This was a one-night stop, so not much else to do but rest and watch football!

**8<sup>th</sup> State: South Dakota** – The drive from eastern Minnesota to the western part of South Dakota took about eight hours which put it as one of the longest legs of the trip. It was also a very desolate landscape beginning in western Minnesota that Carol called **Nothingness**. I was very happy that I held-up physically to the task and after a nice meal at Marlin's Family Restaurant in Rapid City, I crashed shortly after arriving at the Sleep Inn & Suites that Carol had reserved. I'm always amazed at Carol's logistical

skills, as all our stops were reserved more than eight months in advance! Good thing too, as many hotels would have been fully booked had she waited!

With three nights here, we were able to rest-up and then check out the local sights over the next two days. The most famous is Mount Rushmore National Park! Carol had fun taking lots of pictures both here and at the Crazy Horse Monument (still under construction) just down the road from Rushmore. Having passed along the edge of Badlands National Park on the drive in, we didn't feel the need to head back for a closer look. Composed of massive conical and nearly shrub-less hills, it presented the look of bumpy skin, like a bad case of teenage acne. Still, geologists flock here to study the exposed layers of sediments that date back 300 million years when the entire area of the central USA was an inland salty sea! Lots of fossils and dinosaur bones have also been discovered here!



Figure 5. Historical VIPs watching over us at Mt. Rushmore

So, we drove south to see the Black Hills, it's not designated a National Park but probably should be!

WOW , , one stunning scene after another had Carol in nonstop picture mode! Combining forests, lakes and huge rock formations it reminded me of my home state of Connecticut where the north & western portions look very similar. Interest that these two places are about the same latitude though separated by the Appalachian Mountains. Next was more great photos at Sylvan Lake in Custer State Park followed by lunch at the Mt. Rushmore Brewing Co in Custer. Fabulous BBQ brisket much like our Salt Smokehouse's offering in Huntsville was the order

that kept us smiling all afternoon!



Figure 6. Steam and Fumes at Yellowstone Lake

For our second day here, we took it easy and visited the South Dakota Air & Space Museum just outside Ellsworth AFB. Having more than thirty aircraft along with the Minuteman II and Nike Ajax missiles on display, it was quite a treat for me! Lots of memorabilia and tributes to the men and women who served in all branches of the military over the years! There was even a mock-up of a man dressed in the exact set of Air Force Blues that I proudly wore! We also learned that there are still more than 150 Minuteman IIs in the area that help comprise the backbone of our nuclear arsenal and the fact that the newest strategic bomber, The Raider, capable of delivering a nuclear strike anywhere in the world will soon be deployed at Ellsworth!

**9<sup>th</sup> State: Montana** – Most all the fuel available in the north was only 91 octane, but we found a place just outside of Sturgis, SD; an RV park called Cobb's with 93 octane! I decided to detour from our route to change to our planned route and drive to Cobb's to fill Jinjer with her proper fuel. It was quite a remote site as we traveled down this gravel road to reach it. What they had was one massive above-ground tank with one pump (just like regular gas stations have). Happily, replenished, we made our way onto US-212; an older 2-lane highway but a more direct route to Billings, MT (our next stop) than the portion of I-90 that curves south and then north again.



Figure 7. 93 Octane Outpost North of Sturgis, SD

With hardly any traffic at all, we calmly loped along at my usual cruising speed! More **Nothingness** Carol said of the desolate eastern Montana scenery and the very poor living conditions we saw were quite a surprise. This course eventually intersected with I-90 at the Custer Battlefield Park; or so I thought. For Montana's second surprise, we found the park closed! The park is open on Friday, Saturday, & Sunday; today was Thursday.

**10<sup>th</sup> State: Wyoming** – Following dinner at the Montana Rib & Chop House and a one-nighter at the Fairfield Inn, we were back on the road, US-212 heading to north to Yellowstone National Park! I was so ready to be able to drive this route to the northeast entrance because of all the switchbacks and the fact that it closes on October 15<sup>th</sup>. We were finally here! This was one of the main purposes of our trip; one that we just had to see up close! Carol was so excited to see some animals; especially Bison (TATANKA)!

For me, it was more about experiencing time at one of the largest super volcanoes in the world . . . before it's gone! And make no mistake, this bad boy is way overdue to blow . . . geologically speaking! We spent most of the day driving through the wilderness, but roads lined with tall pine trees made it hard to view many of the areas where animals might have been. Tons of tourists clogging areas where there was something to see didn't help! There was a bison herd, but it was so far from the road they looked like black dots. Finally up ahead we had to stop as a limping young bison was trying to cross the road. No mom that we could see, and it was in pain! Without serious manned intervention, it would surely end up as a meal



Figure 8. Arriving at Yellowstone

Yet not long after, Carol finally got her wish! A full-grown bison was calmly grazing by our side of the road! A lot of people had stopped and pulled off the road ahead of us. So, slowly and quietly passing the beast, I stopped for just a moment for Carol to get her shot! At less than three feet away from Jinjer it was too big to get all of it into Carol's pic! Yet what a shot! She was also hoping to see a moose or elk, but none ever appeared.



Figure 9. Close Encounter with Wild Tatanka in Yellowstone

Throughout the rest of the day, we only saw a few mule deer and a wolf that was running across a field and too far away for any kind of good picture; but masses of people with telephoto lenses were trying. We saw geysers and lots of fuming pots along the route around Yellowstone Lake which is actually water filling a volcanic caldron *measuring 30 by 45 miles!* You can still see parts of the rim; what remained after the latest eruption formed this

cauldron some 630,000+ years ago . . . long before man walked the Earth! After 200+ miles in the park, we exited the east entrance toward Cody, for a dinner at Thai Thai and a two-night stay at Best Western.



Figure 10. The Caldera's Edge in Yellowstone

Headed back into Yellowstone early Sunday morning trying to beat the crowds. Only having part of the south loop left unseen, it was still a 100-mile drive before we would reach the south entrance. We also managed to spend some time at the Parks' gift shop, but by the time we arrived the parking lot was a circus! Thankfully, I had received my disabled tag just before we left home which proved invaluable throughout our journey!

**Next up; THE SOUTHERN SWING!**

**Thanks for reading to the End!**