

## **A 63 Continental and 48 Continental States (and Washington, DC)**

When I retired in July of 2016, I said that one of my bucket list items was to visit all 50 states. Stu then thought it would a great idea to try to drive his 1963 Continental through the 48 Continental United States. We had traveled to many of the states in the past and Stu had driven the car to many of the states going to LCOC shows, so it was an easy decision to try to achieve the goal. The challenge was set and met in just over 2 years. It turned out that we were in 48 states and Washington, DC in just 25 months all thanks to the LCOC.

### **Trip 1: September 2016 to the LCOC meet in Westminster, CO.**

We started out in our home state of NJ (1) on September 5, Labor Day, drove through Pennsylvania (2), and into the tip of West Virginia (3). As Stu braked to release the cruise control to go into the tunnel and over the bridge into Ohio (4) on RT. 70, the brake pedal went to the floor. He was able to pump the brakes to get them working. We continued slowly on RT. 70 to the first exit that was not another highway, and Stu kept checking the brakes to make sure they worked. We pulled into a gas station and Stu checked each wheel cylinder before checking the master cylinder. The master cylinder was full. We deduced that the master cylinder was going bad since the brakes caught only part of the time. He confirmed this by making several calls to LCOC members. We went into the convenience store at the gas station to call AAA. They were also able to direct us to a garage that knew about classic cars. I made reservations at a Fairfield Inn down the road and the tow driver was kind enough to take us there before heading in the other direction to drop the car at the garage. As it turned out, he once had a 68 Lincoln convertible! We spent the night and most of the next day in a Fairfield in in St. Clairsville, Ohio. The management at the hotel was very accommodating and let us

stay in our room until the car was ready after 5 pm. We paid the garage to pick us up and bring us to get the car. Once on our way, we continued on RT. 70 through the Heartland states of Indiana (5), Illinois (6), Missouri (7), Kansas (8), and finally Colorado (9) arriving at the hotel just after sunset on Thursday. On Friday we joined the club for the road trip to the Cussler Car Museum and then lunch. Later that day, we went with John Walcek up to the Continental Divide because he wanted a picture of “a Continental at the Continental Divide”. Art Apple was kind enough to make adjustments to the car so we would not have issues at over to 11,000 feet. It was a beautiful day, but it was freezing cold at that elevation and that is when we discovered that the heat in the car did not work. We had not brought the appropriate clothing for an outing like this either, so we froze but it was well worth it. We saw amazing views, some local wildlife and had a wonderful time, so being cold was so worth it. Stu judged at the show on Saturday and on Sunday we began our trek east. We returned home on RT. 80, adding Nebraska (10), Iowa (11), and Indiana (12) to our completed list. We thoroughly enjoyed seeing our beautiful country and had a ton of fun. We stopped along the way, took lots of pictures. In Lincoln, Nebraska Stu stopped the car on the shoulder of the bridge going in, got out of the car and took a picture of the car with “Lincoln” on a bridge in the background.

3,880 miles driven by Stu

Can't find info on cost of gas or gallons used

12.7 mpg

11 states (including NJ)

## **Trip 2: October 2016 to the LCOC meet in Bartlett, New Hampshire.**

Since Wednesday (the start of the show events) was a holiday for us, we were unable to leave for Bartlett until Thursday morning. Our route took us through New York (13), and into the New England states of Connecticut (14), Massachusetts (15), and Vermont (16). We enjoyed the all the beautiful fall foliage before arriving in Bartlett, NH (17) that evening.

On Friday we joined the group for a cruise through the beautiful White Mountains to the Conway Scenic Railway. We enjoyed the scenic train ride though the countryside. Afterwards had lunch in Conway with Dan Szwarc and Doug Shahady. Later that day we walked around Bartlett for a while enjoying the area.

After the show on Saturday, we took the car for a photo shoot with the advertising company that was there from Lincoln and we were also interviewed. It was another beautiful fall day and watching the advertising people work and talking with them was a great experience.

When we left the show on Sunday, we drove up to Maine (18) before heading back into NH and Massachusetts enjoying the sunny autumn day. We made many stops to take pictures of the beautiful scenery. At one stop, a bus of tourist pulled up and people piled out for some photos. Some were more interested in the Lincoln than the majestic scenery and began taking pictures of the car!

We got off I95 in Massachusetts for gas. Stu filled the tank while I used the restroom, then he went to use the restroom while I sat in the car. I started to open my phone to look at the pictures I had taken earlier, when the car started rocking and I heard the horrific,

jarring sound of metal on metal. I looked up to see a large rental box truck's back corner damaging the passenger front quarter panel and front of the car as the driver was trying to go around the car. I got out of the car, yelled for Stu and ran after the truck because I thought she was leaving. However; she was just trying to pull to a safe area. We were fortunate because even though there was damage to the right front quarter panel, front bumper and peak molding, the car was drivable. Once we were done dealing with the police, we continued into Providence, Rhode Island (19) and visited with Stu's cousin for a few hours. We spent the night in Connecticut, and arrived home on Monday safe and sound.

1,013 miles driven by Stu

Can't find info on cost of gas or gallons used

12.2 mpg

8 states (including NJ)

### **Trip 3: August 2017 LCOC Homecoming, Hickory Corners, MI.**

In August of 2017, we traveled to the LCOC show in Hickory Corners, Michigan. We visited the Cord/Auburn/Duesenberg Museum in Auburn, Indiana on our way to Kalamazoo. We had a lot of fun at the show. Stu judged and I was a runner. On the way home on Sunday, we were able to spend a day with my cousins who live in Ann Arbor. This trip was thankfully mechanically uneventful. We only added Michigan (20) to our list of visited states.

1,669 miles driven by Stu

Can't find info on cost of gas, gallons used or mileage

6 states (including NJ)

#### **Trip 4: May 2018 to the LCOC meet in Bradenton, Fl.**

Our next long trip was to the LCOC Eastern Meet in Bradenton, Florida in May 2018. We traveled through the Mid-Atlantic States of Delaware (20), Maryland (21), Washington, DC (not a state but worth noting as it is our capital), and Virginia (22) before spending the night North Carolina (23). The next morning we continued into the Southern states of South Carolina (24) and Georgia (25). As we stopped at the Welcome Center just over the SC/GA state line, the car began to have an issue-it just turned off as we pulled into the parking space. It started right up when we left the Welcome Center, however; we quickly realized that we need to get off the highway. The car would not accelerate, as it should. As we pulled off at exit 104 of I95, the Lincoln backfired and shut off. He restarted the car and we were able to get to the gas station about a block away. The coil bracket had broken, and the coil was hanging by the main wire. With some help from our mechanic (Mark) back home, Stu was able to secure it so we could continue on our way. While he was working on the car, we had no internet service, just phone which made it difficult to send pictures to our mechanic at home. We did not realize until later that day, when we pulled off I95 at exit 104 we were only 3½ miles straight down the road from where a military C130 airplane had crashed a few hours earlier. We arrived in safely in Florida (26) later that day.

On Thursday, we went with the LCOC to The Ringling Museum in Sarasota. John Walcek joined us as we toured the museum. It was really amazing. We did not get to see the whole property, and we would love to go back in the future. We attended the dinner cruise that night, which was relaxing and fun.

Friday, the group went to the Sarasota Classic Car Museum, however; since we were there a few years ago, Stu took the Lincoln to Lincoln Land to have the coil bracket repaired and the air conditioning charged while I went for a long walk along the river and relaxed at the hotel. Thanks, Chris!

Later that day, we went to the Membership meeting. John Walcek came in and said that he had permission to take pictures of the cars on to the grounds of the Ringling Museum and if anyone wanted to go, we had to leave right away. We decided to go with John, as did \_\_\_\_\_ . We pulled behind the art museum and John took pictures of \_\_\_\_\_'s car first then sent him down to the mansion on the river. As he was taking pictures of our car, security came up and told us we must leave. John insisted he had permission. The guard informed John that he was the head of security and he did not approve us being there. John politely asked if he could finish taking pictures and the guard sternly responded that if we did not leave, we would be arrested for criminal trespassing. We notified the guard that another member was by the mansion. He called other guards to go to the mansion to escort him out. On our way out, John made one more plea, but the guard was not going to let him take any more pictures. We were escorted to the gates and headed back to the hotel.

We both judged, on different teams, during the show on Saturday. It was my first time and I really loved it.

After saying our good-byes on Sunday, we went to Winter Park, Florida so Stu could see a client and I could do some shopping. We had a great lunch before heading toward Hilton Head Island.

Around 9:00 P.M. we were about 40 miles south of Hilton Head. We were crawling along because only one of the three lanes was open due to an active nighttime milling and paving project. At this point, we were just south of Exit 110 in Georgia on I95. It also was 6 miles south of where we had the issue on our way down to Florida. Stu hit the brakes and his pedal went to the floor. Luckily, due to the construction, we were going very slowly. He pulled off into the closed left hand lane. The master cylinder was almost dry and there was a puddle on the ground. Stu wanted AAA to take us to a place to get brake fluid so he could fill the master cylinder and hopefully get to Hilton Head before it leaked out again because he thought it was a brake cylinder. After he hung up with AAA, I told him I thought it made more sense just to get towed to the resort and deal with it in the morning. My reasoning was simple-no brakes. He agreed and called AAA back. This is where our three-hour nightmare with AAA began. AAA said it would be at least an hour until they got to us and we would get a call telling us a more accurate ETA along with the name of the towing company. Meanwhile, the sheriff's officer in front of us informed us that we could not stay in that lane because it was going to be milled and must move across the one moving lane of traffic to the right hand lane that was closed. She did not care that we did not have brakes. She stopped traffic and using his emergency brake Stu moved us to the other lane, and behind a concrete barrier. After an hour or so, Stu called AAA back because we never got the call with the ETA and name of the towing company. They gave us a song and dance about the main company having a truck down and other companies not answering their calls. They kept telling us they were working on it and would get back to us. We waited another hour and he called back again reiterating we are in a construction zone, we have been waiting close to 2 hours, the sheriff is giving us grief, etc. Stu asked if they were just going to let us sit on the side of the road until people came into work in the morning. Her response

was that she could not find anyone to come and get us. She claimed they were trying. Next Stu spoke with the sheriff officer who was now parked behind us. The officer said she could call their tow company, but we would have to pay for the tow. After waiting for the loud milling machine to pass by, leaving a fine coating of 195 pavement on the car, Stu called AAA back again (it now was about 2 ½-3 hours after our initial call) and asked for a supervisor. He demanded that they send us a text or email saying they would reimburse us if we got another company. The supervisor said to let him try to find someone. Within 5 minutes we get a call that a tow was on the way. The driver was great. It turned out we were a half-mile outside of his territory, so the AAA agent would not call him even though he was available. By the time he loaded the Lincoln, drove to Hilton Head and unloaded the car, it was well after one a.m.

The next morning, Stu found a garage close to the resort that works on classic cars in addition to regular cars and could do the work on the Lincoln. He called Hagerty for the tow and were towed the garage. After getting breakfast/lunch walked the two miles back to the resort. Since they could not look at the car until the next morning, we just hung out at the pool and relaxed that afternoon. We went to restaurant next to the resort, which had the best bar-b-que brisket we had ever tasted. On Tuesday morning, they inspected the car and found that the line that goes from the brake line to the brake cylinder had a crack in it. We took an Uber to pick up the car later that day. Stu and I enjoyed the rest of the week in Hilton Head and had no issues returning home.

2,610 miles driven Stu

\$650 for 197 gallons of gas

12.9 mpg

8 states (including NJ)

## **Trip 5: July-August 2018 to the LCOC meet in Minneapolis and on to California**

Our next road trip was our longest; 31 days. We left Friday, July 6, 2018 for the show in Minneapolis and then on to Napa, CA with several stops and many states. We left home in a drizzle with a sign in the rear window stating our goal, "California or Bust."

Our first overnight stop was to visit with our former neighbors and great friends 45 minutes south of Erie, PA. We left their home on Saturday afternoon and stopped for the night in Angola, IN. We had difficulty getting a room because there was a balloon festival that ended on Saturday, but we did manage to finally find a place.

Our original plans included a visit with some of my college friends in the Chicago area, but that did not work out. On Saturday night, we decided to change the route of our trip from going through the Chicago area to going through Michigan to the Upper Peninsula. We drove through Michigan and stopped at a Big Boy's for lunch. Neither one of us had been to one since we were kids, and we both enjoyed it as we did when we were kids. From there we went to Mackinac City and took the ferry to Mackinac Island. We arrived there late and could not do the carriage tour we had booked. We walked around town and had a wonderful dinner overlooking the lake. Mackinac Island is very family friendly. It has beautiful Victorian homes, no motorized vehicles but plenty of fudge and t-shirt stores. We surely would love to go back. Once back on the mainland, as we headed to the Mackinac Bridge, we spotted a huge hot dog on top of a

restaurant and Stu had to stop to take a picture of it with the Lincoln. We spent the night in St. Ignace overlooking the lake.

The next morning, we continued west in the UP to Lake Superior, stopping along the way to take pictures, buy local food and produce. We decided to take a boat tour of the Picture Rocks in Munising, but a short way out, the boat had to turn back due to “pea soup” fog. We spent the night in Marquette.

Tuesday morning we heading south into Wisconsin (27). We stopped along the way in the farmland area for some local cheese to take with us on our trip to Napa because cheese, wine and sour dough bread sounded good to us. We made it into Minneapolis, Minnesota (28) at dinnertime, and spent the night near Mall of America.

We spent the first half of the day at Mall of America. It is huge with an amusement park in the middle for kids, an aquarium and lots of other stores, restaurants and entertainment. Each lap around the Mall was 1.15 miles and there are 4 levels plus a smaller 5<sup>th</sup> floor. The biggest surprise was finding a liquor store in the mall. After MOA, we went across town and checked into the Marriott for the LCOC show. We hung out for a while and talked with people. We skipped the welcome dinner and went out on our own.

Thursday was the tour of the amazing Morrie Collection and then back to the hotel after lunch. John Walcek joined us for the ride from the Morrie Collection to lunch and back to the hotel. He identified a noise Stu had been hearing as a universal joint going bad. On our way out to dinner for Indian food, we stopped and picked up two sets of universal joints to have if needed.

On Friday, John Walcek rode with us again to the Veit Museum and the noise coming from under the car became louder. Once we were at the Veit, Stu had the opportunity to ask one of the local club members if there was someplace in the area to get the universal joint fixed. He pointed to Jeff Eisenberg and said that he was the guy to talk to because he owned a shop. Jeff called his place, Libson Twin City Auto & Truck Parts and arranged to have us bring the car right over. Since we were parked in, Stu found everyone necessary to move their cars and off we went, glad to know we were going to have the car fixed by someone reliable, but disappointed to miss the Veit. They replaced the necessary parts while we had lunch at the smallest diner we had ever been in; Ideal Diner and then went for ice cream, before hanging out in their waiting area. What a wonderful group of people working there! They were friendly, generous and very kind. We were back at the Marriott not very long after the tour returned. We went out to diner by ourselves to one of the places that Jeff recommended to us and it was excellent.

Saturday was show day and both of us judged on different teams. It was a lot of fun and there were many beautiful cars! After the judging was done, we had lunch and did some laundry. We went to a lovely place on Lake Minnetonka in Wayzata for dinner that Jeff had recommended. We sat outside and enjoyed our meal and a view of the lake and the lovely downtown area. After returning to the hotel we hung out in our room and then went to the bar. We saw several people who had left the awards banquet and they told us we had won something. Since we do not have the car judged, we figure we better find out what they were talking about and then went up to the Hospitality Room to discover Stu had won an award for the best 60s car in the driving tour. We said our good-byes before leaving for the night.

Sunday morning we headed to Bismarck, ND (29). It was a beautiful day and the trip was perfect. We spent the night in Bismarck, and after taking a picture of the car with a scale model of the Statue of Liberty in a plaza next to the hotel, we were on our way to the Badlands in South Dakota (30). The road there was a two lane state road through farmlands and ranches. We would go miles without seeing a person or vehicle. In over 200 miles we never saw a traffic light and only about 4 or 5 gas stations. We figured there would be limited restaurants, so we decide our leftovers would make a great picnic lunch. About midway into our drive, we pulled over in Faith, SD, population of about 400 (which was bigger than most towns we passed through). There was a visitor's center with a gazebo with a table and benches. We decided it was a great place to have lunch. The woman who ran the center came out and invited us in and asked all sorts of questions about the car. We did venture in after lunch to check it out and use the restrooms. We had a nice chat with her. She told us that the nearest Wal-Mart was 2½ hours away, meaning other than a few little shops, a grocery store and a drug store you have to travel to shop. We filled up with gas, but the highest octane available was only 87 and Stu was concerned that the car would not be happy. We continued on our way to the Badlands, the car started hesitating a bit. He added more gas with a higher octane and figuring it would help.

We toured the beautiful Badlands late that afternoon. It was truly amazing! The stunning colors, the layers of rock, and the variations throughout the park were surprising. We were getting tired and decided to head toward Rapid City for the night where we had reservation. We saw very few cars on RT. 90 between the Badlands and Rapid City and the car still was not running right-there just seemed like there was not enough power. We thought it might be

the gas or the elevation, but made it to Rapid City without the car breaking down.

The next morning, we headed to Mt. Rushmore and the car just did not want to move. Stu kept it in low and by the time we parked at Mt. Rushmore, the car overheated. We spent some time at amazing Mt. Rushmore. The park is beautifully done and is easily accessible. Stu called around and found a garage that could take a look at the car after lunch. We had a picnic lunch in the car, he refilled the antifreeze and off we went to Hill City to have the car checked out. Stu told the guy that we did not know if the carb was bad or needed to be adjusted for the elevation or if the timing needing adjusting or if we had gotten bad gas. The guy adjusted the carb and said the timing was fine. He said the carb was a little dirty and probably should be rebuilt, but we would be fine. Stu said we had a spare carb in the trunk, but the mechanic said we would not have a problem. We left the garage and went to the Crazy Horse Memorial. The car ran a bit better, but still not right. We spent a shorter time at Crazy Horse because storm clouds and lightening were approaching. We were unable to do Needles Highway because the time lost waiting for the car to be checked out. We continued into Wyoming (31) and had a wonderful steak dinner before ending up in Sheridan, WY for the night, however; the car was not running as it should.

The next morning Stu called our mechanic Mark at the shop in our hometown. Mark advised him, based on what the mechanic in Hill City said, to put some carb cleaner and an octane booster in to see if it helped. So a stop at NAPA was needed before we got on the road. We decided instead of driving the smaller roads in WY to get to Yellowstone's east entrance, that we would take RT. 90 through Montana and go directly to our hotel in West Yellowstone, Montana (32). The car was still not acting right and Stu figure he would have it

looked at in West Yellowstone. Earlier in the trip he made arrangements for an oil change there because of the amount of driving we were doing. We exited RT. 90 in Bozeman, Mt. for gas and to begin the drive south to West Yellowstone. He filled up with gas and as we were going through the city, the car would just stall out at traffic lights. Stu pulled over or rather coasted to a stop in front of the county courthouse and called AAA. While we were waiting we had several people offer us help. One gentleman had a huge collection of cars and offered to replace the carb for us or to get us to the best mechanic in Bozeman, but Stu wanted the car near us in West Yellowstone. Our tow arrived shortly and we were off in the tow truck for the 90 scenic miles to West Yellowstone. Our driver was a great guy, former military, very polite, respectful and a member of the Pagans motorcycle club. Several years ago, he lived a few hours from us doing repo work and had a lot of interesting stories. It was a fun ride. The driver dropped our stuff and myself at the hotel before taking Stu and the car to the garage a few blocks away. Upon hearing our plight, the hotel gave us dinner and drinks on them at another hotel they owned a few blocks away.

The next morning we walked over to the garage so Stu could talk to them when they opened. They said they were very busy and haven't worked on a carb for 15 years, but they would look at it.

We rented a jeep for the day, bought box lunches and visited the beautiful Yellowstone Park, or rather most of the lower part of the park. The geothermal sites, painted pots, geysers, Old Faithful, Yellowstone Lake, and more were beautiful and amazing! We were stuck for a half hour when a herd of bison decide to just stop in the middle of the road. I think they just like to mess with the tourist by holding up traffic. All of it was so very cool. It was an awesome day, until we heard from the garage. They did not know what was wrong

with the car and would make some calls to someone who might know how to work on the Lincoln. That night, after dinner, Stu and I started looking at our options if they could not fix the car in West Yellowstone.

Friday morning, Stu headed over to the garage and they basically said they could not fix it, nor did they know anyone who could. There went our plans spend a second day in Yellowstone. Stu made some phone calls to Art Apple and Chris Dunn. Chris was able to help him find someone back in Bozeman who Chris had sold some parts to in the past. Stu called him and found out he owned an engine shop, but there was a mechanic in his building complex who might be able to help us. His referral paid off and the gentleman said he would look at it the same day. Stu called AAA again for a tow, but the driver called and said he was booked and could not take us to Bozeman until Saturday. AAA would not call another driver. Stu called the mechanic back and got a name of a driver who came down from Bozeman to pick us up. As they are loading the car, the mechanic called and said he had a cancellation and he was taking off early. He'd leave a car for us to use (so very kind) and he'd look at our car first thing Monday morning. Having no other option, we headed to Bozeman in the flatbed to drop off the car and pick up his loaner. They were just getting ready to leave when we arrived. He listened to the car and immediately said that it didn't sound like the carb, but rather something electrical. We picked up the loaner, went to McDonalds to use their WiFi and booked a hotel for three nights in Bozeman. We also called our resort in Napa, CA to inform them that we would not be arriving on Sunday as planned and we were hoping now to arrive on Wednesday.

We decided to make the best of our situation and enjoy our unscheduled time in Bozeman. We saw that the downtown area was

having a sidewalk sale over the weekend, so Saturday morning we headed downtown for brunch and to walk around. We had a wonderful brunch. Stu had bison sausage, which he loved and I had stuffed French toast that was so decadent. We walked around the sidewalk sale looking at what they had. There were nice clothing stores, shoe stores, bookstores, restaurants, fabric store, athletic wear store, etc. It reminded both of us of what our city was like when we were kids. We did not purchase anything, but we had a good time walking and looking for just under two hours, which was the parking limit. We decided to go to the Montana Grizzly Encounter; a Grizzly Bear Rescue & Education Sanctuary to see some bears. They had 5 bears on their grounds and we saw two of them. They gave an excellent educational program on the different types of bears, bear facts and how to keep safe around bears. Four of the bears were born in captivity and one was an orphan. None of the five could live in the wild because they did not have the skills necessary for survival. We headed back to the hotel to relax before heading downtown for some burgers for dinner.

On Sunday we headed to Butte to see some of the mansions owned by former mine owners in the historic area. Google maps did not put us where I wanted to go, so we decided to go to the World Museum of Mining instead. Instead of a regular museum, it was recreated mining town on the site of the Orphan Girl Mine. They had a little bit of everything; stores, doctor's office, dentist's office, bank, engineer's office, school, a home, club meeting places, etc. While you could not go in, you could look in to see how they were fully furnished mostly with period correct donated items. There was LaSalle armored car with some bullet holes that was used to transfer money from the bank to the mine payroll office. We also opted for the mine tour-65 feet down into a closed copper, zinc, silver and lead, mine. It was a really an interesting and informative tour and something you

probably cannot do elsewhere. We drove back through the historic district; which very quiet and was filled with beautiful mansions. We stopped to see a historic synagogue from 1903, but like everything else in the area was closed. We headed back to Bozeman, had dinner at Famous Dave's because it was across the street and did some laundry.

On Monday, we arranged for a late check out and hung out in the room. The mechanic called just before lunch to say the rotor was bad and he replaced it with the one in the trunk and changed the oil. We happily picked up the car, had lunch and headed west with a fully working Lincoln! On the way, we had to stop to get a picture of the Continental at the Continental Dr. exit off the highway! We went through Idaho (33) and into Washington (34) and spent the night in Spokane.

On Tuesday, we began to head south with plans to visit the Columbia River Gorge. Traveling through Washington we were surprised to learn that they grow wheat. We thought we would see some apple and cherry orchards, but we really did not see any along the highway. We drove along the Columbia River and stopped for some scenic pictures. We had read that parts of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area were closed due to wildfires but were confused by the information on the website. We decided to head to the first visitors' center to see what was open and what was closed. Unfortunately, the road to the center went under an overpass and there was an accident on the highway, so they closed the road to the visitors' center. We figured it was not meant to be and continued south toward Bend, Oregon (35) where we had reservations for the night. We climbed through mountainous/hilly areas and then came across miles and miles of scorched barren land. I looked up the area once we were in our hotel for the night and learned that a wildfire

claimed about 100,000 acres or about 156 sq. miles about a month earlier. We stopped in the town of Madras, OR for dinner and had probably the best Mexican food we had ever eaten, and we've been to Mexico twice. After our delicious dinner we headed to Bend for the night.

On Wednesday morning we continued to head south to Crater Lake, which is supposed to be one of the most pristine lakes in the world. We did make it to the lake, but a fire burning in the northeast part of Crater Lake National Park made the area very smoky. The visibility was poor because the smoke hung low over the lake. Even with the smoky air, you could tell it must be very beautiful when it clear. We continued on the currently being repaved winding, narrow road without guardrails through the park to the south entrance road. The brakes were now starting to make a strange whistling sound, but they were working fine. We noticed that snowmobile signs and road edge poles were very, very tall. This is because they average 43 feet of snow a year! We stopped for lunch and then continued south, finally arrived in California (36). We still had just over 300 miles to arrive at our resort in Napa, but we made it all the way across the country in a 55-year-old Lincoln!

We stopped in Orland, CA for dinner. We were shocked that it was 109 degrees! We continued on our drive and finally arrived in Napa, CA and only three days late with the brakes that were still making whistling sounds and felt "soft."

First thing Thursday morning, Stu headed over to the nearest NAPA store to ask for recommendations to have the brakes checked out. Upon receiving the information, Stu went to the mechanic and it quickly diagnosed it as a vacuum leak in the brake booster. Stu called Art Apple who had one brake booster left and he overnighted it to

the garage in Napa. We did drive around that day to have meals and check out the area, but we were not going to go far. We wanted to rent a car to tour the Napa Valley, but due to a race in Sonoma, there were no cars available. We booked a Platypus Wine Tour for Friday, which picked us up at the resort, while the car was being repaired. Four wineries, lunch and a group of fun people on an air-conditioned, comfortable mini bus with the seats arranged so we could talk with each other. What a great time we had! The wineries were all small ones, some family operated. The last one, Auburn James, is named for the car company. They claim they actually bought the Auburn Car Company and are working with Tesla to possibly revive the company, although we cannot find anything on line about it.

Once we returned, the owner of the garage dropped the Lincoln off to us at the resort, so we didn't have Platypus leave us off at the garage. He had also replaced a gas line that he thought needed to be replaced. John Cashman and Marshall happened to be just south of Napa, so we met for dinner in downtown Napa. We had wonderful time at catching up at dinner. John also wanted to take a look at something on Stu's car that he was talking about and before we knew it, he had the door taken a part and was fixing the window issue. John also checked out a few other things and told Stu what need to be checked out once we got home, while Marshall and I talked and visited with Luna; such a sweet dog.

Saturday was the Napa Valley Wine Train. I had book this tour before knowing exactly what was happening with the car, so I chose the longer tour (they had so many different tours to choose from) with a four-course lunch and three wineries. The train car only had 33 people on it (this was not an inexpensive tour). Unlike the tour the day before, you were seated with your own group or spouse, etc. We stopped at three wineries and between each one we had a different

course. The wineries we visited were the better-known, larger wineries; Robert Mondavi, Charles Krug, and V. Satutti. We had a great time on the train, at the wineries and talking with others on the tour. We had dinner in town that night before doing laundry and packing up to head back east on Sunday.

On Sunday, we headed east from California until a thumping sound had us pulling to the side of the road. The passenger back tire was flat. We had a large shoulder to pull off onto on busy I80 just west of Sacramento. Stu called Hargerty Insurance to change the tire because he has torn rotator cuffs. The guy shows up in 20+ year old Mercedes with no safety lights and a small bottle jack to change the tire. It was so obvious that he had no clue what he was doing that I started taking pictures in case he damaged the car. It took twice as long as it should. The guy had the nerve to ask for \$50 above what Hargerty pays because it took so long to change the tire. Stu told him that if he came with the right equipment, it would not have taken so long. The guy began to yell and curse. I calmly suggest we call Hargerty to see what their policy entails. The guy got very quiet, then said that the \$50 won't make him rich or Stu poor. He mumbled something in his native language and threw dirt on the hood of his car a few times. He then said we will remember him in an angry voice then got into his car and sped off. Maybe he put a curse on us, maybe not. We were not going to lose sleep over it.

As we continue on through the beautiful Donner Pass area and into a smoky Nevada (38), Stu and I hear a noise coming from the back when he brakes, but we did not know what was causing the noise. We stopped in Winnemucca, NV for the night. The next morning, Stu visited the local NAPA for a recommendation on who can look at the brakes and then takes the car there once they open. The emergency brake was "hung up" and it had worn down the rear brake pads. Stu

had a set in the trunk, so it made things easier. We had a late check out in the hotel and then hung out in the lobby for 90 minutes. I won \$30 in their casino playing with vouchers the hotel had given us. The brakes were replaced, flat tire fixed and we were on the road by 4:00 pm. We travelled a few hours and spent the night in Elko, NV. It is a cute town that looks like a 1950s casino town.

We were up and out in the morning, headed into Utah (38). We stopped to get gas and take some pictures near the Bonneville Salt Flats. The plan was to have a picnic lunch at the Great Salt Lake. However, the area was hazy and there were tons of brine flies. A picnic was out the question, so we stopped at restaurant near the airport. We continued on the beautiful scenic drive through Utah and pull off for gas in Coalville, Utah. As we are getting out of the car, a boy comes running out of the store at the gas station to ask if we know that we have flat tire. Sure enough, the back tire on the driver's side is a pancake. They direct us to a tire and brake place that they own a block away. After gassing up, Stu fills the tire with air and we head straight there. We had to wait about an hour, but they fixed the valve stem and we were on our way again to Rock Spring, WY for the night.

From Rock Spring we headed east and then south into Colorado. Our original plans had us visiting Bryce Canyon, but do the mechanical issues, we had to forgo this segment of our trip. However, I had promised someone I would mail something to her son from Kansas to help with a summer project for school, so to keep my promise, we headed south to pick up RT. 70 instead of continuing on RT. 80. We spent the night in Limon, CO. It is a tiny town with several restaurants along with a liquor store that are all in one building in front of the hotel.

The next morning, Thursday, we headed east on RT. 70. About 25 minutes out Stu says he wants to stop at the rest stop in Arriba, CO aka the middle of nowhere. We meet in the lobby after using the restroom and he does not look good. He said his stomach was bothering him and he felt hot and cold and sweaty. I asked him if he wanted to sit down and he said he just wanted to lean against the soda machine. The doors were open and there was a nice breeze plus the air conditioning was on at that time (they were having power issues and the electric kept tripping off). I asked him again and he did not respond, and his eyes were rolled up and to the left. He then moaned and fell forward toward me. Somehow, I caught him and lowered both us to the tile floor with either of us getting hurt as I called for help. A billion things went through my mind in the manner of a nanosecond. No one came because no one was around. I checked, and he was breathing. I know he had passed out twice in the last 15 years, so before doing anything else, I did what worked last time-slapped him in the face a few times and called his name loudly. His eyes pop open, and he looks stunned and asks me, "What? Why did you wake me?" His color was back, and he looked around having no clue to what happened or where he was. He thought he was dreaming and I had woken him up. He sat up and was surprised when I explained what had happened. We sat on the floor for a while because I would not let him to get up. People started coming into the rest stop and asking if everything was okay. Since he felt fine, we walked to the car and he drank a bottle of water and off we went again east on RT. 70 into Kansas.

As we are traveling, Stu heard a rattling. When we pulled off for gas and lunch, he looked under the car and noticed one of the muffler brackets had lost a bolt and the weld had broken on the other side. He secured the muffler with metal ties and then we went to lunch at

a local place in the small town. We traveled on without a problem and spent the night in Topeka.

Friday we continued east along RT. 70 into Missouri where we had lunch in the small town of Blackwater with a population of 199. It was about 5 miles off RT. 70 through cornfields. The downtown was two very short blocks long with angle parking in the middle of the street. The bar/restaurant we ate in was busy. Many locals were there as were people like us who pulled off the road for lunch. One gentleman said he was next to us on RT. 70 earlier in the day. After a lunch of freshly made hamburgers, we continued through St. Louis and then into East St. Louis, Ill. to a park that is supposed to be the best view of the Gateway Arch. It was a great spot and we took some pictures of the car and us with the arch in the backdrop. We spent the night in Effingham, Ill.

We left Effingham Saturday morning after being awoken by a barking dog and continued on our way. Seriously, at this point everything is blending together. At some point over the last few days, my window switch was stuck and Stu tried to open it with his switch, but it broke, so my window did not open. I was grateful the air conditioning worked! We passed through Ohio and saw our first rain in 3 weeks. We spent the night in Washington, PA. It was our 20<sup>th</sup> and final hotel.

The next morning, Sunday, after breakfast, Stu went to the check the car and I went to pack the cooler. He had to text me to ask our room number. What was even funnier, I almost did the same to him. Yep, we were very road weary, but happy. We continued on home arriving there around 5:30 pm after getting stuck in the traffic in Philadelphia. The muffler scraped going up the driveway. The brakes were not right (I told him several times since the pad were replaced that I smelled burning rubber), my window was stuck shut, and a

piece of weather stripping was coming off the back passenger door, but we were home, safe and sound. The car had another good onceover by Mark, our mechanic.

7,738 miles driven in his car by Stu (plus the rental in Yellowstone, plus 180 miles in a tow truck)

\$2,224 for 629 gallons of gas

12.2 mpg

22 states (including NJ)

31 days

30 nights

20 hotels

5+ lap blankets crochet for the local Veteran's home

The experience: priceless. We are so glad we did it.

### **Trip 6: October 2018 to the LCOC meet in Albuquerque**

The last leg of our US tour began on my birthday, Tuesday, October 9, 2018. It was a three-week trip. Our destination was the Lincoln Western Meet in Albuquerque, New Mexico, however, we decided do some site seeing along the way, or maybe a bit out of the way. We set out at 8 am and headed south, going around Washington, DC to Front Royal, VA where we entered Skyline Drive. We stopped at many of the scenic overlooks and took some pictures. It was very picturesque. Skyline Drive is 105 miles long and we decided to get off about 2/3 of the way because it was clouding up. We spent the night in the Waynesboro area, which is near the end of Skyline Drive and the beginning of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

On Wednesday, we headed to the entrance to the Blue Ridge Parkway on our way to Asheville, NC to visit The Biltmore. The skies

were blue and there were fluffy white clouds. However, once we travelled the 4 miles to the entrance of the parkway, we encountered very heavy, dense fog. We tried to get on the parkway, but the fog was so thick we missed the entrance and when we turned around, we still could not see the entrance. It was so bad that at one point the star on the hood was not even visible. We decided to take RT. 81 and figured we could get on the Blue Ridge further south. Unfortunately, it began to rain and the clouds over the mountains were very dark. We decided we would just stay on the interstates and travel the Blue Ridge Parkway at another time when we have better weather. It did stop raining about an hour outside of Asheville and the clouds on the mountains were very cool looking.

Thursday morning, Hurricane Michael, now a tropical storm, passed through Asheville. We left the hotel in a pouring rain to go to the Biltmore for our 9:45 self-guided tour. We did the self-guided tour, which took about 90 minutes. The house is absolutely amazing! It is 175,000 square feet, with ceilings as high as 70 feet. Visitors only see a small fraction of the largest home in the country, which has 250 rooms including 43 bathrooms, 35 bedrooms, 3 kitchens, and 65 fireplaces. Once we were done being wowed, we headed outside to discover it had stopped raining. We walk around some of the gardens and saw some of the Dale Chihuly exhibit, which officially ended a few days earlier in the week. When we returned to the parking lot, we were told we could drive on the road that went past the mansion. We were told you could not stop, however; Stu asked if he could stop to take a picture of the car with the house in the background and the guard gave him permission. After taking a few pictures, we continued through the 8,000-acre scenic property to Antler Hill Village where we had lunch and walked around. Leaving the property was a problem as the rain caused flooding on the main roads of the estate. We were detoured more than once along with

many other cars through some areas normally not meant for visitors. Finally they brought us out on a very narrow one-way road, with two-way traffic. We headed toward Nashville, Tennessee (39) where we spent the night at a hotel that opened only two days earlier. We were the first people to use our room.

Friday morning we checked out and took an Uber to downtown Nashville. We rode the Old Town Trolley, which was very informative. Nashville has some very interesting areas and beautiful buildings. We ended up on Broadway aka "Honky Tonk Row". After having lunch at a roof top restaurant/bar we headed back onto the trolley to the Marathon Motor Works. Marathon made cars from 1907-1914 and they had four cars in their showroom-well, 1 complete car and three parts of cars. The main building is now shops, distilleries, a winery, etc. and the museum is in the old dealership. They also have many of the tools and machinery used over a 100 years ago displayed throughout the building. We took an Uber back to the hotel to get the Lincoln, and headed to Fayetteville, TN for the night.

Saturday we drove to Lynchburg, TN to participate in the Jack Daniel's Distillery Tour and Tasting. It was awesome. We saw how they make Jack Daniels; the still, fermentation, filtration, etc. We learned that they make all the whiskey from the same spring as Jack did when he started the company, they make their own hickory charcoal to filter the oils out (it is bourbon if the oils are left in, whisky if they are removed), that they make their own barrels (which are only used once), and that they sell the used mash to local farmers. There must be a lot of happy cows and pigs in the area! All the Jack Daniels consumed in the world is made in Lynchburg. They are building their 19<sup>th</sup> barrelhouse and it is estimated that they have over 775,000,000 gallons aging away in the non-climate controlled barrelhouses. The

tasting was 5 of their best whiskeys and we each left with a rocks glass, before making a purchase in their store. After lunch in the village we headed to through Alabama (4) to Tupelo, Mississippi (41) to visit with Stu's cousin Risa and her husband, Kenneth. We had not seen them for 5 years, so we had a lot of catching up to do.

After leaving Tupelo Sunday morning, we headed south wiggling our through MS to RT. 20 and then west into Louisiana (42). Along the way we saw cotton growing and some nice scenery then spent the night in Bossier, Louisiana, which is just east of Shreveport.

Monday morning we woke up to rain and cooler temperatures. We drove through Shreveport and headed north to Arkansas (43). We made a stop in Texarkana where a post office straddles the Texas (44) and Arkansas border for a photo op. We then continued north, in the rain, into Texas. We stopped in Blossom, TX at Wheezy's for great lunch before continuing in the rain into Oklahoma (45). Somewhere into the Ozarks, the rain finally ended. We headed west onto RT. 40 into Oklahoma City, but first stopped to take a picture of the car with a giant Sonic cup (aka water tower). In OKC, we went to Milk Bottle Grocery and The Gold Dome to take some pictures before diner. It was only 43 degrees by the time we reached our hotel near the airport but it was above 70 at home in southern New Jersey.

Tuesday we continued through Oklahoma into Texas with blue skies. We stopped at the Oklahoma RT. 66 Museum, which was quite interesting and nicely done. In Clinton, TX we stopped to take some pictures along RT. 66. In Elk City, TX we went to the National RT. 66 Museum. The one in Oklahoma was much better. Our next stop was the iconic Conoco Station and the U-Drop Inn Café in Shamrock, TX. The building is restored beautifully. Inside you can sign a guest book and walk around. What we found odd was that on the back of the

property there are Tesla Superchargers. We made several more stops to for Stu to take pictures of the car. One stop was a RT. 66 gas station in McLean. This station was the site of the first Phillips Petroleum station in Texas and is Tudor Revival in design. We spent the night in Amarillo.

Before leaving Amarillo under gray skies, we made a few picture stops. One was of the “The Pair of Legs” and the other was the Cadillac Ranch. We made a stop at the historic MidPoint Café in Adrian, TX for some pictures and some homemade pie, before heading into New Mexico (46). We saw signs along RT. 40 for a free car museum at Russell’s Travel Center in Glen Rio, NM. We did not think we would find many cars, but since a pit stop was necessary, it was the logical place to stop. We were so surprised to find a very nice museum. The first thing we noticed was a pink 1957 Thunderbird very similar to mine, a Pontiac Super Chief, a 1925 Ford Model TT Texaco Delivery Tanker, a few Vettes, an early 1950s Oldsmobile, Impala, many other cars and collectables. It is definitely worth stopping in. Our next stop was Tucumcari, NM. This old RT. 66 town is full of photo ops; the Blue Swallow Motel, the Continental Oil Company station (gotta get a picture of the Continental there), Tee Pee Curios, a Polly Gas station, and more. Our final stop for the day was the Crown Plaza in Albuquerque for the Western Meet.

Thursday, a cold and windy day. We went with LCOC group to the National Museum of Nuclear Science & History for a guided tour and photos. After the tour, we went to the restaurant at the base of the Sandia Aerial Tramway and took the tram to the top. The ride was spectacular, however; heavy fog prevented us from seeing much past 30 feet in front of us. Once we returned from the tram we hung out at the hotel while Stu had the car washed.

Our next adventure with the LCOC was to the Anderson Abruzzo Albuquerque International Balloon Museum for another wonderful guided tour then to El Pinto for a scrumptious Mexican buffet lunch. A great time getting to meet new friends! Once we returned to the hotel, we set out to cruise and photograph some of historic RT. 66 in Albuquerque.

Saturday was show day with blue skies and warm temperatures. We both judged and then walked around until the field was released. Once we were able to move the car from the show field, we explored more of RT. 66 and then returned for the membership meeting. After the meeting, we ventured out to explore other areas of the city and take more pictures.

After saying our goodbyes on Sunday morning, we headed west under blue skies. Our first stop was the RT. 66 Casino to take some pictures. Then we stopped in Grants, NM for some more photos and at a NAPA store for some supplies. Lunch was at the historic El Rancho Hotel, where many of the Hollywood elite stayed back in the day while filming movies in the area. Ronald Regan, John Wayne, Katherine Hepburn, Jane Wyman and Kirk Douglas, are just a few that called this hotel home while filming. This hotel was the headquarters for many films from the early 40s to the early 60s.

After lunch we continued into Arizona (47). We went through the beautiful Painted Desert and Petrified Forest. We also toured the historic Painted Desert Inn. After leaving the Petrified Forest Nation Park, we continued on to Holbrook to take in the RT. 66 sites and spend the night.

After taking some pictures in the area, we headed to Winslow, Arizona. In Winslow, they have an intersection/corner dedicated to

the Eagles classic rock song, "Take it Easy". After taking some pictures we did some shopping. While in a store a local gentleman approached Stu and told him about a girl who worked around the corner in a chiropractor's office that is restoring a Lincoln Continental that looked like his. He asked Stu to stop in and talk to her. She saw us before we got out of the parking lot. Turns out, she was restoring a 63 sedan and Stu spoke with her for a good half an hour and helped her by providing information. He really made her day. After leaving Winslow, we headed to Meteor Crater to check it out before starting our trek home. We spent the night in Albuquerque, but not at the Crown Plaza.

Tuesday we drove all day. We stopped in Tucumcari for lunch and for a few more photos. Along the way a Studebaker truck drove past us. Several hours later, we saw it on the side of the road. Stu pulled over to see if he could help the couple from Alabama. He was having an issue with his hood and just needed someone to help him close the hood as he had surgery and was unable to do so himself. After Stu closed the hood we talked for a while and found out his daughter was building a home in the next town over from us. We spent the night in Shamrock, TX. Stu was able to go back to the Conoco Station/U-Drop Inn Café to take some nighttime photos. At the hotel we met a guy from Kansas who is restoring a 1969 Lincoln Continental. Stu spent time talking with him and giving him information.

Wednesday was another day of driving east, in mostly in the rain. We stopped in several places so Stu could take pictures of the car with landmarks, such as, the Rock Café, the world's largest gas pump, a large buffalo, Vickery Phillips 66 Station, a huge "oil man" wearing a "Built Ford Tough" belt, and the Circle Theater. We spent the night in Tulsa.

Thursday we continued east in the rain. We stopped in Foyil, OK to see Ed Galloway's Totem Pole Park, and in Chelsea, OK to visit "Under RT. 66". We also stopped in to a car museum in Afton, Oklahoma. We found a place that sold RT. 66 cookies in Commerce, Oklahoma when we visited the "Hole in the Wall Conoco Station". The gentleman who sold us the cookies grew up about 40 minutes away from us. We travelled through several other communities, stopping to take pictures before spending the night in Springfield, MO.

Waking up to another cloudy day on Friday, we headed out to take more pictures in Springfield. Along the way we spotted another RT. 66 Car Museum and just had to stop in for a look. It is a private collection of some very rare cars, such as a 1939 Packard Safari Wagon which is the only surviving one of three made. Winston Churchill rode in this one. There was a 1936 Horch, which was used by German generals during WWII and was seized by US troops. There was a 1952 Alvis, 1929 Kissel, 1930 Austin Bantums, 1907 REO Model G, and 1908 Maxwell just to name a few. It is definitely worth stopping in to see these pristine cars and trucks. Some of the other photo stops this dreary day included Gilloiz Theater, an old Lincoln dealership, Munger Moss Motel, Wrinks Market, the world's largest rocking chair, Gasoline Alley, and Uranus Fudge Factory where we picked up some fudge and flavored moonshine. We spent the night in St. Louis.

Finally, on Saturday morning we woke up to sunshine! Today would be our final day to take pictures in St. Louis, which has some old and beautifully maintained buildings. We went to the Bevo Windmill which is part of a beerhouse and restaurant originally built by Adolphus Busch 1916, to a flying saucer restaurant, a water tower (in a very bad area of town) that looks like a roman or Greek column, and a few other stops before heading east for the day. We drove through MO, IL, IN and finally in Louisville, Kentucky, which was our

48<sup>th</sup> state! We stopped to take a picture of the giant baseball bat in front of the Louisville Slugger Museum before heading to our hotel for the night.

The next morning, we met the wife and baby boy of our son, David's best friend. His friend is in the army and we had not met his new family. It was so much fun to play with his baby boy and met his lovely wife. After they left our hotel room, we continued on our way home, stopping in West Virginia for the night. The last day took us through Maryland into Delaware and finally home in New Jersey.

5,804 miles driven by Stu (no tow truck miles this time!)

\$1,514 for 451 gallons of gas

12.9 mpg

22 states (including NJ)

21 days

20 nights

18 hotels

Our adventures crisscrossing the country are filled wonderful memories that will last forever. I think I smiled the entire time I was writing this article. We are so incredibly blessed that we had these wonderful opportunities. We are grateful to everyone who helped us along the way. Even with all the mechanical issues, we still had an awesome time because we chose to make the best of each situation.

As you know, Stu does all the driving (almost 17,500 in 2018 alone). What do I do? Crochet. I make lap blankets for the NJ Veteran's Memorial Home in our city. I have probably made close to 20 of them on these trips.

Are you wondering about Hawaii and Alaska? We have been to Hawaii several times including January of 2017. In July-August 2019 we have planned trip to Alaska that includes a cruise, and land tour. We also have planned to extend our trip and drive around Alaska for a week-but it won't in in the '63 Lincoln.

Again, a huge thanks to everyone who helped us along the way and to the LCOC for giving us the opportunities to travel across the U. S. A.

Most importantly, I am especially grateful to have such a wonderful, fun, crazy and adventurous husband who is willing drive tens of thousands of miles in a classic Lincoln.

You can see the pictures on Stu's website;  
<http://classic63lincoln.com/>.