

Ole Gal Takes A Memorable Road Trip

By Ole Gal – assisted by Joanne Day & Read Van Zile

Hi! Remember me? I'm Ole Gal, the 1963 Ford Thunderbird convertible that belongs to Joanne Day. In the February *Chesapeake Bulletin* I told you my life story and toward the end, I mentioned that Joanne wanted to drive me all the way to Florida and back (no AutoTrain stuff this time). Well, Joanne, Read Van Zile, and I made the trip. I took them more than 4,000 miles round trip to Key West and I performed flawlessly for Joanne and Read the entire time.



I had many opportunities to show off my vanity plates on the Florida trip.

A little background: in early 2008 they had my engine and transmission rebuilt. By late March, Joanne and Read put 800 miles on me in less than ten days in order to take me back for an oil change, and complete inspection before the Florida trip. After two or three minor adjustments, I was good to go!

On the morning of April 12th we were leaving for Florida with an early stop at the Sunshine Grille car show in Fork, MD. However, there must have been a gremlin hiding somewhere inside me because the temperature gauge wasn't working – at all. They hurriedly took me to the shop where the engine work was done and the mechanics tried to fix it but couldn't. So, we drove the entire trip with no temperature gauge. They figured that with many new parts and a new water pump, we shouldn't have any trouble.

We swung by the Sunshine Grille for about an hour, and then we were off to Staunton, VA to visit Read's cousin. From there I took them further down the Shenandoah Valley and into the Appalachians to Blowing Rock, NC for a great meal at Crippen's. Gee, I only get a choice of mid-grade or high-test gasoline, but they got the stuff that sounds really good like pecan encrusted halibut, prime rib, and elegant desserts.

From there it was off to Hendersonville, NC for Read to visit another cousin and then on to Atlanta. They gave me a one day rest while they visited a friend and

took a narrated bus tour of Atlanta.

Our next stop was Valdosta, GA where I was parked right in front of a sidewalk café while Joanne and Read were having dinner. Everybody who walked by admired me and I loved that. 'Course they had my top down so that I looked even sexier.

Well, no rest for now. After a short morning run the next day, we stopped and had lunch near Gainesville, FL with an older gentleman that Joanne used to work with many years ago. I had never met him before, but he thought I was really good looking even though I was kind of dirty.

Then, we went to Cedar Key, FL (about 50 miles west of Gainesville), a really interesting little town on the Gulf which is largely a fishing village but is developing an arts community with several really nice galleries. Joanne and Read decided to stay an extra day and give me a bath. I hadn't been washed since October and needed cleaning – especially those white wall tires. Well, I got washed, scrubbed, rinsed, dried, polished, you name it, and when they were finished I was **gorgeous** and ready to move on.

Sidebar: They brought along the directory of car shows for both the Thunderbird and AACA clubs. They thought that if we were in the area

when a show was scheduled, we would stop in, show me off and say hello. Unfortunately, we never found a show or activity near the places we visited.

From Cedar Key we went to Clearwater, then on to Tampa, and down the west coast to Port Charlotte before heading across the state to Lake Worth where Read's high school buddy lives. They had a several day visit while I sat in the parking lot getting a well deserved rest.

Then I took them to Miami where Joanne's sister and family live. We had a great time with them and even celebrated a very belated Christmas. Joanne and Read shipped the gift packages ahead of time because I have no storage space in the trunk when my top is down.

They even gave *me* a gift of a luxurious morning at the Car Spa in Aventura, FL for a complete detailing. Why, they soaked me, washed me, rinsed me, blow dried my exterior, scrubbed my white wall tires, put tire shine on the black part of my tires and cleaned my entire interior. My goodness, I had six young men working on me at one time. What more could I want? It might seem like just a car wash, but to me, it was luxurious pampering. While we spent a few days in Miami, Read took the time to take me to have my oil and filter changed and give me a thorough inspection. Everything was good – but I knew that.

Then we headed for Key West, certainly one of the most picturesque and fascinating trips driving over all those bridges. Well, Joanne and Read didn't have reservations, but found a really nice little hotel that consisted of three old houses connected in the front with a two story 20 unit motel behind them. There was a pool which Joanne and Read loved but they wouldn't let me get into it, of course. The other nice

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Ole Gal Trip – continued

thing is that they were pet friendly. Oh, that's right! I forgot to mention that we had a small dog with us for the entire trip. Duchess decided that she liked traveling in her cage on my back seat more than sitting or sleeping on the console in between Joanne and Read. They worked out a temporary arrangement with a towel to keep her in the shade when they were driving me with my top down.



Here I am on Daytona Beach

One of Joanne and Read's goals had been to have a picture of me with the well-known sign "Southern most point in the continental U. S." We got pictures, thanks to a kind gentlemen who offered to take them.

Next day we were on the highway back to Lake Worth to spend one more night with Read's buddy, then up to Jensen Beach where they visited friends. These people had just bought a new yacht that Joanne and Read were anxious to see. It's huge! It's 94 feet long and 20+ feet wide. My goodness they could put me in the boat. 'Course I'd look pretty silly there. Anyway, the yacht has a captain, a mate, and a chef who served up a great lunch. Well, they hated to leave this lap of luxury, but they knew that I was getting antsy.

I wanted to go to Daytona Beach and drive on the sand and I wanted to drive around the Daytona Speedway. I kept tugging as we drove by the Speedway trying to pull in, but that darned Read, told me I was too old to be running on the speedway. Then I had a big dis-

appointment – as we got into Daytona all the entrances to the beach were closed with the disheartening sign "no admittance, high tide". Joanne and Read were also disappointed.

However, the signs were gone the next morning and I was able to go to the beach. That was neat. My tires kept wondering what this strange new surface was and I had no luck explaining it to them. While we were going along on the beach a red Corvette convertible came alongside and I was ready to show him up, but Read flagged the driver down. We both stopped and they exchanged pleasantries with the goal of taking pictures of each others' cars on the sandy beach.

From there we continued north and stopped in St. Augustine. They decided to take the trolley tour but had the problem of the dog because these parking lots simply have no shade and my convertible top is black. Joanne talked to the lady selling tour tickets and she couldn't have been more

helpful. She found a "reserved" parking spot under cover where Duchess and I could be in the shade and where the ticket lady could keep an eye on us. When they got back, I of course had not seen St. Augustine nor had the dog, but Duchess was fine – probably asleep. Read and Joanne were impressed by St. Augustine, parts of which are very old – even older than the cars in the car clubs. We got to Brunswick, GA that night.

The next day I took them to Savannah where we drove around and soaked up that southern charm for several hours. Then we went onto Hilton Head Island where we stayed overnight. The next morning I drove them around Hilton Head for several hours then on to Charleston. They did not take a guided tour, so I drove them all around Charleston and did a mighty fine job of it if I must say so myself. Charleston, like Savannah has enormous charm. We found a pet friendly Motel in North Charleston. The next day we took the old road from Charleston up through Myrtle Beach; then took the expressway to Rocky Mount, NC.

The final day of the trip, I drove them into Richmond so that they could have lunch with friends and then we headed home. Joanne and Read had not warned me of the terrible traffic around D.C., but it would not have mattered, I guess, as there are only so many ways to go. Anyway, I got them home early evening after having taken them 4,000 trouble free miles. I'm right proud of myself! So are Joanne and Read.

HALLOWEEN POKER RUN SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2008



Assemble at 10 am – Start 11 am – Dinner 2:15 pm

Friendly Farm Restaurant in Upperco, MD is the start and finish point

Drive new routes on rural roads, see fall foliage, stop at interesting sites



Cost is \$23 per person, which includes coffee & donuts at start, plus dinner & gratuity

Poker hand winner, Door prizes, and dash plaques

Payment: Tom Kenney, PO Box 178, Hampstead, MD 21074 – Info: 410-239-7071