

about the time Nancy and I married, I discovered that I had a blood problem. It wasn't a medical issue! I had "travel" in my blood. It really came home to me when we recently were looking at some old 8 mm films (which we transferred to VCR) from our first big trip. We had filmed our vacation to Maine and back thru Canada. What a kick to see the sights, and how we looked in our late 1950's attire. We camped most of the way, and traveled comfortably in our Plymouth station wagon.

Family vacations with the kids, and extended trips for the parents, were continued throughout the years. Discovery of new cultures, beautiful sights, and strange happenings were part of the adventure. And over the past 20 or more years, I have been fortunate to be in a business that required considerable travel.

I am telling you this because if you are an MCA show person, the 2008 season will provide the broadest spread of sites that you could imagine. It starts with Pensacola in March, then Ohio in June, followed by Oakville, Ontario, in Canada in early August. The Grand National is in Park City, Utah, over Labor Day, and the final show is in Phoenix in October.

What I'd like to zero in on is the Ontario Show because I hear people raising very worrisome concerns. Since I live only a few miles from Canada (in Washington State), travel back and forth across the border is hardly a concern for me. Over the years I have driven my Mustang to the Vancouver, BC, show and I have "trailed" the car as well. In the summer of 2006, Nancy and I traveled by vehicle to Alaska (with our dog) and crossed US/Canada border several times. We just did our homework, and we were ready for another grand adventure. However, like any of the thousands of people who cross the borders daily, we are hardly experts.

If you are worried that Canadian Customs or U.S. Customs are going to tear your car apart—forget it! The Border Patrol Officers are only concerned about protecting either country from those who would want to bring harm.

What you need to do is some proper homework. I would begin, if you never traveled to Canada from the USA, by ordering the U.S. Customs and Border Protection booklet, "Know Before You Go." You can get it at your local Federal Building, or go to the web site: www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbvg. If you plan to download the booklet, be aware that it is more than 60 pages in length. But, it is the best source I can suggest.

Give special attention to the documents you will need to re-enter the US from Canada. Because of the overwhelming submission of passport applications over the past few months, the original deadline for "passport only" travel has been extended into the summer. Today "U.S. citizens must be able to verify their identity and citizenship when crossing land borders and sea borders. A combination of identification documents such as a U.S. driver's license and U.S. birth certificate may be presented," in place of a passport, according to the website www.usimmigration-support.org/passport. In the summer of 2008 the "passport only" regulation will come into effect, which means that by the August show date, you will need a U.S. passport if you do not have one.

You do not need an international driver's permit in Canada, and your US auto insurance is acceptable.

If you follow economics, you know that the exchange rate is pretty much at par, which is to say that the U.S. and Canadian dollar are about the same. Be sure to check the "Know Before You Go" booklet to understand what duty free exemptions apply if you buy items to bring back to the U.S. Also, remember that if you see something for a good price in Canada, there will be a goods and services tax applied to it at purchase.

It isn't that difficult to go and come from Canada. Just keep on top of the booklet, and watch the evening news. The show in Ontario will be exceptional, I assure you. Welcome to 2008. Have a wonderful show year.

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Bill Johnson



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