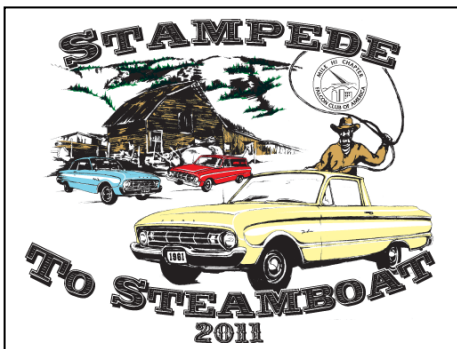


Stampede to Steamboat

***Journey to the 2011 FCA National Convention
Part 1, by Al Aiello***

My good friend Steve Dolar and I attended the 2011 FCA National Convention that was held in Steamboat Springs in July. The original plans were that our wives (Lois and Emily) would make the trek too, but that did not happen.

Steve and I decided that we should drive a Falcon to the Convention. I mean, after all, it was a Falcon Convention, and it was the nearest one to the west coast since 2005. It was



decided that my 1965 Ford Falcon 2-Door Wagon that is equipped with a 200 six and C-4 automatic was the best choice for the journey. The Wagon would be the most economical and offer the most storage capacity for the trek. A mere 1,400 miles one-way did not sound like it was too far, but it turned out to be quite a journey.



Here's proof that we made it...that's my wagon, that's Steve and me, and that's the Rocky Mountains in the background!

Prior to our departure, Steve and I made a long list of things that we would need for the trip. We made a special list of parts that we should bring with us in case of a breakdown. Mr. O'Reilly Auto Parts was happy with me as I purchased an alternator, fuel pump, spark plugs, points, condenser, belts, hoses, wheel bearings, and a host of other parts may be necessary in the hinterlands.

I picked up Steve from his house on the early morning of Monday, June 11th. Steve and I brought some parts along for the swap meet, so by the time we departed from Novato, my 1965 Ford Falcon Two-Door Wagon was fully loaded...like sagging loaded! We headed east on Highway 80.

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By mid morning, we had crossed the beautiful Sierras. By noon, we had reached Reno and filled up the gas tank. Although the gas tank was full, I had a bit of an empty feeling as we headed east from Reno. I knew what was ahead. It was the long, lonely and hot Nevada Desert. Did I mention that we had no air conditioning? Well, actually we did have AC, it was in the form of those little plastic bottles filled with water and topped with a battery operated fan, and a trigger for spraying.

That first day we made it to Wendover, Nevada. We had planned to stop in Elko, but after a strange stop at the auto parts store there, and some bad advice about the hotels, we decided to drive on to Wendover. We stayed at the Montego Bay Hotel and feasted on an excellent buffet dinner while there.

We were off to Salt Lake City the next morning. As we left Wendover, we traveled along the Bonneville Salt Flats...which by the way are disappearing due to salt mining there. Within a few hours we were pulling into Salt Lake City. Steve has a cousin who lives there and she graciously let us stay at her

home. We kicked back in Salt Lake City for most of Tuesday, and the next day (Wednesday) we met up with a couple of members from the Columbia River Falcon Club.

There were now three Falcons in our caravan. Just as we were leaving SLC, I noticed anti-freeze on the front passenger side carpet. This was not good as that is usually a sign that the heater core was leaking. The one thing that we did not buy was heater hose, or a heater core. So, we decided to just bypass the heater...there was no way that we were going to need it on this trip as it was hot!



This photo was taken of Steve and my wagon along Highway 80 in Utah...that is the Great Salt Lake in the background.

We headed east on Highway 40 after successfully bypassing the heater. It was a beautiful drive through Utah and the northwestern portion of Colorado. After a full day of driving, we arrived in Steamboat Springs that evening. When we arrived, there was a massive traffic jam due to construction...and did I mention it was hot....and the wagon sputtered a bit as it was not happy with the 8,000 ft. altitude. After checking into the resort there, we met with a few people and then called it a day. We had made it to Steamboat and felt good about our accomplishment! ***(more later next month)***