

Those who frequent the track (we call them track junkies, among other less-delightful terms) have been steadily changing from the pedestrians driving their Porsches to these events to looking more like an SUV sales lot every day, with car trailers of every shape and size imaginable, pulled by some exotic, and some merely functional, tow vehicles. And then there is MY rig. This is its tale.

Well, it seems the laws of physics have struck again. The Motorhome, forever now to be referred to as TrannyTrash, will be going on the blocks right after Parade. Assuming of course that the gods of finance haven't decided I am unworthy of the purchase of its replacement; a BIGGER unit. Come in close, now, we don't want the secret to get out. My '79 32 Ft King's Highway, a great "guy" piece, has pissed me off for the last time! So I'm spending three times as much to buy two more feet. But at least John Hajny won't have to sleep with the maggots, unless I forget ANOTHER tuna salad container for a month!

Before you decide I've COMPLETELY lost my marbles, listen to my tale of woe. TrannyTrash has a Dodge 440 gas engine. When I first bought it, I needed a big enough rig to live from for months at a time, and it served me well, going through two tough winters in Schenectady while I worked with GE Power Gen Systems. The summer between was my feeble (maybe STUPID) attempt to tow the Porsche & trailer up to the top of Watkins Glen Hill, on the way to Cincinnati for Parade. I learned then that a spinning engine fan behind a radiator does little good for a tranny cooler nine inches ahead of it at 4 mph up a hill. Puked all KINDS of ugly fluids. But it continued to run until it was REALLY out in the boonies before giving up the ghost.

Adding to the fact of a metropolitan downtown Parade poorly run, with the hottest weather in years, no A/C, three of us squeezed into the 911 with helmets & luggage, and you can see why we had little fun that year. A guy in the boonies did an excellent job of repairing it all, but how was he to know the torque converter was mis-manufactured? And the tranny mis-set? So it ran, but couldn't launch worth a damn. You really had to worry about soft grass. The following fall the exhaust manifold broke, destroying brake lines and causing an engine fire while the replacement headers which could have prevented the fire were sitting IN THE BACK ROOM. Dumb. That got fixed, again by people in the boonies while I went up to a fun weekend at St. Jovitte, site of next year's Parade, in the ever faithful Porsche life raft.

After returning to the Schenectady site, and suffering a few freezing problems, I decided to address the poor starting. I had always assumed it was inadequate starter torque, so I got a special unit made. Melted the starter cable insulation, it got so hot trying to crank. It wasn't until THIS year, purely by happenstance, that I noticed that when I cranked it I got a spark from the oil pressure line to the hydraulic brake check valve line I had to put in when the tranny blew last year in CT, destroying the tailstock brake system. Turns out there was never a ground strap to chassis. Cranks FINE now that I fixed THAT! I told you; it isn't that I WANTED to be a good diagnostician...

So, anyway, I decided to have a shop try to deal with the launch problem. And they did. Marvelously. After adding thermostatically controlled fans, with master switch backup, and adjusting it all for my desired 2200 rpm stall speed, it climbed that hill without a burp. For two years. Then puked last year on its way to Cape Cod through CT on practically flat roads. The CT shop's rebuild lasted about 400 miles, until I was returning from the Niagara Region event this past June. But I was lucky; I could limp it by manually shifting to drive it to the earlier shop which fixed the launch and converter problems. They rebuilt it and pronounced it "better than new", since the one-way clutch which failed both times was no longer merely pressed in, but was now bolted to the case. That

lasted exactly one way to Watkins Glen, when the same clutch had the same failure, albeit not turning the outer raceway in the case; merely grinding its innards to dust. Mind you; it NEVER overheated.

Along the way, as recounted above, last year I managed to forget a container of tuna salad, which burst leaving maggots to grow in the carpet, and a god-awful smell discovered by your humble editor when he attempted to sleep there at one event. After a herculean, but inadequate, cleaning job, I decided to replace all the carpets this spring. Not exactly fresh as a daisy, but definitely livable. I had also replaced the fresh water system, whose tank leaked more than we ever used, with a three-tank system a civil engineer like Rocket Ralph could appreciate. Hot showers all around, and instant winterizing with a couple of valves and some bottles of RV antifreeze. Added an outside/inside track arrangement to replace the useless original TV table so I had a real portable office with flexible layout or conference tables. Set up the electrics for any and every combination of external/internal power, with two completely isolated circuits so I could have air and power wherever I needed, added 4 batteries and an inverter so I could go a week without any need for generator even while I used my CPAP machine to deal with my sleep apnea. Added an external kitchen, like I first used and loved on my first popup camper. Keeps the interior grease free, and gives you a great cookout ability. And the feature which sold me this rig in the first place was the toilet. No joke. For all their size, more than 90% of the motorhomes on the market are simply not possible for a big man like me to use the toilet comfortably. It ain't the size of the bathroom, some of which are the size of a bedroom, it's the layout, squeezing a seat between a bulkhead and a cabinet. Stupid designs.

I loved old TrannyTrash. Still do. But reality is setting in. I need better transport reliability. So I found a '92 34 Ft Holiday Rambler Imperial, with the right bath and the owner has done most of the same stuff I did to mine, plus it's injected Ford 460 with OD and has the Banks Power system, and TrannyTrash is up for sale. But not before I make one last fix - to replace the original Chrysler 3 speed 727 with a GM Turbo 400 like I see in every one of those Stupid Useless Vehicles which tow their race cars to my mecca. Day after day. Maybe the next owner won't have quite so many problems as me. I hope the new owner gets even one tenth the pleasure old TrannyTrash gave me. I'll miss it.