

44th Storyworth: What Did You Most Look Forward To As A Child?

I was probably little different as a child from what I am today – and today I look forward to most things new. For the most part, that meant learning new things, because I have always been fascinated by the way things worked. Even to this day, I am far more likely to pick up a service manual and simply start leafing through it than to ever look at literature or prose, and especially fiction, although I am a bit of a history buff about the middle 20th century, and I am NOT unfamiliar with the variety of entertainment on TV and streaming.

I am often asked how I seem to know so much about things automotive, and especially Porsche related. Sad fact of life; I was never going to have a silver spoon in my mouth, so the ability to own the latest Porsche has never even been a pipe dream to me. But by studying I was able to learn an awful lot about what Porsche AG, and especially their developments at Weissach, their R&D Center, were working on. Yesterday would be an example of the impact of that. We had a CNY Porsche Club Fall Tour scheduled, planned for driving through the Catskill Mountains, from Whitney Point NY to Woodstock (yes, THAT one ;-). Weather predictions the week before had suggested it would be a washout, and as late as ten minutes before we were supposed to leave to drive through there in a half hour, they were predicting tornadoes to occur in Lafayette, which is about 1/3 the way between here and Whitney Point.

But surprisingly, despite seeing heavy rain clouds all around us, we had a glorious sunny drive over some super roads and never saw a single cop car until we actually reached Woodstock. Good thing, too. Let's just say that Dawn has never felt such lateral g forces in a Subaru before; we were the "sweeper" car for the second of two groups of cars totaling 19. One of those was just ahead of us the entire way; Chris and Kathy White of CNY, in their Audi S5 Cabriolet, whose roof they kept down the entire trip with the club. I daresay they closed it for the trip back because it rained so hard we could literally not see the end of the hood on our Forester, but since we were by then driving solo, we have no idea the route anyone else used; we took the Thruway for safety.

Anyway, the tie-in to my comment above was Chris' telling me he bought his S5 because it had a "True PDK", and then, upon my confirming how impressed I had been when I first encountered them, asked me if I knew what cars they were first used on. I told him I thought the 956 or 961, which were variations for the racing Group C Porsches from the '80s, which he confirmed after looking at me sorta surprised. I think he forgot that no less an expert than Chuck Gladle refused me a participation in our region's 30th anniversary "Tech Quiz", because he said I was a "professional". My name is actually on the permanent National trophy for Men's Tech Quiz at the 50th Porsche Parade held in Hershey PA in 2005. So it was neither a fluke nor was he wrong ;-)

But a person cannot have that capability without PORING over tech details and the history of Porsche and its entire product line, as well as it's substantial revenue generating consulting work for almost every automotive company on the planet, which was actually the way the company first started out, even before they made their first car actually called a Porsche, and which was project number 356. MY fave, the 911, was originally called the 901, except the French Peugeot company had a trademark on any car numbered with a zero in the middle, and the 900 series as chosen by Porsche at that time (1963) was the first number series not already in use by Volkswagen for parts inventory, as VW would world market Porsches. Now even YOU have some esoteric knowledge of how automobiles come to be called what they are, and what I meant by my comment above ;-)

But I was also a kid once, and so I recall looking forward to some holidays, such as the soon to be October fave, Halloween. Because that was when I got a bag full of sweet treats, back when the neighbors gave enough candy away to actually threaten one's health as the child of a diabetic ;-). I also looked forward to next month's Thanksgiving, for the huge "groaning board" dinner we always had, and both my Birthday and Christmas in December for the new presents we would receive. We were never wealthy, but well treated I assure you ;-)

I also enjoyed summer vacation, as well as the Christmas Holiday season, although that was never as much anticipated because we got so little time away from school. As a C- student, you can guess that “looking forward to school” was NEVER on MY A-list, and barely tolerated, except when we were going to actually learn about something which interested me, like machines and science. And although I subsequently found I have an affinity for math, it was never something I “anticipated” much. Even writing, which I HOPE you dear readers will admit is not something anathema to me, was never seen by me as much more than a chore while I was in school. And I NEVER looked forward to chores ;-)

Oddly, both summer and winter were looked for by me as a child during my formative period of my young teens, mostly because they were my “busy seasons” for business. I started my first moneymaking by mowing lawns using my parents’ lawnmower, which I effectively “rented” from them by doing the mowing at our own home. Same with rakes as used for leaves, although mostly that was aimed at our own joy at jumping into the leaf piles, and far less for money because they were really labor intense. Snow clearing as originally, with a shovel, was similarly not efficient, at least until my parents helped me buy a small walk behind plow, and subsequently snow blower. So I knew how to get work done right, and when I moved with Lynne to Liverpool, I knew I would need powerful tools, so bought a 16 HP lawn tractor with two-stage snow thrower attachment, because the snow would be wet and heavy and we were at the WORST spot on a cul-de-sac.

Having once made my money, and with my parents allowing me to pretty much decide where to spend that, I obviously anticipated my next purchases. They did change over time; from plastic model car and plane kits, to actual flying hardware like balsa wood and doped tissue wings for both wind-up and subsequently gas powered planes, to eventually girly magazines. I subsequently had a better collection than my Dad. Like I have often written; I have been pretty fortunate to have been born when I was. Imagine, if you will, what life would have been like, for example, for Steven Hawking, had he been born 25 years earlier. He would never have been even a footnote because the technologies which enabled his communication with the rest of the world simply did not exist then. And today, there is NOTHING to prevent a child half my developmental stage then from direct exposure to all kinds of explicit materials, which in my day was directly limited by them being behind the counter at the local “convenience” store, and which evolved WITH me over time.

One last “looked forward to” I want to mention was my driving privileges. And I know enough about both our Constitution and History to recognize the odd distinction that Guns and the Second Amendment have vs the “right” to be a driver, which is actually non-existent. By law, you are ALLOWED to drive, and only if you don’t threaten that by a host of unrelated “gotcha” crap which has nothing whatsoever to do with actual vehicular transport, but instead the leverage government has because we NEED transport unless we live in a major metro area with mass transit alternatives. Personal vehicular transport, which I interpret as the ability to be where I am not at this moment, is to me the epitome of what “Liberty” looks like, and so it has always been important from the moment I got my first example so I could practice clutch work in the driveway, and pray I could get it stopped before I reached the road, to my first real road worthy ’63 Chevy Bel Air Wagon which took me to Clarkson and my first few years as an engineer, after replacing its drive shaft which was all it needed when its original owner gave it to me thinking it needed a new transmission.

EVERY day I owned that car it proved the worth of that liberty, as have all my others, and I continue to look forward to every adventure they have allowed me, which are far too numerous to list here. So I suggest you review some of my past years’ writings from my website <http://www.holzerent.com/pdfpages.htm> and see what I’ve already had to say about them. I am sure you will look forward to YOUR next read ;-)

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