

The Coventry Cat



Official Newsletter of the Jaguar Association of New England

December 2019

More than just a Car Club ...



Photo by Russell Dennis

***Not Everything We Do Has To Do With Cars!
A JANE Member's Visit to Sicily,
Including Much Dining,
Is A Nice Warm-up For Our Holiday Season!***

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*An ad in The Coventry Cat
currently reaches over 350 households
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From the President Chuck Centore . . .



It's now December, and another year has passed beneath our wheels. As I look back, I can remember many things about this year. I will leave it to others to detail

them for you, but our year has been very good, and we have truly enjoyed our Jaguars and our time spent together.

I was the new President last December. After a year, I continue to look forward to the challenges of this position. We managed to have five business Board Meetings, resulting in some fine things for the club. We got our Events Calendar in shape, and organized some new tasks for our Board Members. While I tried to provide direction, it's really the Board Members who do the work, together, to insure the smooth running of our club. And our Board Members stepped up to professionally assume their roles and make things work.

So, I need to thank some people.

Especially I thank our VP of Events, Dean Saluti! We really had some great speakers and great subjects to explore. Our invitation to Wayne Carini, thanks to Jeff DeMarey and Rich Doucette, really packed the house and was certainly a speaker highlight for JANE in 2019. Many other members also stepped up either by actually speaking at one of our dinner meetings or helping to arrange for a speaker for us to enjoy.

We thank Dave Moulton, Bonnie Getz, Kevin Murphy, and Bob Gosende for their help in organizing the Hudson Valley Tour, and Dave Moulton, Kevin Murphy, and Bonnie Getz for organizing the Deerfield Valley Tour. These were two wonderful events and they deserve a big round of applause. A lot of fun!

And a big thank you to Dave Moulton again for being our Editor and putting

together another great year of the Coventry Cat, as well as to all of you who wrote the articles that kept us so entertained and informed.

Then there's the guy who takes care of making sure new members and old ones get their JANE name tags. That's Ray Binder. Thanks, Ray. Need a JANE name tag? Give Ray a call.

In addition, we need to thank Aldo Cipriano for completing the new Bylaws so the Board could approve them. Aldo also planned the JANE Myopia Polo Matches in July. He's our Chief Judge. He, with Sandy Cotterman, provided the Judges' Training this year and made teams available for both ours and JCSNE club's Concours.

Thanks, Bonnie Getz, for your work as our Secretary. I must also thank you for your tireless help in organizing events throughout the year.

Also, thank Gus Niewenhaus for his work over the past few years helping Aldo get the Bylaws sorted out as well. Thanks, Gus.

Now I want to thank a guy who originally could not think of a role he was enthused about taking on. But when we talked to him about taking over the management of the Advertising tasks for the Coventry Cat, he found what he was looking for and quickly pulled the entire process together. So, we are now getting our bills out and the money is coming in, all thanks to John Feng. Thanks, John. Great job!

Then there are two ladies who manage and maintain the Membership records for JANE and continue to bring our membership up to new highs each month: Marjorie Cahn and Jeanine Graf. Thanks ladies!

I also must mention John Brady, not to be confused with his brother Don and other brother Tom (both nice guys, you understand), because John spearheaded

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November 2019 Events

Dr. Dean Saluti, VP of Events



Looking Through My Rearview Mirror...

What would the Thanksgiving season be without the “real” Thanksgiving dinner that we are so lucky to enjoy each year at Longfellow’s Wayside Inn, which we like to think of as our JANE clubhouse. What makes our

Wayside Inn experience so special is that we are hosted every year by the actual Innkeeper, Steve Pickford. Of course, the meal is always one of our best memories, and we hold it near and dear to our hearts. Imagine: the turkey, the stuffing, all the fixings, the libations, enjoyed amongst our JANE family, some of our best friends! What a wonderful evening it is!

This year, Steve introduced us to Gary Christelis, President of the Wayside Inn Board of Trustees. Gary spoke and gave us a very different perspective on the Inn - its history and its future. Of course, we were reminded of the Henry Ford connection, but we also learned a little about what it takes to run this multi-building historically significant estate.

Coming Attractions

Our President, Chuck Centore, just held a brunch working session at his home to plan for 2020 JANE events. Patt, as usual, assembled a magnificent array of eating options – bagels and lox, pastries, and various other goodies. As we line up the next season, I think that you’ll find many events that you will not want to miss.

For example, our every-other-year weekend on Martha’s Vineyard, hosted by General Joe Carter, will be scheduled for 2020. By popular demand, we may also do a return trip to Deerfield, MA. First quarter monthly JANE dinner speakers/topics will include InControl on driving safety, Hagerty Insurance on new classic car policy features, and First Republic Bank on financing options for classic cars. Stay tuned for what is to come!

Check out the website and the Cat for the schedule of all upcoming events. And don’t miss our December gathering at the Vesper Country Club for our Holiday Party and Annual General Meeting (AGM). I look forward to seeing you there. I’ll be with “Jan and Dean” and I’ll be driving the X-Type “VDP” (they actually did make a few!).

President’s Message (Continued from page 3)

the efforts to make our Website better than ever. You see, John heads up our IT Committee and helps keep things in order. Thank you, John.

Then there’s our Treasurer, Don Holden, who keeps us honest, keeps track of our income and expenses throughout the year and keeps us posted on the financial things we need to know. Thanks, Don!

I would also like to mention another Board member who recently assumed a new role for JANE. Rich Kosinski is our new Manager of Charitable Giving. Believe it or not, the Board has developed programs for charitable giving to several organizations which we feel are deserving and which reflect the mandate of our Bylaws.

We really can’t forget Daniel and Jeanine Graf for their tireless work in planning, promoting and running our Concours for the past two years. And thanks for stepping up again for 2020. Great job Daniel and Jeanine.

We also need to thank Rich Hanley and Glen McLachlan for their work in planning and running the JCNA-sanctioned Slaloms for the past two years, as well as Paul Bicknell, who has remained involved and helpful (as well as fast!)

in the slaloms.

Finally, we need to recognize Diane Wells-Murphy and Kevin Murphy for their work in planning, organizing, and running our Holiday/AGM Party. It takes a lot of work and effort, and they have done a great job making sure this is a wonderful event for everyone. Thanks Diane and Kevin.

Our Coventry Cat is one of the best publications in all of JCNA. But without our advertisers we would not be able to put this wonderful publication together each month. I want to first thank them all and wish them the best for 2020. I would also like to reiterate a few words from our Editor, Dave Moulton, “Buy their stuff.” That’s what makes it all work.

I will mention another Board Member, Dave Reilly, who provides insight and support to the board by his presence and thoughtful support. Thanks, Dave.

Some sad news to report, as well - we lost a good friend of JANE this year. If we could all just take a moment of reflection for Ed Hall.

Thanks everyone, for making this a great year for JANE.

Membership Update

by Marjorie Cahn and Jeanine Graf, Co-VPs of Membership

Season's Greetings!

JANE membership renewal time is here! Ho, Ho, Ho!

You should look for your Constant Contact renewal announcement and sign up ASAP (to get the discount!) for another great year of JANE membership. Let us repeat what our President, Chuck Centore, reminds us, "We are more than just a car club."



Marjorie Cahn and Jeanine Graf

In addition to his "Ho, Ho, Ho" Santa duties each year, keeping children and adults in the Holiday spirit, Bill has been a photographer for JANE at the Concours and other events for many years. Bill and his wife Deb have been devoted JANE members, and you can find them and their beautiful, award-winning, red XJS at car gatherings throughout the year.

We first met Bill and Deb at a Columbus Day Parade in Boston,

where he drove his red TR6 and was wearing his Santa outfit. People were lining up to tug his beard to see if it was real – yes, it is!

The Richardsons have become regulars at many diverse car community events – not just parades – Bocce on the Beach and Belmont Day to name a couple. Most importantly, Bill and Deb are "ambassadors" for JANE. This wonderful couple always attends the British Invasion and the Bristol British Motorcar Festival with their gorgeous XJS. JANE is blessed to have Bill and Deb with us.

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Member Spotlight - Santa, aka Bill Richardson



As the Christmas season approaches, all of us should keep in mind just how lucky JANE is to have our own personal Santa Claus! Bill Richardson is multi-talented.

Lucas, Prince of Dim Humour)

(Laughibus Minimus Luminorum)

Joke for December

by Mort (not their real name)

Editor's note:

For those of you who do not know, Prince Lucas has brought the same dim standards of performance to humour that he has to electrical systems.

What was the President's name in 1975?

See the From The Top Of The Scratching Post for an answer.

HONKU

by Aaron Naparstek

You know traffic's bad
when you envy the *hombre*
selling oranges

And remember:
Honku if you love Jaguars

November Meeting Report

By Dave Moulton, with file photos



Longfellow's Wayside Inn

On November 20th, about forty of us gathered at Longfellow's Wayside Inn, and enjoyed the kindly and welcoming hospitality of Marvin Our Bartender, as well as a pleasantly roaring blaze in the tavern's hearth, before wafting off to our dining room on the second floor for our first Thanksgiving celebration of the season.

After a very nice turkey dinner, replete with cranberries, gravy and the all-important stuffing, we settled back in our chairs to hear Steve Pickford once again tell us stories of the Inn, first run by the Howe family for 150 years, then after a stint as the Red Horse Tavern (that did not take in guests), as Longfellow's Wayside Inn (as made famous by Longfellow's collection of poems *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, published in 1863). In 1923, Henry Ford bought the inn and surrounding acreage and buildings, and restored it as a museum of Americana, subsequently gifting it to an independent foundation, which operates it to this day as both a museum as well as a hotel and restaurant. Numerous JANE meetings have been held in the Ford Room, which was set aside as Henry Ford's personal bedroom whenever he visited.



The Grist Mill

Steve was accompanied in his presentation by Gary Christelis, who is now President of the newly renamed Wayside Inn Foundation. Gary described to us a fresh initiative by the Foundation to emphasize and develop the Foundation's mission, which extends far beyond the operation of the hotel and restaurant.

Projects include keeping up the 110 acre landscape and historic buildings, maintenance of the Longfellow Memorial Garden, trails and fields, developing and offering new educational and cultural programs, improving access to the Foundation's archives, and authoring new publications to educate the public about the remarkable 300-year history of the Inn and its beautiful surroundings.

For that work, the Foundation is soliciting gifts and public support to augment its hospitality earnings, which do not begin to cover the operating costs of the entire facility. Long-term associations with organizations such as JANE are a key part of that effort, and Gary expressed a strong wish that we strengthen our mutually beneficial relationship and possibly collaborate on future fund-raising events for the Foundation.

On that thought, we wrapped up the evening, and began looking forward to 2020.

Thanks, Steve and Gary!



Wayside Inn Foundation President, Gary Christelis, Dick DeVito, Chuck Centore and Innkeeper Steve Pickford.

RICORDO DI SICILIA “Record of Sicily”

By: Marguerite J. Dennis

Dedicated to Dott. Marco Geraci, a man of courtesy and elegance,
a tour guide who introduced Sicily to us with an eye on culture and history.
“*L’Italia senza Sicilia non lascia immagine nello spirito che e la chiama di tutto.*”
“To see Italy without Sicily is not to see Italy at all, for Sicily is the key to everything.”

– Wolfgang Goethe



The harbor at Lipari, near Messina

Every culture has a vocabulary of scent, texture, taste, sight and sound that speaks to the hearts of people. Words emerge from the culture, the history, topography and climate, formed by time and habit. And every person’s life is filled with memories, keepsakes, and traditions.

I am married to amazement – what I felt and experienced in Sicily convinced me that even at my age, my capacity for wonder remains intact. Every story has a beginning and by the end of the story you are no longer the same person. So, I’m not the same person at the end of my visit to Sicily as I was before.

“Travelling - it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller.”

– Ibn Battuta, Arab writer and traveler

Behind every writer are avid readers. What follows is our Sicilian story, a brief recall of seven days we spent there, sharing stories, eating fresh food, enjoying long lunches and exquisite dinners, and most of all discovering a part of Italy we didn’t know. We learned about the history, the architecture and most of all, the people of Sicily.

Now it is time for you to “*Vade mecum.*” (“Come with me.”)



A street market in Palermo

First Impressions

The first thing I noticed were the vibrant colors. Because Sicily is constantly kissed by the sun, the colors of the sky and the sea look different – especially the sea. Indigo, vermillion, and just plain blue vie for attention.



Ahhh! Cefalu . . .

But I confess, by lunchtime on most days in Sicily, the sun had worn out its welcome. I found the heat oppressive but realized that the harsh brilliance of the sun is what makes the colors in Sicily so vibrant, and the food and fruit in Sicily so delicious.

The rhythm of Sicilian life follows the hours for eating: 8 AM for breakfast, 1 PM for lunch and dinner at 8 in the evening. The fabric of Sicilian life includes children, and it is not surprising to see them, including infants, eating with their parents in restaurants as late as 9.

It is also not surprising to see old men, sitting on benches or chairs, talking endlessly about who knows what, practicing *dolci far niente*, the “sweetness of doing nothing.” And I noticed many Sicilian women who, in any culture or country, would be considered *la bella figura*, or fine appearance.



Dolci far niente

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RICORDO DI SICILIA “Record of Sicily” (Continued from page 7)

From 1 to 4 PM outside life stops for lunch and naps. But at 5, Sicilians take to the streets for a *passaggiata* (stroll) to shop, enjoy a pastry, meet friends, or just to be seen, wearing the latest fashion or walking an unusual dog.

The brightly painted donkey *carretti* (carts) are vehicles exploding with color, and harken back to the island’s medieval past. Several donkey carts are painted with intricate scenes from Norman romantic poems. The donkeys themselves look a lot less happy than the person playing the accordion or taking pictures with tourists.

Food is fresh, *very* fresh. Most of the seafood served for lunch or dinner was caught earlier in the day. Fruits and vegetables come from farm to table, maybe within hours, not days, of being picked.

Food is also good, *very* good. It is difficult to leave Sicily without nostalgia for the taste of Sicilian almonds, melons, *arancine di riso* (rice balls) and *pasta fatto a mano*, (pasta made by hand).

Sicilian life pulsates around family and food. And talking, talking, talking. I understood little of what I heard but with rare exceptions, conversations were lively and the participants seemed happy. “The surest sign of wisdom is constant cheerfulness,” wrote Montaigne. Perhaps he was thinking of Sicilians when he wrote that.

History of Sicily

Myth surrounds the history of Sicily. The island is a mosaic of cultures – its history has been one of invasion, and the many invaders left parts of their language, art, architecture and food for generations of people, as well as tourists like me, to admire and enjoy.

Strategically positioned between Europe and North Africa, Sicily was a prized possession of both Arab and Norman invaders, and for Europeans it was a bargaining chip in key negotiations. The first recorded inhabitants, the Phoenicians, date from 8,000 BC. Next came the Greeks in 750 BC, followed by the Romans from 218 BC to 468 AD. The Barbarians and the Arabs called Sicily home from 468-1060 as did the Normans from 1060 to 1194. In 1208 Sicily became the capital of the Holy Roman Empire. Spaniards could be found living in Sicily from 1282 to 1713, followed by the Hapsburgs and Bourbons. In 1713 Victor Amadeus of Savoy became king of Sicily. In 1720 Sicily became part of the empire of Charles VI of Austria and in 1734 it passed to Charles de Bourbon, son of the King of Spain.



Cloisters in the Royal Palace, Palermo

Unification took place in 1860 under the direction of Giuseppe Garibaldi. Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa’s only novel, *The Leopard*, captures, like no other book, the elusive history of western Sicily during the unification. It is the story of great change as seen through the eyes of a middle-aged Sicilian prince not unlike the author. It remains a must read for anyone interested in learning about the people and culture of the island. In 1946, a popular referendum, in which Italian women voted for the first time, established the Italian Republic. The monarchy was abolished and the titles of the nobility were no longer recognized by the state.



The Royal Palace in Palermo

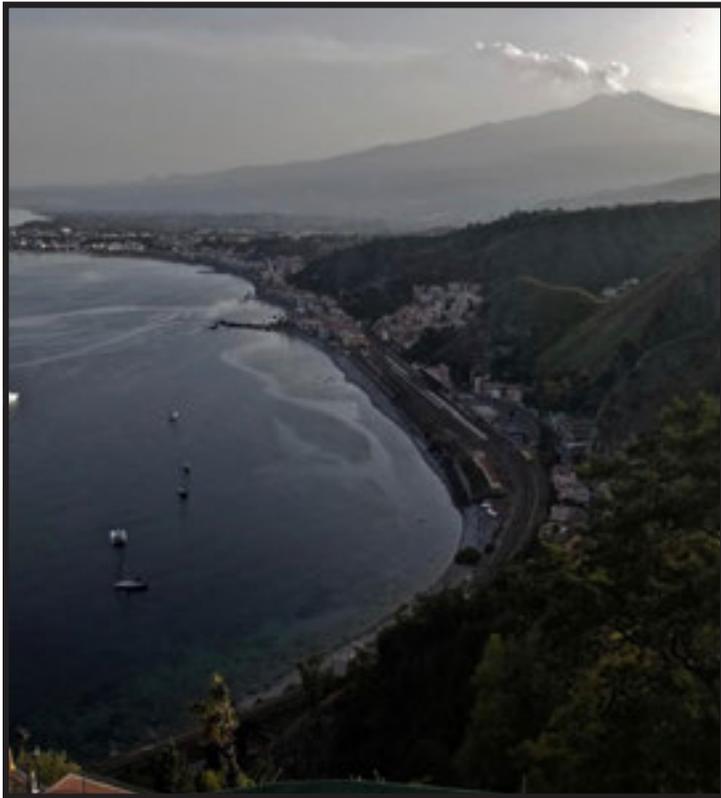
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RICORDO DI SICILIA “Record of Sicily” (Continued from page 8)

I was surprised to learn that the Sicilian language has only 250,000 words and is not a dialect but a unique blend of Latin, Greek, Arabic, Norman-French, Castilian and German. Except for Sicilian-Italian dictionaries and a few compilations of Sicilian poetry, Sicilian is not a written language, and it has no true future tense. Perhaps Sicilians have discovered the need for, and joy of, living fully in the present moment.

A word that has become, for several reasons, associated with Sicily is *mafiosa*. It is more than interesting to learn that in the original Palermo dialect, the word meant beautiful, bold and self-confident (sadly, that information never made it into the Godfather films).



Mt. Etna as seen from our Hotel Villa Diodoro, in Taormina

Approximately 83 percent of Sicily’s surface area is mountainous or hilly. Mount Etna, in the east, is the highest point on the island, at nearly 11,000 feet in height. It is Europe’s largest active volcano.

The bright Sicilian sun has played a large role in the island’s history. The average number of hours of sun per year in Sicily is 2,500 (almost 7 hours each day, on average!), contributing to the richness of the flora and fauna, the oranges, the olives, the wine, everything that looks good and tastes delicious in Sicily. Coastal regions enjoy citrus orchards, olive trees and vineyards. Mountain slopes sport lavender, rosemary, wild olives, oleander and carob trees.

Between 1880 and 1910, 1.1 million Sicilians left Sicily for the United States. Included in that number were my grandparents, Lorenzo and Margherita Curreri, as well as the ancestors of Phil Mannino, Al Pacino, Tony Bennett, Mario Puzo, Joe DiMaggio, Frank Sinatra, Robert De Niro, Sylvester Stallone and Martin Scorsese. Today, about 10,000 people leave the island each year seeking better employment opportunities in the United States, Canada and northern Italy. Despite this exodus, the population has remained steady at 5.3 million.

Our Sicily Tour

Here are some memories of the days, the dinners and the time we shared in Sicily. Forgive the parts I’ve left out and enjoy what I have included. I trust you will politely overlook any inaccuracies.

Palermo

Palermo is the capital and chief seaport of Sicily. Palermo’s history dates back 2,600 years, too rich a history to detail here. But do you remember the Piazza Praetoria and its 16th century Florentine fountain? Do you recall the Martorana church, a 12th century building, a showcase for Arab-Norman architecture? Do you remember being the only guests eating lunch at a long table in a restaurant where the pizza was homemade and the clams very, very fresh? And do you remember laughing a lot as we began to discover ourselves on this first day of our trip?

Monreale

Russ and I took a class in Florida, “The Art and Architecture of Sicily,” where our instructor encouraged us to visit Sicily to view the mosaics in Monreale. I took notes, never dreaming that two years later I would be standing in that small hill town, seeing these mosaics in person.

The Norman king, William II, built the Santa Maria La Nuova cathedral as a monument to his wealth and authority. The two great towers of the church are quintessentially Norman, as are the apses. But the decorations applied to the apses are clearly Arab in design. The magnificent bronze doors were designed in 1185 by Bonanno Pisano, the same architect responsible for the Leaning Tower of Pisa. No one can fail to be impressed by Monreale, ablaze as it is with over an acre and a half of mosaics.

Do you remember walking in the Benedictine cloister, feeling peaceful and quiet?

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And do you recall the golden-hued, Romanesque cathedral built by the Norman king, Roger II?

Cefalu

It took quite a while to arrive in the small fishing village of Cefalu, on the Tyrrhenian coast with its stunning natural setting and beautiful cathedral. After Taormina, Cefalu is the busiest of Sicily’s coastal resorts.

Segesta

Segesta lies 15 kilometers south of Castellamare del Golfo and the ruins of the ancient city are among the best in Sicily. Segesta traces its origin to the Early Iron Age, 1000-500 BC. An unfinished Doric temple dates back to the 5th century BC. The writer John Julius Norwich wrote: “Of the nine temples at Agrigento, the loveliest of all is the temple at Segesta, set in a fold of hills. Despite the fact that the temple is unfinished, the general impression is one of quiet perfection, as a late fifth century B.C. Doric monument should be.”

Erice

Perched at 2,463 feet, Erice stands on a triangular plateau defended by bastions and walls, a maze of cobbled lanes, some so narrow just one person can pass at a time. Erice brims with bright sunshine in the summer and enjoys stunning views across the plain and out to the sea. In winter, clouds muffle the city and it returns to its medieval roots, standing behind what appeared to me to be a wall of wood

and stone. The origins of the town are linked with Virgil’s narrative, *Aeneas*. One of the least known myths about Erice has Aeneas coming ashore at the foot of the mountain to perform the funeral for his father, Anchises.

Erice reminded me more of towns I have seen in Germany and Switzerland. It’s not easy walking around Erice, with its tortuous cobbled streets. But the sweets at Pasticceria Maria are undeniably Sicilian, indescribably delicious and worth the walk.



The view from Erice

Do you remember a long table in an upstairs room of a restaurant in the heart of Erice? Do you remember how delicious was the pasta, the bread, the everything? And do you remember crossing the “street” and sipping coffee and eating sweets at the Pasticceria Maria? How can we forget?

Agrigento

Although Agrigento is best known as an archaeological site, the city center is also famous for its impressive buildings and monuments. The city is surrounded by almond trees that bloom in January and February.

Would you agree that our visit to the Planeta Vineyards was one of our best stops on the tour? Do you remember the enthusiasm of our tour guide, Deborah, who walked us through the wine-making process, treated us to wine and olive oil samplings and then offered us a “snack” of Sicilian delicacies both savory and sweet; all local, all delicious. What we learned from Deborah is that 40% of the wine produced in Italy comes from the Trapani area and Italy ranks third in olive oil production, after Spain and Greece. The other night I drank a glass of Maroccoli 2015 I had purchased from the vineyard. It brought back memories of that day so vivid I thought, for a moment, I was sharing that wine with all of you!

Taormina

This day announced itself with us in Taormina, at the Villa Diodoro for three days of breathtaking views. We had time to explore Taormina, so Russ and I walked and walked up

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RICORDO DI SICILIA “Record of Sicily” (Continued from page 10)

and down tiny, twisting streets filled with all good Sicilian things to eat and buy. I still have the lemon and orange soaps I bought in an outdoor market. My grandson will wear, on his first birthday, the outfit we bought in one of the local shops.

Do you remember the Baronessa restaurant and our five course, rooftop dinner? Do you remember thinking you will never eat again, only to begin eating again with gusto the next day? And do you remember the views from our balconies overlooking the water? That memory is a keeper.

Milazzo-Aeolian Islands Milazzo-Taromina



Arriving in Lipari

Two boat trips; two islands. The first setting is Lipari, the queen of the Aeolian islands. Do you remember the Filipino restaurant? Do you remember the pasta, the *dentic* (snapper), the bread that was served at lunch? I haven't tasted food like this since my grandmother cooked. I could have stayed much longer at Antonio and Lucio Bernardi's restaurant but the next stop called. And that next stop was Vulcano, famous for the mud baths in the hot springs and for its beautiful beaches. Lots of gelato to eat here. Some shopping. Even with the heat!!!

The Godfather Tour

And who wouldn't enjoy a trip to the villages of Savoca and Forza D'Argo, the towns where Francis Ford Coppola chose to film the Godfather movies. Who wouldn't enjoy granita tasting at the Bar Vitelli in Savoca? You could almost feel the spirit of Marlon Brando and the face of a very young Al Pacino walking out of the Church of Santa Lucia in the movie's wedding scene.



The Bar Vitelli. “Hey, anyone seen Marlon? Or Al?”

Final Thoughts

“No day shall erase you from the memory of time.”
– Virgil

You know you have experienced something special, when after weeks have passed you are still engaged with the people and experiences you had in Sicily. The sights, the smells, the sounds, the laughter, and yes the incredible Sicilian food we enjoyed for seven days will remain with me forever.

Now it is time for me to stop writing and begin baking Denise's sesame and fig cookies!

Grazie!

NOTICE

It's time to renew your memberships in JANE.

Go to the website and log in as a member, then select “Members Only Functions” and choose to renew your membership. Renew before January and save \$5. It's the easiest \$5 you'll ever save!

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A Member Wonders: What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

By: Tony Fontaine, photos by Tony and Google Maps Street View

At my age, I should know better. Here I was, intending to fly cross country, hand over a wad of Benjamins to someone I'd met online only two weeks earlier, hop into an unfamiliar 29-year-old XJ6, and drive it 1800 miles home to Maine. What could possibly go wrong?

And that is how I came to meet Earl Gibbs at North Coast Exotics, a rather interesting repair shop at the end of an alley on the less than perfect side of town. Which town? We'll get to that.

For 20 years or so, we have been driving older BMWs as daily drivers. The trick has always been to find well cared for, lower mileage models, then maintain them utilizing the widespread knowledge found on the web. Club support is fantastic and many clubs offer assistance when asked. But age has taken its toll on our 528i wagon, with rust appearing where it shouldn't and numerous components exceeding their typical life expectancy.

So, it was time to move on. And if we could do it with a BMW, why not find a used XJ to serve the same purpose? Why, indeed?

So the search began for a used XJ6 or 8. I'm partial to the X308 series with its gorgeous exterior styling and comfortable interior. Alas, there is the dreaded issue of timing chain guides needing replacement. Every time I found one with reasonably low mileage, it was either prohibitively priced and/or it had no maintenance records.

And then it appeared in an online ad: a 1990 XJ6 (XJ40) with 34,000 miles!

It looked stunning! It had been part of a collection, then purchased two

years ago by the current seller who had put lots into it to bring it back to roadworthy condition. Numerous conversations with the seller left me with the impression he was being meticulous with its care and forthright about its condition. And, as I said earlier, what could possibly go wrong?

Standing curbside at the arrivals gate at Minneapolis-Saint Paul International, I grew giddy as I saw it approach. It looked as good or better than described, the closer it got. A short while later, the seller and I went over the car in detail followed by my handing over the aforementioned fistful of cash. Now, only 1800 miles separated me from home.



Our "new" car! Nice!

My wife being in Michigan at the time, attending to a family matter, we had made plans for me to swing through Michigan's Upper Peninsula, cross the Straits of Mackinac over the Mighty Mac bridge, then pick her up in central Michigan. This trip went extremely well, and without incident. Just as it should.

Upon picking my wife up, we headed off into the sunset with plans (were they possibly unrealistic hopes?) to make it to Buffalo, NY for the night. But, did the car sense my wife's reservations about me buying another old car? It took but a few hours with my wife aboard before things started going sour. Apparently, the old girl (the car, not my wife!)

started having second thoughts about this journey. Or maybe they both felt the same way? Who knows? Anyway, that is when the "adventure" part of the trip began.

It was about 60 miles west of Cleveland that we encountered a "hiccup." Make that an outright automotive failure. Dead in our tracks. While exiting the highway and pulling away from the intersection, the car sputtered and died. I caught a brief glimpse of a transmission failure warning light and that was it. Transmission? Made no sense. After the initial shock wore off, we found a nearby towing company and made the call. While waiting for the tow truck, trying the ignition one more time proved fruitful with the car firing up and running smoothly. Huh? When the tow truck arrived, we followed it to their shop but a quick look under the hood provided no useful information. Time to carry on.

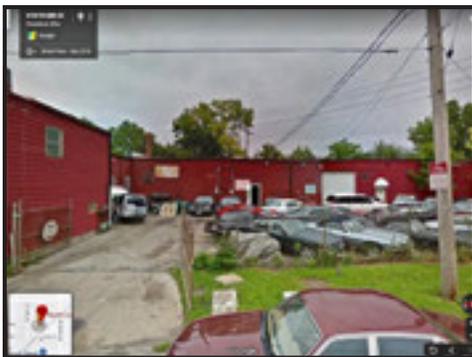
The remaining 60 miles into Cleveland proved stressful indeed, with the car continuing to die on occasion, the distance between each such stoppage growing shorter every time. We hoped that at least by being in Cleveland we would be able to find someone to assist us the following day (Monday). Little did we realize that as there were not one, but two professional sporting events happening in the city that weekend (baseball AND football), there was no lodging available. After much searching, a room was found. 10 miles away. Requiring over an hour to reach. Because the car was now dying every 2 miles!

So what does any rational person do at a time like this, being hungry, tired (it was past our bedtime!), and

(Continued on page 14)

thirsty? Why, go across the street to a sports bar and serially consume adult beverages, of course. And, after briefly describing our woes to our server, a young man sitting at the next table leaned over and said “Did you say your Jaguar has broken down? I work at Westside Jaguar and, although we’re not likely to be able to help, I know who can.” And so we came to meet Earl Gibbs.

Earl Gibbs is the owner of a shop called North Coast Exotics, on the southwest side of Cleveland. This is not a location you would normally visit. In fact, it was downright alarming as the tow truck operator slowly maneuvered through a maze of back city streets, in neighborhoods that were decidedly less than prime real estate. Finally, at the far end of a narrow residential alley, there appeared a (figurative) bright light: a large industrial-looking facility out front of which were parked somewhere near a hundred cars, the vast majority of them Jaguars. But upon closer inspection and scattered throughout, there were also Maseratis, Ferraris, Lamborghinis, Bentleys, and the odd Lotus! Ahhh . . . we were obviously at the right location.



Earl Gibbs’ North Coast Exotics, thanks to Google Maps Street View

In times of need, one sometimes

meets remarkable people. Earl is one of those remarkable people. Very remarkable, actually. You sense right away that not only will this man go out of his way to help, he also has the knowledge to readily do so.

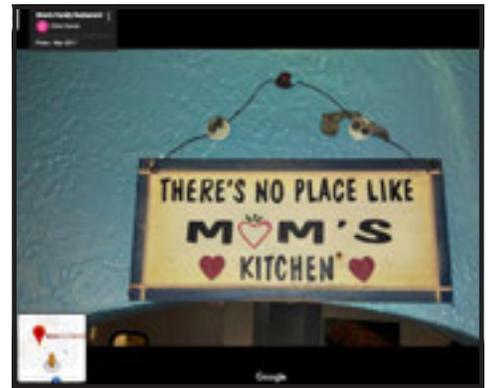
Earl is also a very concise and focused individual. When he asks you a question, you must reply in an objective and thorough manner. Get off track and he quickly redirects you. He wastes no time with frivolous conversation. In between multiple phone calls (including one from Australia where he was being asked how to address an issue regarding someone’s Ferrari – and just what time was it in Australia, I wondered???), constant questions from employees and the odd customer, he asked for the details of our car’s failure.



The shop floor of North Coast Exotics. Interesting.

Without saying a word, the car was pulled into an open doorway and Earl returned momentarily with an analysis of the car’s fault. It was 90% likely to be the fuel pump, 8% the ignition sensor, and 2% the ignition pickup. And of course, he had a brand new fuel pump on the shelf for a 29-year-old Jaguar.

“Go to Mom’s Restaurant around the corner, get something to eat, and come back in an hour,” Earl said.



Mom’s Family Restaurant, thanks to Google Maps Street View

One hour later, full of Mom’s best efforts, we returned to find Earl crawling out from beneath the car (no hoist, just jack stands) where, while lying under the car, he had fielded more calls on his cell phone, all while replacing our fuel pump. He handed us an invoice and an ignition sensor, stating that he wouldn’t accept money for the sensor but wanted us to have it in the unlikely case it was the problem. Just covering that 8% possibility, he said. And just like that, we were back on the road.



Our “new” car, ready to hit the road again

The remainder of the trip wasn’t without issue, but we felt immense relief that the car was again running smoothly. Except it wasn’t. The next day a vibration gradually developed in the driveline, and though we

(Continued on page 15)

A Member Wonders (Continued from page 14)

were able to keep it at bay by not driving faster than 60 mph, it was nevertheless disconcerting.

And then the phone rang. Someone calling from Cleveland. Earl was sufficiently concerned about our well-being that he was actually calling to check in on us. We gratefully

explained that the fuel pump solved one problem, but another had arisen. Another objective explanation of the issue was followed by his analysis. Hearing him tell us the driveshaft guibo was likely failing but would also likely carry us the rest of the way home was music to our ears. And so it did.

Earl doesn't know it yet, but he is now a permanent addition to our Christmas card list. And along with the ignition sensor which we are mailing back to him, there will also be a large box of goodies from Maine for him and his employees. We feel very fortunate to have met a person as remarkable as Earl Gibbs.



1956 XK-140- around 62,000 miles, black with beige int., four wheel power disc brakes and power steering, alternator, five speed, chrome wire wheels, This car has a MC Series head and up rated.

For more information, please call John Hall at 774-551-6837.



1994 XJS, 150,000 miles, maroon with beige int., six cylinder with unusual factory 5 speed standard trans, sport suspension, rear seat delete kit (I think the seat is in there), very good physical and running condition??

Asking \$15K.

For more information, please call John Hall at 774-551-6837.



1968 E-Type - 30,000 miles, red with black int., Triple SUs, standard trans, everything new or rebuilt, solid #2 car. (engine not highly detailed). Includes Heritage certificate. Asking \$80K. Negotiable.

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For details, call or email Kris Alaerts at 617-347-8075 or kris.alaerts@outlook.com.



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From the Top Of The Scratching Post

by Dave Moulton



The editor, trying unsuccessfully to appear as if he were thinking a profound thought!

It's the end of another year and this is, quite improbably, the 25th consecutive Coventry Cat I've edited. Yikes! You all are remarkably patient and polite about this, for which I really and truly thank you.

Chuck Centore recently called a small group of us together to begin our planning

for next season. A bunch of interesting ideas were put forth, and, along about the second round of drinks, we had more than twenty possible events on our list, some which may seem vaguely familiar, while some may seem new, different and possibly even original!

Obviously, these will get pared down and then, beginning in early April with our Annual Tour du Sirop d'Erable de le Grange Parquer (aka Parker's Maple Syrup Barn Run), we'll be heading off into another season of touring, slaloming, concouring and, without a doubt, partying hard.

I suspect (and remember, you heard it here first) that we may see something of the Cape this year, and possibly an island or two, as well as a goodwill tour into the depths of New Hampshire to visit our long-standing friends

at David's House. I'm lobbying for further and more elaborate explorations of the Deerfield Valley, several tech sessions have been proposed, and a couple of VERY interesting new ideas are in gestation. Gratifyingly, a couple of charitable fund-raisers have been suggested. Several museums have also been mentioned, as well as lobsters and polo, another interesting combination (think of it: lobster polo! Could be a lot of fun!).

In the meantime, it's time to tuck into the holiday season and enjoy it to the hilt. New England offers a lot in the winter and, even though we've put away SOME of our cars, that's no reason not to enjoy this coming season as well as some of our OTHER cars ("Fire up the Landy, Caruthers, and get the fishing gear, bourbon and augur! We're off to Rangely for some jolly good ice-fishing, eh what?"). We could also curl up by a nice fireplace with an exceedingly mature beverage and the latest car book we've acquired by hook, crook or even pan-handling, and occasionally glance out into the cold darkening twilight gloom at the descending crystals of ice, slush and occasional bits of cold water that we fondly like to think of as falling snow. What's not to like?

So then. A Merry/Happy Christmas/Whatever to all of you, and thanks, as always, for reading all this stuff. Ho ho ho/Ha ha ha/Heh heh heh! And don't forget your duckboots!

Oh, right, about Prine Lucas! He says, "Same as it is now, Donald Trump."

Bannister the Barrister on Cars, Places, and the Law

by Barry Bannister, Barrister (say it ten times, quick!)

Barry Bannister, our kindly, if expensive, Barrister, gently explains to us the law as it exists in various places to which JANE members and their automobiles may or may not travel. Why? Well, just in case . . .

In Florida, by law, you must feed the parking meter if you tie an elephant, goat or alligator to it. Barry does note, however, that if you tie the goat **and** the alligator

to the meter at the same time, you may return to find the goat missing.

Thanks, Barry, and we won't ask you to explain further. Anyway, now we know. As always, we look forward to next month and more interesting laws we need to abide by in various interesting places.

Adapted from the website AutoWise: Crazy Traffic Laws From the U.S. and Around the World by [Nikola Potrebic](#) Updated on June 1, 2019.

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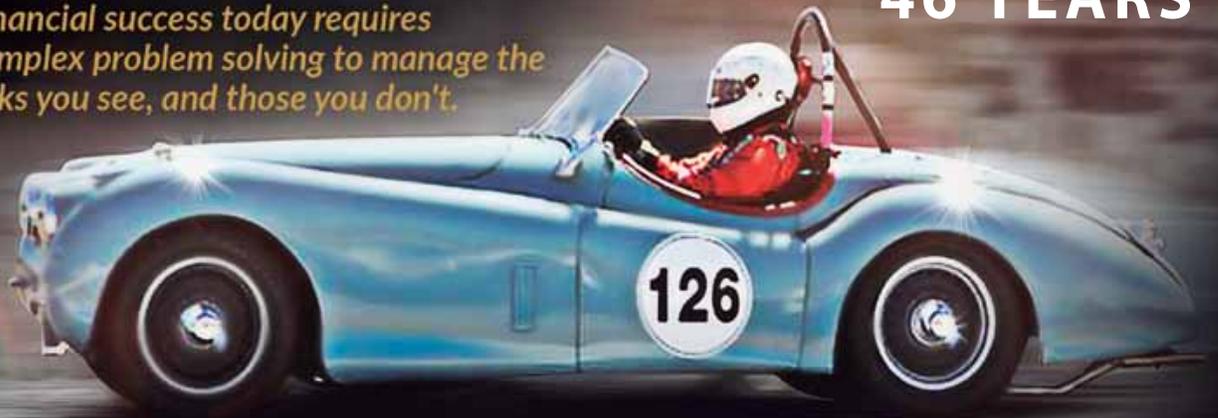
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