

Commentary...

Two Rabbits and The Hop

By David Tremblay
Columnist

What are the odds?
In March 1982, my brother, Rick, and I went to a VW dealer on Burnside in Portland, Oregon.

I bought a used, beige, two-door VW Rabbit.

This Rabbit was used in the car dealer's rental fleet, along with another "sister," beige VW Rabbit — parked in the adjacent parking space at the dealership. Back then, dealers could transfer their plates to buyers. I chose that. The transferred plate was CUT 773.

In July, I put an ad in the *Portland Oregonian*, looking for someone to drive the car to New Hampshire. While the car was heading east, I would be leading a month-long bike trip through Switzerland, Italy, and Yugoslavia.

Soon afterward, the phone started ringing at my Rhododendron cabin. People seemed to like the idea that some fool was giving up his car for a month — FREE. With the first call, I chatted with this nice guy. Immediately, "the deal" was consummated.

He was selling organic products and needed a car to make his rounds across the United States. Roughly, he would go down to California, Texas, Virginia, and up to Vermont. Once he arrived in New England, around Labor Day, we would arrange the Rabbit exchange.

Of course, in hindsight, my plan was SUPER STUPID! What could possibly go wrong with this, eh?

A week later, I took a plane to Europe. Rick met this man in Gresham, giving him the keys to the Rabbit and giving him the once-over.

"See ya's!" were politely exchanged.

Again, I never met him, no background/reference checks — just putting blind faith in this total stranger!

The month passed quickly on this great, memorable European bike trip. Returning on Labor Day, the flight arrived in New York City.

Driving back home to New Hampshire, a postponed, huge thought arose: "I wonder where my car is? I sure hope this guy was as honest as I thought he was!"

Pulling into our family's driveway, Dad walked up to my car and cut to the car chase; that is, the VW car chase.

"So, what's the deal with your Rabbit? Have you heard from this Oregon guy?"

"Uh. Not yet. He is supposed to call in a couple of days. When he is in Vermont or New Hampshire."

"Rick talk with him?"

"I don't think so. I haven't talked to Rick for over a month since I was in Europe."

"I sure hope that guy returns your car," Dad logically and painfully said. "You better hope so even more!"

A couple of days later, the guy called. What a huge relief! "Hey. I'm in Southern Vermont. Where do we meet?"

WHEW!

On Rendezvous Day, Dad and I jump in his car. We drive south to the "exchange point."

During our quiet, 30-minute trip, the wheels in my head are turning, "What if this guy doesn't show up?"

We get there. NO GUY!

With Dad, we were always early. "Breathe. It will be okay," I thought, only half-believing in this calming technique.

Being vindicated in believing in people — or lucky enough to find a trustworthy person who can drive and tell time — THE GUY and his return-trip buddy appeared about five minutes later.

He wants to chat a bit. In my mind, that is not happening. I want this saga of my own making to end!

"So glad that everything worked out. How'd it run? Great. If you give me the keys, you can be on your way. Thanks for doing this. Take care. Stay safe."

Run, Rabbit, run. The car's fine! I am certainly better now, hunkered down in the vinyl driver's seat.

A couple of days later, I go to Dartmouth College in Hanover to run an errand.

I park outside the Hopkins Center (The Hop). Only a couple of parking spaces are there. Coming back after he errand, what do I see?

TWO Oregon-tagged, beige VW Rabbits. One mine — with Oregon tag of CUT 773. The adjacent, beige Rabbit with the Oregon tag of CUT 772!

Each car — sold at the same Portland, Oregon dealership, driven at least 3,270 miles across the country; at the same location, day, time — parked at The Hop. What are the odds? A gazillion to one?

Logically, the owner of the other car was a Dartmouth student from Oregon.

Some people have asked, "Did you leave a note on the other Rabbit's windshield?" There was a fleeting moment when I thought of doing that. My brain probably said, "Don't mess things up. Leave well enough alone!"

Sometimes I think, "I wonder what tales its 'sister' has to tell."



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

The Sisters Folk Festival is headquartered at Sisters Art Works.

CAMPAIGN: Organization is in final push of funding effort

Continued from page 3

- Strings in Sisters monthly jam sessions.
- The Journeys High Desert Moods Textile Arts Show is running through November 20 in the downstairs gallery.
- SFF will host a Sisters Middle School art exhibition, kicking off with a reception during the 4th Friday Art Stroll on November 22 from 4 to 7 p.m.
- Kathy Deggendorfer and Furry Friends Foundation will host a holiday open house on December 7 with an art sale and pet photos with Santa.

Executive Director Crista Munro notes, "This is just the beginning of our vision for what the Sisters Art Works building can become. In the coming months we plan to offer art and music workshops and classes, lectures

and performances for all age groups. As we continue to grow our programming to better serve the region, it is our hope that we will be seen as one of THE creative centers of the Sisters community."

The organization is hopeful the community will join the individuals and foundations who have already made contributions to the campaign.

As Development Director Steven Remington notes, "It is our hope that we can collect the final \$60,000 from as many community members as possible — we want everyone's name on our building plaque... whether you can give \$10 dollars or \$10,000 dollars, if you believe in us, we want the world to know!"

More information on the campaign, current donors and making a donation can be found at <https://sistersfolkfestival.org/capital-campaign-2/>. For other information contact info@sistersfolkfestival.org or call 541-549-4979.

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