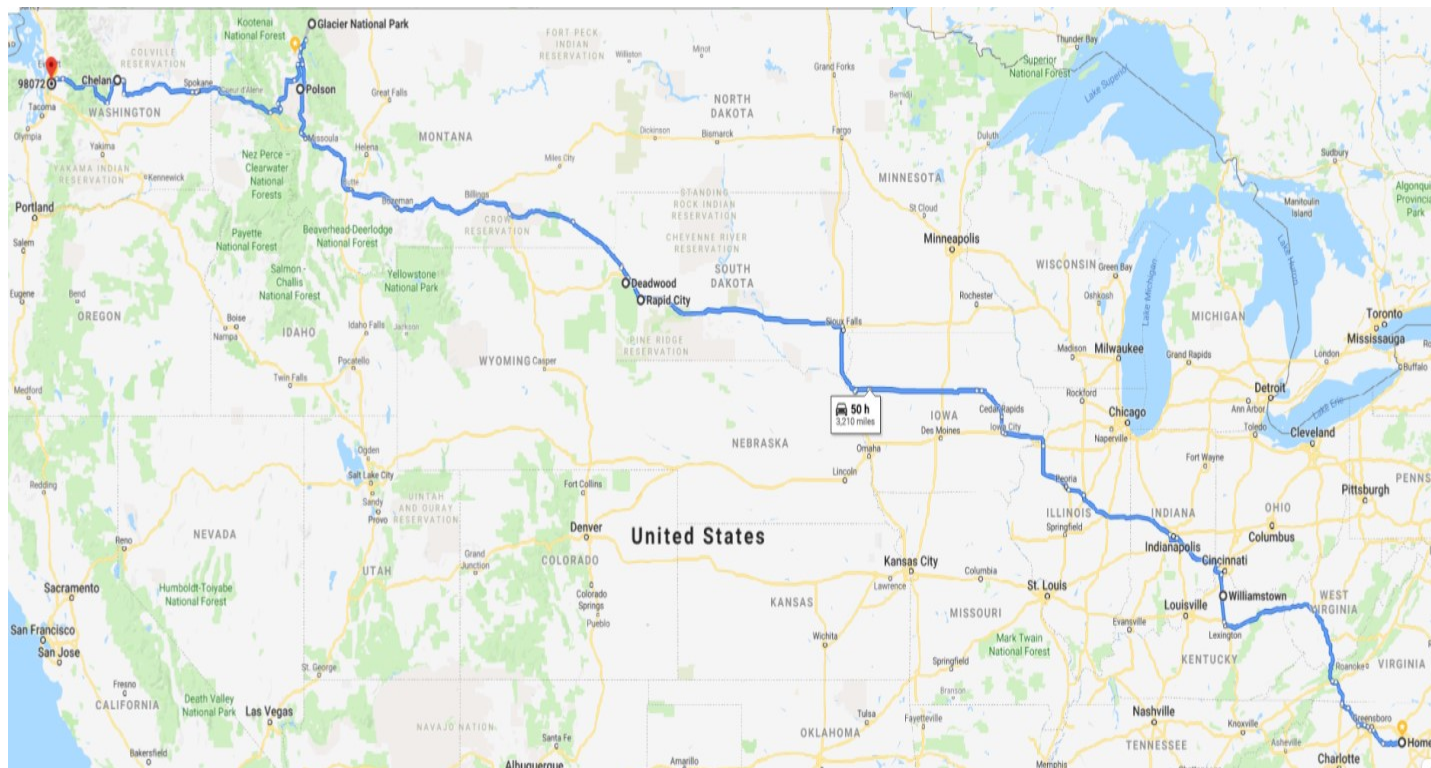


## TEST DRIVE: 2008 XC70

My daughter's polar white Volvo XC70 arrived in late February via a transporter (\$1100) from Seattle to my home in Cary for repair. The local Volvo shop's repair estimate was \$12K to replace the failed differential and companion components. I completed the rebuild (\$2000), using parts secured from Erie Vo-Vo salvage and recycling in Whitesboro NY. The rebuild was described in earlier articles. The net result is that a good vehicle was saved from the scrap yard and returned to service.

I began the rebuild in March and completed the project in April. Weather was a factor because I work outside, I'd wait for the air temperature to creep to 50 degrees before working on the car as my 76 year old bones and joints do not tolerate cold weather well.

May was spent driving the XC70 about and working out the inevitable kinks that are associated with such an endeavor. In early June, I loaded the XC70 and began the "test drive" to the Northwest which became a 3800 mile on/off road ride. The route driven is shown below.



The first stop was the Ark Discovery exhibit in Williamstown, KY., 30 miles south of Cincinnati, where I toured an all-wood life size replica of Noah's Ark. Experiencing the Ark replica, built at a 1:1 scale, was overwhelming. The fact that one person with vision accomplished this feat is a phenomenal achievement.



Next, a stop at the Badlands National Park (and No, I did not visit Wall Drug).





Followed by an overnight stop in Rapid City, SD....



Then, Deadwood, SD where federal marshal Bill Hickok was cowardly gunned down, his back to the saloon's front door, whilst playing poker holding 1 pair of black aces and 1 pair of black eights (2 pair) and a hole card; aces and eights, a dead man's hand.





And Devils Tower National Monument. The trail around the monolith is about a mile and was filled with interesting people. Although, I looked, I did not spot any aliens or UFOs; but, I did see 5 climbers in the process of descending from the top. They'd scaled the tower earlier in the day during cooler moments.



(I do cut a svelte dashing figure, a real chick magnet.)

I was having so much fun, it did not occur to worry about the XC70; it just purred and loved those 80 mph western speed limits where 100 mph is easily achieved on desolate federal highways. Regardless of speed, the 6 cylinder 3.2 XC70 averaged 25mpg, sometimes more. The AWD was useful on the back roads and dirt tracks where you'd never take a low clearance 2WD vehicle.



The XC70 headed north to Polson, MT and Flathead Lake where the fishing is spectacular.



Finally Glacier National Park (Montana), the northern most stop. Unfortunately, the Road to the Sun (Logan Pass) was covered with snow; the trek to East Glacier will wait until another time.



Departing Polson the following morning, the XC70 traced US Highway 2 west through Spokane into Washington passing through Coulee City, Orondo, Leavenworth, Skyhomish, Goldbar and Monroe before turning south to Woodinville and the farm.



That evening, I backed the car on ramps and crawled underneath to inspect all fasteners. Two missing bolts on the left rear brake caliper were replaced (stopped that rattle). I observed traces of grease on undercarriage above the driveshaft/haldex CV joint and the left rear inner

axle boot. Tightening the fasteners attaching CV to the haldex solved the leaky lube problem. A grease zerk fitted to hypodermic needle let me pumped grease into the axle's inner CV boot where a pinpoint opening had allowed lube to escape. I sealed the pinhole with silicone. While at "it", I changed the oil and filter on the XC70 and did the same for the S70 my granddaughter drives.

It was an enjoyable 8 day trip, the XC70 ran extremely well and the trip cost was \$1200 for fuel and accommodations. The decision to drive was easy, because car haulers quoted prices of \$1700+ to transport the XC70 to Woodinville. If I had to spend \$1700, why not drive and enjoy the trip, because what else would I do in a very hot, hot, hot North Carolina summer.

Entry to the National Parks was free upon presentation of my Golden Age Passport, a lifetime admission permit to all national parks for the driver and passengers. The Parks Service ceased its issue January 1, 2007 and replaced it with a Senior Pass. If over 62, purchase a pass and carry it in your wallet because you never know when you might be in a National Park. The cost is reasonable, the savings are tremendous.

I made a deliberate effort to stay off the interstate highways after crossing the Mississippi River. The old federal highways are excellent and largely unused. The vistas are incredible and the little towns a joy to visit plus you dine with locals.

To avoid tire problems, I inflated all tires to 40 psi because hard tires run cooler. Blowouts are most often caused by underinflated tires whose diminished air supply becomes superheated due to tire flexing. The superheated air causes the internal air pressure to exceed the pressure limit of the tire; hence a blowout. Yeah, the ride can be a bit harsh, but if you're driving the highway/interstate during the summer, you may not care to experience the agony of tire failure on a hot day; and hard tires are less prone to hydroplane because they squeegee water into the tire grooves more efficiently.

Bob lives in Cary, NC and is co-chairman of the Blue Ridge Chapter of VCOA. Contact him at [rfsepe@gmail.com](mailto:rfsepe@gmail.com). He'll respond pleasantly to questions about your Volvo.