

Exotics at Redmond Town Center Blog Archive 2020

December 24, 2020

I'm a bit behind...

... on the blog. I was too busy fattening up for Christmas. There is nothing else to do but eat. Friends can't come over, so I'm eating all the stuff I'd normally give to them. I've eaten my weight in pie.

It's been kind of a quiet time because of the weather combined with holiday stuff. As soon as it's over, we'll get back to competing the photo year book, and picking up some of the other projects we need to get done. There is a lot to do.

I did a drive along 101 on the east side of the Olympics. On purpose. I've not covered that stretch between Shelton and Pt. Townsend in well over a decade. I often read about the numerous car accidents along that route. It's a surprisingly curvy road. Sort of like my old girlfriend.

Give a blue-hair a curvy road, some alcohol and big giant trees that don't move and there is bound to be some news. It is a unique stretch. There were a lot of extremely slow drivers that day. They were scooting along at ten under or more. I've not seen that many tiny beat-up pickups since I was in college. Most I saw were from that decade. Why are they the preferred transportation of super-grumpy old men? Nothing screams old man like a tiny pickup. It doesn't look like anyone makes them anymore. There are still plenty of old men to go around, but I guess there isn't a market. Now old men drive tiny vans.

What I noticed most along that stretch was that most of the businesses in route have seen much better days. Obviously there was once a time when it was booming. I find it hard to believe that many people had a shitty idea to build a business that had no customers, so the business must have been there once. I don't know if it was the logging days, or the Boldt Decision of 74 that caused it all to collapse. Most of the buildings look pre 74. Most look like they were built in the 60s, and died in the 70s.

What is it with letting moss grow on everything?

What I especially don't understand is why a business that's running would let moss grow all over their sign. Nothing screams "I don't give a shit" more. I'd have stopped, but to me that's yelling you're out of business or damn near it. Maybe it gets them sympathy, sort of like, if you don't

stop and buy something, I don't get to eat. It's just odd. That stretch has a whole hillbilly kind of feel to it anyway.

It was nice to get out and drive a new stretch. We will still pull together some drives after the holidays. No, not organized drives. Just a route, a day, and a time we're sort of thinking about heading out and some places to meet. Meanwhile, we wish you all a great holiday from all of us at E@RTC. It's been a super-shitty year for everyone, we know. Let's hope 2021 is a lot better. Cheers!

November 27, 2020

Happy Thanksgiving!

I know the rules are that people were not allowed to get together. It's not a law, just a proclamation.

I wonder what this all meant for turkey sales. I imagine all the big birds were unsold in stores, with everyone fighting over little ones. I hear chicken was gone in stores. If the crows are missing from the neighborhood, I'll know a lot of people were eating alone.

You could still buy pie. Nobody cares if they are eating alone if they have pie. Nobody minds eating an entire pie in one sitting. Some of you are at home on the floor with both feet wrapped around one right now while binge watching The Mandalorian in your underwear. We know who you are.

By now you probably read that Stephan Winkleman has returned as CEO of Lamborghini and will also be running Bugatti. He's been a good friend of E@RTC from our first season and always made sure we had cool stuff. He's attended E@RTC and did a talk for us up at Salish Lodge. Someday, we hope to have him back.

Automotive is in the middle of its biggest evolution in probably a hundred years. Think of all the propulsion options we have today. It's not been like this since steam was a consideration. Or something that poops. I guess that's still an option in some parts. We will see more alternative propulsion exotics at E@RTC than ever before.

I know this blog is supposed to be about all things E@RTC, but there are times like this when I just don't have much to say about what's happening. We always have a lot to do in preparation for our next season. It's just the boring part right now. We still encourage you to at least get out and drive somewhere. There are a lot of great audio books. You may as well learn something as you discover the wet parts of Washington.

We're long overdue for a big snow storm in the Seattle area. I think this could be the year. The weather has been just weird enough to have me placing that bet. There is nothing I love more than the Pacific Northwest's involuntary car luge on new-fallen ice. The body shops all staff up and watch car accidents on the news while drooling on their desks. Good times!

It's a good time to get those chains or studded tires. It's now required that you carry chains in your cars, even if you're not into S&M. It's not those kind of chains, however for some of you, they might just look the same. You give "chain up" a whole different meaning. You may not want to bother and take your chances on the involuntary car luge. I have to admit, it's kind of fun when it's over and there is no damage. Some neighborhoods in Seattle, it's like bowling with busses. Fun if you're just watching. Not fun if you're Granny in the Prius with nowhere to go. Here comes Agnes in the damn bus, plowing you up onto the hood of a Volvo when all you wanted to do was go get eggs. Yup, it's coming. I know it.

November 20, 2020

It's nice to have...

...storm season back. It's one of our favorite times each year. Something about sitting in front of a window watching a roof fly by makes me think of my student housing years in school. It's the thrill of standing too close to a plate glass window.

We don't have a lot to report this week, and with the new flair-up of COVID, we don't know what the new year will bring. Seems logical that cases would increase when more people are stuck inside. We know this from hoof and mouth or that night you staggered out of the Likety-Split with that wood nymph at 2 AM. I know you're still trying to forget your past, and COVID does nothing but remind you of those embarrassing visits to the doc where you first discovered you're allergic to penicillin and peanuts...and latex.

I'm far more worried though about what this is doing to small business across the state. It seems like everywhere I drive something is boarded up and gone out of business. I get the feeling plywood is selling well in these parts, but it's a grim sight.

I get the social distancing and all, but I can't imagine the toll in other ways, just because we're shutting down Washington's economy. Savings are wiped out, families destroyed, and I get tired of the debates. We get so many people who get a nervous tick just talking about any of this. I'll get hate mail no matter how we write about it, yet it's hard to ignore. Many who attend E@RTC are small business owners and we wish there was some way to help.

We will come back roaring when this is all over and we will do all we can to help small business. The "bubbly personalities" of our volunteers, as someone recently described, are eager to kick things off once again.

I've not heard the term "bubbly personalities" in a long time. It's a term I've forgotten about until they said it. What it means now is a fat guy in a pool after taco night, but a few decades ago it meant you were fun, exuberant even. It may be a good way to describe some of us I guess. I can see where it fits. We do like a good laugh. We're bubbly. We're all bubbly.

We're still going to plan some routes and get people out in their cars. Get out there, and practice safe virus, but do something to help keep the local economy going. I'll be sure to zoom up to Waterfront Pizza then eat in my car with glee. I'm still hunting for good donut shops or bakeries so please keep the suggestions coming.

A few are concerned about the ferry docks with exotics and we concur. You don't do it at low tide. We will gather safely at other places like Port Gamble or somewhere along the way where we can all be a safe distance and say hello. I can't imagine we'd be in much danger standing on a windy beach, but someone will have an issue somehow.

Look, it's not normal or safe to have no interaction with anyone. There is nothing like hurricane force winds at the coast to keep everyone feeling alive. It's fun. There is a trick to what to wear; fleece and a wind-proof shell and super-heavy shoes will usually do it. Oh, and a rope to hold you down. If you want to do something fun, go to Cannon Beach, get a nice room with a beach view during a storm and watch some out-of-towner get blown down the sand like a cheap kite. It's super entertaining.

There is decent pizza in Open Sores. If it's windy, the North Jetty is kind of a fun place to watch the waves crash along the breakwater. I doubt if there are a lot of COVIDs out there. It's fresh air, straight from the central Pacific, or somewhere there is not likely to be live virus.

There aren't a lot of places to drive this time of year unless you want to risk driving in snow. Cannon Beach is still a nice weekend destination. Astoria is interesting if you like old stuff. When was the last time you went to Vashon island?

We may have a Zoom call one of these mornings for all who are interested. It's way to just say hello, or help. There is nothing but rain in the forecast, so we're not resuming anything for at least a week. But, there will be a new site one of these days.

November 11, 2020

I can't believe...

...we're already nearing the holiday season. It's already impacting us. We couldn't do the Yearbook shoot this past weekend because of logistical issues with RTC over their tree and the

number of volunteers they wanted us to have on hand for such a small shoot. We will find a new location and resume as soon as the weather improves. It likely won't be at RTC, so stay tuned.

I don't know if you saw it, but the AAT is petitioning for a black plate to assist the museum. Here is a link to sign the petition. The profits from the plate go straight to the museum so it's a good cause, and the plate is that black plate so many wanted.



I've already commented about the font choice, so no need to blast me. You don't need to snog with it. I tried to get the plate, "SAMPLE" and it's a prohibited name. What a great vanity plate to get. No, don't. I'm serious. "BPM" is not a good idea. Too soon. It's available, but no.

So, the great donut drive is still a point of exploration, however, to my surprise and amazement, there are a lot of crappy donut shops around, so research is a little grim, one bite and I'm done. Seriously, they taste like sugary hamburger buns. We're not looking for just any donut shop. It has to be good enough to be worth the drive. We're also looking for gathering points and are open to suggestions.

I was also thinking of a theme for the drive around the Olympic Peninsula. Given that we want to eat everything in sight that's good, something about locusts came to mind, but no name nailed down just yet. Seriously, the BEST pizza I know is still Waterfront Pizza in Port Townsend. It's been there a very long time. Lewis and Clark probably stopped by.

Please write us to suggest some good gathering points around 101. First gathering point would be the ferry dock, then probably Port Gamble, someplace in Port Angeles, someplace near Lake Crescent, Forks, yeah Forks, Ruby Beach, Kalaloch Lodge, Quinault Lodge, then Pacific Beach, Open Sores, possibly the Quinault Beach Resort and Casino, then Aberdeen and back through

Olympia and north. Some may go up through Bremerton and take the ferry back. Others will be tired and grumpy. It's a long day, but we want to keep doing something this winter to keep a sense of community. Oh, I'm sorry, Open Sores is on the map as Ocean Shores. My apologies.

We're short on finding that one gathering point where we can all meet up this winter because of COVID, yet we're trying everything we can think of. We will have a pop-up E@RTC in January for fun.

We still have the Yearbook shoot and assembly to complete, so write us at events@exoticsat.com and we'll get you on the list for the makeup day. I will go back to posting something every Thursday. I've had to catch up on some other E@RTC business, so it's taken me a while to get back to our normal routine.

Thanks as always for reading.

November 2, 2020

We will try again...

...this coming weekend to continue the Yearbook photo shoot for those who need the makeup day. It's not going to be like your high school yearbook shoot when you had to pay extra for a retake, only to end up looking more demented than the first shoot and decades later, your picture still shows up in memes with a satanic caption. We promise this will go a lot better for you. Please come out because it's lots of fun and we have goodie bags! The car wash from ParkPlace alone makes it worth it!

If you're interested in participating in the Yearbook, and want to schedule time for Saturday morning, write us at events@exoticsat.com and we will send you the details to nail down your time slot. We've shot about two hundred cars so far and we know there are a lot more out there and we still need to shoot all the car collections offsite somewhere near their cars.

Other Plans

This is going to be a busy winter for E@RTC with lots of plans in the works and I covered that in the last blog. We believe we will have a normal season in 2021. By then there should be enough real data on COVID to know what's livable or that we have this under control. Well, we can at least pray. It does depend on who gets elected, but we don't want to get into that. I'll be answering hate mail for days. Touchy subject for touchy people. Can't anyone just laugh at stuff anymore?

Yes, we still want to do a pop-up event, but probably not until January sometime. We need to get through the holidays. Won't that be fun? How many people are going to decorate their tree

with little COVID ornaments? Ten bucks says that someone is selling glass covid ornaments. Someone is probably decorating their tree with toilet paper right now. I just know it.

Olympic Mountain Loop

Who's up for an Olympic Mountain Loop drive? We won't do a formal drive but we will pick a day when we will let everyone know what ferry we're trying to hit. It will be rain or shine, daily drive or not. We will mark some stops, stuff like that, but not make it an organized drive for liability reasons.

If people have some stop suggestions, send them our way. It's an all day drive, but about the same number of miles as the Cascade Mountain Loop. I'll post something with the dates, the stops, and the ferry departure and let everyone figure out what time they want to head out. We're also going to start promoting radios and a standard frequency for everyone. They are cheap, and they make coordination a lot easier.

Halloween was a bit of a let down this year. It's a tiny bit twisted when a day that celebrated death, misery and gore is a bummer because nobody celebrated death, misery and gore. Not a single kid ventured down our driveway. Kids now go for the low hanging candy I guess. If your front door is more than ten feet from the street they want to either pass or call an Uber. I think it was probably COVIDs that scared everyone away more than death, gore, or misery. It was a beautiful night for once. Most of the time it's pouring on the 31st and it's a week night. All the yards were well-decorated in the neighborhood, with lots of fake cobwebs after clearing out the real ones all summer, but we didn't see any kids anywhere.

I don't get some people. They will burn down their house over a real spider the size of a quarter, then inflate a fake one the size of a Buick across the entire lawn and think it's cool. I got the dog out for a walk in the middle of the night figuring that if anyone was still out, they were probably either drunk or getting chased by something and that would be fun to see. I wanted to see someone looking like a zipper go running by, or an inflatable poop, but no. The only thing we saw was a coyote with a WTF expression on its face as it trotted across the street. What a letdown!

Come on out this Saturday for your photo, it will be fun! Just write us first so we have you signed up. Stay tuned for other stuff.

October 23, 2020

I'm normally on top...

...of this blog a little more than this, but when we do an event like the photo yearbook project, it means other things have to get moved aside. With only so many hours in the day and with the limited number of volunteers we have, it's hard to spend time on one thing without giving up time on something else. We've yet to figure out how to squeeze more hours in a day, but I'm sure some pimply grad student somewhere is working on it as a physics problem. I just know it. They probably sent their cat back in time and don't want to tell anyone. Especially if it materialized on a dining room rock during the Paleolithic period.

SSC

A giant congratulations to those at SSC for their world road speed record of 331 MPH! Can you imagine just tooling down the road at 70 MPH, and have someone squirt by you at 261 MPH in the left lane? You wouldn't even know it happened! It would sound like a very loud bird fart and you'd have no idea what you just saw. You'd burp up your coffee in terror! Your eyes can't even focus that fast.

If you've ever driven extremely fast on a road, you know how narrow it gets as you go faster. At that speed it had to be like balancing on a fishing line. I'm getting lots of requests for the record holder car at E@RTC and we'll work on it this spring. If you look at the inside camera, the driver doesn't dare flinch. Just a sneeze would send you into another county. The entire endeavor is a remarkable thing. Think of what the tires went through! Think what his shorts went through!

We still have one more day of shooting to complete along with all the collections, but we've run into a combination of weather and scheduling issues. We're still working on it. It seems like a lot is happening all at once, but we will get it done. So far, the photos look great!

Calendar Meeting

Once again we're bumping up against our calendar planning meeting for 2021. We do this right as our season ends. We have four special calendar days that have to get scheduled. Opening Day is easy and all we have to do is get decent weather. That's officially the first Saturday in April, however we are going to do some kind of winter pop-up event on some cold Saturday, so please watch for that!

After our opener, the next event day is German Car Day, which will be in either late May or early June. This is followed by Italian Car Day, then Classic Car Day and British Car Day. Those are the big four special events. As for special cars, so much depends on how many volunteers we have this upcoming season. The more help we get, the more we can improve our season. It's the big regulator.

The calendar meeting is a lot harder to sort out than you'd probably imagine. There are so many other clubs and their events and every year, no matter what, we get email from someone complaining about the special event dates. Rest assured, there is no way to pick our dates

without it conflicting with someone somewhere. Some grandmother in Iowa will write us and say it's the day she takes little Bark Twain to the vet. It never fails.

If you have some big event on the calendar for next year that competes with E@RTC, write us and let us know. We'll take it into consideration.

We'll keep you posted on the next photo day and anything else that's happening. I plan to write weekly all winter as I did last year, so hang with us. Lots to write about.

October 14, 2020

We still have...

...one more day of shooting for the Yearbook at E@RTC, plus we will be going straight to the collections to shoot in front of where the cars are sitting rather than have them all come out with one car at a time. Cameras are easier to move than cars. So are people. Most people. Okay, I know one or two who'd be hard to move.

We're already up to around 200 cars photographed, so we're making good progress. It was a lot of fun seeing everyone last weekend and we're just waiting for a break in the weather before we announce the next shooting day. For now it looks like rain for a while. This would normally be when we call an end to our season.

Pop Up!

We still plan to do a popup event car. This means, the minute all this is over, and we get a nice clear day in the forecast, we'll do an E@RTC just for fun and we'll all feel that hypothermia together. Should be a good time. We'll call it the big shiver. We'll bring out our blast heater, "Sir Heats-a-Lot" and melt a few shoes like we did in our second season. You'd be standing there warming up, and you wouldn't notice your shoe roasting and melting like that marshmallow that fell off your stick. You wouldn't notice how hot your foot was until it was way, way, too late and you'd involuntary River Dance all over the place until it cooled down. Good times!

We can't wait to resume E@RTC with some sense of normalcy. By next spring, hopefully we'll have the elections all settled and people can go back to being friends again and only argue about cars and sports teams. Those were the days. Covid will be a weird memory, and there should be some sense of sanity in our lives. We want to get back to just having fun. 2020 was like riding in a packed bus full of sweaty people going the wrong way... down a hill...with no brakes... while playing polka music...and on fire... We all just want it to be over. The Violent Schitz would also be a great name for a polka band. By the way, now the WHO is saying lockdowns are a bad idea. Every health organization has flopped more times than a freshly landed trout, yet some still want to argue.

Cascade Loop

We managed to pick off another long day of driving the Cascade Loop. It's my third time this year and the colors were beautiful as you'd anticipate. Sun Mountain Lodge is still one of the best car destinations in Washington and it won't be long before the North Cascade Highway closes for the season so get out there and drive it while you can. Three days after we did the loop they got about a foot of snow, so check to see if the stuff has melted. You're otherwise screwed until spring.

That drive is perfect for loading up the car with friends and heading out for a day of it. It's best to overnight at Sun Mountain or someplace nearby. Why rush? The place was empty. So was the restaurant. Food was good!

We're going to do the Olympic loop next. It's one for driving in the rain. I mean hard, fire hose kind of rain. It's almost the exact same number of miles as the Cascade Loop, only no real mountains to cross. People have the same number of missing teeth either way, so there is about the same amount of involuntary whistling when you stop. If you don't like trees, the Olympic Loop is not for you. It's otherwise another nice drive.

We'll keep you up to date here about what's next. We will need your help getting the word out when we do our next thing so stay tuned!

October 5, 2020

We had a very...

...successful first two days of the Yearbook shoot, and plan to hold it again to make sure we get everyone memorialized in digital form. This is our first year's attempt at this, and like anything we try that's new, it's a lot of learning, but it went fairly well...not like in college when trying something new could result in weeks of antibiotics.



Cars lining up for the shoot in groups of three.

Some commented in social media on the lack of spectators, and that was entirely intentional, which is why we didn't advertise exact times or make a big announcement. It's also why sign up was a two step process and not just online. Remember, we're still prohibited from gatherings of fifty people or more.

We know we will still get hate mail from the grocery bleachers no matter what we do, but we managed to strike a balance between common sense, and well, less common sense. Someone always has to be the raisin in the cinnamon roll and virtue signal while adding nothing to anything. I've never met anyone who says, "Oh, it's the raisins I love." Well, same with virtue signalers.

A very special thanks to Amanda Rosbrook, our newest Thug who did a massive amount of behind the scenes work to pull this off and it would have been difficult without her huge contribution in time. She joined us from her other car gig, and with her came a huge amount of influence and additional participation. Amanda is a critical part of keeping E@RTC's top of the mind awareness in the car community and we're lucky to have her help. Thank you Amanda!



Amanda trying on Lunch Box's new jacket.

She also put together the swag bags and set up a stuffing line at her house that we all attended. No, a “stuffing line” wasn’t a buffet you missed for those of you from Wisconsin. Wisconsin should change their license plates from, “The Dairy State” to “When can we eat?”

Amanda also rounded up the swag and we have a lot of organizations to thank who donated something for our one event this year...but stay tuned on that as I’ll write something about what’s ahead.

The stuffing team consisted of Blake, Jason, Amanda and me and we got it done in a couple of hours.

Thank you!

The stupendous volunteers, known as the illustrious Parking Thugs dove on the project and did their usual outstanding job and we can never thank them enough, even if we recorded “thanks” and looped it a million times. Wouldn’t that get annoying? It’s fun to see everyone and have a few laughs again. Thanks guys for everything!

Thanks to all the photographers and Spencer for coordinating them. We look forward to seeing your great work in images. Thanks Jason Tang for all the behind-the-scenes stuff. The cool thing about the Thugs is that they are made up of such great leaders, that they all know what needs to be done when they arrive and they make it happen. It runs smoothly because of them! We will write more about the photographers when the photos come out.

John Rodrigues, and Spencer Leamer were working long hours behind the scenes managing the emails, car criteria, and massive amount of correspondence. Thank you!

What us Thugs all have in common is that we all fell out of trees a lot growing up. I have to admit, it’s had career influence.

Thank you Sponsors!

Redmond Town Center also paved the way for not just this but a commitment for next season. They also provided \$10.00 gift cards for everyone who participated and took good care of our volunteers. Thank you Courtney and Chris for all your help pulling this together. RTC was hit badly by the shutdown and so we want to do all we can to help everyone at the mall get back on their feet. It’s a nice place to shop, and it’s all open air! It’s when the outdoor malls have the advantage.

From there, we had Park Place LTD who gave everyone a car wash coupon and for those of you who don’t know. This isn’t like some cheap auto car wash they toss in with a tank of gas, no-no, this is a real modern hand wash and dry and a great place to peruse cars. PPL has been a supporter of us for a very long time and we hope you thank them for their support when you

stop by. They are also the Aston Martin and Lotus dealer along with a lot of other interesting cars, so swing on by if you're itching to buy something rare and exotic.

We also had \$25.00 off from Right Away Tire which is Blake Siebe's company. Blake has been a part of E@RTC from the day we started. Right Away Tire isn't like anything else. They come right to you with a new set of shoes for your car. Just the time savings alone is massive! Blake also donated \$25.00 in maps from his app Rallista.app which is the new enthusiasts route app for your phone.

Avants supplied everyone with copies of their new magazine and a one year membership as a prize. Many Avants members are also regulars at E@RTC and we like working with Avants and Adam Cramer. Adam has done a terrific job of building a car community. Thank you Adam!

America's Car Museum provided us with two-for-one entrance cards, in addition to a one year membership as a prize. They are now open again, so please go and visit when you have the chance. They have been a great supporter of us over the past few years.

Hagerty supplied the bags and sunglasses and a prize of one year membership to Hagerty Driver's Club. We thank them for that too. Hagerty has long been a supporter of all things related to car shows and the complexity of insuring collector cars.

Metropolitan Detail also supplied a car wash as an additional prize. Thank you for your support and participation over the years. They too have been with us from the very start. Many of our participants of E@RTC are huge fans.

Griots also supplied catalogs and through Avants supplied what product they could. They also supplied us with the mack-daddy door prize of an elliptical correct and protect kit! Griots has always been a supporter and we're always happy to support them too.

What's Next?

We got a big commitment from Redmond Town Center for our 2021 season and more details will come out soon. It looks like we're going to be staying and they came through for us. We will do our best to make E@RTC something even bigger.

This leads to another decision we've made. After talking to so many of you, we've decided that we're going to do a pop-up event as soon as this is over and well before the start of our new season. You read that right. The first chance we get, on a nice clear day, once this is all behind us, we guess sometime in January, on that super cold day, we will do a quick E@RTC pop-up just so we can all say hello. It will be like a flash mob with shitty singing and dancing, and we'll all leave hypothermic, but we will have some laughs. It won't last the full two hours unless we have barrel fires, and that won't happen.

We still have another photo shoot to complete, along with going out to the collections, and we hope to get all that wrapped up in the next few weeks.

October 1, 2020

We are NOT on for Opening Day this Saturday!

We are NOT on for Exotics at Redmond Town Center as usual this Saturday!

Apparently, we have a few who didn't read the blog, and word got out that we're on for Saturday. No-no we're not! What's up with reading these days? Do we have to translate everything into bumper sticker? Is EVERYONE from Fresno?

The only thing we're doing is the appointment-only photo shoot for criteria cars. (I underlined it as a visual aid.) This is not a spectator event, this is not a just show up event, you have to write us to get the invitation so we can get you time slotted in so you're not waiting around all day. We've gone out of our way to explain this because of COVID restrictions, yet someone started passing the word around that we're on for a normal Saturday and we're not. To whoever is doing this, Fresno needs you back, run!

We've been trying to keep a lid on this yearbook photo shoot from the time we came up with the idea because of COVID restrictions for gatherings. We thought it would be nice to memorialize the year in some way. If there are too many people who do show up, well, then we have to cancel the whole thing and shut it down immediately. That's going to suck because a lot of volunteers went through a lot of trouble to make this happen. Please help us get the word out that this is not an E@RTC regular event, nor is it opening day, nor will there be a lot of cars at any one time.

In the alternative, we will move the shoot to a different location if we have to. Don't make us do that. We're sorry we can't do something different, but you can blame the politicians for this one.

September 29, 2020

Saturday's Invitation Only...

...photo shoot is finally on. It's important that you help us get the word out so send this to your friends who have an exotic or rare car that meets the general show criteria. We want to memorialize as many cars and their owners as we can, and it will be a lot of fun! There is swag too! You don't even need to shave your legs!

You can be photographed with your car or without, depending on what you prefer, but we'd love to have a lot of people with their cars so everyone knows who you are in this wonderful car community.



A visual aid from a prior season... See how fun this looks?

Come out and memorialize this strange time in US history. You can look back on these photos from your rocking chair when you're old and all your teeth are gone, or shifted in all directions, and you have no idea where you are most days. You can look back fondly on the car you once owned that's now a classic and think about what an awesome attractive human you once were. Pass the photos around the nursing home, or put them up on the wall of your prison cell, if your life didn't go as you intended. Either way, come out and have some fun!

To join us, just shoot us a note here. Or, have your friends who have an exotic or rare car that meets our show criteria write us at events@exoticsat.com. Like they do on cheap commercials, I'll repeat it, events@exoticsat.com, in case you can't go back and read for some reason. We'd love to see you at least once this year!

September 27, 2020

So far, the weather...

...is looking like it will hold for next Saturday and we will kick off the Yearbook project. We continue to get people signing up. If you want to participate, write us at events@exoticsat.com and we'll add you to the list. I'm also adding this energy saving button if cutting and pasting seems like an extreme activity at the moment. Who knows what you just did. There is going to be swag, including handing out extremely expensive air guitars.

I started working on the E@RTC donut circle. I tell you what, there are a lot of donut shops that are highly rated but suck. We're also looking for congregation points. We're not even sure this idea will work, but we want to do something that gets everyone out this winter. We're also pondering some rolling meetups, where we spend the day at a location to meet and greet and people can show up at their convenience. The problem we're trying to solve is the mass of people hitting a restaurant all at once. The restaurants never like that. It's like picking up everyone at the bar at 2 AM, it's quickly diminishing returns, and you deeply regret the next day.

I have to admit, after a couple of bad donut shops, I was ready to go home. I already think Top Pot kind of sucks, but that's just me, so it's not on the list. You can tell their donuts came from far away and are already dry and flavorless. In fact even the small chains were not good on our hunt so far.

We also need a congregation point somewhere in route. We're sorting out a few suggestions. The problem is if they are good, they tend to already be crowded. It's a lesson for you budding entrepreneurs who want to be in the restaurant business. Just go out of your way to make a great product! There are a lot of ho-hum places out there. Too many!

We're also skipping Seattle entirely so nobody is just stuck in traffic. We're especially staying out of the downtown core, which is now kind of empty and is primarily occupied by mostly peaceful undocumented pharmacists.

We want this to be a drive you enjoy between food stops. We're welcome to any great suggestions. The usual suspects are already on the list, but we'd love to find something new. With COVID causing us to lose our season, we'd like to make it up somehow through the winter. We may even do a special E@RTC event to commemorate when we'd start in February.

Please join us for the yearbook photo shoot. You don't have to be in the photo with your car if you don't want, but we'd love it if you were. We hope to see you next Saturday!

September 16, 2020

I never thought...

...I'd be happy to say we're rained out for the beginning of our yearbook photo shoot, but we kind of are, because of the smoke and fire danger. We will try again next week. I don't remember the air holding this still around here before. You could go for a walk and toot (for those in Fresno, trouser cough, step on a duck, roast the Jockeys) and it would be right smack in the same place you left it two hours later.

It was like the Pacific Northwest turned into that smokey bar you coughed your way out of in college at 2 AM. You couldn't get the smell off you for days. You didn't mind the smoke because it helped ease the pain from that magnificent swamp donkey sitting on the stool next to you who took you home and cared for you all night. Where am I going?

People are still signing up for the Yearbook photo shoot at a nice clip, so if you want to participate, just make sure your car is E@RTC qualified under our normal criteria. We'll help you out there if you don't see it on our web page. We hate to turn anyone down, so please check that page first if you don't know the guidelines. We always feel like we're telling you your kid's ugly when we're not. Some of you do have ugly kids, but we won't go there either. Hope they get good grades.

I'm happy to say the AAT and America's Car Museum had a very successful virtual Gala, and thanks to all of you who participated. I'll be posting a cool video of the mission of the AAT. It was very well done. They open back up on the 25th and of course the state provided some badly conceived guidelines that make no sense, but they are working through it. When this is all over, someone will have to compile a book of all the rules from each state that contradict each other.

I'm still loving the concept of the "donut drive" that we can all do without it becoming an official drive. I'm personally going to love the research. If you know of some unique donut shops anywhere in the region, tell us about them. It could be a bakery, but it must be above average or why bother. We'll come up with some interesting routes. The fun part will be gnawing on something as the cars roll in and out of each location. Some will group, others won't. You can be in your daily driver or not. Donuts nuke fairly well, so you don't have to eat them all in one sitting, and you don't have to eat the ones with sprinkles in your car either. We will start working on the route after we get done with this yearbook project.

Meanwhile, please sign up for the yearbook! There will be stuff to give you.

September 11, 2020

Our photo booth...

...project is coming along nicely and we hope you will participate to remember what an odd year it was. We're going to call it a "Yearbook" instead. It's closer to what it is. When you're old and

toothless you can look back on the photos while gumming soft foods and tell the great grand kids about the time you wore a mask in a bank and nobody hit the silent alarm.

We're nailing down a long list of small details and it's been awesome seeing our loyal Parking Thugs again as we work out the details. It will be next weekend, both Saturday and Sunday and you can pick your time. You could help us a lot by spreading the word to any car you think should be in the Yearbook. If you want to join us, poke right here. Not everyone comes to the website or follows us on Facebook so you play an important role in getting the word out to everyone.

Or, send them the email address at events@exoticsat.com and we'll be sure they are added to the invite list where they get to pick the block of time that's most convenient. We want to get as many as we can to join in the fun.

Meanwhile, we're still wading through a series of minor yet annoying obstacles put in front of us by Redmond Town Center and we hope to get those resolved. It seems like two steps forward and one back, but we'll keep at it until it makes no sense in that location in which case, we plan to have a backup. We're also going to give out some prizes to those who go the extra mile and dress up. You can dress any way you want for the shoot.

America's Car Museum

Also don't forget, this is the weekend of the Virtual America's Car Museum Gala. It costs nothing to register and you can bid on some cool stuff. They could really use the help this year. The money goes a long way towards keeping the doors open. Speaking of which, they will be open once again on September 25, but just three days a week. They need the other four days to hunt and kill tiny COVIDS.

Donuts...

I like the website "Only in our State" and they put together a loop called the "Washington Donut Trail" which is a drive to various donut shops in a big loop. As I looked at the site, any self-respecting fat guy and donut aficionado, me included, knows of some even better donut destinations around Western Washington. Even though we don't do organized drives, I am thinking we could do a few of these this winter and have some fun. For those of you living the miserable existence of gluten free, and secretly missing out on life itself, we could do one with places that just sell, I don't know, cardboard maybe, or okra, carrot sticks or some hummus. Aren't you really just trading one fart for another?

We could make it so you get a book stamped or something. It could be fun and people could start anywhere on the loop. I know people want something community that still lives within the political climate we're in and this may work. It would be fun, even during the rainy season. We will give it more thought. I'm doing it anyway.

September 6, 2020

Our one event...

... is still moving ahead. It's a simple plan, and it has some historical importance. I'll explain why in a moment. The event is a drive up photo booth, you drive your exotic or rare car to RTC to a designated spot, we walk it to a photo area, take a few pictures of you with your car and move off to the next car, keeping them moving so nobody has to wait long. Cars will be based on the time block you pick. We promise you it will take less time than Hellen Keller in a golf tournament. This isn't like a clown inviting you into the woods. We will use the photos in a photo montage as well as build a downloadable or printable book, depending on the number of cars and the assistance we can get to put the whole thing together.

We are not going to be posting details here because this isn't intended to be a spectator event because then we run into other issues because of the virus. We get enough online finger wags as it is.

We're going to shoot with a few different settings so the photos don't look like a catalog. You can dress anyway you want, bring any signs you want, but most of all it's about memorializing the people who make up E@RTC in one of the strangest years of my lifetime and probably yours unless you're from Fresno. To participate, drop a note to events@exoticsat.com and we will send you the invite where you get further directions.

Here is why this matters. This has been a bad year for just about everyone. It seems like we've all had a rough go of it, and if we do nothing, well, it feels like we gave in. We wanted to do this to keep the spirit of who we are and to memorialize all the people and cars who make up this wonderful car community. We want everyone to come out and participate in this one thing that lets the car world know we're still here. Right now a lot of you have already emailed us and it's important that you tell others who don't read the blog or follow us on Facebook. We don't want to miss anyone.

For all we know, some of you may be stuck at home with that significant other who can't take the ankle bracelet off just yet so now you have an excuse to come out. We were all at RTC yesterday and it was nice to see so many people shopping. They feel safe at RTC and it's an outdoor mall, so even more so.

The Big Gala

Don't forget, America's Car Museum has their online gala coming up on September 12. It's only online this year, but you're still welcome to get all gussied up if you want. I suppose you could wear anything this time. The museum is having a tough go of it because of the closures so hopefully you can join in the fun.

August 30, 2020

There is a lot...

...going on! First off, thanks to all of you who wrote us about the photo booth concept and plans. It meant a lot to hear from so many of you. We'd love to see all of you at least once this season even if we can't do a big social gathering.

For those of you from Fresno, this "photo booth" is not all that complicated. It's driving up, getting pictures of you with your car, dressed any way you like, and moving on without a big gathering of people. The pictures will be used on this site and on an upcoming new site as well as available in book form. The exact place that the photos will be taken and when will be sent out via email. Come on, this is the one chance to have to see just how fat you got this year! Don't blow it.

It's important to participate in this stuff because what we're going through will someday be considered to be stranger than that thing you once dated. You know the one, where if their name comes up you look down in shame, or smile, depending on how weird things got.

To keep you all from waiting around, you will have a time block in which to show up to make it easy. So far, we have an excellent list going. If you're interested in participating, write us at events@exoticsat.com and we'll add you to the list. The car just has to be E@RTC-qualified. The people in the car can be weird AF.

The reason we're doing this is to memorialize the craziness of the year and to at least do something. We wish it could be a big social gathering, but nothing stops you from shopping or eating while you're at RTC. Don't let that innuendo escape you. You don't need to wear a mask for the photo, unless it improves your looks. You otherwise have to follow whatever the rules are that hour at RTC.

We won't be posting a lot of information about it, outside of the email we will send you. If you've written us and not heard back, you will.

LeMay America's Car Museum Gala

Here is what I received regarding the upcoming event. The Gala is virtual this year and they could sure use your help this year. This is especially critical because the museum badly needs financial support. Read this in a different voice from me.

It's that time of year again! The LeMay America's Car Museum Gala is only 2 weeks away (Saturday September 12th) and is more important to us than ever given the Museum's closure and loss of revenue. This year, of course, it's virtual and there are some great items being auctioned off here. One item of interest is a visit to Nicola Bulgari's garage outside of Florence, Italy. I visited this a few years ago and it is very special. Plus.....Monoco F1 Grand Prix; Le Mans; McLaren Arctic Experience.....check it out!

Register on-line for the gala/auction and participate 'live' with us to help bring energy to the event.

Consider hosting a gala party in your home with a few friends. You can go to our site and purchase 'Car Hop Dinners' for 2 or more persons and get delivery of a meal from El Goucho—hors d'oeuvres, dinner, dessert, Hedges wine (thank you Tom and Anne-Marie!). Or, let us know a restaurant near you and we'll provide gift certificates so you can take delivery of a dinner. Or just host a small cocktail party.

Importantly, support the auction. The complete catalog is online on the auction website—attached are some 'premium' items. Please send that list and the auction link to friends who you think might be interested in these pretty spectacular items. And, of course, bid on items you like—you can bid in advance as well as the night of the gala.

Finally, Raise the Paddle in direct support of our efforts. RTP pledges are 100% tax deductible gifts. You can let me know in advance, particularly if you can't make the gala, and I'll make sure it's recorded and a paddle is raised in your name during the evening. Or do it 'live' during the event.

<https://americasautomotivetrust.ejoinme.org/mainpage>

Back to my voice-

Just so we're clear "raise the paddle" is not to be confused with that kind where you need a safe word. If I have to explain that joke you haven't lived.

Thank you again for all the great email about the photo booth. It was a lot of fun to hear from all of you!

August 22, 2020

So, here it is...

...this is what we're thinking and we want to run it by you. Where did that expression come from? Have you ever actually run anything by anyone? Do you ever hold up that report while running down a hall?

Okay, we've been trying to come up with something that would allow us to get together in some form without getting anyone's undies in a bunch. We're just people who love exotic and rare cars wishing to do something fun.

Every idea we've had so far, comes with some challenge, be it social distancing, potential shaming of others who don't want to hazmat up, or do. It's a topic that has people deeply polarized and we want to unite rather than divide the car community. It doesn't help that pitchforks and torches are on sale.

We thought about a car parade, but with the number that typically shows up on opening day, allowing for space between each car, the parade would run close to four miles long, with no gathering point and no way to safely manage a parade that long. We don't have four miles of space in Redmond without closing much of downtown. It's just not possible to control, keep people in their cars, etc. So we had to scratch that idea from the list, even though we loved the idea.

We can't just have an event and expect people to social distance. We'd be answering flame mail for the next four months. Again, we want to do something, but what? Every idea, from flash mob with cars at some farm, to just staying in our cars has had some big flaw. So, here is our idea. Ya ready?

We're thinking about a car photo booth and we want feedback from you before we kick this thing off. The idea is you'd show up with your car at a defined location and time, based on time slots, and we'd take pictures of you with your car. All cars would still have to meet E@RTC's show criteria. You could dress any way you want, goofy, serious, etc., and we'd shoot a few pics and off you go. You could even come back with something else from your collection. We'd then put all the pics in one place on our site, and make a photo album available that people could buy or download. No, we don't make a buck. It's just a way to remember we were all here.

It would be done very low key because we can't have spectators gather to watch, and it would take a long time to complete, possibly days. Yeah, it sucks that there isn't a sense of community that comes from a gathering point, but we'd all have great memories, right? It would be about the season that didn't happen. Like that prom date that fell through, except, we're trying to make up for it.

Here is the most important part. If you'd want to participate, please let us know by writing us at events@exoticsat.com. We need to know if this is something you'd all want to do. If yes, we will try and do it in mid September, which is coming up fast. If we don't hear from you, then there is no point. Also hit love button (not that one) on this post so that others know you're interested.

Now, we do not have it all sorted out yet, so it's not a done deal. We have to kick it around with our volunteers, and we're talking about it with Redmond Town Center. It's the only idea that's still standing. It's like the fat guy on Survivor. Again, if we don't hear from enough of you, well, then the fat guy didn't survive, and the season is over for us. This next step involves you. Write us and hit the heart button on this post so others know you like it.

If you hate the idea, write us and let us know why too. We love hearing from you anyway.

August 15, 2020

It was a beautiful...

...morning to drive up to the North Bend Bakery. I was getting low on my prescription for fat pills. What a morning! This is when you go for those rare topless drives. Especially with the top down. We don't have a lot of perfect weather mornings for early morning drives, so get out there and drive! Sunday will be hot, so it will be perfect to hit the road early. Do it! You won't regret it.

An Event

Okay, so we're working on some interesting ideas for at least one E@RTC event for this year. We have a lot of "what ifs" to sort out and that's what we're working through right now. Doing anything is not as easy as it seems, and we're still thinking through all the variables, sort of like a fat guy in the cookie section. We've explored a lot of small details to pull it off, but this one idea still remains viable so we're working through the details. The trick, as always, is how to do it and maintain the "social distancing" that keeps everyone happy, not that it's ever possible. We can have wishes.

It will require a high level of cooperation to pull off, and there are some issues that some won't like, but we're doing our best to weigh all considerations. Stay tuned for more news on that.

Website

We're also going to be building a whole new website in the coming weeks and months. It's going to be a massive challenge because of all of our content. The reason we're doing it is because of how Squarespace works. They came up with a new architecture in the latest version and the one we have now will be obsolete. You can't just update from one version to another. I'd guess it's a little like swapping spouses without the court dates or anyone throwing shit.

Trying to keep modifying what we have is a bit like the girlfriend who suddenly gets too many after market parts and you don't know what to touch without breaking something. We don't want to ruin a good thing.

When it happens, we won't be offline for more than a few minutes when we make the switch after it's built. It will also be better for our photographers who want to have more control over how they post and arrange photos. It will be a good thing, but it will be a lot of work. It will have more visual content, and it will be much easier to keep current. We will get started on it soon, and because we do this stuff around our other work, it will be done when we can get it done. Sort of like those mods on your very first car. My first car had so much Bondo that it made no noise in a car accident.

Ferrari of Seattle...and now Bellevue

You may have heard this, but Ferrari of Seattle recently opened an Eastside location, called Esperienza Ferrari Seattle. They still have the downtown Seattle location, and that's where you still go for service, but now you Eastsiders can get your quicker fix of Ferraris by heading over to the new place. It's by appointment only so shoot them a note to sales@ferrariofseattle.com. I suspect it's appointment only for COVID reasons. No, it's not to size you up. They will be there Monday to Saturday, 9-5PM. The new address is 13120 Bel-Red Road, Bellevue, WA 98005. I will get back to posting on Thursdays as before. We've been working on the event and that takes time.

August 8, 2020

We're still working...

...on some ideas to get something kicked off this season, but it's tricky. We like the idea of a car parade the most, but we have some "what if" kind of stuff to sort out.

I'm still catching up from running around Washington State for a week with two kids visiting from Wisconsin who thought everything they saw was awesome, right down to the variety of roadkill. It's easy to forget just how much interesting stuff is around here and that we do live in an amazingly beautiful state, except for what's become of boarded-up downtown Seattle. I didn't want to expose the kids to that, so we trekked around as much of the state as we could.

We got out to the big VLBA (Very Long Baseline Array) radio telescope north of Brewster. I spent some time explaining speed of light concepts to them. It was the usual mind-bending stuff, that a planet that's four billion light years away, still hasn't seen our earth form, and how the radio telescope right there in front of us is picking up stuff from a very long way away. They also use the VLBA to study black holes. Who hasn't dated one now and then? Ever been on Match?

We also spent some time at Sun Mountain. That's still a favorite destination for car people, but this time, the place was empty. Winthrop was booming as usual, even on a very hot day.

We were up at Paradise on Mt. Rainier just as a handful of BMW 2002s showed up. The organizer said they are restarting their club. They were out on a drive and picnic. I forgot what a great place that is for a drive. It sucks when it's cloudy so make sure it's a clear day. If you're up there in the fog, you may as well be at a park in Renton. On a clear day, a lap around the volcano is a nice way to spend the day with friends as long as it doesn't blow up.

We again looked for any drive-in that had a crowd and we were not disappointed using that proven method. It doesn't work if they are there standing around a dead guy. Last week I wrote about Twin Pines, and this week it was Cliff Droppers on HY12 in Packwood.



Don't let the name scare you. The burgers were good!

By the way, what's a Cliff Dropper? Is that slang for something? Is that someone who lets you down? It sounds a little disappointing, but the food was good. How about the Cliff Rashers or the Big Step Surprise?

We made it to the San Juans. That was a hassle. First, you have to make reservations or risk missing a boat. Second, the boats don't run on time. Third, even with a reservation, it's still a long wait. San Juan Island was still charming and all, but Roche Harbor was crowded at a time when social distancing reminder circles, distance markers and all the other stuff kind of ruins it for me. It's like we're all radioactive. I'd much rather be driving somewhere and hit the drive-ins. I've not been to San Juan Island in years and I'm not sure I'd go back until the pandemic is over. It's just too much fuss.

Some places are complete zealots about the virus, while others are a bit more relaxed. One place was completely over the top and that wasn't fun at all.

I just wish people would put the same effort into digging at the numbers around this pandemic as they did taping and measuring where to stand, let alone the policing of masks and distancing. We still can't find those pesky monthly death numbers for year over year. This isn't political either. It's just trying to get at real answers by applying a little common sense with some

rationality behind it. You'd think everyone would want to know the numbers. It shouldn't be a left or right argument, but to some it is.

Car people are all about numbers. It's been some of our most interesting discussions at E@RTC. Just get anyone started on the Nurburgring Lap Times and watch the sparks fly. I've never understood how some think the laps are faked. How is that even possible? It's a squiggly circle! Unless you cut across somewhere. They argue that the timer is off. Well, you have a watch, the videos are in real time, so time the video. Why the debate? You'd have me if they arrived before they left. Then there is the whole argument about track setup.

Then we have the standard 0-60 arguments. "I had an SUV that did 0-60 in 2.5 days." We've all heard that one before. I came across this interesting calculator to help settle it. Not that it will. Someone is always claiming to defy physics.

I can tell you, I sure miss the heck out of all of you. It's been hard on all of us to sit idle like this and watch the summer go by. I smile every time I see a group of cars out driving around. It makes me think all is still right in the world somewhere.

August 1, 2020

We have a few...

...ideas of what we may be able to put together before the season ends, but it's a lot of work to evaluate, which we have begun. That's all I can say about it. I can tell you this bit of trivia from our research, that if you parked our normal opening day attendees, and stuck with all the same criteria, and parked them with adequate social distancing between cars, the line would stretch to over three miles. This is what makes alternatives like a car parade so tricky.

The point is, we're working on solutions. Yeah, and handing out Hula Hoops for everyone is not practical either. Neither is handing out disinfectant spray to anyone who gets too close. If you get out and look at what some restaurants are doing, it goes from the casual prevention to down right hysteria and it's hard to tell if it's a parody or not. Sort of like some dates i've had.

I'm late writing the blog because I was doing a reverse loop of the North Cascades Highway, meaning heading to Roslyn for a couple of nights first, before continuing counter-clockwise. If you only do it one way, try the other, it's like all new scenery. I imagine you'd get the same effect if you walked backwards. It was in the high 90s or low 100s the entire time. I felt like I could just sit at a rest stop and casually blow glass.



Pasty white legs are a trend.

Oh, I did discover another good spot. Twin Pines Burgers just east of Cle Elum on HY10. The food was above average. So was the size of everyone who ate there, which is a good sign in my book. I'll always ask the fat guy who has the best cake. I'll ask the skinny guy who has the best running shoes. Or heroin if that's your thing. Reminds me of the time my college roommates got into the shrooms. I found them outside praying to a street light.

Everywhere you go, people excuse the heat and say, well, it's a dry heat. If my face is on fire, it feels the same no matter what. You see someone on fire, they never scream, "At least it's a dry heat" now do they? Hot is hot. It was still a little miserable to play tourist and I had two kids with me from Wisconsin who think everything is a mountain. In that part of the state, it's so flat, anything taller than a business card is marked in elevation.

I wonder if there is a sweating competition somewhere?

For tourists, the Cascade Loop is still one of the best drives there is anywhere. Clockwise is better, but if you've already done it a lot, change it up and you won't be disappointed.

Few people know that you can drive over the top of Diablo Dam, which is a cool thing to do. To get there, look for the dam road off HY 20. It's after you get out of Newhalem to the west, where all the dam people work. When you drive over the dam road, you can park in the dam lot to the north of the dam control house. The dam road is narrow, so keep that in mind. Sometimes the dam road is closed, in which case you have to walk the dam thing.

It's forrest fire season, so keep that in mind. Check where they are before you trundle off into the woods with your prized guitar. Thanks as always for reading. Except that one guy.

July 23, 2020

We still don't have...

...any news about when we're going to start. It's been a wonderful year so far...probably somewhere under water, deep in the ocean. I wonder what New Years celebrations will be like this year given how much 2020 sucked. Do we blast fireworks or do we go symbolically burn something in the back yard?

I keep getting email asking what would it take for us to open. It reminds me of that commercial, "What would you do for a Klondike bar?" I wonder if the company ever received a four page list from a psychopath?

The situation is that it's not in our hands to decide when we start up again. We'd do it now if we could, but this is still way too political. By the way, did you notice that nearly all of the reporting errors are in over-reporting COVID cases rather than under? That should tell you enough. So, all we can do is wait until the real data comes in, and it will. Then there will be shouting and finger-wagging. Why can't this all be a dream? Wouldn't we be better if we all woke up naked on the lawn with a headache from this bad dream and all we had to do was get inside and forget about everything but the pictures, and it was all over? No?

We worry about sustaining what we started when stuff like this happen. We never know the mood when it's time to restart, but we do know a lot of people want to get started again. That's for sure. Oh, and thank you for writing us about it. We do like to hear from you, except for that one guy. There is always that one Karen in the pile.

Did you know that in the 90s, Washington State was one of the most popular places to shoot car commercials? It wasn't just because of the scenery, some of the better production people were also here at the time. I tried to find the picture of the VW jumping the Montlake bridge. Someone around here must have it. Just about every major brand has shot something in Washington.

As a point of trivia, those recent Matthew McConaughey Lincoln commercials were shot right here in Roy, Washington. Not to be confused with Roy Cats who's been hanging around with us since we began. What if Roy Cats started selling cats in Roy? Allright-allright-allright... I got to thinking more about cars in movies. Ever notice that in movies, in a car chase, the car gets creamed and the driver's expression rarely changes? They just totaled their car, but they keep driving, and never look all that concerned. They didn't like their new Buick anyway. Yet, anyone here so much as get a foreign fingerprint on their window and it's ten posts on Facebook.

We will do our best to pull something off before the end of the season. We're kicking around ideas, but for now, we're just on pause. Maybe we do a video drive through and record it. Who knows! We need a field of personal bubbles. Hopefully one on a level surface. That could all otherwise go downhill. Sorry.

July 16, 2020

It's not likely...

...that we're going to start August 1 unless our governor does something to open things up a bit more. We don't know when we'll start, but we will do something before the season is over, somehow. We're trying to do the right thing in a climate of polarized opinions sprinkled with pockets of mass hysteria. It's a challenging time for rational discussion about anything COVID. It's way past Lamborghini versus Ferrari.

We're not ready to kick the 2020 season right in the huevos rancheros just yet. We will post something the second we have something definitive.

Cars in Movies

We have been working to get more cars from famous movies into E@RTC and we will work on that once our season gets going. It's something we've wanted to do for a long time. Famous cars are around and we just need to draw them out. This is where we also need more volunteers to draw out some of these interesting cars.

Speaking of which, I don't know if you know this, but movie production companies have to get permission from the auto manufacturers to place their brand in any commercial film. They all get to control their own brands and some come with restrictions. For example, Lamborghini gets hundreds of requests each year but doesn't allow villains to drive their cars. Have they met some of their owners? Jaguar and Range Rover have no problem with villains and even put one in a commercial. I wonder how that worked out for the brand? What do villains care about reliability anyway?

Lexus is thrilled to have anyone use their cars, villain or not. They are just glad someone thought of them.

Have you ever noticed in movies, when two spies meet, it's always on a wharf, a park bench, or some old decrepit factory? First, if it's in a park, which bench? If you told me to meet you at a bench at Alki, I'd have a hell of a time knowing which bench. Every park has dozens. I'd be afraid I'd get stuck in a conversation with some old guy about soap. You wouldn't send someone to a bench, would you? Have you ever asked anyone to meet you at a bench somewhere? It's never happened even once in my life. Think about how awkward it would be if you show up and four people are on the bench already and you're just standing there waiting.

Once at the bench, they always exchange a few words that could have been in a text message, and leave. It takes far longer to send the instructions about the damn bench! What, nobody is pissed that they drove across town for two hours, were stuck in traffic, had to stop to pee, get gas, and some lunch, only to show up and hear something like, "George knows" then they leave? I'd be so pissed! You send me a long text or email of bench location instructions, made me drive across town to tell me that? If any of you called me and asked me to meet you at Green Lake to tell me two words, then walk away, I'd be grumpy.

Why not meet in line at Dick's? Ever heard of Starbucks?

There are a few rules I suggest you follow if you're brand new to exotic car ownership. If a suspected bad guy asks you to meet at an old steel mill, always say no. Suggest a nearby Arby's. You will be the only two in there anyway.

Did anyone consider tire damage from driving around the old steel mill? The parking lot is always wet and no villain is willing to drive their exotic through a wet lot without getting mad. You ruin one tire, you have to replace at least two and sometimes all four. What, you think you're inconspicuous driving an exotic to an old steel mill?

By now you should know that if you go to an old mill, someone's going to be hanging from a chain. Why not meet at a Motel 6 where there is always yelling and screaming anyway. Nobody will notice if someone is getting pummeled in the next room.

Ever notice how when the bad guys come rolling into that old mill, they are always driving the same brand in matching cars! How does that happen? Is their friend a car dealer? Fleet discount? None of us get together to make sure all our cars match, do we? I know we're not villains.

They are always driving too fast and on each other's ass. You see Cadillac after Cadillac and Guido never shows up in the line of cars looking all tough driving a Leaf. The cars are always black with tinted windows. Nobody shows up in a Bug with a flower in the vase and a machine gun. Often it's black Suburbans and only four guys get out. It's never the twenty they can hold like a clown car. You never see them roll up in a hospitality bus like blue hairs on bingo night.

Another very basic rule. If you go to an abandoned factory and see a chair, some random chain, a battery and some jumper cables, along with a bucket of water, leave. Same with a bat and a plastic tarp. It generally means someone won't be happy.

Basic rule of mine is never meet someone at an old factory to do business that doesn't normally happen at that old factory. It's just a basic rule I follow. If I'm doing business with someone and they want me to meet at an old mill, I'm not going to go.

Why is traffic always flowing in chase scenes? Why not show Seattle at rush hour where everyone is crawling along just fast enough to make it hard to run with a machine gun, but just slow enough to be annoying. You never see chase scenes through a beautiful winding countryside. And, hiding behind a car door with AK-47 fire is about as helpful as holding a sheet of paper. You never watched Myth Busters?

Furthermore, as a general rule, stay away from ship wharfs if you like your car. A car always ends up with either a container on top or the car in the water somehow with you in the trunk. Stay safe and just meet at a Quiznos.

Until next week!

July 9, 2020

Last week would normally...

...have been a big weekend for E@RTC. The 4th of July holiday always brought a lot of people from out of town who decided to vacation here in the Northwest. I doubt Seattle will be as popular anymore given its growing bad reputation, and from what we've heard from those in the automotive industry, more people are heading out on driving vacation to more remote destinations instead.

We hope you survived the 4th without a fireworks mishap, potentially resulting in your navigating your computer with a stick in your mouth for the first time in your life. We all know the 4th of July is Christmas to hand surgeons across the US. I imagine the burn units are a busy place too. It's a gross thought, but I wonder if Harborview smells like burnt human on July 5? Just a thought. I picture a waiting room of smoldering people with regret on their minds.

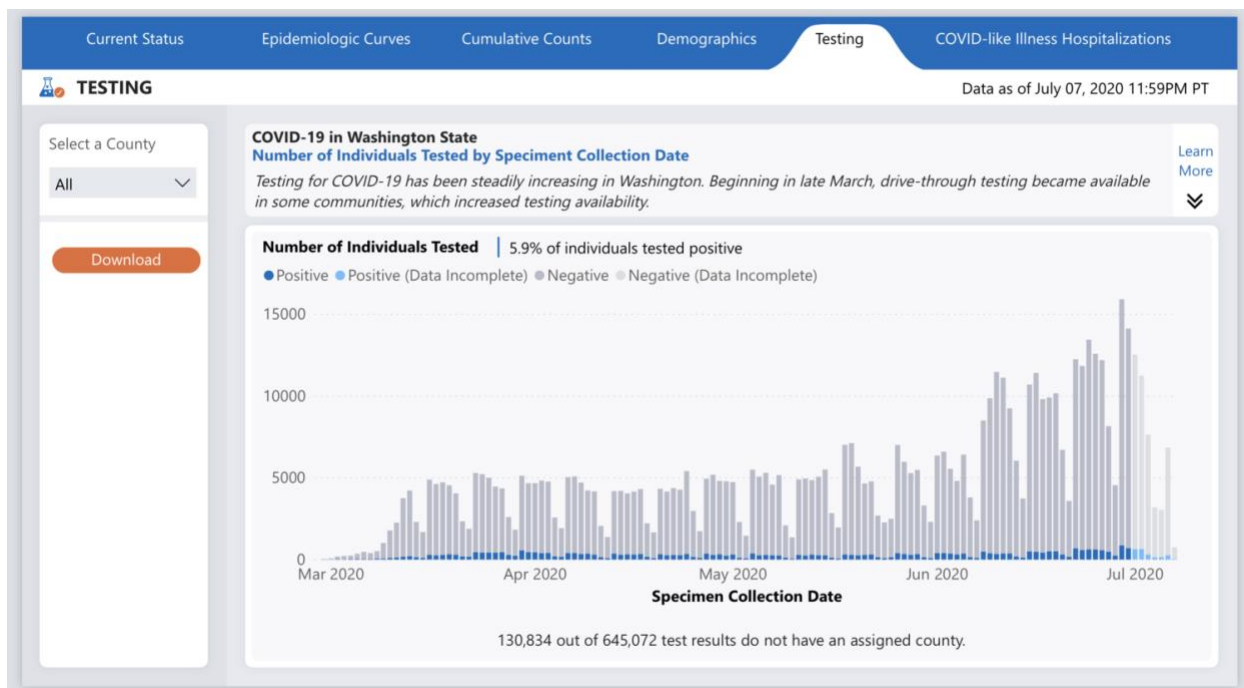
When I think of car trips, most of us as kids hated car rides growing up, but look at us now! Now we're nuts about cars. Nothing killed us more than a two hour ride to Gram-Gram's. Seatbelts were not a thing when we were kids. You could go flying through the sunroof and everyone would tell you how lucky you were to be thrown from the wreck, even if you were in pieces. Back then, our parents could strap us to the roof like luggage and nobody cared. There were no safety standards of any kind. A car accident was about as safe as a ride in a Cuisinart.

RTC and our Plans

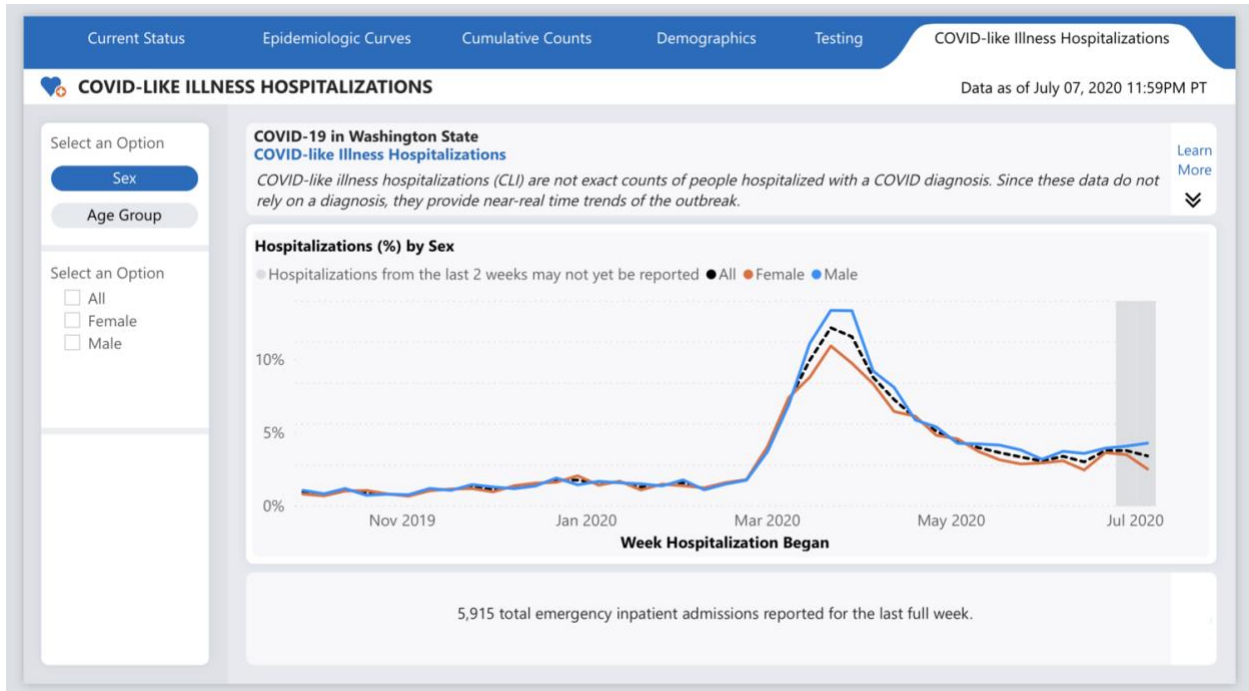
We had a good conversation with the new management of RTC. They are as eager to get started as we are, but we still don't have a start date and there is no way to rely on the numbers getting turned out by our politicians. It's not like we can look at the charts and see where this is going. It's all extremely political, and we don't like that it is, but it is, so we wait.

We try and predict when we can get started but we have no visibility into what the governor will do next as it's not based on anything we can point to. I will say, I strongly encourage you to go directly to Washington's own site to see the inconsistency between what your governor and the local press is telling you and Washington State's own data. We're just handing you a link to see for yourself so you get a better feel for what we're dealing with here.

We only mention it because it's impossible to say what will happen between now and August 1 or even September 1, or for that matter for the remainder of the year. We have no idea where this will go a week from now as it seems to be political whims, just looking at the charts and compare it to what you're hearing. There is no "target number" given to us because if the stats are right, we should be wide open already.



Sure, positive tests "may" be going up, but go to the link above and play with the testing tab and hover over the cases, you can see the percentage of positives against testing. Our only point is that we're not getting consistent positions on anything so don't try to blast us over not jumping aboard anything they tell us.



COVID-19 in Washington State
COVID-like Illness Hospitalizations

COVID-like illness hospitalizations (CLI) are not exact counts of people hospitalized with a COVID diagnosis. Since these data do not rely on a diagnosis, they provide near-real time trends of the outbreak.

This chart shows an increase, starting in early March, in the percent of emergency inpatient admissions with complaints of fever and respiratory illness (i.e. CLI or COVID-19 like illness). These symptoms are common among patients who have COVID-19 and many other illnesses. Looking at the CLI admissions helps to identify hotspots, anticipate need, and map the course of the outbreak. The increase may be an overestimate due to the decrease in total emergency department visits and admissions during the outbreak.

It doesn't matter what side you're on regarding this, all we're pointing out is that the decision is not based on anything we can count on. Every state is doing it differently, so there is no "settled science" on any of this as we've said before.

Regardless of what we do, we're not going to get consensus of opinion on this and if we did, we'd all be driving the same cars and eating donuts all day. We'd all be fat.

It brings up an important point again about the spirit of E@RTC. It's always been a point of debate, especially when it came to setting car criteria. If we caved to all the flame mail we received who have tried to editorialize us, we'd have never started. So, with that, here is a duck butt to argue about.



Photo by "Corey"

Healthy debate of topics is important in any good decision. For those of you working in big companies, notice how there soon becomes an underground when debate is silenced? Debate is important to any great society. After all, given that this past week was the 4th of July, that freedom we all think is so important is why we declared our independence in the first place, and fought hard for it.

We're a parking lot filled with cool cars and that's our focus.

Okay, moving on...trust me, I'll still get mail from someone on this. Argue with the state, not us. Don't make me post pictures of kittens. I have a limit too.

America's Car Museum Vote

You can still vote for the best car museum in the country. Thank you Joel Parker for giving us an updated link. You can vote here. These standings are important for museum attendance and that in turn helps keep the doors open. Vote if you've not done so already. We believe voting is still open right up until July 17.

We had a lot of plans for this season and I can't express how disappointing it is to see it delayed and pushed off even further. A lot goes into the behind the scenes stuff on this and we do our best to let you know everything as it happens.

A New Thug!

For those of you who know Amanda Rosbrook, she is now one of our newest Thugs. We welcome her to the group. Our Thugs are the backbone of E@RTC and without their work, we wouldn't exist. They too want to get our season kicked off and get the party started. Sean our gatekeeper and ambassador can't wait to greet you.

If for some reason, we're not allowed to get our season going, we are working on some kind of alternative so we all get to see each other somehow. We are working on some ideas, but we're not going to put a lot of time into it until we know what's going on.

July 3, 2020

You probably figured...

...it out by now that we like to laugh a lot. It's a contributing component to our success. If you go back to the old days and look at photos of some of us attending the show on Old Main, you see that humor was a cornerstone. That, along with some cars, asphalt, a very good donut, good friends, enthusiasts, another donut, ambiance, acceptable weather, and one more donut.

The purpose of E@RTC was always to have fun. You may have even noticed that we don't take ourselves too seriously either. You all have your daily work and some come from high stress environments so we try and be just the opposite when you show up. This should be something you look forward to on a Saturday morning. We're not there to do anything other than have a good time.

We get occasional mail or posts on Facebook from those who are mad about something we say or do or someone shows up with a demanding attitude. While they suggest, well, we go... let's call it a form of parthenogenesis, to be polite, we suggest they suck on a fresh cool mint instead. It could be that they just need a good massage, or a tug at some well-priced rub-rub joint along 99. We know you're stressed about something, but this should be a joyous place. You've otherwise kind of buggered-up the feng shui.

We've talked about it before. Usually it's a complaint about something that shouldn't matter to anyone all that much, but it's somehow monumental enough for them to write what comes through as a sprouting vein and spit all over their keyboard. Yeah, once in a while it's worth a listen, but most often when we get these comments, they miss the entire spirit of E@RTC.

Because we never take ourselves too seriously, we often don't know how best to respond. You could even yell at me in person and I'm more likely to think of something funny because it's my Saturday morning too. It's a parking lot. It's asphalt and some paint. It's not the Alamo or Denny's at 2 AM.

Yes, we're strict about protecting the event and the safety of everyone involved, but outside of that, we're just here to have a good time and put on the best event possible. We take event preservation very seriously, as we should. A lot of very dedicated people worked on building this thing.

We have to point out as a reminder to those few, that nobody pays us to do any of this, in fact, we pay for this, so you can't get snarky with us and expect a great response from anyone who gives up their time to make this happen. We've never wanted to shell out a few more bucks for a customer service department. "Excuse me, I'd like a refund on the fun I didn't have... I was expecting a lot more fun in the box..." Us: "Do you have your date of non-purchase...?"

When people get snarky, we politely tell them to go home, make some toast, hammer two boards together somewhere, water the lawn, cook a nice piece of fish, or do some laundry. You know if we ever do direct you to Lot 9 on a Saturday morning, it's out the far exit, and all the way to Moclips, WA, on the coast, in the old school parking lot. It's a lonely place. Silly too. I've been there.

The blog is whatever strikes us that moment along with the E@RTC news of the day. If you're just looking for facts, we post if we're on or off on the home page banner. This way, you can be spared from the misery of our humor, potentially saving yourself years of therapy. Snapping pencils every time you're mad at us can add up.

When I write, I know it's not possible to make everyone happy, but if you get a tiny laugh, then great, even if it's just a micro-spasm of a laugh, it's good enough. Even one eyebrow lift will make it worthwhile. If you don't like what we write, or my own views on any subject, it's perfectly fine. We promise everyone will still live to see unicorns and rainbows somewhere, just like you did at that rave in college. Hopefully you're not the dude who always woke up naked in the neighbor's front yard with kids standing around poking you with a stick.

We have no plans to change our style, however we do take suggestions for the sake of very personal improvement. We could all use some very personal improvement. Every doctor suggests we do something on our annual checkup. It makes them feel better. Telling me if I get any fatter, my eyes won't open, isn't news.

Yes, this writing takes a lot longer now because I'm intentionally writing slow to accommodate Prius owners. We do it as an important public service, but that's about it. We apologize if takes you longer to read.

E@RTC never had the mission to be all things to everyone. That was never in our original plan as we knew that would lead to failure. For you budding entrepreneurs, the number one rule in product development is never try to appeal to everyone, because you will ultimately appeal to no-one. Know your market.

Our general rule is, if it's funny, we say it. We have no plans to become PC. It's just humor. It wipes off with a fresh towel for most people we know. You almost never need soap or water. Being offended isn't on par with losing an eye or waking up at Motel 6 missing a kidney.

We've said it many times, and it's why we write the blog the way we do. We're just here to have a good time on a Saturday morning and go away with that feeling like your morning was well-spent. We try to keep all this as simple as humanly possible, so anyone from Fresno could show up and figure it out.

Don't agree with something? Then be nice, but we're not changing who we are. This isn't a strategic land dispute over land rights for endangered whistle pigs. Nobody here ran over your new phone. This is just a parking lot full of rare and exotic cars and those who love them who like to talk about cars. We're here to laugh, make fun of stuff, and have a good time so when you leave, you have great memories without bruises.

Our Best Joke Ever

Just to share how our culture rolls, in 2017, our opening day fell on April 1, yup, April Fools' Day. We were rained out. A few of us still had breakfast that morning and while we were at the table, we thought it would be funny if we posted that it was our best opening day ever. I got back and wrote a blog post thanking everyone for coming out that day, and added special detailed thanks that was over the top.

All of our long-term participants immediately got the joke and piled on about what a great opening day it was, completely with a fly over, and cookies by the Sisters of the Turbo Encapulator. You'd think marching nuns would be a clue, wouldn't you? The more outrageous it sounded, the more angry email we received about not letting anyone know it was still on. The posts made me laugh for days.

I've always wanted to pull off a large group prank on April Fools Day, and I wasn't disappointed. We still can't thank everyone enough for their enthusiasm and the spirit of the joke. It showed that we have the best car culture of them all. That IS what we're all about.

There was however, one particular reader who was especially mad from Graham, WA, who went completely postal in a very long rant about our not getting the word out on time. His verbal

tantrum was priceless. He called us a lot of bad stuff which made the whole thing even funnier. We suspect his friends clued him in at some point, but it sure was a good laugh. Of course, we never let up and instead apologized for everything he missed that day.

You know those rocks with inspirational messages drilled in? I received one from a friend that says, "laugh" and I cherish that rock. In retrospect, I'd feel differently if it came through my window.

June 29, 2020

America's Car Museum Could Use Your Vote!

America's Car Museum is competing for best museum in USA Today's contest. All you need to do is click [here](#) and vote. This stuff matters to the museum because it helps elevate the status and more people get to learn about how great this place is. It's just one tiny way you can help out the museum. Of course, we'd also love it if you'd participate in any of their great event as well. They have been very good to E@RTC and they are always willing to bring cars to our event, so it's our turn to help them out too. Please vote!

June 26, 2020

We've been watching...

...our car community through all this pandemic and we love what's going on; that people are still participating and getting out and driving. It's nice to see Avants grow, as just one example. Adam has done a terrific job building a community from nothing and there are others. I see organized drives and people getting out having fun as it should be. This was what we always wanted out of E@RTC.

While some over the years tried to fire brand us as snobs because of our show criteria, we do it because it makes for a great show of cars people want to see most. It's not quantity for us.

It's the same reason you're with one special partner rather than rotating through that half-dozen swamp donkeys you met in college who rigorously built your immune system. Or tore it down, now that I think about it. It would suck, if you have a nickname at the CDC. I feel super-bad for Typhoid Mary. Imagine that guy in bed who suddenly goes, "Wait... you're...Typhoid...Mary???? Ah, I think I left something on the stove..."

We're still not sure about our opening day yet but still want to shoot for August 1 if the COVID-fighting gods are with us. With the new mask rules, right now nobody will recognize anyone anyway and there would be a lot of awkward moments.

“Dad, it’s me!!!”

“Oh sorry, forget I asked you on a date... Don’t tell your mom...”

We don’t know what to think about all this when it seems like a ham sandwich can test positive for COVID and die of it on the same day. I’m sure I’ll get some mail about that comment.

So much to say on this, but my one wish is that people will do their own reading from a variety of “experts” and notice how they all contradict each other, which is why we don’t know our own future. It doesn’t matter what position you take, there is some “expert” arguing just the opposite, so lighten up. Every “expert” you have can be countered by another “expert” who says the opposite.

Like I said last week, we won’t know real numbers until the CDC puts out the total monthly deaths compared to 2019. Then we’ll have something to debate, so save the snarky comments. Our point is, we don’t know what they are going to throw at us next so who knows if we’ll be wearing aluminum foil suits by August 1. At least with the murder hornets you could see those terrifying little suckers. This is like chasing phantoms. No more like cooties in school.

I know, someone is going to write me, “MY gramp almost died of cooties in the war...”

Speaking of debates, one of the hallmarks of E@RTC is that we’d get together and debate cars in good spirit. We welcomed all different forms as long as they met the show theme criteria. Outside of that, people have brands they love and identify with the most. One of the best parts is listening to people talk about what they love or hate and why.

For some reason, debate has turned into a bad word in our society and we want to keep it alive at E@RTC where we can debate cars or just about anything. Remember our old debates about the survival of Tesla? Debate is how great decisions are made. The silencing of debate usually means the loudest voice is wrong and can’t stand up to scrutiny. Disagreements shouldn’t come to chasing each other with a stick. At E@RTC, we’ve never scared anyone up a tree. We’ve had our own version of Ford Versus Ferrari, but with parked cars, people standing around, and nobody burned up hitting a fence.

Drive-in Chow

Hey, does anyone know of some good drive-ins? I’ve been looking for something good, and someplace I can eat from my car and not have to race home and repaint a bathroom a few hours later. I’ll dig out the pesky french fry between the seats later. I can only go to Dick’s so many times before people start talking. Burgermaster remains a favorite, but where else? Please send your comments. Yes, XXX remains one option. Sonic kind of sucks, if we’re being honest. (It’s why it’s in Renton). We’ve done Pick-Quick and a shout out to them for coming to E@RTC. That’s a good one, but we also need more for destination drives. Please send some along and we’ll put them up.

Speaking of shout-outs, don't forget all the guys up at Salish Lodge! I miss the attic. Good pizza! Gooood pizza! By now, I hope you know by now I'm never going to write about a great salad somewhere. My God, who thinks okra tastes good?

June 19, 2020

When I write the...

...blog, I'll usually get started days before with a few things that I want to bring up; news about E@RTC, or something interesting. Possibly share some embarrassing moments or make fun of something. It will often take all week to write the blog, and sometimes I'll read it and want to start over. It's the electronic equivalent of a crumpled up paper, except I miss the can toss every time. This week was like that. I was ready to go, but then I read it just before it was time to post and decided, nope, I wanted to start over. It's why I'm late posting this.

We're still thinking of starting E@RTC on August 1, so pencil that that on to something important. Write the date in Sharpie on someone's forehead so you remember. We won't make the final call for a while yet. We suspect that first day will be massive. Think about it. Opening Day AND warm weather! That's like double hot fudge! That's almost like dating twins!

We still have to wait for the governor to stop fiddling around with people's livelihoods and let them make their own call. We'd take him more seriously if fifty states didn't all disagree with each other, or if scientists had more consensus on the spread, but everyone seems to change their mind on the science of all this, so we're just going to remain a skeptic for now. I somehow doubt we have the smartest governor of the bunch.

You can find a counter to everything on COVID, so please don't argue with us over the seriousness. We'll believe it when we get some accurate stats compared to prior years that show the true bump. With gunshot victims added to the total, it's hard to believe anything that's put out, and skepticism is a good quality, not a bad one. So color me skeptical. Don't have an aneurysm over our position and we delete the snarky comments.

E@RTC has always been about uniting people. All the brands were just as polarized by culture as we are politically when we began in 2009. Brand tribalism was a real thing in this community. Some said we'd never unite the tribes, but we did. So how did we do it? We focused on just having fun. We ignored everything else.

We made it so there was no sacred ground on the parking lot. Believe it or not, when we first started, some argued about corners of the lot having higher status than others. This is the core reason we move car sections by brand every week. There is no asphalt status. We've kicked people out for trying to start arguments over the parking lot or some car brands over others.

Every corner of the lot is the same. There are no better views, or a pricier neighborhood. It's all just one big parking lot. There is no class difference. We shuffle the cars around based on what we think will happen that Saturday. We like all cars. We're just a show that's based on a theme of what people want to see most.

Still, we get a few who think there is status in some corner of the lot. I'd get down and point for these individuals and say, "This is asphalt! It's cheap as hell, just seven to fourteen dollars a square foot. You've paid more to kill toe fungus. It's everywhere and if you want some, you can get a whole truck to deliver it right to your door!" Given how long it lasts, it's probably cheaper than maintaining a lawn!

So who does show up at E@RTC?

I get this question when I'm outside of E@RTC from people who've never attended before. We thought we'd share who's sort of typical at E@RTC. First off, and most important, you can't tell the difference between participants and spectators. They look the same, act the same, and they are 99% nice people. We have a low tolerance for assholes and kick them out. It's like weeding except we don't spray them with anything.

Most who show up as participants of E@RTC are self-made. If I had to look at the largest percentages, most are small to mid-cap business owners. The next largest group are senior leadership in large companies. Tech comes to mind, but it's not all tech. I can't even say that Microsoft dominates the group. It's Amazon, VALVe, other gaming companies, a few athletes, celebrities in one form or another. People from all trades. We have a few in the medical profession. I honestly don't know if we have a proctologist or two, but I'm guessing we do. We get plenty of pilots too. The point is, there is no one company or profession that dominates. More and more women are showing up as owners and the percent of women-owned exotic and rare cars is well on the rise.

We have teachers, lawyers, people into real estate. We have some who are first generation immigrants, some who go back generations, and everything in between. Average age is probably late 40s. Sure, like anything, we get a few spoiled brats, but we often have to kick them out too when they behave badly. We get a "Karen" or two, but that often doesn't end well. Security is there to help when we need it. So is Redmond PD.

We just want to have a good time on a Saturday morning. We've always had our opinions about what matters to us. It's a part of our brand. We're as eager as you are to get started, so we're counting down the days until we can resume our season and get back to good times.

June 11, 2020

I'm still tap dancing...

...on this blog until we're able to resume E@RTC. No, more like super-shitty river dancing. Trust me, we will put up our opening day faster than a fat guy on Cheetos. We can't wait to get started, and the more that is known about COVID, the more it's becoming clear this was a way-overblown shutdown and that political kerfuffle will have an impact on how fast we get back to normal. It's maddening when you look at the impact on small business, and compare results to states that didn't shut down at all. We hope to have August 1 as our opening day. That would give us a ten week season. We will have details soon enough.

Just so you know, as a courtesy to Prius drivers worldwide, I'm rewriting the entire website at half speed.

America's Car Museum

The pandemic shutdown resulted in a devastating impact on the museum and its operations down in Tacoma. Some of the one-size-fits-all restrictions placed on the museum by our governor, given the museum's size and configuration are just silly, but that's a whole-nother topic.

The Museum relies heavily on donations in addition to revenue from events, memberships, and ticket sales. All of that either went away entirely or was limited because of the restrictions. We want to help them any way we can, so if possible, get involved in some way, attend, donate, or participate in any of the cool stuff on their calendar. We will do some type of co-event if we can later in the season.

We were thinking of getting exotic and rare car owners to auction off a ride from RTC to Salish Lodge for lunch or dinner or something when things open back up. If it's something you'd like to do, let us know. Write us with what you drive and we'll add your name to the list. Or, if you have a hankering to write them a fat check, they would appreciate the help. I'll have to pay someone to ride with me, but that's the price I pay for annoying you here. I promise not to sing.

I've been talking to others about trends and travel, and because of then pandemic, people want to drive rather than fly to their next vacation destination. It's not just because of the pandemic. Flying isn't so fun anymore. Coach has slowly become luggage class anyway. With people more reluctant to fly, I'll bet the airlines will have to start offering more if they want to get people to put up with them. They won't bring back peanuts because of allergies, but it doesn't stop them from liquoring up the entire plane to at least unlimited gummy worms or something. Even first class over time has turned into just slightly better seats with prison-quality food. That would be a photo, an entire cabin of people gnawing on gummy worms.

This means road trips will be a little more crowded, but still fun anyway. Did you ever play Punch-buggy or Slug-Bug as a kid? On a family road trip, you'd slug each other at the first sight of a VW Bug? You'd show up at Gram-Grams missing a tooth with a couple of bruised arms or severe head trauma if you were really into it.

Thanks Guys-

As all of you long timers know, E@RTC has had volunteers support us for a stretch before moving on. We have a long list who have helped us over the years and moved on and we'd love to do something for them to memorialize their contribution in some way. This season, Nick Burgeron and Dan Putnam have decided to move on to other things. Their contribution was huge. Nick joined us in our third season and Dan joined us in season five. Both were big supporters of our mission, they were both involved on our days of the events and behind the scenes with various tasks that needed to be done.

We can't thank them enough for their work these past few years. Dan was responsible for helping us better define our show criteria along with updates, getting our jackets sorted out and Nick managed a lot of our day of show activities. Nick also worked on our sponsorships. I'm sure we will still see Nick and Dan as they may still show up as needed and now they get to just hang out. No, not that kind of "hang out."

We have had many others to thank who gave up a lot of time over the years. John & Mikaela Fowler were big contributors, as was Ted C, Blair North, and so many others. We don't take their contribution lightly ...wait, we're fat, we don't take anything, "lightly." Would be fun to have a Thug reunion. So many great memories with these guys. They are all family to us.

It takes a lot to sustain E@RTC and the event has always been fragile. It wouldn't take much to destroy it and so we're highly appreciative when we make it through each season. It couldn't be done without the volunteers.

Thanks for the bakery suggestions and we welcome more and I'll put them up. We may even make a page of destinations. We're going to form The Society for the Preservation of Gluten and make it a thing. We can make great bakeries a good driving destination. Send your thoughts and we'll put them up.

After a late night visit to Arby's, I was thinking The Violent Schitz would be a great name for a band.

June 4, 2020

We hope to have...

...our opening day just as soon as it's allowed. We're not going anywhere for now. Through all this, we wait. Hopefully you're getting out there for some good long drives. There is so much we wanted to cover with E@RTC this summer and we will do our best to make whatever season we

have left our very best. We're not ready to snap a wet towel on the season's bare ass just yet. We will do all we can to resume as soon as we can.

Now that hospitals can move on to elective procedures, you know it's time to get that colonoscopy scheduled you always wanted. While stuck in traffic I've occasionally wondered how those doctors chose that profession. Were they daydreaming and drawing assholes as a kid? What was it?

When I think of becoming a doctor; all the training, and required good grades after late night studying, only to end up shoving a camera up someone butt seems like a big fail to me. It must be good money. I always wonder what dinner conversation is like. I wonder if they go to work and think about the assholes they see that day. What's a good day in that profession because I don't see any. Do they come to E@RTC? Do they tell anyone?

If I were thinking about becoming a doctor, there are a million things that would interest me more, but I guess everyone else must want those jobs. Was there a career fair? Did those docs pick the short straw? What? It must be very good money in shoving a camera up people's unconscious ass I guess. I can just hear the father-son or daughter talk, "You know Chris, there is good money in shoving camera's up people's asses..." Chris, quietly listening with a finger in a dinner roll.

If you've not had yours yet, you're in for a treat! The worst part is the gallon of stuff you have to drink the night before. Tip; sleep within reach of the toilet, or clinch with your life. Avoid carpet. Your call. To cut costs, you get a prescription to Taco Bell the night before. Yummy.

You could probably have it done a lot cheaper in Mexico and make a vacation highlight out of it. They probably use a GoPro on a hose, but you'd save a few bucks. You may even get paid if you're willing to return to the US with a colon full of blow. Where am I going, this was supposed to be about cars.

You know, waking up after a colonoscopy is like that time you got drunk with your college buddies, woke up, didn't feel right, but knew better than to ask what you just did. Better to go home and pray there were no pictures. Okay, now I'm done.

I guess I'm not. So if proctologists show up at E@RTC, are they like dentists who high-five the patients they see? Maybe they don't recognize them from the other end. Okay, done.

Do they snake their own drain? Sorry, I'm having trouble putting this one down.

EDIT: After I posted this, I was thinking, you know you could have worked for SpaceX and been high-fiving each other after a successful launch! Instead you're wet-high-fiving the nurse for you're ten-thousandth butt-cam.

Just when you think 2020 couldn't suck any more... I don't want to get into it. Enough has been said about everything already by everyone else. We just want to stand around and talk about cars again. I've never known a situation where there was virtually 100% condemnation and we're there with everyone else. As for the rioters, and those who do bad things while on the job, hope they see jail with lots of bad food prepared by inmates who don't like them. We all just want to see justice served and get back to work.

Hey, I found a great bakery in North Bend. They were clever with the name. It's called the North Bend Bakery. It's just a few doors down from Twede's, which has been around since Lewis and Clark stopped for coffee. You can always tell a great bakery when you see a giant old floor mixer in the background and a few fat guys walking in circles. It was well worth the drive. Makes for a good destination if you're out doing the backroads. Shoot me a note if you find other good bakeries.

You know, I could have been a world class indoor freestyle skydiver if it wasn't for my love of pastries. Now when I go, I just lay there, spinning in circles, bouncing from corner to corner looking like an aimless fat Roomba cleaning the floor. No, more like an aimless hovercraft.

May 28, 2020

Group Drives and How to Make Them Fun

We kicked the gathering at RTC for a drive to death, didn't we? For those who were stuck in a dark elevator somewhere, there was a big hubbub about gathering at RTC during this pandemic. Read all about it on the previous blog. Of course, as always, a few trolls show up on Facebook and don't care if the event survives, so we deleted their posts.

Just so you know, we hate to kill posts and love a good debate when it's helpful. The posts were not on topic and not helpful to our mission of preserving our event.

We know we have a couple of people who are always complaining going back a long time and never do a thing to help. Everyone knows who they are, so we don't have to say anything.

Okay, once again, about drives, normally we do our best to host them as a jump off from E@RTC as long as you don't leave early. It turned into a safety nightmare. If you want to leave after E@RTC, wait until it's time to wrap up at 11 AM. We still don't know when we're opening.

About Drives

Having attended lots of organized drives, I thought I'd share a few tips, and tricks to dial up the fun and keep you safe and lusting for more.

A Wee-bit About Safety First

We don't organize drives at E@RTC for liability reasons mostly. If you get a group together and all it takes is one basement-dwelling-diaper-baby or "BDDDB" to cause a reckless driving accident combined with an enterprising Saul Goodman who wants his own Lamborghini, and the slippery lawyer ends up naming everyone. So, we thought, nah, let someone else do that stuff. We'll focus on our event and keep our cars.

We managed a few drives when we began, but all it took was a couple of drivers who got out of hand and it was just a matter of time before someone was going to get hurt. Besides, we had enough to deal with just managing E@RTC. We don't want to carry another insurance policy either. If the organizer has a reputation of driving like an asshat, be wary. They are putting you at risk.

First of all, never let someone driving like they indulged in shrooms or jacked on Redbull join you or lead your drive. They are a liability for you and everyone and people do call the police when there is a group racing up the freeway. If you're the only green car, guess what, even if you were not the culprit, you're the target because you're color is memorable. Bright exotics in a group are like skeet to roadside cops. Especially those with a hankering of bending you over there trunk.


FYI, if you're a fan of FlightRadar24, you can see how frequently the Washington State Patrol is out there. It's a lot. Here is a screen shot of a recent flight so you know I'm not pulling your bodily appendage when I say they are out there.

flightradar24 LIVE AIR TRAFFIC

Apps Add coverage Data / History Social Press About Commercial servi


N305DK Washington State Patrol

Aircraft photo not available
If you have a photo and want it to appear on Flightradar24, upload it to jetphotos.com

OLM  **N/A**
OLYMPIA
PDT (UTC -07:00)

ACTUAL **10:31 PM** ESTIMATED **5:52 AM**

AIRCRAFT TYPE (C206)
Cessna 206H Stationair

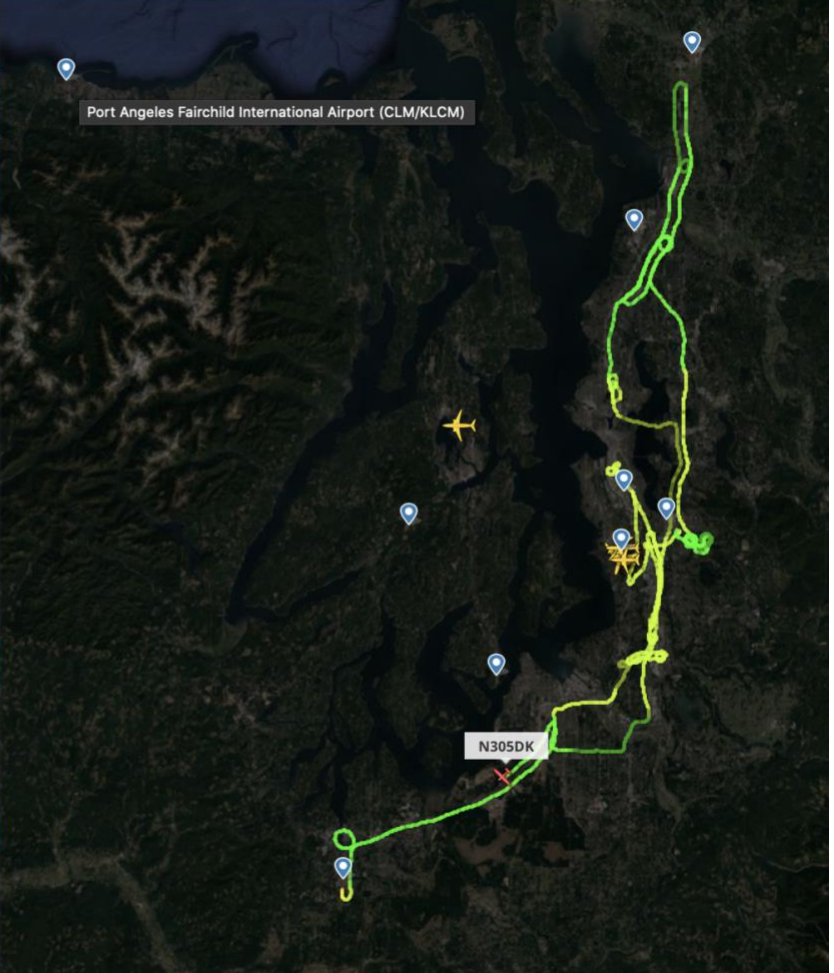
REGISTRATION N305DK	COUNTRY OF REG. 
SERIAL NUMBER (MSN) 206-08080	AGE (JAN 1999) 21 years

Recent N305DK flights

CALIBRATED ALTITUDE 2,100 ft	VERTICAL SPEED +64 fpm
GPS ALTITUDE 1,900 ft	TRACK 229°

Speed & altitude graph

GROUND SPEED 94 kts	TRUE AIRSPEED N/A
INDICATED AIRSPEED N/A	MACH N/A



No, that's not a giant slug trail. By the way, did you know slugs are natures gum?



Notice the nifty FLIR hanging off the side?

That camera is capable of seeing exactly what's in your hand and record you playing with it, so don't.

The point is, behave! Take it to the track if you can't. Don't kid yourself that you're in a group and won't be followed. Here is a list of what WSP has in their flying arsenal. They can quickly find you in and a group of cars, and your group will get their attention because it's big publicity, big revenue, and kind of fun. There is no "safety in numbers" and in fact just the opposite, a group is an incentive to send a plane your way.

Organization

First, organize the cars in groups of about five cars per batch. One person is the group leader and the others just need to keep an eye on them and bring up the rear with three in the middle. This helps keep a group together through a series of lights and the lead then knows how many cars can get through the light. Organize the cars from lowest in front to tallest, so that some dude in a Phantom isn't blocking the view of Atom. It also looks better in photos. The car in the rear, opens the gap between the lead and rear car to let the others in on the freeway and everyone can stay together. It's a way of keeping things tidy. Do not pass the lead. They set the pace.

Organizing them in groups of five also helps reduce the inchworm effect with very large groups. Assume you will get split up in a series of red lights, so if you're in a group of five, so what. You end up with fewer cars racing to catch up, which generates the calls, and the armed blockades, machine guns and grenades. I dated a grenade once.

Radios

We strongly encourage you to get radios and ear-mics. Here is what we just bought for E@RTC and they seem to be decent build quality. Now, the problem is if you mix brands, they are tough to program between brands. You need someone with a PC and lots of patience. We tried two cans with string but it hurt like hell.



SAMCOM 5 Watts Two Way Radio Long Range Handheld UHF Business Ham Radio for Adult Programmable Walkie Talkie with Rechargeable 1500mAh Battery LCD Display Charging Docks Earpieces (9 Packs)

Visit the SAMCOM Store

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1	2	3	6	9	19
\$28.80	\$154.90	\$199.90	\$293.90	\$398.90	\$779.90
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- **[LONG RANGE TWO WAY RADIO]** 20 channels with 5W strong penetration and long antenna ensure you can talk freely with your family and friends for hiking, hunting, climbing. High mode provide strong penetrating power between the construction area. Low Mode saves battery life and long use. Radio :1.19*1.18*11 inch

Don't fool around with those FRS (Family Radio Service) radios unless you're hunting for chicken tendies in a strip mall. They are useless for any distance. We bought these Samcom radios and they seem to work well so far.

Again, don't assume you can buy different brands and all show up for the drive and dial to the same frequencies. It's not that simple so pitch in and buy a pile of the same radios. What makes the radios fun is that not only does the group stay together, the chatter alone is worth it. It also cuts down on the constant confusion when someone makes a turn and the group follows or someone drops off because they suddenly have something to drop off. You can also share interesting roadside attractions, and so often way too much information if you know what I mean. They add a lot to drives.

Food

When you're driving with big groups, plan ahead, especially if you want to eat as a group. Restaurants hate big groups. They may smile as they serve you, but they are not happy, especially when you just show up unannounced. If it's fast food, it's probably not an issue, but if it's sit down, it's a pain in the ass for the restaurant and they usually are cursing your name. Fast

food is easier to manage, and if you want a sit down, call ahead, and be there on time. Don't say you're going to show up and be there an hour late. Also, tip well.

We have a few jerks in the exotic car world who pride themselves on bad tipping. We all know who they are. Tip well, and be a great ambassador for all things rare and exotic and you will be welcome with open arms on your return. I hear about the jerks when I'm out and about and I cringe. Don't be one. Make Moma proud! I've hammered this point before, but when a group shows up and acts like BDBBs, it ruins it for the next group that shows up.

Gathering Points

When I think of gathering points, I'm out to avoid a string of lights that immediately break up the group. I look for sites close to a ramp where nobody will complain when a large group leaves. Park and Rides work well. The Sears in Redmond next to Red Robin would work well right now. We've also used the two Park and Rides on 405, the one at 70th and the one at MP9 "Newport Hills Park and Ride." I'm sure others can add to this and I'll post your suggestions.

If you can prearrange your destination gathering point, it's more fun. This means sending an advance team and getting permission to cone off an area. It's extra work, but worth it. You can buy tiny cones to segregate an area, but it won't do much good in a territory war. I'd also recommend periodic milestones where the group can gather up again. If you're doing the North Cascade Highway, there are several great places to gather.

If you're going overnight, I highly recommend Sun Mountain Lodge, and do it in the summer on a week day if possible, something like a Thursday night. Combine it with the compete loop. Two nights is best so everyone can hang out together. I mean gather.

Drop us a note if you want more details or have other suggestions.

May 23, 2020

We were disappointed...

...to see someone immediately take cheap shots about our asking that there not be gatherings at RTC until we're back on. Of course, this speculating individual was quick to jump on Facebook and condemn RTC and us. That's like a fowl ball to the nuts, but we can take it. Before the bench charges the mound on our behalf, we wanted to explain. (That was a baseball analogy for those in Fresno.)

Our request was born from an exchange we had with the management of RTC some weeks ago when we were thinking about doing something to support the restaurants of RTC during this time. They wanted our help, but doing it was tricky given the City of Redmond's position, so we

agreed there would be no gatherings. We posted where we were on this, and why, and we asked that everyone just be patient. Keep in mind, some of this is city politics at a time when we need their support during our season.

As you know, and it's well documented on this nifty website, that we've always welcomed drives out of E@RTC both after and on other days when we're not on. If you've read the blog, we write about it too. We do point out we can't sponsor drives because of liability reasons. This blows a giant hole in that theory that we want to somehow control everything. We don't. For those of you who are entrepreneurial, remember this little tip when someone projects motive on you. It's a projection of who they are. It's useful in competitive strategy, but I digress.

Right now, with RTC under new ownership, our presence at RTC remains a delicate matter and we're still working through the details. Some of which includes our obtaining our own event insurance. They have asked for certain things, we've asked for some stuff in return, and we're trying to make a point that we're a cooperative bunch. The new owner's rep isn't exactly a car fan. They asked that we not gather and we're passing it along. That should be the end of it, but nope. This, like other car drama, always spouts ugly hairy legs of its own. Don't people have more to do? Jeeze, go make a casserole or something!

I can't help but think that those who stir shit, if they were dog's they'd be the ones who'd have to wear a cone after every vet visit. They don't know when to leave something alone. Don't blame Redmond Town Center either as they are trying to sustain a great relationship with Redmond city government. So, if this isn't connecting, let me say it a little differently in case this is hard to grasp. Stop licking your own junk on this, you're grossing us out. That should generate mail from some shirt tucker somewhere.

For those of you organizing drives, we know you mean well. We're not on you about this, we're just making a simple request that until we're through this stage, that there not be gatherings at RTC. This isn't hard.

Some out there, who want to spout off, just don't think the relationship with RTC is all that important. There is always someone who didn't put ten minutes into helping us build this event, but are so willing to cheap shot everyone involved and ruin it for what seems to be their own self interest, whatever that is. We've fought that since we started. We will always fight it.

We're just asking for a little cooperation, that's all. If you're going to gather as a group, don't do it at RTC just yet, okay? Meanwhile, we'll get things sorted out on our end and let you know when it's okay to resume. It's not like we're asking you for a kidney.

May 21, 2020

Every now and then...

...we like to answer questions we get when we're out talking to those who attend E@RTC. People frequently ask who writes the blog because it's never signed by anyone. The answer is, I do. I'll explain.

We started writing the blog for several reasons. The first was to keep you informed about what was coming, such as special cars, if we were on or off because of weather, COVID, black plague, locusts, mad infectious squirts, or because of some other problem, along with any announcements we had to make on behalf of E@RTC. We didn't want to sound like that old dust bag of a principal you once had in school who'd make announcements over the PA, so we write as if we were all standing around the parking lot having fun. In fact, that's the image in my head as I write. I just sit down and write.

It's kind of fun to leave out authorship and up to your imagination and as I write. Second, for some odd reason, it's easier to write, as I can worry less about what others think. There is freedom in it. Not as much as running naked majestically through a ball field, like a fat confused gazelle, but close. I write whatever pops into my head as I bring up what's going on with E@RTC. The news is usually in there somewhere. Some love the blog. We guess there are a few who hate it too. While we wish that wasn't the case, it would suck if I tried to write for everyone. We don't want to sound like a mattress tag either.

If we make you laugh, it's great. If we don't, we understand too. My mother cringed at my low-brow humor but loved me anyway, as I've been led to believe. I suspect as I grew up, she daydreamed about the missed opportunities to drown me as a boy, but here I am, writing this blog. Man, I want a jelly donut right now.

Meanwhile, we're still waiting to see what our state does next to hunt and kill super-tiny little Covids. The news is hard to watch anymore. "Covids" are becoming the new Snipe hunt and there will be books written about this for years. Remember snipe hunts? You'd run around in the woods in the dark with a flashlight yelling "snipe" and eventually run into a tree. Such fun! Run fast enough, and with a good solid tree hit, you could erase your entire childhood memory. You go home with a headache and whole new family.

During our off season, we consider the blog to be the warmup act for E@RTC. It's the placeholder to ensure you know we're here working away on restarting every season. This year, writing the blog is like tap-dancing to warm up the band who managed to electrocute themselves during the mic check. You're doing your best to keep dancing, but still can't get the smell of toasted human out of your nose as you dance.

Some ask how many read the blog. Well, it depends on the topic. We're not like some of the others in auto circles who claim to have thousands of fans a week while having virtually none that we can find anywhere. Here is how our traffic looked in the last 30 days.

Traffic

Sun, Apr 19 – Mon, May 18, 2020

Last 30 Days

Unique Visitors

3,693

+4.8% mo/mo

Visits

3,976

+7.7% mo/mo

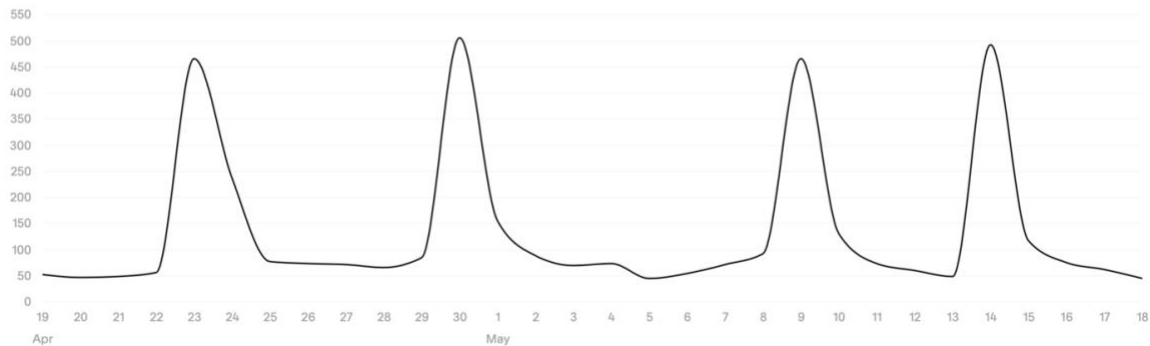
Pageviews

6,027

+10.4% mo/mo

Visits

Daily



This EKG-looking spike is when we post the blog, which isn't posted at the exact same time each week, hence the gaps. We otherwise don't get a lot of traffic when we're not running, but we never do anything to promote our blog, our website, Facebook or Instagram page. It's just not our focus. There are only so many hours in the day to earn our chicken tendies and so spare time goes into this.

We had 154K page views and 47k unique visitors in 2019. Not bad for a Saturday morning event that only runs about twenty-two Saturdays a season. Unique visitors? We don't have any idea of exactly how unique. I'm sure a few were unique enough to wear opposite gender undies more than once without telling anyone, but beyond that, who knows. When I think unique, my imagination goes a little nuts. I think of someone who keeps a hidden mailbox somewhere out of town for "special" packages. I think of someone with black velvet chihuahua paintings. Maybe someone from Fresno.

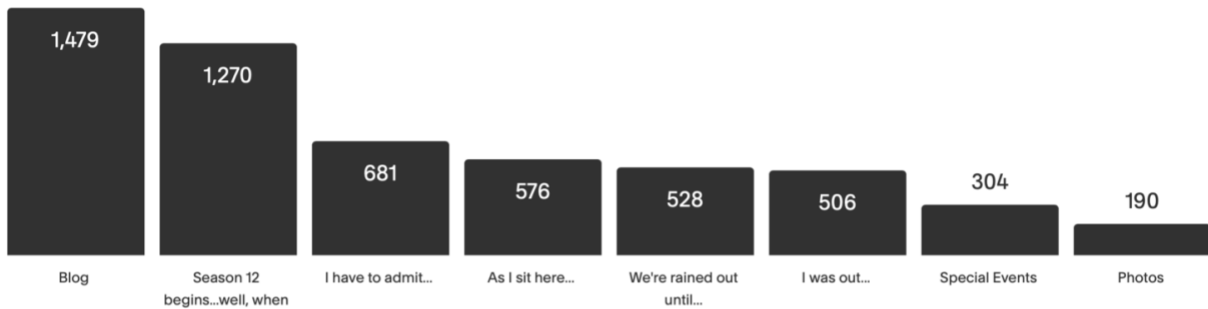
This website is about the event and not us. We post generally weekly, and put it up on Facebook, and that's it. That's all we do. It's all we have time to do with our small group of volunteers. We'd rather put our volunteer time into our event.

This next slide is where people go when they come to our site over the last 30 days. In prior years, we didn't keep the blog going all winter. This was a first for us, just to see what would happen.

Popular Content

Sun, Apr 19 – Mon, May 18, 2020

Last 30 Days



Page	Pageviews
Blog	1,479
Season 12 begins...well, when life gets back to normal we guess.	1,270
I have to admit...	681
As I sit here...	576
We're rained out until...	528
I was out...	506

Of course, because we've not yet started this season, our numbers compared to last year are way down. The blog in season is normally about half our traffic, not most of it. So, ignore that. Chalk it up to those little Covies. In season, we count cars and samples of people to get an accurate read on who attends. We're always looking for trends. We also give you an estimate of how we did at the end of each season.

Our goal is the quality of our event and not quantity of our web traffic. We want you to come and see cars that slap a giant smile on your face. Sure, it would be fun if this site were more of a destination, but we don't have the time or energy. We welcome contributors, but then we'd have to come up with a signature or something. It would be some weird name, I promise.

We're happy to share our numbers because you are all a part of this and our authenticity matters to us. When someone in the car world claims big numbers about anything, just ask them to show you. If they don't, your bullshit meter should be pegged hard in the red.

I also wanted to put up these beautiful visual aids to show why we think it's important that we keep writing. It helps us all stay connected and it's nice when you write us and comment, even if it's to vent about something.

So why do we make fun of Fresno? Well, because it's Fresno. It's Fresno!

May 14, 2020

As I sit here...

...writing this, I can't help but think about the car community we've built over the years that makes up E@RTC. You'd think this would all be simple to build and sustain, but most would be surprised by the number of political agendas we have to navigate in a season, yet we do it with good cheer because of all of you so thank you for all your support. Most want us to succeed, but there are those who want us to fail for their own weird personal gain. We don't get it, but wish them itchy underwear on their next long drive.

What's always kept us motivated was our core mission to celebrate exotic and rare cars and the community that loves them. It's a simple mission with challenging navigation at times as we work to keep everyone happy. Sure, we do get the snarky comments here and there, which is to be expected. We love suggestions that make us better, and we're good at ignoring cheap shots, so, if you're reading this, knock it off mom.

We recently got one, and only one, snarky comment about the virus. We don't post those because they come in anonymously and we're not feeding trolls any chicken nuggets.

We have empathy for everyone effected by the virus, but if you read enough, there is a lot of bullshit and disagreement out there from some very smart people. States can't claim their orders are rooted in science when all fifty states have different rules. A critical thinking person would immediately recognize the flaw in that assumption. These non-critical thinkers are the same people who regularly went to raves in college and ended up naked in a tree every time, and never put two and two together.

We've not just lost friends to the virus, we've lost friends who didn't get to a doctor soon enough because of fear of the virus and an inability to see their doctor. We have friends with companies that will go under, and no COBRA to continue insurance for former employees (I'm not talking about maintaining the snake tank either) and thus end up uninsured and are less likely to seek medical treatment when they need it. The point is, loss of life also happens in a crippled economy. We know this is a hot debate, and none of us want to see it spread, but the point is, there are risks in life and we have to accept some. Taco Bell is just one.

North Cascade Highway

The North Cascade Highway opened on Tuesday and get this, they kept it secret because they didn't want a bunch of people showing up. If you want to see something cool, take that drive while there is deep snow along the sides of the road at the crest of the pass, but I'm warning you now, there are not going to be a lot of bathrooms open anywhere so plan accordingly. It's a great day drive if you leave nice and early. It makes for a long day, but it's nice to get out. You

may want to try and look local. Not to the point where you pull out a front tooth or anything, but try not to stand out too much and you will be fine. They need the business like everywhere else. Avoid the mini-mart sushi unless you don't mind blowing the porcelain horn when you find one.

We don't have much else to report about our opening day future just yet. We are seeing a bit of disinformation out there about our future and we plan to start just as soon as we can. No, we're not done for the season. We're here and we're eager to get back to car stuff, so feel free to write us if you have something to say. We'll get back to you right away.

May 9, 2020

I was out...

...driving around yesterday and found myself in actual traffic! TRAFFIC! Tears of joy were streaming down my face. I know it's a pandemic and stuff but I think people are just getting back to work and in some cases apparently ignoring the Governor. I saw more than one business that technically shouldn't be open that said screw it and was up and running. They have bills to pay. People can be worried about the virus, be cautious, and still work!

As I was out, I saw a lot of people practices safe mask, and still keeping their distance, sort of like when you saw any nun with a ruler. You knew just how far to stay away. I don't know what's more worrisome, a nun with a ruler or a fidgety terrorist. I'd bet on the nun in that matchup any day. I'm not kidding, we had nuns in school that could win a major war before lunch! Think about it, you never ever see Chuck Norris tangle with a nun, ever.

As for when we finally start, there is still no changes. Our plan is to just remain on hold until we get more direction about where and how we can all meet. This Saturday would have been a hell of an opener too. So, since our April 4 rained-out usual kick-off, the score is two closings to the virus and three because of rain. With 82 degrees in the forecast for Saturday, we'd see a lot of pasty white legs for the first time this year. That's always a jolt to the system and it usually doesn't happen this soon. People walking around cars look like a couple of glow sticks in a pair of shoes.

There is still no word on when the North Cascade Highway opens. I expect once they remove the snow, they probably have a big barricade from those on the other side keeping the virusy Coasties out. Still, I can't wait to get out there.

The Whidbey Island loop is still a favorite and a nice day drive. Another is Bremerton Ferry to anywhere north or south. Pt. Townsend is nice. Sometimes I'll just pick a direction and just go. This will be a hell of a weekend to get out, so do it while you can! With temps in the 80s, it will be nice to drive with the top off. You can put the one down on your car too.

Yes, it sucks that once you're at some of these places, nothing is open, but get out, spread around some badly needed commerce where you can. Help the small entrepreneur. Buy some chutney!

America's Car Museum is really going to need your help when this is over so get down there as soon as you can and mingle with the cars. I've said this before, the food in the cafe is very good. Far better than you'd expect. This pandemic hit the museum very hard and so just showing up helps a lot.

We're starting to see notices about various businesses that have decided not to reopen. It's terrible news and there is a lot more I'd love to say on the subject, but want to keep this about cars. I still recommend getting the spiffy car out this weekend and supporting as many takeout places as you can, especially at RTC if you're in the neighborhood.

We're damn worried about the impact long-term from all this. Hopefully, you all want to come see each other when this is done and it doesn't feel like you're keeping your distance because got into the hooch, latched onto the nearest swamp donkey the night before and woke up to regret it.

I kind of miss you all.

April 30, 2020

I have to admit...

...the stay at home order is getting to me. I've not dressed up an appliance to resemble a special someone just yet, but it is driving me nuts. One can only tweeze so much or spend that much time with your favorite "love lump" before it's too much to bare.

Our governor is killing this states small business economy by extending the order, but this is who people voted for, so apparently people are okay with it enough to not raise hell. I do recommend that you let them know what you think, one way or another. Seriously, email or call, but don't sit idle, regardless of what you think. Be polite, but say something. Hopefully it's to open things up, but if COVID really scares you, stay in the basement and let other people save their business. Okay, I'm done now. I still don't want this to get political.

The one thing you can do is get out and drive! I don't know where to drive, but just drive! I kind of want to do the Olympic Loop Drive or "The 101 Loop," as it's called. Journey to the land of the toothless. I've not done it in a while, and stopping in Forks has never mattered much anyway. There is no word on when the North Cascade Highway is opening, so I can't give you an update for that one, and most of the parks are still closed.

I will warn you that with so many places closed, finding a place to pee can be a little challenging, so plan accordingly. Oh, and if you're not free styling behind an open car door, don't miss. You don't want to explain the interior fragrance to someone important. Especially if you borrowed someone's ride. Don't blame the dog for one more indiscretion. Bring garbage bags. They can do a lot in an emergency. That, and duct tape. Better known as, "Tillamook Chrome" along the Oregon coast.

Even with a drive, where else can you go? South Dakota may be a good choice. They never went into lockdown and had the trust in people that they would simply exercise good judgment, and it looks like they did. That was nice. I like to be trusted, don't you? It's only about a three day drive to dine at a sit down restaurant. Take your "work at home" to new limits! Stop at Wall Drug, then head back. That's about two days from here. What if you drove there and Wall Drug was out of toilet paper? That would be shitty.

Still, as I work on this, I never knew I'd be writing about a virus here, when we just want to talk about cars and what's coming up at E@RTC. How in the hell did all this happen? I'll bet the last time you asked that, you were at the top of a flag pole naked.

We've not worked on any specific plans for E@RTC until we know what's going on. We do know a lot of small businesses do not plan to open back up and that could impact the whole city of Redmond. The losses are so big, they just can't make them up after all this. I've received letters from several that said they are done, and it's just the tip of the floating block of ice. We're worried. We'll keep an eye on things and come up with something fun until we can get a meet up somewhere. We're not sitting completely idle we want to help everyone get back to work.

April 23, 2020

We're rained out until...

...August 1... well, sort of. The City of Redmond, decided to cancel all public events until August 1. Redmond Town Center is going along with it, and we're not sure what we should do between now and then. We'll see how the virus plays out, then possibly meet somewhere else temporarily until this blows through.

We're in a little different position because we don't need the lead time that other events require, so we're a little more flexible. Not as a flexible as the bendy folks at Cirque, who can fit in their own wallets, but we're flexible. This all seems so crazy and unreal. It's sort of like the time you accidentally took your Gram-Gram's medication and could see the back of your own head.

I think at some point they are going to face some constitutional challenges in all this and things could get messy. We all care about the disease, we all care about people being out of work, and we care about our healthcare workers. We can actually care about all three!

Already there is serious debate about the widespread nature of the virus and if we're on the backside or frontside. We just want to get it right and not drift into mass hysteria. We don't even know what to think about the numbers anymore. If you rely on the press, they will be entering Lincoln's tomb to see if early COVID played a part in his assassination, just for the headlines.

Take a big breath for a moment and think about this in a very rational way. Mooosaaaaa...

The CDC knows how many people die every day, year-in-year-year-out, right? They gather up all the data in real time, which is why they are called the Center for Disease Control. Key word, "control." The word "for" meaning "in favor of," I'd guess. The way you control a disease is to monitor sickness and death the second it happens so something doesn't get away from you. You don't want to know about Ebola a year after everyone's eyes are bleeding, now do you? Are you following along so far?

Okay, if the CDC knows every day who died of what, and they have the total number of deaths every day, they should know if there is an increase in deaths in real time in New York or any other city? Anyone disagree here? (I'll wait a few moments for anyone from Fresno to catch up.) In other words, if you subtract the "normal" death rate, from what's currently happening, you should get close to the actual number who died of COVID-related, even if not the cause. Anyone want to change my mind so far? Okay, so if they have all this, has anyone yet seen the numbers? Nobody is raising their hand.

If the number of deaths is increasing, we should all know by how many, right? Furthermore, life expectancy in the US would go down a smidge. You know I could have been a world class analyst if it wasn't for my love of pastries.

We just want to get together and talk about cars as soon as we can. We're not out to make any of this political and yet it's all become just that. Please keep checking back and we will post what we're up to between now and August 1. I know we'll come up with something fun to do. As always, write us if you have some thoughts.

April 16, 2020

We'd all be fine if it...

...wasn't for that crazy bee-itch Carole Ferken Baskin! If you've not watched it, now there's a dumpster-fire-rolling-down-a-steep-hill kind of show to watch during this pandemic! How do I get those seven hours back! It's like three dimensional Jerry Springer. Who knows if her husband

actually became a steamy pile of tiger poop in the hot Florida sun, we have more important stuff to deal with up here, like getting everything opened back up, an economy back on track, and our season going with the virus in the rear-view mirror.

We're still off because, well the Governor said no, and because of greater than 30% chance of virus, and a 36% chance of rain so the rain wins this weekend. So two Saturday for rain, one for virus so far. Our season opener will still happen sooner than later. We waited this long. Redmond Town Center needs us more than ever before and so I hope you're still ordering takeout from RTC when possible. Please do what you can to support them.

The virus lockdown is getting tedious and one can only tweeze so much, and if you've been following the news, they have been intentionally overstating the numbers because, you guessed it, they get federal bucks for doing it. Plenty to be mad about through all this, especially when you think about how this is harming small business. It's wiping some people out entirely and that's not good. Seattle has the worst in the politics of it all, so I feel sorry for all of you on the other side of the bridge.

Someone tell me, why the heck isn't Dick's selling French fries at some locations? That's pure blasphemy! Dick's without French Fries! That's like Joe Exotics without tats! Ben without Jerry's. Taco Bell without toilet paper. Oh, and, dare I say it, you can still buy an entire box of... Dicks.

The longer this goes on, the more kids are going to be born in nine months and the hospitals will be flooded all over again. I picture baby cannons firing in the hospital halls like it's the 4th of July in 76. There will be names like Covelius, and Corona-May, nicknames like "Bug-boy" and "Wu-Hun." It's going to be a strange year no matter what happens next. I think we just touched the tip of the weirdness iceberg.

Still, we all want to talk cars. I know there are some very cool stuff that's going to come out, stuff you won't see anywhere else. We have some great surprises, we just need to live through all this nonsense, so hopefully you're remaining sane and are doing something productive. I've got cars that have never been cleaner. How about you?

April 9, 2020

It was a little tough...

...watching what would have been a nice opening day drift by, all because it was still raining virus. We also would likely be rained out this Saturday anyway. But our missed opening day would have worked, so chalk one cancellation for the virus so far, and one for excessive low-level atmospheric moisture.

I know you're eager to come out and just get out of the house. By now some of you have been cooped up so long, you're engaging in risky personal experiments that could leave the emergency room snickering. Just be careful where you put stuff. That's all I'm going to say.

I wonder how couples are doing? You know, the ones who are always putting on the together photos on Facebook and have now gone deadly silent. I wonder if the search term for "meat grinder" or "cannibalism" has gone up, or, "Convenient poisons you can make at home in under three minutes" or how about, "How deadly is a nail gun?"

Don't worry, according to our own government, it will still be recorded as a corona virus death, even if there are a dozen see-through bullet holes. You could "fall" into a wood chipper and if the tiny bits tested positive, it would still be called a Corona death. Yes, they said in a news conference that they record corona deaths as anyone who died "with the virus" versus "because of" the virus. Using that logic, I could die with a common cold and that's the cause of death. We don't want to get political in all this, but we sure would love it if they would play straight so everyone could get back to work.

We're not sure when we will return to normal and have our opening day. It's possibly they will allow us to go on, but require the six foot personal gap. We can hand out badgers to make sure everyone remains far apart. We're open to any suggestions should it come to pass. Six foot wire rings would scratch the cars, so that won't work.

A lot of us are itching to get out and just drive anywhere, just to get out of the damn house. Some are just itching because it's allergy season. It could be because you're spending too much time with the cat. I'll bet you never knew you were allergic to that little fuzz-monkey until now.

They started clearing the North Cascade Highway on the 23rd and that should open sometime either late April or early May. This assumes there isn't an Eastern Washington blockade against us "Coasties" for fear of a virus uprising. Seems a little ironic coming from a few places better known for questionable relationships with barn animals. What's worse, eating a bat or dating one? Here come the complaints from Fresno.

I know I've been in the garage cleaning cars, how about you? They never looked cleaner. After scrubbing the house, doing all the spring cleaning, we've pressure-washed everything not nailed down. If there is virus around here, it's not very happy. I don't know what else to do with my free time.

We don't have much else to report. We're just glad you're checking in and know that we're right here. We're damn worried that the economy won't rebound and will do all we can to help in any way. We'll keep you posted on any news we get on this end. We are looking forward to seeing everyone and all we can do now is wait. I know we're all going to be a lot fatter than I was originally expecting.

April 8, 2020
Valerie Dickison

We got the news this morning that we lost someone who's well known and loved in the car community. Valerie Dickison passed away, and from what we understand it was sudden. Val was the Secretary of the Classic Car Club- Pacific Northwest Region and was very active along with her husband, Stan. She was also responsible for membership and a huge contributor in general. This is a big blow to the club given her tireless efforts to do so much to keep the club growing a thriving. She made a huge impression on all of us at E@RTC and we were devastated to hear the news. As soon as we know more about a memorial, we will post something here. Given the virus, we doubt there will be a funeral, but will do what we can to get out any news we hear.

Our hearts go out to Stan who has also been an important member of the club. Both were instrumental in building a strong bridge between us at E@RTC and the Classic Car Club. Our thoughts and prayers are with them.

April 2, 2020
We would normally kick off our season opener this Saturday...

...but, that will have to wait. We have no idea when we will start. Next, I fear we will have some other problem to overcome. We've not had locusts yet, or a major flood. We'd be commanded to build an ark and load two of every car.

We usually still have rainy weather to overcome and this year some RTC hurdles to get past, but we're making progress, and then there is the whole virus thing, and how it will impact our season. We just don't know what's going to happen next.

We know some of you are probably going a little nuts at home and we'll get moving as soon as we can. You're up all night eating canned foods and singing prison tunes. A few of you probably developed a somewhat questionable relationship with a sock puppet by now. We won't judge.

The CDC is running tests on the theory that those who can regularly eat at both Taco Bell and Chipotle in the same day are completely immune to not just Corona but also a range of other conditions from toe fungus to Ebola and they may even resist ticks. I'm sure there will be more on that study on the news.

In an attempt to be better informed, so we know what to do, I kept searching the news and I keep reading about the people who do die of this, and how they all have an "underlying condition" in some form, but nobody tells you what that is, or how bad it has to become before

this is fatal. What is a real underlying condition? From the news it could be anything from living with plastic tubes coming out of you somewhere to mismatched socks. I've tried to find articles that give it to us straight, but I've yet to find a clear answer.

We don't know what to think of the numbers anyway. Just as expected, this is all becoming very political when all we want to talk about is cars. There is a lack of straight information and even the state data doesn't match the CDC, so who knows what's really going on or why. We just hope you can financially hang in there through all this.

We probably won't kick off our season if we're still required to keep a six foot social distance. It's not practical. We don't want to be legally forced to sleep dart anyone who breaks the six foot rules. We just don't have enough volunteers for all that, and besides, we can't afford the darts. That wouldn't photograph well either. We'd look like Jonestown after a morning toast and it wouldn't be good for our brand.

We are eager to get going, but keep in mind even though we always set a date of the first week in April, it rarely happens anyway. We're a bit like a hot flakey date. You know the one I'm talking about that forever moves your special night out? That one! They are probably home right now in case you're wondering. Imagine they have nothing left to eat but canned peaches in heavy syrup, while you're living it up on fish sticks. Life is good.

March 25, 2020

Well we can't...

...do much just yet about all this. We hope everyone is doing well, taking this social distance thing seriously and helping out where you can. Still, I'll bet you haven't spent this much time running around the house naked since your cousin put the wrong mushrooms in the soup.

Again, we're staying out of the politics and are trying to just go with facts, and plan to help out any way we can, where we can. We are helping a lot by staying inside and not spreading this virus around. The daily numbers in the Northwest are going down, so this distance thing is helping, so far. We've got to get the numbers down as soon as possible or the economic toll will do more damage than the virus. It already has, but that's another time.

I keep hearing there are going to be a lot more babies around in about nine months. I'm guessing a lot of divorce papers in about two? We all know someone's getting a frying pan to the forehead somewhere after being cooped up too long. I've not read any stats about that. I've not seen any neighbors chasing each other with rakes yet, but it's coming. Give it time. Someone's going to go nuts and start yelling out a window.

Sheltering at home can be that perfect way to get that list of projects done before summer starts. This way, when all this blows over, you can come out every Saturday and not have to paint

something. Who'd have thought something like this could ever happen anyway? Who put this in their budget for 2020? About the only thing missing are zombies with chain saws, and too many people who drop their keys while unlocking doors as the killers approach. Why is it that people chased by zombies never have remote locks on their cars? They always have fifty keys and can't seem to figure out which one is the car key. Zombie avoidance tip; you should have about three keys, car, office, home. That's it! Put the others on another chain.

Takeout Meetup

So, the plans to do takeout and meet up somewhere are going to go on hold because of the new law our Governor just passed makes it a challenge. Besides, some aren't taking the social distancing thing seriously enough and we don't want to contribute to the problem. There is new information out that this virus can last on surfaces a little longer than first thought. It goes without saying, don't lick anything in public. What you do at home is your business.

Someone said basically, if you can smell a fart, you're too close. They haven't met some of our volunteers who could crop dust an entire 40 acres in one toot. Some are so bad you'd not hesitate to jump out of moving car at freeway speeds. I'm not kidding. One guy we know could ruin your clothes from fifty feet! So, it's nothing we didn't already kind of know. We think we should just stay cautious and not gather anywhere. Follow the rule, if you can smell a fart, move further apart. If it's Corona, best to phone ya. If it's a virus, better to wire us. If it's COVID you'd better be so hid.

This is serious. This isn't like that time you went to the clinic after that hookup that you thought was so magic after drinking on a good set of beer goggles. Unlike that, "reminder sore" you get now and then, this can kill you faster than that swamp donkey you met at the Suds and Puds if you're not careful.

For us in the car community, many of us are older than 60 and don't want to end up like Italy where if you are over 60, there is no ventilator for you. They just don't have enough to go around. It's kind of a death sentence for those who need air just to fight this thing. We don't want that here in the US, so slowing this sucker down is important so there are enough machines to go around.

Please do the takeout thing on your own to support business, but avoid everyone else if you can. Someone's life depends on it.

March 19, 2020

How about eating in your car?

A few have been asking if we have a new opening date. We won't know our opening day for a while. We could have a Sharknado next for all we know. The virus isn't our one hurdle but it does

buy us time to sort out other hurdles. We are getting alternate location suggestions, which is great. One very nice location was offered thus far and we expect more, but we don't want to move unless we have no choice. Hopefully this will all work out.

I don't know if you ever noticed this, but there is never any way to look cool while sitting on a camel. Ever.

We were talking about what to do about the economic harm to the northwest, and how us car folk could help those impacted by the virus restrictions. We thought it would be nice to show some love from the car community. We were thinking about some meetups where we bought takeout at our favorite restaurants, then parked in some designated lot and ate in our cars and left, taking our garbage with us, never getting out of our cars, but showing some solidarity while helping local restaurants. It may seem like a weird idea, but it's better than doing nothing but sitting home and sprucing up the toe nails.

It doesn't matter where you pick up food, and even the big chains are likely franchises owned by locals who are equally impacted. You could go to Taco Bell sit in their lot and race straight home to use up some of that mountain of toilet paper you bought. We could start a contest to see how far you can drive from either a Chipotle or Taco Bell without using a bathroom. You'd be showing both Taco Bell, Chipotle and Costco some love.

We don't care where we meet, we just want to get out of the damn house! We'd love other suggestions. We need to do something to preserve our economy or this will be the Great Depression all over again, all for a virus.

We could as an example, hit the restaurants in downtown Kirkland and park in the city lot, then move to another lot on some other night. Bring the daily driver, it doesn't matter. It's just car people supporting local companies.

If you like the idea of a community meal inside your car, post a comment here or on our Facebook page. We'd welcome any suggestions.

Also, a big shout out to the Salish Lodge employees who always take great care of us. Think of those folks while you're out. They have always been there for us, so lets show them some love. Even if everything is closed, it's still a great destination to go for a walk, buy something to go, etc.

Redmond Town Center is still one of the safer places to go shop. I'm just pointing that out.

What a mess!

March 16, 2020
Update!

We have no idea what's going to happen next because of the virus and RTC, the CDC, and every other alphabet agency and government official who is trying to keep us "safe." Like I said, we want to stay out of the politics of it all. However, it's not likely we will have an opening day on April 4. We don't know when we will have an opening day at this rate. We've got hurdles to overcome, and we're working on it, but we did want you to at least know that April 4 is less likely than a date with Paris Hilton.

We will write as soon as we know more.

March 15, 2020

We have other things to worry about...

We're just three Saturdays away from our opening day...sort of. Fairbourne, the new managing partner of RTC has thrown a condition at us that may delay our opener, or cause us to move, so keep checking with us for that. It could be a nice day on the 4th and no E@RTC, so keep an eye on the blog. If you have a glass eye, use the other one.

There is also the virus thing, but we're not going to participate in the mass hysteria. You take greater risks just showing up. We may be banned from gathering anyway, and we will address that as we get closer to opening. We try and stay out of the politics of all this stuff. We're just car people who like to hang out and talk about cars. Just wash your damn hands. We have a no touching cars rule anyway. So we were ahead of the curve.

March 5, 2020

No, We're Not Worried...

Well, we're five weeks away from opening day and the only thing on anyone's mind is the damn virus. Admit it, you've slept with scarier things that didn't require you to race off to Costco and fill a van with toilet paper. Or did you? You weren't so worried when that thing you were dating was tying cherry stem knots with her tongue at the dinner table, were you? Heck you didn't care if you'd get Ebola that night. You could have bled out your eyes yet you'd be laying there thinking, worth it!

This is nuts! It would be one thing if the symptoms were that you involuntary, and without any warning, pooped yourself on a bus or something, but that's not what we're reading in the news, is it? Who bought all the damn bagels? What in the world are people thinking? Seriously, all the bagels? We're dying! I know, BAGLES! That will save us! They are just bagels people. They have no medicinal purpose what-so-ever.

Meanwhile, the frozen pizza section of the store was virtually untouched, but bagels? What have you heard? What am I missing? I hear people are buying up all the food they can get. Well, what are you going to do when it all hits the expiration date? Ohooo, that explains all the toilet paper. We plan to continue with our event until the CDC says we should call it off. Just don't shake hands or anything else with anyone. We hope that in five weeks the hysteria dies down and that people put this in a little more perspective. Until then, we're not going to spend a lot of time on this. We're not. It's everywhere else. All someone has to do is sneeze and out pops a flame thrower to reduce them to ashes as a precautionary measure.

We're still looking for more volunteers for our upcoming season. There is an application and interview process but we encourage you to apply. You must have a personality somewhere. We may have to dig a little to find it, but if it's there and you love all things cars, this may be the thing for you to give back to the community. It's why we all do this. The reason we go through a formal process is because it's even more work for us if you don't make the commitment we need. It's incredibly rewarding for all of us to have done this so many years. There is something that feels good about giving back to the community with something other than a virus.

We're still getting ready for the season opener and you'd be surprised by how much there is to do. If you're new, take a gander at our rules page as we modify them just slightly each season as stuff comes up. Also pay attention to the entrance directions. We will be updating the criteria page as well, but just some minor tweaks. If you're coming in overnight, we recommend The Archer right in the parking lot.

Redmond Town Center is still a good place to shop without being inside... fresh air... less virussy.

February 28, 2020

Can you believe it?...

...wow, just six weeks to go before our season begins. We get to hear what everyone did all winter and see the new rides people acquired in the down months. That first opening day has a feel all its own. It's like a massive block party. It's also the day we turn away cars that don't fit the criteria more than any other day. We hate that part. We wish we could make everyone happy, but that's not possible. Still, if your car isn't the right fit, park and come in and have fun anyway.

Someone recently asked why we don't have E@RTC in the center of the mall every week. There are lots of reasons. For starters, the center of the mall only holds about seventy cars. Connecting the cars around the mall requires about twice as many volunteers as we normally have because you have to deal with the other 250 cars around the other side, and monitor all that too. It's a logistics challenge. It's also much harder to manage and it separates people more than we'd like.

It's fine for theme days when we're so busy, but it's otherwise a real complicated process to sort and land that many cars, not to mention then get them out of the mall when we're done. There is a lot of yelling.

We want to support the mall as much as possible, so when you're at E@RTC, make the rounds, thank the store owners for hosting us. It's important that they know we support them, given that they support us.

By the way, did you know an egg will grow hair if you leave it in the fridge long enough? Now that I think about it, everything will grow hair. Except bald men.

We're still looking for more volunteers for this season, so let us know if you're interested. Yes, there is an application and interview process. Personality and knowledge about what's coming in does matter. We want volunteers who help keep the personality of the event alive. We like people with a good sense of humor. Not because we expect them to be funny, but because they will get a lot of crap from each other. It's how we trundle.

February 21, 2020

Our Calendar is Up, Except for...

...German Car Day, which we should have nailed down soon. Not in the literal sense.

The other special events are on our, you guessed it, Special Events page, which is different from our usual-every-Saturday-event that the weather is suitable. For those who are new, we're on when the chance of rain is 30% or less. We cover all that in our FAQs.

We take over much of the mall on theme days and the event requires a lot more volunteers. We're space-limited to about 550 cars, and we tend to run full on these special event days, so come early. That's always one of our best days and it's just seven weeks away!

For those who are new to E@RTC, we take bad behavior very seriously and ban cars for good when someone doesn't follow the rules at E@RTC and we're getting the word out early. We're far worse than those nuns you had in school. We don't just ban the car, we go on Ancestry.com, and we ban all relatives and ancestors going back six generations.

Over the years it's been the one day when someone once in a while shows up who wants to create a problem so we're planning on extra security as usual. The police will be there and they will be out on 520. This is when we get to see who's diligently campaigning for Village Idiot somewhere.

I'm curious, have you ever been with someone and thought, "If I only had a pressure washer right now..."?

Our work behind the scenes is in full swing. We've updated a few things on this website, we start to dust. We make sure everything we wrote is still current. We find nuggets that our out of date here or there, so help us out if you see something. There is always a lot to do. It was a long rainy winter, and typically that means less rain later, if tradition is a thing. If we get more than 22 Saturdays, we will be thrilled. I think the least we've ever had is eighteen, back in about 2012 or 13.

We will now be looking for more volunteers to join the Thugs for this season, so if you're interested, write us. We could always use the help. Even on the back end, there is always something that could use some attention. Stay tuned for more as we get closer to opening day!

February 13, 2020

The Planning Meeting... And Our Future

Happy Valentine's Day to all you E@RTC Love Bumps out there. Hope you get a great meal and lucky that night. I don't mean in a gambling kind of way either. Hey, the thong better fit or someone's going to be crabby. It's a basic rule.

Valentine's Day, marks the true anniversary of starting E@RTC on that very cold February morning. I was afraid to shake anyone's hand out of fear my fingers would snap off. It was extremely cold, fun, but miserable at the same time. Like having dinner with a nun.

We had our calendar planning meeting for 2020. We're just waiting for one of the clubs to weigh in for May's German Car Day. We will get the other dates posted over the weekend so you can plan your summer and visits to Gram-Gram. Those leaving Fresno can set an escape date.

The calendar planning meeting is never easy and it's always a challenge to find dates that work for everyone and remain outside of other car event conflicts, but there is no way to make it perfect, so save the hate-mail postage. We do our best and carefully consider every date, and even then, because we're weather-dependent, we still need window of time to shift things around.

We're shooting for April 4 as our big opener which is always one of our biggest dates. It's also when we get the most nonsense from those who want to ruin it for others, so we will invite Redmond PD to be there to help kick things off. We ask your help in getting the word out about how seriously we take bad behavior. It sucks to get banned for good on opening day and you know how much we hate calling your mom... unless she's hot.

We also had our first meeting with the new property owners and that went just so-so. We love our relationship with Jessica and RTC as it's been and we'll see how this all goes, but all that may change. They have hinted at restrictions that are not going to work for us. In which case, should they hold firm, we will move to a new location. Let's hope it doesn't happen, but if it does, we will move as fast as we can to find that right location. We've been approached before and we'd welcome suggestions just in case.

February 6, 2020

Here we go!

Our last post generated a few direct comments about the problem of some taking credit for work they didn't do and per their request, if necessary, we're going to repeat our last post should we hear it from others that this behavior is still going on with someone somewhere. We want to keep the drama to a minimum. We prefer to have fun. We don't like giving verbal wedgies.

At the same time, if you ever think we missed a contributor who deserves a special shout-out, drop us a note because we don't want to miss anyone. We try not to take this stuff too seriously and we've mostly been ignoring it, but after a few calls, we decided it was best to respond.

We're also lucky because we're so well documented over the year. We have a lot of our original participants, volunteers and spectators, who look out for us, and were the ones who told us, not to mention all the photographs, various registrations, documents, and emails from every season of who did what when and to whom. We keep this stuff around just to make sure we memorialize who helped us. We don't want to leave anyone out either if we did miss something. I'm sure you all feel the same way about this, but taking credit for someone else's work is about as welcome as a tick on a testicle.

We're lucky to have the volunteers who do this every year and we never want to overshadow anyone's contribution, but we're family and we all have a role to play and there is plenty of work for everyone. We'd rather put our attention into our twelfth season.

Our Calendar

Next week begins our first week of calendar creation for our new season. If there is something you want us to consider, shoot us a note. This is always a challenge as we try and find the right days for all events without flame mail. No letter bombs will be accepted. Just so you know in case you're new, we have only a few theme days, German, Italian, British, and Classic/Muscle/Collector or broken out, depending on dates, etc. Finding the right dates for each group is not as easy as it looks because of weather considerations, the mall's activity schedule,

and other car events that may be in conflict. So don't get your undies in an uproar over our date selection.

Next will be the call for new volunteers. We have a few meetings, talk about who wants to do what, and we get ready for our big opening day. Stay tuned as a lot of stuff will start happening.

January 27, 2020

Oh, so YOU founded E@RTC, Really?

We received a call this week from someone who recently attended a car event where an individual was claiming to be a "founder" of E@RTC. This happens once in a while, but it's become a thing. Vic and Tom were not there, so it wasn't them. We never got that teleportation device to work, so we're fairly sure it wasn't them.

There were only two founders of Exotics at Redmond Town Center; Vic Tiscareno and Tom Nault. There were no other, "founders." Some who have previously made the claim were either involved in Exotics on Old Main in Bellevue, which was not us, or were not involved in E@RTC until well into our third or fourth season when we were growing. They were definitely not founders. It sucks when others try to take credit for other people's work when they were not there.

We had a few people helping us that first season who we don't forget. Christian Diamond, Ty Washburn, did a lot of the organizing, and Michael Greenwood did the graphics and a few others showed up later in our season, and pitched in as needed. Eric Reeves was one of our very first Parking Thugs, and he was the one who gave us the name, "Thugs." That was it. We had humble beginnings and a very small group, because we were a small event at the time.

Control of E@RTC has remained with the founders this entire time as the stewards of the event. Some have even claimed to "run" the event, over the years, which they don't either. They claim that they, to be more specific, "run the show," which they don't, and never have. We've never ever shifted control of the business of E@RTC. We have let others manage events to spread the workload, but that was it. We just want to clear that up, control has never changed hands, ever.

To be specific, volunteers have come and gone over the years and we consider their work to be an equity position, but there is no formal equity, really. We just want to make sure that those who put in the time, have a say in how we do things and are acknowledged in some way. It's why we can't have someone else take credit for their work. We want credit to go where credit is due.

There are roughly twenty volunteers within our core who all hold different roles to put on the best show possible. Tom still has the core business responsibility for the event, Vic has been a strong brand ambassador and others have joined us over the years. Jason Bourriague manages

the volunteers, Sean manages the entrance and so on. We list all the volunteers on our season ender and what they do. You can find that post here. We made sure we covered everyone who was involved this past season, and we never want to forget those who made huge contributions in earlier seasons. We're a group effort.

The event has never been in the control of anyone else but the founders, and we do what we do on behalf of everyone, including the volunteers. They manage things like fiduciaries. There is no, "lead volunteer" other than on event days when we have someone take the lead that day. We hate to write this, but we don't want to take credit away from all those people who generously give up their time and do such amazing things. We have a lot of great people who all pitch in and we run like family as best we can. We hope this settles it, and feel free to pass this around. When you hear someone make the claim, feel free to call them out on behalf of all who make the event work.

January 24, 2020

Opening Day is Just Eleven Weeks Away!

Are you wetting yourself with excitement? It's been a fast moving winter and I've somehow managed to keep the blog going every week. Hopefully that's a good thing. We know, some of you may pray every night that you wish we'd stop, but no, we keep right on writing.

We're now in preparations mode for the new season. Lots to do, including checking to see where we are with volunteers, shirts, radios, and other stuff we use to keep the thing fun and running smoothly. There is always a lot to do. The calendar has to be up, and we'll get that done as soon as we know all the dates. The calendar meeting alone is always interesting. We go through a lot trying to pick the right dates for each group that don't conflict with other car events. I'll give you a little clue. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! No matter what, we get someone emailing us that one of our theme days conflicts with their dentist appointment or it was their weekend with the kids. We do our best to make everyone happy. Some of the email about schedule conflicts gets a bit nasty.

We never thought E@RTC would last this many years. We all thought we'd be in jail by now for premeditated speeding or some other crime. We were worried that the winter months would result in everyone forgetting how much fun they had, but they didn't.

People still ask why we wait until April to begin our season. Well, we did originally kick off in February, but we all suffered disfiguring frostbite. Some of us had to give up our piano careers as a result. It was painfully cold and the wind would go through is like we were clothed in screen doors. We went out and bought a giant industrial diesel heater and named it "Sir Heats-a-Lot" but all it did was melt the first guys shoes, and made us all smell like diesel. It was loud too. And the thing was, you didn't notice your shoe melting at first until it was too late, then that lava would be on your foot. It was bad. My white athletic shoes looked like toasted marshmallows.

One day, we all looked at each other, as we chattered our teeth and said, “this sucks” and that was the end of our February opening. Even when we do open in April, we rarely get in more than one or two Saturday before mid May. By then, we’re far less likely to lose a limb to hypothermia.

I’ll have more actual news to post in the coming weeks as we work on our start. If you want to volunteer this season, drop us a note. We can always use the help.

As always, thanks for reading!

January 17, 2020
Now, About CES...



Showing up to look at cool stuff with 180,000 of your closest friends, relatives and probably a few you don't like.

I know I’m late getting this out, but you will see why. I said I’d write about the Consumer Electronics Show as it pertains to where automotive is going, so here it is. I’m going to skip all the stuff about the show because that’s everywhere and I’m going to just highlight what matters to you car folk.

First, this was a transitional year for CES because the schedule conflict with the Detroit Auto Show has finally disappeared. CES has become that important to automotive. It was reflected everywhere as I'd say autonomous driving was one of the larger central themes at the show this year, and I think that will continue.

If you attended CES's North Hall, which is now entirely dedicated to automotive, you'd think that the only future is electric vehicles, or EVs as they call them. You didn't see that many of the latest and greatest vehicles, but you did see some cool things. What you saw a plethora of, or if you're from Wisconsin, a pig pile of, were technologies in support of EVs and driverless cars.

I didn't take any pictures of the Audi booth because there wasn't anything that interesting. It was a nice booth, but nothing memorable or cutting edge.

The big fight at CES is over voice control so, "Hey Goodle," Siri, and Alexa were talked about a lot. Alexa remains in the lead, Apple's Siri and Car Play are in there and who knows where Hey Google lives at the moment. Apple Car Play is catching on, while Siri just kind of sucks.



Amazon, never having shown before at CES was the new kid on the block in automotive.

I did see the new Defender at the show in the Qualcomm booth and I thought it was cool. What made it unique is the massive number of accessory configurations. The thing goes on and on as if you're spec'ing a house. It has more options and accessories than Lamborghini! It also looks like it can run over more stuff.



This was cooler than I was expecting. It should sell well too.

Sony got into the act and had an autonomous EV concept car they were promoting. Shocking! Just think, you can select from thousands of Sony movies as the last thing you ever see as your EV has a skizzies right into the back of a parked semi.



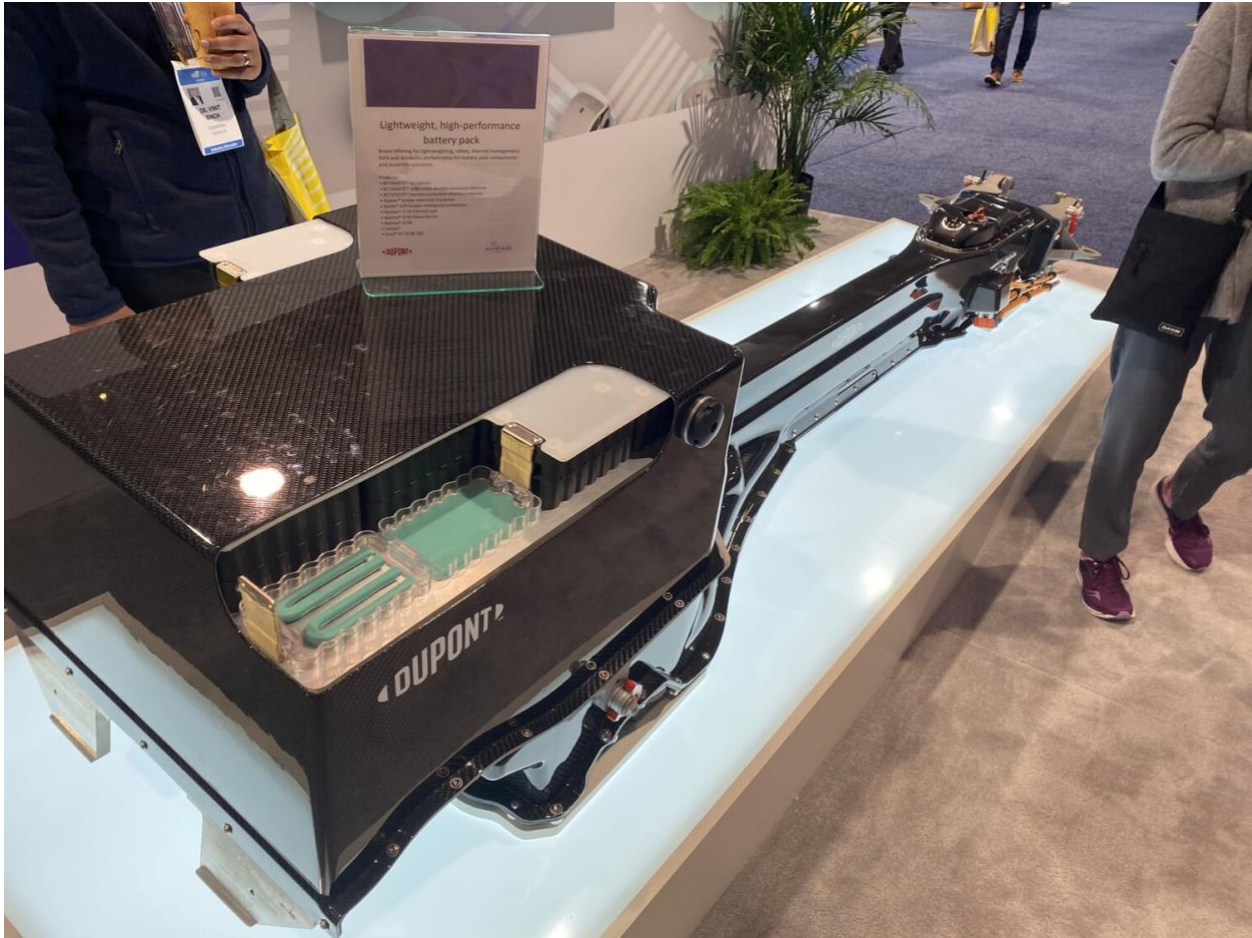
Sony's Concept EV wouldn't get much notice on the street. It's all about entertainment.



Until you see these running around a closed campus environment in regular use, forget completely autonomous cars. This will have to come first.

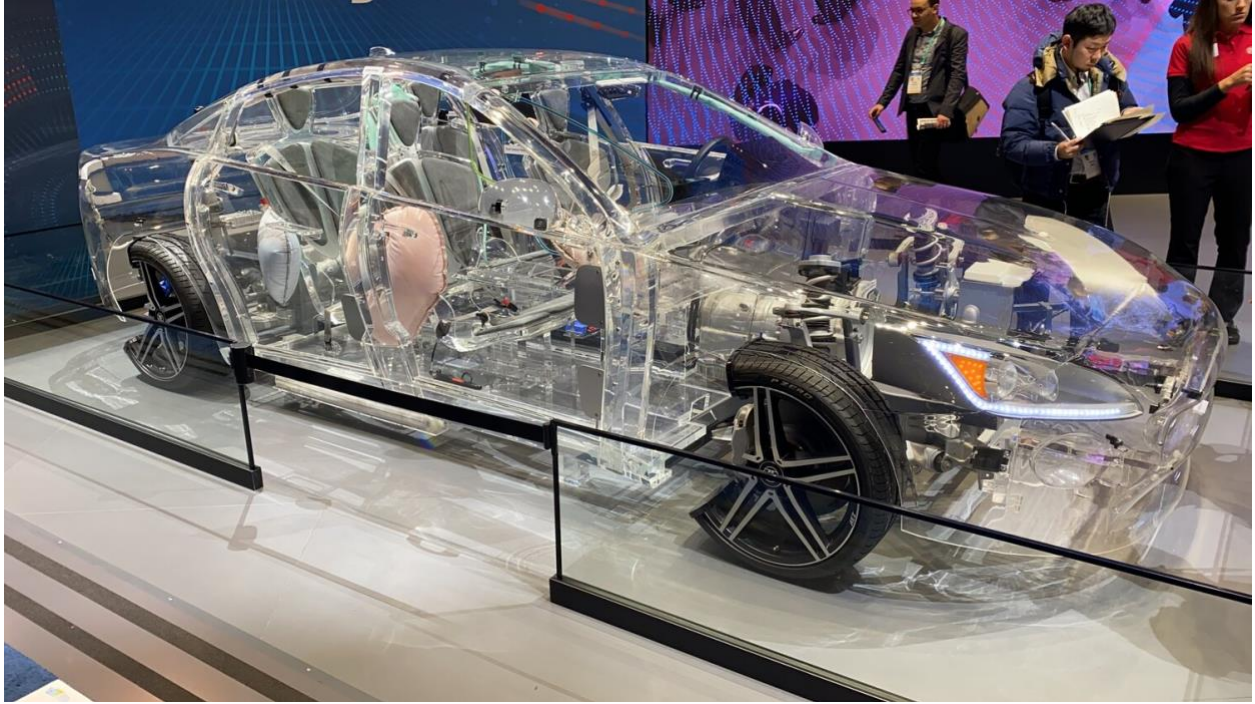
Yes, there were other EV cars, but I want to keep this blog shot enough that you don't miss your kids growing up. I could spend hours writing about this stuff.

We saw a lot of electric scooters, bikes, motorcycles, and just about anything with wheels. We saw a remote control trike, but who cares? I couldn't wrap my brain around the point of that. Most of all, it was endless systems such as what DuPont was showing. We saw over a dozen battery solutions, navigation technologies and object detection hardware.



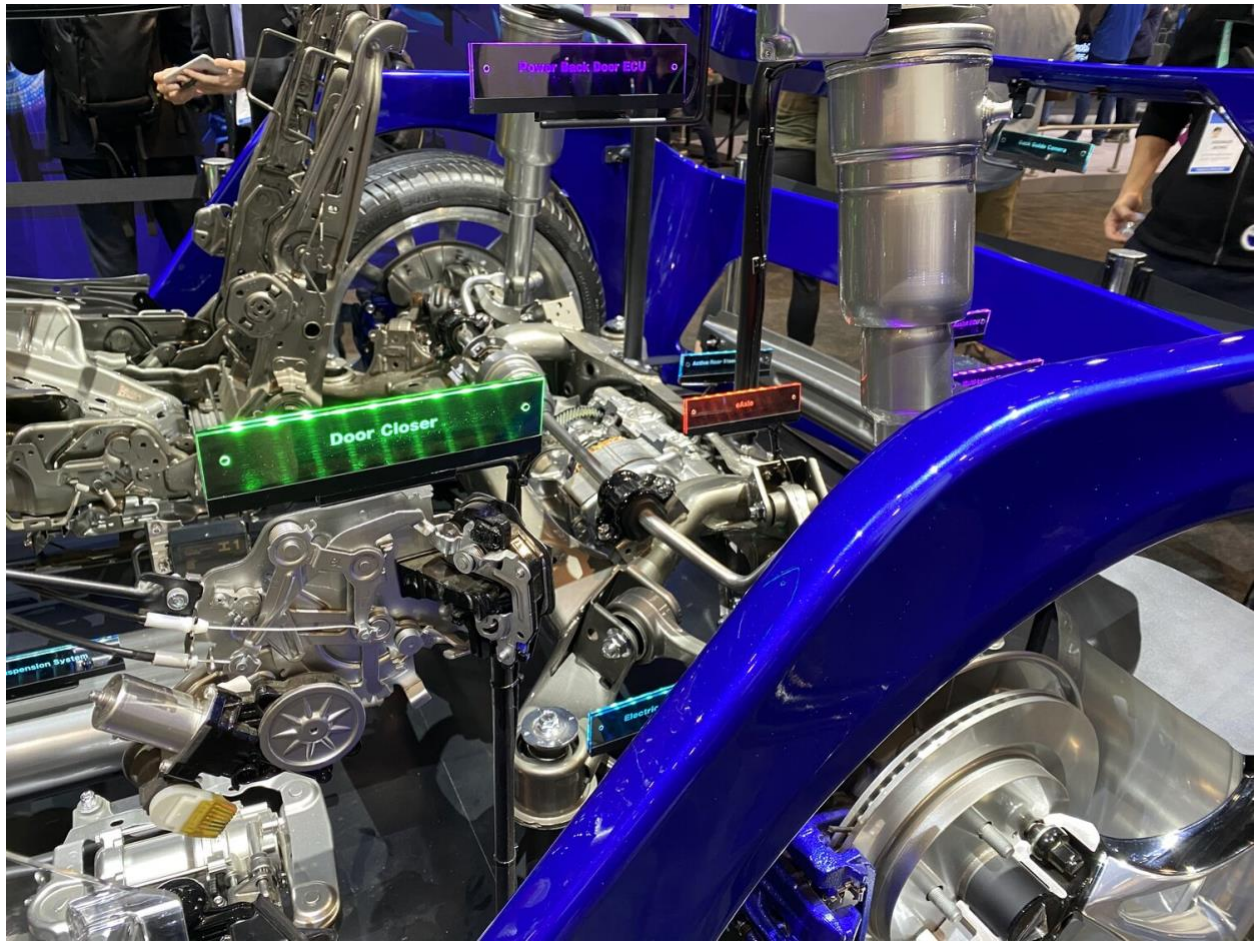
DuPont is into "energy storage solutions" isn't that what we call sleep?

Rather than bore you with writing about every little thing. I thought I should put up some pictures with a few comments.

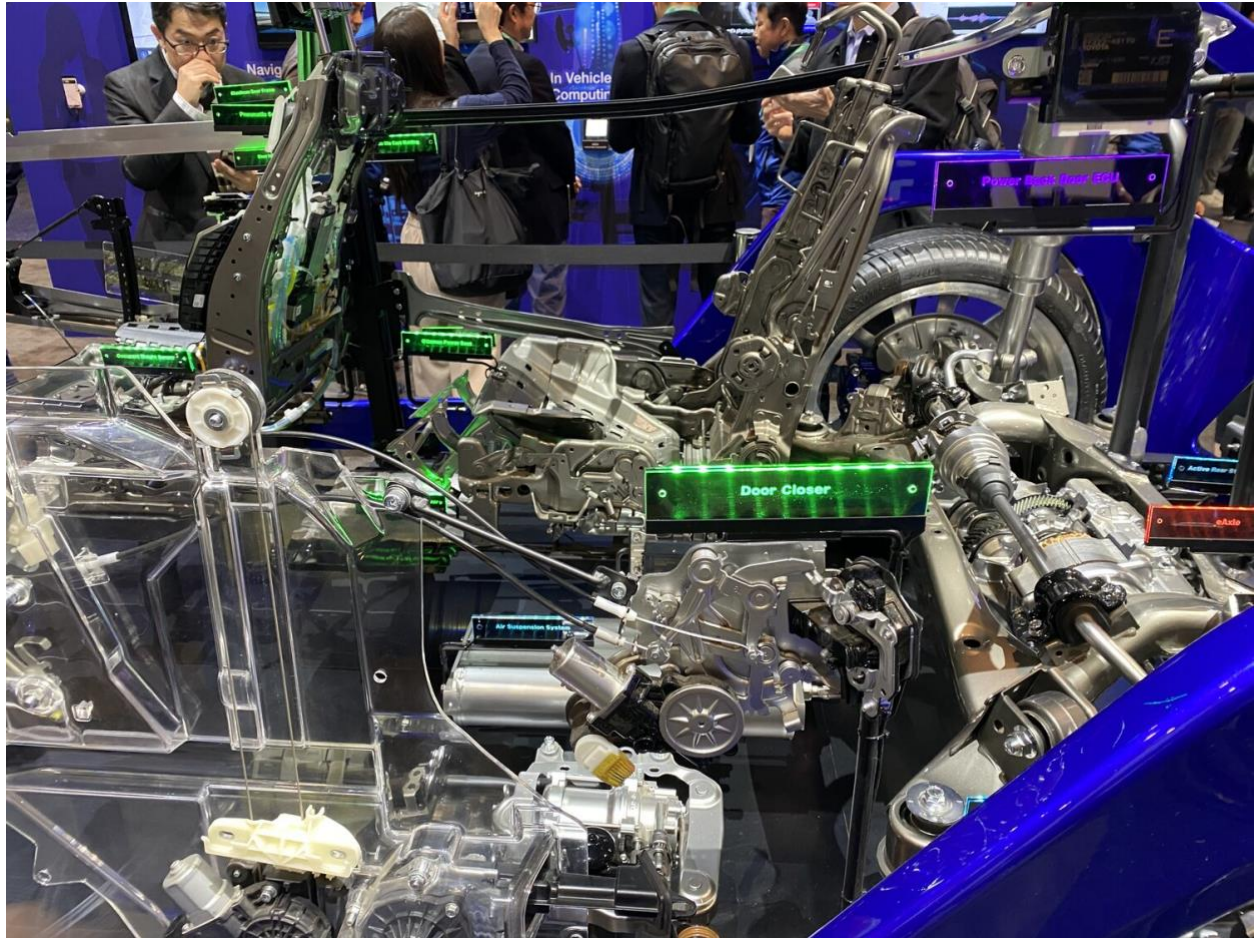


An exhibitionist's dream car...





This was a lot of work without making a point. It was a beautiful thing, but why?



Okay, we get it, we get it, cars are complicated things.



Okay, but why? What problem are you solving? Do we really need another EV company turning out what looks and works like everything else?



These things looked interesting, not comfortable and 3D -printed, which they said was not the case. Still weird.



An EV tractor by Nikola Motor Company. Thought it was cool.

If you went through CES, you'd get the impression that completely autonomous vehicles are going to ship soon. Not so. If you can't get a Roomba to stop picking up poop, it's going to be a while. EV is here, even though it's not the end-all-be-all as claimed. You need to get the juice from somewhere.

The flow for autonomous vehicles will be from the safest to the least safe, so think Roomba, then think outdoor cooler chasing you, then think closed campus freight, then people in a closed campus environment, where it's still slow, then cars on open roads, then last, trucks. Until you see those steps in wide deployment, don't believe the hype. Sure there will be assisted driving, but we're a long way from 100% confidence, and that's the point.

We still trust our 96 year old Gram-Grams to get us around more than computers, so until they outlaw them, and allow cars to take over, we're kind of screwed. Oh, and Uber is not taking over the world.

January 10, 2020

About That Blimp...

So there I was minding my own business when my friend Rebecca Lindland who wrote about Greg Whitten's 250 GTO for Forbes, calls me while I'm in a cab at CES and asks if I'd like to go for a ride on the Goodyear Blimp around Las Vegas. Given I've written about wanting a blimp to come visit E@RTC, it seemed serendipitous that I'd get this call to go to it instead.

I thought about what could possibly go wrong? Well, we could be stuck in the air, or have a helium leak in the cabin. We'd all have squeaky voices screaming in terror, all while laughing because of how funny we all sound all the way to a bouncy yet somewhat humorous crash landing. We'd be laying there laughing while sounding like Munchkins.



Goodyear? Well, so far anyway.

Can you imagine that radio call? First Air Traffic would yell at us damn kids to get off the radio. We'd be yelling back that, no we're crashing, but nobody would take us seriously. The ambulance driver would ask us to sing the Lollypop Guild song just for fun on the way to the hospital.



When the six of us arrived at North Las Vegas Airport in the Goodyear Van, we were immediately given a safety briefing with no mention of the possibility of a helium leak. It was followed by an online of boarding procedures, which is about keeping the weight neutral, so two on, two off, and so on. The airship engines were at idle the whole time. Once aboard, the crew does another preflight, we're all seat belted in with the windows open, and about two minutes later, we're off the ground and rapidly climbing with the nose in the air.

We could take off our seatbelts and walk around once we were about 1,000 feet above ground level. It's a similar motion to a large boat, and fairly quiet. It's easy to carry on a conversation and nobody wanted to close a window.



No mistaking this ride for anything else!

We all got to know each other as we talked about the experience. We were cruising at about 40 knots, maintained an altitude of about 1,000-to 1,500 feet above the ground. The landing was slow and cautious. The cool thing is that you can just stop mid air, which we did as we made our way to a landing.

There are some interesting facts. First, there is a good size crew that travels with the blimp wherever it goes. There are lots of support vehicles. Next, you don't just park a blimp overnight. It has to be watched 24/7 once its inflated. They make sure there isn't too much or too little weight on the landing wheel, and weights are checked every hour. If the winds come up, someone capable of flying is on the thing at all times.



A look out back.

It was kind of nice to say, "I just got off the blimp..." without disparaging an ex girlfriend for once. That felt good.



This is the Wingfoot 3 coming in for an extremely slow landing.

It was a wonderful thing to experience and something I wish everyone got to do. Thank you Goodyear for accommodating me, and I'm thrilled that they have been out there flying around for so many years.

So, what does this have to do with E@RTC. Well, stay tuned...

Meanwhile, there was a lot to see at CES and I took hundreds of pictures and notes. I'm going to get organized and think about what it means for all of us in the car world in the coming years. It was one of the best shows I can remember because of the leaps in technology. I saw a lot of products finally hit the market that were impossible even four years ago.

I can say that how we interact with cars is about to change in a big way. I don't think we'll see real autonomy in for a long time, but we will see a lot of systems making our commutes a lot easier. We're not seeing autonomous vehicles in wide deployment on closed campus environments just yet and that would come first.

Also, the gasoline or diesel engine is far from dead, but I don't think petroleum-only vehicles will survive. I think the future will be fun plug-in hybrids to get us around that won't suck as much as a Prius. I'll get a summary written for the next post.

January 3, 2020 Heading to CES

Next week begins the four days of the Consumer Electronics Show. It's not really just that anymore. It's more like four days of time travel without having to step into a machine and risking some bad burns or parts of you that don't end up in the right places on the other end. Or worse, end up in some weird time in history that everyone hates. When the four days are up, we all feel like kids who just had cool toys ripped out of our hands. We all want to cry that we don't get to take the stuff home.



This screams, "I have a lot of money and no friends," like nothing ever before.

So what does CES have to do with cars? Just about everything! If you want to see where automotive is heading, you're not going to see it in all its glory at SEMA or Detroit, you're going to see it at CES. This is the one show that predicts where we're going.

Two years ago, we saw audio broadcast technologies that pointed right at your head. You could hear it fine while someone next to you couldn't hear it at all. It was like confirming those voices in your head... for once. Super-fun to use on someone who's not expecting it. You could drive them to some controlled substance in a matter of hours!

This is the first year CES doesn't conflict with the Detroit Auto Show. It's hard to say how that translates just yet, but with 175,000 people attending, seems like a good idea for the auto industry to show the best stuff. Some in automotive don't get it, but that's part of the fun too.



Nothing like a high-speed cooler chasing you down the street to keep those nightmares alive.

Every year I think I know what I'm going to see, then we get there and there are far more too it and we're always delighted. Some of the stuff we see makes absolutely no sense, yet someone thought it's a good idea. Honda is notorious for showing products they never produce. Some are very cool. Then you hear, "Look what we're never going to make!"

I'll post cool photos in real time if I can. About a half dozen E@RTC regulars will be there all week as a group. Stay tuned!
