

THUNDER TALK

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ROAD TRIP

Can you believe it! It is Chili Bowl time again! It seems as though we were anticipating the first race of the season only yesterday. Now comes mid-winter and it is time for my annual pilgrimage to Mecca. Mecca to Midget Car race fans is the Chili Bowl Nationals in Tulsa, Oklahoma. NO doubt about it, the biggest event on any race fans schedule.

Three days on the road can seem long to some folks, but, I really enjoy the journey. It is filled with anticipation of the great racing ahead, and, also, in meeting up with old friends, some of which I only get to see at the Chili Bowl.

As the miles roll on, it gives me time to reflect on the past and plan for the future, without the phone ringing every ten minutes at the office. It is also a time, to turn the van into a rolling concert venue and listen to some great road music as the miles pass by. My musical tastes run the gamut from Country to Classical and most everything in between. Here are some of my favorite road songs and artists that help the time pass.

Hot Rod Lincoln, Truck Drivin' Man, Lookin' at the World through a Windshield, Momma Hated Diesels, Seeds and Stems, are all by Commander Cody and the Lost Planet Airmen. Of course, anything by Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, Buck Owens, George Jones, Ernest Tubb, Gillian Welch, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Kinky Friedman, Johnny Cash, Dwight Yokum and Hank Williams round out the Country portion of the concert. Assorted CD's with Bill Monroe, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and Split Lip Rayfield fill the Blue Grass category. I have the complete library of Rhythm and Blues from 1956-1968. This, along with great Jazz, from Eddie "Clean Head" Vinson, Etta James, Miles Davis and John Coltrane, coupled with some Mozart and Vivaldi, round out my musical preferences. They make for quite a concert rolling down Interstate 40.

The best part of any journey is the anticipation. Think back to your last vacation. You talked about it, and thought about it for many weeks before you left. Just like this years Chili Bowl. You have been talking about it and looking forward to it since last year. Now you are here, the fun begins and the time will fly by like a flash, as it always does when you are having a great time. There is nothing like being at the Chili Bowl!!!

Anyone back home who didn't make the pilgrimage, are eating their hearts out!

Tom Toutz is a long time vendor at the Chili Bowl and a lifetime fan of Midget and Sprint Car Racing. He can be reached at tom@thunderheadonline.com.

