

Oh, But for a Spare Tire

On a recent trip to North Carolina, primarily to drive the **Dragon's Tail** and visit some friends in the Smokey mountains, I hit a piece of metal lying in the middle of my lane. I couldn't react fast enough to avoid it. As a result, we had a flat tire. Karen and I were on the WV turnpike about 35 miles south of Beckley. If you are familiar with this area, you know how desolate it is. My initial thought was to try to check out the tire to see what needed to be done.

Now, we needed to get the bags out of the trunk to get to the jack, the compressor, and the tire sealant material that came with the car. Looking at the tire sealant container, I realized that the material was 3 years past good to use. I decided to try to use it anyhow. To inject the liquid, the valve guts needed to be removed. So we had our handy-dandy valve removal tool that didn't work very well as I broke it trying to extract the guts of the valve. Next came the compressor to try to fill the tire. It worked well, except the tire was not inflating. Now I knew that there was a more serious problem. It turned out the side wall was sliced and a new tire was needed.

Now to get a tow!! Let it suffice to say this was not easy. A very helpful State Trooper came by to see if we needed help. He knew we had hit this piece of metal and he thought he knew where it came from. He left and when he came back, he had all the information we needed to get reimbursed for the tire. The tow truck finally came and took us to Beckley to a Sears store that was open. No tire my size there!! Meanwhile the tow truck driver called a friend who worked for another tire place about a mile from the Sears store. They had a tire but they were closed. Now we needed a place to stay the night. A Days Inn was less than a mile away, but there was no transportation to get there. The Sears auto department manager was a good samaritan and took us there for the night.

The next day we got a cab, got the tire, took it back to Sears where it was mounted, balanced, and put back on. At last we were back on the road again by mid-morning.

Lesson to be learned here- become familiar with your tire changing equipment especially the tire liquid sealer that comes with the car. It is only good for a short time. I priced a new bottle-\$93 yipes! **Fix a Flat** looked awful good for \$10.

Another observation- There are still good people out there willing to help in time of need. People bent over backwards to help us. Without their help, we would have spent the night hiding out in the Sears store.

See Karen or I for more details.

Dave and Karen Baker