

## BCAA to the Rescue<sup>1</sup>

Jan H. Boer

Fran, my wife, and I were happily cruising Vancouver-Seattle along I-5 in our 20-foot Slumber Queen RV, but beginning to transition into the go-slow for which I-5 seems to have been constructed over the last 10 miles north of Seattle. Though I sometimes take the HOV lane, this time we were fortunate to be in lane two from the right. Suddenly, the engine sputtered and died. We? Well, we stopped in the midst of the increasing traffic. There we stood, helpless and without cell phone. The traffic piled up behind us and skirted around us, tooting and hooting at us, stupid Canucks. That experience told us to get a cell phone, which we've had near us when driving ever since.

As we were pondering our next step, a fire truck came up from behind and stopped next to us. Could they help? They called a tow truck from out of the city and went their way. Not sure how long before the truck arrived, but they pulled us into the city--courtesy of BCAA. The first time in a series. When we arrived, the service people advised us to try starting the car and sure enough, it started without a hitch. They said it could be the fuel pump and we should be sure not to run it empty. We tried to stick to that advice.

We continued driving, but every once in a while we would get stuck. A wait for 5 minutes and the engine would start up again. No real problem. Not even when we took the baby up into the Yukon and Alaska. Six weeks of driving along some of the most isolated roads on earth, including the smoke-covered Top-of-the-World Highway, all without a hitch. Were we ever foolish—and lucky.

It was not until our return journey, at McLease Lake, some 40 miles north of Williams Lake, that the problem acted up again. We called BCAA and before long they delivered us to Canadian Tire in town. They checked us out and told us what they expected the problem to be, but were not sure. Taking a chance, with our approval, they ordered a part from Vancouver to

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<sup>1</sup>BCAA (British Columbia Automobile Association) invited members to tell their stories about BCAA's great Road Service. This is the story I submitted. They never responded. Too long perhaps? The more complete stories as well as additional travel stories are available in our memoirs, *Every Square Inch: A Missionary Memoir*. Vol. 5—*Our Post-Nigeria Travels* at the top of this same web page you are now on.

arrive the next day. We camped on their parking lot. Some \$700 later, the next day we were back on the road.

Fran never drives the RV. However, approaching the Fraser Canyon, I felt sleepy and asked her to drive. And sure enough, in the middle of the Canyon the vehicle stopped on her. Fortunately, it was right at a sightseeing turnoff. So she managed to ease her way off the road.

No telephone service in this isolated location! Now what do we do? We found a traveler who was heading for Hope and who was willing to alert BCAA once he reached Hope. So, there we sat, praying that someone would hear and take action.

In the meantime, an ambulance drove past and could tell from the raised hood that we were in trouble. The driver merely gave us a thumbs up without stopping and continued his way north. Little did I understand that gesture, except as one of encouragement.

So we waited and waited. Finally a tow truck showed up from Hope. Our message had gotten through! The driver hardly had started to prepare us for the long haul of 150 km to Hope—the maximum distance BCAA covers—and, would you believe it, another tow truck arrives from the north. Apparently that ambulance driver had given an alert in the last town we had come through and they listened as well. Now we had two tow trucks on our hands. We were frustrated and did not think things through. We simply dismissed the second driver, arguing that we had not called him. The man left in raving anger. We should have paid him something, but at the time it did not occur to us, given our own agitated state of mind. I regret this till this day with a sense of shame.

At any rate, the Hope truck delivered us to a Chevy garage, since ours was a Chevy. Can you imagine our gratitude to BCAA for this free 150-km towing job? The garage people had the vehicle idle for almost three hours to see what it would do. Nothin'! So, they advised us that it was probably the gas pump located in the tank and that as long we kept the tank full and drove slowly, we should make it home to Vancouver. They themselves did not have what it took to take out and replace the pump. They, too, would have to order overnight.

We followed their advice and arrived home in the West End without any further problems. Within a few days, we had our regular garage, Hemrich Brothers, check it all out and replace the pump. The end of a year-long story with three BCAA rescues. We have not even told you of a remarkable BCAA rescue on an isolated Oregon road one early Sunday morning or about a double rescue in Grand Rapids MI! We are members for life! And we never allow our tank to go lower than half.

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