

The Open Gate

by Greg Mumm

As I said in my last column, it is my opinion that the greatest thing about the TLCA is the people of the TLCA. In this column, I want to tell you about my friend Ted.

I first met Ted at the Black Hills Cruiser Classic (a TLCA sanctioned event) several years back. Ted came to the event with a few other TLCA folks from Minnesota who, by the way, also became my good friends—and about whom I could also tell you stories of my experiences with and of their good character. But for now, I just want to focus on Ted. And I will leave it at just Ted, because he is humble enough that I know he wouldn't want the limelight here.

As a father, one of the most difficult things to do is to watch your kid go away for college. Setting aside all the emotions that go along with your kids growing up and moving out, you know as you watch them going off down the road in their beat up old high school car, if that car decides to give it up, you are no longer just a phone call away for them to get help. It's a disheartening feeling. Two things happened to make me realize that last thought just isn't true.

The first thing was the big blizzard that year in Minneapolis, where my son was attend-

ing college. He had parked his car for what he thought was going to be just a short time in a location where there was both limited parking and a limit on how long you could park. Long story short, the big dump of snow, the snow plow coming by that absolutely buried his car and the huge drop in temperature hardening that plowed pile of snow into ice, turned into an impossible situation for my son. A tow truck wasn't exactly in the budget, except to impound his car if it overstayed its welcome in the zone.

I was 600 miles away but my son called asking, "Dad, what should I do?" That prompted a hopeful phone call from me to my TLCA friend, Ted. Presto, a Toyota truck perfectly capable of extricating whatever from wherever was at the ready. My son said it best about the TLCA that night when he called me back after his car was set free: "That's so cool that you can just do that!"

That wasn't the only time. Two years later when my son got the call for his new job and it was time to move out of his college digs in a hurry, I was scheduled in DC to follow through on appointments that had been set with a lot of long-suffering effort. I couldn't get there to help my son in the short time needed. One more hopeful phone call to my TLCA friend, Ted, got my son the help

he needed and a free place to store his things until I could get there.

That is the character and quality of people you get to know as part of the TLCA. I needed help and Ted was only too happy to help me. I count myself blessed and not just for his help. I have many times been blessed by his company around the campfire at a TLCA event. He is a great person. His friendship and many others happened because of the TLCA.

I am telling you, the TLCA is about more than being in a car club and wheeling. It's a community in the truest sense. And by the way, you should tell your friends. That is what brought me to the TLCA in the first place. My friend Charley told me.

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