

1971 Torino Rescue

A Flood Tried, But Failed, to Claim This Torino

by Rick & Kathy Funk

We purchased our '71 Torino in August, 2010, out of Virginia after seeing it advertised on ebay by a private seller. The Torino is the "Spring Edition" with GT option, Hideaway headlights and "halo" vinyl roof. We waited a month to have it hauled from Virginia to Cedar Rapids, Iowa. We picked up our car that evening and drove it back to Iowa City to the last cruise of the season to surprise our friends.

We decided in April 2011 to take the Torino to our friend Greg Kalmes who owns St. Donatus Body Shop, which is a few miles south of Dubuque, for minor repairs and paint touch ups. On the morning of July 27, 2011,

we received a call from Greg explaining that the area received 15 inches of rain in 24 hours and that night the creek behind his body shop rose 13 feet! Unfortunately, our Torino was located in a storage building which was flooded around 2 o'clock in the morning. The water came through the building so fast it pushed our car along with another car through

one end of the building. Greg found our car sitting about 20 feet away along with all the other debris that was washed out of the other stalls. The water had gotten as high as the drip rails on the roof and Greg informed us that the car was "totaled," because of the damage. We were devastated to hear this news, as we had only driven the car a few times before we took it to the body shop.

We could not think of having this car hauled to the junkyard. Being a Spring Edition made it somewhat rare and we loved the color and style of the car. So we decided to bring the Torino back to life and, hopefully, in better shape than before the flood.

Greg and his wife Jeanie went to work right away hosing out the interior and trunk which was packed with mud. Since they attended to the car so quickly they were able to save the original seat covers. As you can tell from the pictures, the car was covered in mud. The engine was pulled and completely overhauled. Greg ended up painting the entire car instead of finishing the touch ups he had started before the flood.

Greg and his team worked for five long months to restore our Torino. The car looks like it came off the showroom floor and we could not be happier to have her back home. We're looking forward to many years of cruising with our friends in our "new" Torino. Many thanks to Greg Kalmes at the St. Donatus Body Shop and everyone else who worked so hard to restore our Torino.

