



# The *ROCKET FUEL* Newsletter



## GOING FOR THE "GOLD"



**This is a story about my long quest for the gold!** You see I have owned my 1971 Saturn Gold 442 W-30 for 23 years now, having purchased it in California. I was living there then because Sue and I had been transferred in 1982 from Lansing, MI to Fremont, CA while I was working for Oldsmobile. *con't on Page 4*

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## Greetings from the President

I don't know about you but I am getting anxious to get my car out of the garage. Poor thing, I don't think it has seen the sun since last October. That's why I'm looking forward to our annual All Oldsmobile Dust-Off to be held next month at Rotary Park in Livonia, MI. The date will be Sunday, May 20, 2007. For those members who are new and have yet to attend an MCR Dust - Off, please plan on attending. It's the first outdoor event for our club. A flyer, listing all details is posted on our web site. Note that we will **not** be meeting at the Hyatt on May 19, 2007 as we will use the Dust-Off as our May meeting. Also I hope you all saw last month's issue of JWO with the terrific article about Bill Szelag and his "Journey with Olds".

**Steve Apking**



### "TECH TIP"

Pat Rederstorf has offered this tip that might help a fellow MCR member.

Thought I'd share a little story about my recently finished '442 with you! I finished my 69 '442 restoration in late summer of 2006. I had the 400 CID engine professionally rebuilt and

an (OLD STYLE) Rope Rear Main Seal was installed on the crankshaft. As I completed the project and got the engine running, I immediately had an oil leak at the rear of the engine. I was able to drive it but the leakage had to be taken care of. Over the winter, I removed the front clip from the car, so as not to damage the body and paint and removed the engine to correct the oil leak. I did some research and found that Neoprene Rear Main Seals are available for Olds and Pontiac engines through BOP engineering.

I am in the process of reassembling and learned a lesson about old technology! Hopefully, I'll have her back on the road shortly, ready for some spring cruising without any oil leakage. Hopefully my experience may save other Olds buffs a lot of extra work in the future.

Pat Rederstorf  
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## Editor's Notes

We have been receiving excellent ideas for articles for our newsletter. This month for example, you will begin reading a history of the automobile by Richard Wright of Wayne State University. Alan Wilcox brought this set of articles to our attention and went so far as to ask permission of the author so we could publicize them in our newsletter. There are thirteen of them and we will begin this month with chapter one and will continue until the end. Also note our tech tip section. In addition we have heard from some members in regards to having a classified ad section and a recipe corner for the ladies. These are excellent ideas so check them out in this issue and future ones.

**Sue Apking &  
Kelly Ferry**



APRIL 2007						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Paulette Width	9	10	11	12	13	14 Bob Jones
15	16	17	18	19 Sonee Lapodot	20	21 MCR and Nationals Meeting
22	23	24 Pat Macaluso	25	26	27	28
29	30					

UPCOMING EVENTS: MAY 5 [DINNER CRUISE TBD](#)

MAY 20 [DUST-OFF](#)

JUNE 16 [OLDSMOBILE HOMECOMING](#)

## Welcome New Member

We would like to offer a big welcome to **Mike Pettinga**, the latest member to join our ranks. Hope to see you at our next meeting so we can welcome you properly.





## Going for the “GOLD”    con't. from Page 1

Although I love automobiles and I have worked my entire adult life in that business, 20 years of which was for the Olds Division, I never thought about having an Olds as a hobby car. What was I thinking? You can forgive me though because our daily drivers have almost always been Oldsmobiles. Anyway at that time I didn't think I could afford a hobby car nor did I think I'd have the time to put into one. In fact I had reluctantly sold a black 1969 Z28 Camaro to help defray the high cost of that west coast move.

That blow was considerably softened though when I found this 442. I guess to be accurate, I should tell you that my wife, Sue actually saw the ad for the car and brought it to my attention. It's something I always remind her of when she complains: "You spend too much time with that car". Anyway we went to look at it. A sales manager at a Chevy dealership in Pleasanton, CA owned it although he was not the original owner. I could see that the car had been repainted the wrong color gold and there were no black stripes. It also had Monte Carlo wheels and wrong tires and there was an after market exhaust system and radio. So I checked part numbers and thought for the most part it looked pretty sound. Thinking I might have a diamond in the rough, I decided to buy it. That was in 1984.

At the end of that year, we were transferred back to Lansing. That move brought us a new house and new places to spend money, so the car didn't get too much attention. Our time in Lansing lasted 14 years and during that tenure we took the car to the 90<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> Olds anniversaries and some local events. It was at this time that I joined the OCA and the R.E. Olds chapter. Another move in 1999 took us to Buffalo, NY. Nothing was done to the car during that stint. We stayed there a year and then we were transferred back to Michigan, this time the metro Detroit area.

I would say that most of the work that has been done on the car has taken place since this last move. I have rebuilt the front and rear suspension, the alternator and the distributor. I've also replaced the exhaust system, the water pump, the oil pan gasket and the timing chain and put in an original AM/FM radio/8 track and super stock II wheels. It has power windows, power brakes, and power steering. And now that the air conditioning works, Sue can ride in comfort. It runs really good and it's fun to drive. I might add that when Sue's behind the wheel she really likes that 455 under the hood. Because of our involvement with the Motor City Rockets, we've taken this car to many club related road trips, such as the Lansing Homecomings, Traverse City Weekends, OCA Nationals (Lansing, Cincinnati and Minneapolis) and various local events. There is still a lot to be done so my quest for the gold continues. Stay tuned!

Steve Apking



## MCR Meeting Minutes

### Saturday, March 17, 2007

#### Dearborn Hyatt Regency



Steve Apking opened the meeting at 9:40 AM with a brief welcome and reminder about lunch at Buddy's Pizzeria afterward.

Officers' reports followed:

Dan Evans brought to our attention two articles regarding Oldsmobiles: the March issue of JWO with an excellent article about Bill Szelag and the April issue of Hemmings Classic Car magazine regarding collector cars from Lansing.

Alan Wilcox gave updates on treasury and membership. Funds are still good and we have one new member, Mike Pettinga, which brings total membership to 105. Alan also reported on a new vendor for nametags, Pro-Graphics. They're a local company that the Piskorowskis brought to our attention. Set up fee is \$22. Cost of nametags is to be \$8-\$9. Nametags will look the same as what we have now.

Steve then gave reminders about upcoming MCR meetings and events from April through June. All details are on website or have gone out in previous e-mails. There was specific mention that there will be no April dinner cruise because of Easter weekend.

MCR web site had been down temporarily but Brian Lorway has everything back in working order. Members need to log into the MCR web site members section. This will re-establish you with the web site.

Discussion was held on Greg Carriere's idea of a work/ picnic at his home in June. Because of two other events, mainly Homecoming and the June 30<sup>th</sup> meeting, members felt the month was getting full. Perhaps another date later in the year will work. Steve will follow up with Greg.

Regarding the Dream Cruise, Jeff Pregler informed us that the Charter One bank branch located in Bloomfield Hills at Long Lake/Woodward looks promising as a spot for our club. There will be approx. 35 parking spots. Restaurant nearby with restroom. Jeff will check on any permits that might be needed. This will be strictly for MCR members. Although further North on Woodward than in previous years, all agreed that this spot would be less hectic and provide a more comfortable day at the cruise. Final decision still needs to be made by Charter One.

Steve then asked members to update Bowling Green Nationals worker schedule and Pat Macaluso provided flyers for the Auto Fest in Frankenmuth. (Sept 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>) obtained from Auto Rama.

Meeting Adjourned 10:40AM. 19 attended lunch at Buddy's.



## OCA 2008 NATIONALS UPDATE

Our plans for the 2008 Nationals are moving right along. It's amazing how much work is involved in hosting an event such as this but all committees are working very hard on their specific duties. We are extremely fortunate to have members that are willing to contribute so much of their time and talent to this effort. What follows is an overview of the past months' activity.

The executive committee has been meeting monthly in addition to the regular MCR/OCA meetings. They have been busy in reviewing each committee's progress, advising them on matters when necessary and making final decisions as needed. All this groundwork by co-chairs, Bill and Alan and the rest of the executive team is the reason we are as far along as we are on the planning.

Many of the sub-committees have also been meeting monthly working on their own particular projects. They are heavily into the planning for everything from registration and hospitality to show field layout and judging. So many other projects are in the works too and so the planning continues. Also the logo is very close to being finished. We've been waiting for it and it will surely provide a lot of excitement when we finally get to see it.

To gain experience on how a national meet is run, about 35 members will be going to Bowling Green to help the Music City Rockets in areas where help is needed. We will also be manning a table of information regarding our 2008 meet and encouraging all to attend. It won't be all work though because many of us have signed up for the various activities that the Bowling Green chapter has planned and we look forward to having lots of fun.

You know it always happens that way with the Motor City Rockets. We start with a project, work hard on it but somehow have fun and learn so much in seeing it completed. So we invite those of you who want to have fun to join us. It's not too late to sign up for a committee. There is a place for you no matter how much or how little time you have. We want you. To volunteer your time and talent, please contact Bill, Alan or Steve. .



## **A Brief History of The First 100 Years of the Automobile Industry in the United States**

### **Chapter 1 - A century whittles automakers to 3**

by Richard A. Wright

Of the thousands of auto companies that have produced cars in the United States in the hundred years of the auto industry in this country, only three survive. These three are the products of a weeding out process of intense rivalry. Despite this rivalry -- or in fact because of it -- Ford Motor Co., General Motors and Chrysler Corp. are closely related, by mergers, by intermarrying with top executives of rival firms and through other business relationships.

Chrysler Corp. is now headed by Robert Eaton, a former top General Motors executive. The No. 2 man at Chrysler is Robert Lutz, who came to Chrysler from Ford Motor Co. after Lee Iacocca took over Chrysler after being fired as president of Ford Motor Co. Top-level personnel changes have been going on since the very beginnings of the industry.

In the family trees of the three companies are numerous firms that have been absorbed, merged and discarded. General Motors was built on Buick, Oldsmobile, Oakland and Cadillac. Ford Motor Co. absorbed Henry Leland's Lincoln Motor Car Co. (Leland also founded Cadillac). Chrysler Corp. was built on the remnants of the Maxwell and Chalmers car companies and absorbed the Dodge Brothers venture after their deaths.

Chrysler Corp. acquired American Motors a few years ago. AMC was formed by the merger of Hudson and Nash and the product Chrysler was most interested in was Jeep, which carried American Bantam, Willys-Overland, Ford Motor Co. and Kaiser-Frazer in its ancestry.

Top executives of the three auto companies have moved easily from one to another - William Knudsen from Ford to GM and his son Semon Knudsen from GM to Ford; Walter Chrysler from GM to his own Chrysler Corp. and later Lee Iacocca from Ford to Chrysler, then Robert Eaton from GM to Chrysler; Earnest Breech from GM to Ford. These intercorporate switches were possible because, although each auto maker has its own culture, Detroit's auto industry is a family affair.

It could be argued that since the development of agriculture about 12,000 years ago, the two inventions which have had the most profound effect on the way we live have been the electric light and the automobile. The electric light made it possible to erase the boundary between day and night. The automobile expanded our geographic boundaries and allowed us to go where we want and live where we want.

We reserve for the car an emotional relationship we do not have with other machines, not with refrigerators, or airplanes or even the curiously human computer. The car has been venerated as an object of affection, excitement, even love. And when it fails us, we heap upon it the bitterness and intense anger we generally reserve for our loved ones.

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Think for a moment about the world of 100 years ago. Travel was slow and difficult. A trip to anywhere was a major undertaking. Dearborn was a day's journey from Detroit on the road to Chicago. Most roads were just gravel or dirt. Cities, usually built on streams or lakes or rail lines were compact and congested. They were quickly transformed by the car into sprawling urban complexes, held together -- and in some ways split apart -- by the freeways and interstates that in fact bind them.

Buildings have been razed and farmland paved over to provide parking for the almost 300 million vehicles we own in the United States alone.

And along those roads are motels (motor hotels), fast-food restaurants, shopping malls, drive-in movies, drive-in banks, drive-in florists, even drive-in funeral homes. In this century, the auto has spawned whole industries where none were before. Depending on whose figures you accept, one in six or one in seven working Americans is engaged in the building, selling or maintenance of motor vehicles. The Census Bureau says auto dealerships account for 28.5 percent of all the retail business in the United States.

Auto makers are the biggest or among the biggest consumers of steel, aluminum, copper, glass, zinc, leather, plastic and platinum and they use most of the lead and rubber consumed in the United States. The automobile is not cheap. In addition to its voracious consumption of resources at the societal level and our income at the personal level, its toll of death and injury surpasses war many times over. Auto accidents are the leading cause of death of Americans from age 5 to 45. But there is no talk of banning the auto or even seriously restricting it. Most of us consider a driver's license a right, not a license. Controversy rages over such "invasions" of our rights as laws requiring use of safety belts and 55-mph speed limits. In Germany, in fact, a bitter battle has been raging for some time over the imposition of any speed limit on the autobahns.

The automobile is, like no other machine, part of us.

The automobile's time had come to America 100 years ago. Here and there around the world, men were at work on motorized vehicles, unknown to each other, separated in time and space. Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler in Germany; Louis Renault, Rene Panhard, Emile Lavassor and the Peugeot brothers in France, and in the United States, Frank and Charles Duryea, Ransom E. Olds, Charles King, Elwood Haynes, David Buick and Henry Ford -- all were working on vehicles they called by various names. For the most part, they worked in ignorance of each other.

Benz in Germany was the first to put an automobile into production, a three-wheeler he built in 1885. Just when his first delivery took place is not clear. It seems likely that it took place in spring of 1886. In the United States there were tinkerers, but no industry until 1896.

In fact, when Benz first got his three-wheeler chugging into movement in Mannheim, it was not the first time a vehicle had propelled itself. What was new was that Benz perfected his machine, put it into production and people bought it.

Isolated instances of automotive promise had come and gone. As early as 1769, Nicolas Cugnot fitted a wagon with a steam engine, fired it up and ran it across a field in France, thereby becoming, as far as we know, the first person to make and operate a powered vehicle. Incidentally, Cugnot's machine did not handle well and he ran it into a wall, the world's first auto accident. Legend has it he was arrested for his trouble and so might also be credited with the world's first moving violation.

The first internal combustion engine was built in 1860 by Etienne Lenoir in France, but it ran on illuminating gas and was quite different from the modern engine. But in 1876 in Germany, Nikolaus Otto patented the four-stroke gasoline engine – the type used today.

So the automobile was born in Europe. But it quickly took on an American character after the United States industry began in 1896. And not just an American character, a midwestern rural American character. The men building the first cars in America were for the most part from rural backgrounds in the Great Lakes area - Henry Ford, Ransom Olds, Charles B. King and David Dunbar Buick, of Michigan, and Alexander Winton and James W. Packard, of Ohio, Elwood Haynes and Edgar Apperson, of Indiana, Thomas B. Jeffery, of Wisconsin. The first production car in the United States was the Duryea, built by Frank and Charles Duryea in Massachusetts, but they were from Illinois. When Chrysler Corp. acquired American Motors in 1987, the Chrysler branch of the automotive family tree took on the numerous ancestors of AMC in combination with its own complex heritage. GM's branch already contains hundreds of companies through acquisition.

And the three surviving American auto makers -- out of literally thousands -- can all trace common ancestry back to the turn-of-the-century machine shops of Leland & Faulconer and John and Horace Dodge.



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If you have any comments or suggestions for the MCR web site.

## MCR MERCHANDISE

To view our merchandise please visit



<http://www.motorcityrockets.com/merchandise.htm>

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## MCR WEB SITE

[www.motorcityrockets.com](http://www.motorcityrockets.com)

The MCR web site includes:

- \* **An Event Calendar** – Where all MCR members can schedule or post club events
- \* **Chat Application** – Rocket Chat – Where MCR members can host chat rooms
- \* **An Archive Area** – Where all prior years event photos and documents are stored
- \* **An Event Photo Gallery** – A display of current year event photos
- \* **The Bulletin Board** - Club member details and National updates - register to gain access.