



The *ROCKET FUEL* Newsletter



Greetings from the *P*resident

*S*ummer arrived last month and with it came a

whole host of activities in which the Motor City Rockets participated. First came the 15th annual Lansing Homecoming and it was as big as ever with over 500 cars. Our club was well represented with 29 members who traveled to Lansing. A dozen of us also helped in areas of registration, parking, raffle and food service. The show was a bit different this year in that there was no judging but the first 500 participants did receive a commemorative gift celebrating 110 years of Oldsmobile. Three major awards however were presented and they included the Spirit Award, the Helen Earley Award and the Founders Award. The feature car this year was the Curved Dash. We enjoyed the show as always and look forward to next year. con't on Page 2

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Greetings from the President

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Our second activity took place June 30 at the home of Dennis & Karon Piskorowski. It was a dual meeting/picnic and send off for the Szelags. 34 members attended. The setting was perfect as the weather was warm with a nice breeze to keep things comfortable. Our Oldsmobiles looked great lined up along Dennis & Karon's lawn and as usual there was plenty of food. We talked some business but the day was all about fun. We did have a small demo of how to display a car at a National meet. We have some members going to this year's Nationals taking their cars that have never done so before, so this demonstration was helpful to them. We then spent a lazy afternoon talking cars and a few played horseshoes. We also had a raffle but this time instead of putting tickets in a bucket, we placed our keys in a basket. As keys were pulled from the basket, the owner of that set of keys came forward and claimed their prize. One of the most coveted prizes was a Hurst poster signed by George "Doc" Watson. Since this was the last time our club would see Bill and Mary Szelag before they took off for Texas, we presented them with a gift card from the club and a MCR decorated cake provided by Dave and Denise Tucker. All in all, it was a terrific day with some fine Oldsmobile people.

Steve Apking



TECH TIP

PLEASE SEND YOUR TIPS TO
KELLY AT MRMBUX@AOL.COM
OR SUE AT
S442APKING@AOL.COM

Editor's Notes

HELP!

You probably noticed there is no lead article this month. That's because we are not getting any articles from our members. Please send a story about you and your car. With over 100 members, we should have enough subject matter for years to come. This newsletter is for you and about you. So think about it and send an article our way. In addition, we'd like to point out that many MCR members will be traveling to Bowling Green, KY this month to attend the 2007 OCA Nationals. Along with showing our cars and enjoying the sights of Bowling Green, we'll also be working with the Music City Rockets. We hope to gain some valuable experience while there because in just 13 months, we will be hosting our own Nationals. Remember, it's not too late to volunteer for our own Nationals. This is an enormous undertaking and we welcome any and all help.

Also next month is full of activities. We have Meadow Brook and Gratiot on August 5th, the Lansing Car Capital Celebration on August 11th and Woodward on August 18th. Details for these activities are on our web site. **Note:** There are no June meeting Minutes, just the recap of the Lansing Homecoming and June 30th picnic in "Greetings from the President" section.

We are still looking for someone to volunteer for our activity director position. This person would be responsible for planning events and outings for our club and also to communicate those details to the club. Remember many of our activities are already in place like the Dust-Off, Homecoming, Woodward and Traverse City so half of the job is already done. Please contact Steve Apking if you're interested.

**Sue Apking &
Kelly Ferry**



			JULY 2007			
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4 Independence Day Jeff Zaenger	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Dave Tucker	12	13 Oldsmobile Powered Nationals	14 Oldsmobile Powered Nationals
15 Oldsmobile Powered Nationals	16	17	18 OCA Nationals Bowling Green KY	19 OCA Nationals Bowling Green KY	20 OCA Nationals Bowling Green KY	21 OCA Nationals Bowling Green KY
22 OCA Nationals Bowling Green KY	23	24	25	26	27 Mike Anderson Bob Wheeler	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

UPCOMING EVENTS: AUG 5 GRATIOT CRUISE

AUG 5 MEADOWBROOK

AUG 11 CAR CAPITAL CELEBRATION

AUG 18 WOODWARD DREAM CRUISE

SEPT 7-9 FRANKENMUTH

SEPT 21-23 TRAVERSE CITY

Welcome New Members

Dick Leopold

We welcome Dick and see you guys soon



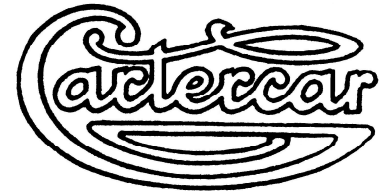
Bill Ehrsam

Bill to the club. Hope to at an MCR event!

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

Chapter 5 - Chrysler leaves GM and makes it the Big Three by Richard A. Wright

Among the many auto companies which William Durant bought for General Motors in its first few years was one owned by Byron T. Carter, who designed the friction-drive Cartercar.



In December, 1910, Carter stopped to help a woman whose car had stalled on Detroit's Belle Isle Bridge. As Carter hand-cranked her engine, it backfired, spinning the crank backward. The crank broke Carter's arm and shattered his jaw. Two Cadillac engineers passing by on the way to work took Carter to a hospital, where he developed pneumonia and died.

Cranking engines by hand was the way to start them in those early years and it was a hazardous undertaking. It took considerable strength to turn the engine with the crank and if the car backfired, the crank could suddenly turn with great force. Broken arms and other injuries were not uncommon.

Henry Leland, head of GM's Cadillac Division, knew Carter and was horrified when he heard of his death. He assigned a group of Cadillac engineers to find a solution to the problem of cranking engines to start them. They did: Charles F. Kettering.

While an engineer at National Cash Register Co. in Dayton, Ohio, Kettering had invented a small, high-torque electric motor to replace the hand crank on cash registers. Kettering and Edward Deeds, who had been sales manager at NCR, set up their own company, Dayton Engineering Laboratories Co. (Delco) to make and market an automotive ignition system Kettering had designed. One customer was Cadillac.



Charles F. Kettering

Two months after Kettering and his associate, William A. Chryst, began work on the auto starter, they gave a demonstration of it and Cadillac bought it. In fact, Cadillac bought more than a starter, because Kettering had integrated the starter -- adapted from the cash register motor -- into a complete ignition and electrical system which included a battery recharged by a generator run by the engine and electric headlights to replace acetylene lamps. The system was installed on Cadillac's 1912 model, one of those very few cars that was truly an automotive milestone.

Kettering's system -- basically still used by every maker in the world -- opened motoring to a vastly greater public.

Upon regaining control of General Motors in 1916, William Durant's first act was to fire Charles W. Nash, who was president of GM during its period of control by the Eastern bankers. Nash took over the ailing Jeffery Motors (which became Nash, then Nash-Kelvinator and in 1954 merged with Hudson to form American Motors). His second was to give Walter P. Chrysler a raise. Chrysler was head of Buick, a job for which Nash, no spendthrift, had paid him \$50,000 a year. Durant had heard that Chrysler was making a bid to take over Packard and he offered him \$500,000 a year to continue at Buick. Chrysler stayed.



Walter P. Chrysler

That same year, Durant made one of GM's most important acquisitions: United Motors Corp., a combination of parts and accessories makers which included Delco, New Departure and Hyatt Roller Bearing Co. In addition to the products it brought into the GM fold, it also brought in Delco's Kettering and the president of Hyatt, Alfred P. Sloan Jr.



Alfred P. Sloan, Jr.

Part of the deal when Durant regained GM was a division of the board of directors -- six named by Durant, six by the bankers and three to be neutral. Pierre S. du Pont, head of the chemical giant, became chairman, nominated by Durant and trusted by all. One of the neutrals was John Jacob Raskob, a close du Pont aide. In the years ahead, Johnny Raskob turned out to be Durant's most powerful ally in his empire-building spree.

When the United States entered World War I, Henry Leland, along with his son and close associate at Cadillac, Wilfred, told Durant they wanted to convert a new Cadillac body plant to production of airplane engines to help the war effort. The Lelands were anglophiles, Durant was not. He told them no GM facility would produce war goods.

The Lelands wrestled with their feelings for weeks, then on July 3, 1917, they quit GM. Six weeks later, they organized Lincoln Motor Co. to build airplane engines. In 1920, they built the first Lincoln car to challenge Cadillac in the luxury-car field.

With the end of the war came boom times for the auto business. Durant began buying companies, including a 60 percent interest in Fisher Body. In 1919, GM of Canada and General Motors Acceptance Corp. were created. Encouraged by Raskob, who was able to secure financing with du Pont money and connections, Durant continued to expand GM's empire, ignoring more cautious voices.

Durant ordered construction of the General Motors Building on West Grand Blvd. in Detroit, to be the largest office building in the world. (In fact, it was to be called the Durant Building and it has the initial "D" at its corners near the top in the manner of Napoleon, who decreed the letter "N" be put on buildings erected in Paris during his reign.)

Irked by Durant's management style, Chrysler quit. The action shook GM, particularly Sloan.

Car sales declined, inventories began mounting, the bond market was weakening and GM was in a financial bind. GM's stock price slid, despite heavy buying by Durant with his personal fortune in an effort to prop up the stock. He bought on margin, often only 10 percent.

Fearful that his personal failure would be tied to GM, which itself owed \$80 million to the banks, the bankers demanded that Durant resign. Raskob and du Pont came up with a proposal to buy Durant out. Forced to sell at \$9.50, he had lost about \$100 million of his own money.

The deal was consummated and he resigned on a Friday. Monday, GM opened at \$16.50. What Durant had failed to do with his millions of dollars, he finally did by resigning. GM was turned around.

Durant had wanted nothing in the world so much as to run GM, but that was not the case with the man who succeeded him. Pierre S. du Pont was only 50, but had retired from running the family chemical firm because he had more important projects in mind: cultivating plants at his greenhouse on Longwood, his estate near Wilmington, Del., and pushing educational reforms in the Delaware schools.

He had become chairman of GM in 1915 to help the company he and his friends had invested in, but Durant had run the company. But by the time Durant resigned in 1920, the DuPont Co. owned 43 percent of GM and du Pont could not just walk away.

While president and chairman, du Pont managed to get involved in one of Kettering's few ideas which didn't work out, an air-cooled engine with copper fins to pass off heat. Du Pont thought it would be just the thing to power a low-priced car to compete with Ford's Model T. Sloan was cool to the idea, because there were serious manufacturing problems.

In a curious way, Henry Ford set in motion a chain of events that would lead to Chevrolet's ill-fated production of the copper-cooled engine and the elevation of Sloan to the presidency of General Motors.

Signius Wilhelm Poul Knudsen was a big, beefy Dane who arrived in the United States at age 20. He took a job at the John R. Keim Mills in Buffalo, where a timekeeper decided he was "William S. Knudsen," because he was not going to fool around with any name like "Signius."

Knudsen developed a method for forming and drawing steel and Keim Mills became a major supplier of pressed steel parts. Ford bought the company and gave Knudsen a raise. Knudsen got married, one of his better moves, because his wife, Clara Euler, proved to be a civilizing influence on the hard-driving, hot-tempered, blaspheming Knudsen.



William S. Knudsen

Knudsen organized 14 Model T assembly plants in two years and then three more in Europe, including one in his native Denmark. He became one of Ford's top executives and, as was so often the case, this led directly to his departure from the company.

Ford did not like to surround himself with strong men, or with men who smoked, drank and swore. Knudsen was guilty on all counts. In February, 1921, stung by public rebukes from Ford, Knudsen quit.

Ten months later, he was hired by Charles S. Mott, vice president of GM's accessories division, for \$6,000 a year (he had been making \$50,000 a year at Ford). A month later, Sloan made him Chevrolet production vice president at \$30,000 a year.

When Knudsen, a can-do kind of guy, said he could produce 500 copper-cooled Chevrolets a month, the scale was tipped to du Pont. The copper-cooled Chevrolet went into production and 250 were built in time for the New York Auto Show in January, 1923.

Knudsen admitted production problems were greater than anticipated, but Kettering's engine required less maintenance, weighed less and got better mileage than conventional water-cooled engines.



Charles Stewart Mott

The cars had not been in the hands of the public long before complaints started. The engine overheated, causing all sorts of problems. Kettering's design was not as efficient as other air-cooled units, such as the Franklin's.

The decisive Knudsen recalled all the copper-cooled cars and had many of them dumped into Lake Erie.

Du Pont brooded about the episode and his role in it. That he had made an error in judgment was not so bad. That he had become emotionally involved to the extent that his judgment was impeded was, he felt, inexcusable. Du Pont resigned as president and recommended that Sloan succeed him.

In 1923, the Sloan era began at GM, an era that would transform the corporation, the American auto industry and American industry in general.

After Chrysler resigned from GM in 1920, he agreed to manage the financially troubled Willys-Overland. While there, he put together an engineering team under Fred Zeder, who had been with Studebaker, which developed an advanced, high-compression engine.

As Willys-Overland returned to financial health, the bankers who had drafted Chrysler for the job asked him to do the same for Maxwell, a Detroit auto maker which was in serious difficulty. Chrysler bought the Willys engine plant and Zeder's engine for Maxwell and began building a new car at the old Chalmers plant in Detroit.



Several models of this Maxwell, which had the name "Chrysler" on it, were shipped to New York for the 1924 auto show. But because the car had never been sold as a production model, it was not eligible for exhibition.

This was bad news, because Chrysler was not only looking for sales orders, he needed financing. He showed the cars in the lobby of the Hotel Commodore and manned the exhibit himself, selling a number of cars and securing from Ed Tinker, president of Chase Securities, the financing he needed.

"It was the only way I could get away from him," Tinker later joked of his wise investment in the supersalesman and his car.

Later that year, Maxwell-Chalmers was reorganized into Chrysler Corp. Detroit had its Big Three.

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According to Jeff Foxworthy, You know you're a **MICHIGANIAN/MICHIGANDER** when ...
Down south to you means Ohio.

Recípes

Tuna Wrap

- 1 2 oz can tuna packed in water, drained
- 2 tbsp fat free ranch dressing
- 1/4 cup chopped celery
- 1 chopped radish
- 1/4 cup chopped green pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped cucumber
- 2 whole wheat tortillas



Mix all the ingredients, wrap in tortillas, enjoy.

According to Jeff Foxworthy, You know you're a **MICHIGANIAN/MICHIGANDER** when ...
you have worn shorts and a coat at the same time.



SUMMER FUN





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MCR MERCHANDISE

To view our merchandise please visit



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

To Purchase please contact

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MCR WEB SITE

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.