



The ROCKET FUEL Newsletter



TRAVERSE CITY Weekend

We said goodbye to summer and welcomed in autumn with the 5th annual cruise to Traverse City. This trip has quickly become the highlight of the Motor City Rocket car club season. From day one we had the perfect combination for a great weekend: good weather, awesome cars, terrific people.



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Greetings from the President

Summer's officially over and now our meetings will once again resume at the **Hyatt Hotel in Dearborn, MI**, the sight of our 2008 Nationals. The dates are posted on our website calendar and barring any changes, these meetings will be held on the **third Saturday of each month**. For October, the day and date and time is **Saturday, Oct. 20, 9:00 a.m.** We usually go to lunch after the meeting for those who wish to attend. For our new members, these meetings are a combination of MCR business and continued planning of the 2008 Nationals.

Steve Apking

Editor's Notes

We still need more member input for our newsletter: things like tech tips, recipes, or services you can provide are examples. Remember it doesn't have to be car related although we would love to run an article about you and your car. For example, last month we had a note from Pat Macaluso regarding important information on the use of cell phones and emergency contacts. Anything you may think is useful information for our club will be welcomed. Lastly, we have gotten some feedback that the newsletter takes too long to download. We hear you and to that point, Kelly and I will consider some changes in the future. **Special note:** *Greg Carriere won 1st place/Best of Class in the Milford Car Show held Sept. 15. Congratulations, Greg!*

Sue Apking & Kelly Ferry

OCT 2007						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13 DINNER CRUISE KAGAYAKI SUSHI YPSILANTI
14	15	16 Kelly Ferry	17	18	19	20 MCR/OCA MEETING
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31 Halloween	1	2	3 DINNER CRUISE TBD

UPCOMING EVENTS: NOV 3 DINNER CRUISE: LOCATION AND TIME TBD

NOV 17 MCR/OCA MEETING TBD

DEC 15 CHRISTMAS PARTY: WE NEED A VOLUNTEER AND/OR LOCATION

**TRAVERSE CITY Weekend con't**

We began Friday with four couples traveling to Birch Run to eat breakfast. They were Ken & Pat Kress, Bill & Shirley Layton, Steve & Sue Apking and Al & Kelly Ferry. Three other couples joined in along the route. That group included Terry & Sharon Garfield, Glenna & Kurt Tillman and Tom & Tracy Riddle. When we arrived at the restaurant, we met up with Dennis & Karon Piskorowski and Dave & Denise Tucker. Breakfast was going well and everyone was visiting when all of a sudden, Al and Steve saw smoke billowing from under the hood of Ken's car. The guys moved quickly to the parking lot where they opened the hood to see that the wiring harness had burned. Luckily the restaurant staff had seated us by the windows or we would never have seen it and been able to react so quickly. Ken called Hagerty Insurance and a trailer was on its way. The group decided to wait until the trailer arrived before we continued our trip. Then Ken and his wife, Pat decided they would continue to Traverse City later after they accompanied their car home and picked up their daily driver.

From here, Terry Garfield led the remaining group to our destination. Our trip was uneventful with just a couple of stops and we got to our hotel in Traverse City about 2:30 p.m. At about the same time we arrived, we ran into some REO Olds members who we had invited to join us. They were Don & Eva Cooper, Wayne & Vicki May, Scott Whitaker and Sue Mitchell. Shortly after greeting them, Paulette and Doug Width, MCR members, showed up. After checking in, we all had some time to relax before meeting for the rest of the day's activities.

At 5:00 p.m., we gathered in the Sam's Club parking lot. Here we met up with our hosts for the weekend, Jack Tokie and Dorothy Maseles who each year tirelessly plan and execute this annual get-together. They secure the hotel, plan the cruises, make reservations for our dinner and provide space for the Saturday car show. While waiting in the parking lot for others to show,

Dorothy signed in people and passed out goodie bags with maps that had our route for the evening highlighted. At this time, Pat and Suzi Macaluso joined in. They had arrived a little before the scheduled 5:00 p.m. deadline. They





originally planned to be part of the original caravan but Suzi had had shoulder surgery to remove a bone spur just two days prior. We weren't sure if she and Pat would make it at all. But they made it despite losing the AC on the way up and we were glad they did. Dave and Denise Tucker had a little episode of their own on the way to meet us for dinner. Dave accidentally locked his keys in the car. He called a locksmith but the locksmith didn't want to use a slim-jim for fear of scratching the moldings. So the guy used a scope to view the notches in the ignition key and cut them right on the spot. Thank goodness, the keys were in plain sight. We were also privileged to have Vaughna Layton, mother of Bill Layton and her friend, Jay Holser, join us. Lucky too that we had Eric and Ann Drake as part of our cruise as they are local residents and could help all of us find our way around.

Now that all were present and accounted for, we began our evening cruise. We drove a route that took us along Old Mission peninsula and that put us in the middle of the east and west arm of Grand Traverse Bay. It was beautiful. Along the way we stopped at Chateau Chantal, where we sampled some wine and took in more sights. Before leaving, we had to get a group picture in the parking lot. Steve Apking, who usually takes the picture, was trying to get everyone organized when a patron of the winery came out and offered to take our picture. She did a good job too although we were wondering how much wine she might have sampled. From there we continued to the Old Mission Lighthouse Park. We got out there to walk along the beach and take another look at the bay. We then headed for dinner at Boone's Long Lake Inn. This is a favorite of the group. They serve delicious food and plenty of it and we enjoyed it very much. After such a long day, we headed back to the hotel for some much-needed rest and to look forward to Saturday's events.

On Saturday, we headed to Cherry Capital Cadillac, the dealership who every year opens their lot to us. By mid morning, our Oldsmobiles were washed, shining brightly and lined up for the public to admire. We also had more members join us here. They were Dick and Alinka Minor and Gar Martin. A tent was set up that displayed our banner and all members set up chairs around





their individual cars. We had a DJ, Mike O'Shea from Oldies 107.5 who supplied us with tunes from the past and made announcements when necessary. While most of the group stayed with their cars, some of the ladies wanted to go shopping in downtown Traverse City. There is an abundance of unique shops and Dorothy graciously took two groups of ladies down and back. While downtown, some of us witnessed the Red Hat ladies parade. This group was attending a conference in Traverse City. One of them was driving a Cutlass and Paulette invited her and her friends to the dealership and to our surprise, she came and showed off her car.

After lunch and another group picture, we all got into our Oldsmobiles and took off for another cruise, this time to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. This is a very special part of Michigan and the area is protected as part of the National Park System with its 72,000 acres of dunes, forests and beaches. On the way, we stopped in Glen Haven and visited the Maritime Museum. There we got to see a fully restored life saving station and a boathouse where a volunteer showed us equipment that surfmen used to rescue passengers from shipwrecks almost a century ago. It was really informative and interesting. As we left the museum, we just had to get one more shot of our (19) Oldsmobiles. So we lined them up across from the Glen Haven General Store. It was such an awesome sight to see all those beautiful cars. There were other visitors too who were stopping to take pictures of our Oldsmobile brigade. We continued on to the dunes and when we arrived, we parked our cars to view this breathtaking area. One could spend hours gazing at the amazing sights. It is so peaceful and calming. We did take time to walk some of the area too. By the end of the afternoon, we were now ready to return to Traverse City and eat dinner.

Our dinner on Saturday was held at Jack's other building where he houses some cars and car parts. The set up was great. There was a buffet at one end with tables and chairs for dining in the middle. Jeff Stolowski rounded up the tables and chairs and was in charge of the food too. He did a fantastic job with the cooking. We had chicken, beef, potato salad, baked beans, rolls, relish





tray, and pies for desert. Later in the evening, there was a bon fire and we made smores as if we hadn't had enough to eat earlier.

Sunday came and some of us met for breakfast while others left early or decided to extend their weekend further. After breakfast we said our goodbyes and again thanked Jack and Dorothy for a job well done. It's important to note that Jack went through the weekend in excruciating back pain knowing that he would face back surgery just a few days later. But he wouldn't let us cancel the event because being the kind of guy he is, he didn't want to disappoint anyone. Well, Jack, no one was disappointed. All agreed that our time together went way too fast and that we couldn't wait till next year. It was another testimonial to the great people that you meet and the good times you have when you own an Oldsmobile. Sue Apking

Note: Jack had his surgery and is now home. Please keep him in your thoughts and send him a card if you wish. Jack Tokie

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

Chapter 8 - Hard times slim industry, Detroit starts selling dreams

by Richard A. Wright

A famous car of the '20s was the Jordan Playboy. Despite its flashy name, it was a me-diocre car. Sales never hit 10,000 a year and it was gone before the stock market crashed in 1929.

It is remembered because of an ad that its maker, Ned Jordan, wrote in 1923. The ad, headed "Somewhere West of Laramie," did not dwell on the technical aspects of the Playboy. In fact, it did not mention them.

"Somewhere west of Laramie there's a bronco-busting, steer-roping girl who knows what I'm talking about," Jordan wrote (so legend has it) on an envelope while riding a train over the Wyoming plains bound for San Francisco. "She can tell what a sassy pony that's a cross be- tween greased lightning and the place where it hits, can do with eleven hundred pounds of steel and action when he's going high, wide and handsome.

"The truth is -- the Playboy was built for her."

The ad, which was published just a week after Jordan feverishly penned it and forever changed the marketing of cars, went on in this vein, then concluded:

"Step into the Playboy when the hour grows dull with things grown dead and stale. Then start for the land of real living with the spirit of the lass who rides, lean and rangy, into the red horizon of a Wyoming twilight."

In the '20s, just about every family had a car. The automobile was accepted and reliable. There were literally hundreds of name-plates to choose from and now cars had to be sold to buyers who by and large already owned one. And they all functioned in more or less the same way.

So what made a Jordan Playboy different? Romance. Or, as we call it today, image. Apparently not too many customers bought it. But the industry did.

Detroit began selling not only cars but dreams.



In 1929, the year the stock market crash in October triggered the Great Depression, new-car sales in the United States totaled a then-record 3,848,937. They would not reach that level again for 20 years.

The crash hit the auto industry with incredible impact. People still had to eat, they still needed clothes, they still needed shelter. But purchase of a new car could usually be put off. In September, General Motors stock sold for \$73. It fell by half in October. In 1932, it bottomed out at \$8.

In 1929, U.S. auto plants produced more than 5.5 million cars and trucks. By 1932, output fell to less than 1.4 million.

Many nameplates fell by the wayside during the Depression. Essex gave up in 1931, Franklin (of air-cooled fame) in 1934, Reo (Ransom E. Olds' second automotive venture) in 1936 and the magnificent Pierce-Arrow went under in 1937.

The Auburn Automobile Co., Auburn Ind., produced three American classics, the Auburn, the Cord and the Duesenberg, all of which went out of production during the Depression.

The Duesenberg was arguably the finest car ever built in this country, America's answer to the Rolls-Royce and the Bugatti. Styled in-house by Gordon Buehrig or with custom body by the most prestigious coachmakers, the Duesenberg J was the ultimate automobile and the ultimate status symbol.

The final nail in the Auburn company's coffin was driven by one of its most magnificent products, the Cord 810, introduced in 1936, and the upscale 812, introduced in 1937. Also designed by Buehrig, the front-wheel-drive car was powered by a V-8 engine and had a body so advanced that it still looks modern, with retractable headlights, wrap-around grille, and chromed exhaust headers.

The car created a sensation, but the company had trouble building it, ran out of money and collapsed.

When Auburn folded, dies for the Buehrig Cord were adapted by Graham for its 1940 Hollywood model and by Hupmobile for its '41 Skylark. It was the last gasp for both these nameplates, although Graham-Paige Co. survived as part of the basis for Kaiser-Frazer after World War II (Joseph W. Frazer was president of Graham-Paige).

The "Big Three" survived the Depression, in fact GM made money every year and Chrysler actually grew. Ford Motor Co. was wounded almost mortally, although nobody knew it because it was not a public company and its bookkeeping was bizarrely primitive.



The Oakland and LaSalle nameplates were dropped by GM and Chrysler brought out its very modern Airflow in 1934, which did not sell well, but which established a number of design principles- unibody construction, engine forward of the front axle and all seats within the axles, among others -- which quickly spread through the industry.

Among the stronger independents, Nash dropped its Lafayette and Hudson sales declined, but its Terraplane carried it. Packard continued to lead the luxury-car segment, but the annual model change and changing demographics were already weakening its position. Packard was the car of the old moneyed class, while Cadillac was favored by the emerging new rich. The Depression was eroding the old aristocracy and when prosperity returned after World War II, Cadillac soared and Packard was doomed.

Studebaker brought out its low-priced Rockne (named for the popular Notre Dame football coach) in time to get chewed up by Ford's Model A and it bought into Pierce-Arrow just as the luxury-car market was collapsing, but it survived a financial crisis in 1933 and came back to play an important role in the post-war boom market of the '40s.

As the auto market became more competitive, the push for mechanical progress became intense and the Depression was a fertile period.

The '29 Cord featured front-wheel drive. Ford put a V-8 in its '32, the first low-priced V-8. (It would be all alone in that market until Chevrolet and Plymouth got V-8s in 1955.) Pierce-Arrow, Lincoln and Cadillac experimented with V-12 and V-16 engines.

A number of makes used superchargers, which forced air into the carburetor to allow the engine to burn more fuel faster. The modern turbocharger is based on the same principle, but the turbocharger is driven by exhaust gas, while superchargers are driven by the engine.

In 1938, Oldsmobile offered Hydra-matic transmission as optional equipment, the first true automatic shift that worked.

The Depression also finally did in William Durant. About two months after his second and final ouster from General Motors in late 1920, Durant incorporated Durant Motors. He had no car, but he had the faith of investors and goodwill of dealers and before production began in 1921 of the Durant Four, he had 30,000 dealer orders. The next year, he brought out a low-priced car, the Star, to compete with Ford and Chevrolet.

Durant was on his way again. He added nameplates -- the Flint, the Eagle, the Princeton and the Mason truck. To compete with Cadillac, Packard and Lincoln, he acquired Locomobile. He gobbled up supplier firms. In 1927, he announced formation of Consolidated Motors, clearly intended to challenge GM. It would include the Star, Moon, Chandler, Gardner, Hupmobile, Jordan and Peerless. But it never became a reality, because Durant was again in financial trouble.



A major figure in the bull market of the '20s, Durant had amassed a \$50-million fortune by 1927, but displayed his old weakness of losing interest in day-to-day management of his company in favor of empire building and stock manipulation.

When the crash came in '29, Durant was hit hard. In 1933, Durant Motors went broke. He was down, but not out.

He still had a plant in Lansing and he signed a deal to build and market the Mathis, a small French car. But in the depths of the Depression, it never got off the ground. In 1936, William Durant filed in bankruptcy, claiming debts of \$914,231 and assets of \$250.

In 1940, he opened a bowling alley in Flint, the North Flint Recreation Center. Always thinking big, he had plans for 50 such centers across the country. He suffered a massive stroke in 1942, shortly after a trip to Nevada to investigate a venture in mining cinnabar, a mercury ore.

He and his wife moved to New York, where they lived quietly, supported in part not by the General Motors he had created, but by four long-time associates - C.S. Mott, R.S. McLaughlin, John Thomas Smith and Alfred P. Sloan.

Durant died in that apartment March 18, 1947.

When the Democrats nominated Al Smith to run for president in 1928, Smith called on a friend for help, John Jakob Raskob, chair- man of GM's finance committee, and a life-long Republican who described his profession in his Who's Who listing as "capitalist." Raskob accepted the job of chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

Sloan, an ardent supporter of Herbert Hoover, demanded that Raskob resign, either as Democratic chairman or from GM. Raskob refused. The board of directors supported Sloan in a split decision. Hurt, Raskob resigned from GM. So did Pierre du Pont, board chairman and Raskob's mentor. Smith, of course, lost the race for the White House to Herbert Hoover.

After Raskob resigned, he cashed in \$20 million worth of GM stock and built the Empire State Building, a spectacular, though unprofitable, undertaking. He continued as Democratic chairman, playing an important role in the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt as president in 1932 -- an unusual role for a self-proclaimed "capitalist."

In Europe, the industry had taken a somewhat different path than the American, with U.S. companies generally leading in mass-production techniques. But the period between the wars were also fertile in Europe and companies then little known in the United States, but who would make themselves known in 20 years, were busy.



In newly created Czechoslovakia, Tatra began building unusual but high-quality cars in 1923. In Britain, Morris Garages began building the MG in 1924. The world's two oldest auto makers, Germany's Daimler and Benz, merged in 1926 to form Mercedes-Benz. In 1923, Opel became the first German maker to mass produce cars using American techniques, then was acquired by GM in 1928.

In 1927, a Swedish ball-bearing company named Volvo (Latin for "I roll") began building solid automobiles and in 1928 Bayerische Motoren-Werke began building a car called BMW. Citroen introduced its first front-drive model in 1934.

In Japan, DAT was building a second-generation car called Son-of-Dat, or Datson (the DAT stood for initials of the founders, Den, Aoyama and Takeuchi). The car's name was changed to Datsun in 1932 to tie in with the Rising Sun of Imperial Japan. Most of the Japanese nameplates familiar to the modern world did not yet exist.

And, in 1934, Adolf Hitler ordered Ferdinand Porsche to design a "People's Car," or "Volkswagen." This odd-looking little rear-engined air-cooled car would leave its mark on America and present Detroit with its toughest challenge.

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Welcome New Members

Welcome, so nice to have you aboard!

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