



Nov / Dec 2012
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Inside this Issue

1	President's Message
2	Editor's Notes Birthday Greetings
3	Calendars
4	Working for Olds
5-11	Fall Color Tour
12	Pure Stock Drags
13	Great Pumpkin Car Show
14	Get Well Wishes
15	Potty Humor
16	Service Team
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Motor City Rockets

The Rocket Fuel Newsletter

President's Message

By the time you receive this it will be November 1st. I cannot believe the summer and fall are already over. If you haven't already, it's time to tuck your babies in for the winter. What should you do to prepare that beauty for a long winter's nap? Here is my list: wash & wax before the cover goes on; if you don't put it up on jack stands, air the tires up well above what they call for so you don't get flat spots; check your coolant to make sure it's good for winter storage; change your oil and filter; check all the fluid levels; they say if you are concerned about mice to put dryer sheets in the interior & trunk; if you own a battery tender of some sort, keep that battery up to snuff ; most important to overcome that ethanol fuel we get these days, try adding either sea foam or blue stabil to the tank and make sure you drive it a little to get it mixed up and worked into the fuel system.

Well, it's election year for both the United States and the Motor City Rockets. Regarding the US, no matter your choice, you **MUST** vote. Please do not, **NOT** vote. This is a critical year election.

Now down to MCR business. By now the board has received all the nominees and you will be receiving ballots shortly to vote for your 2013-2014 officers. Please make an informed choice and return your ballots within the

allotted time. The outcome of the voting will be revealed at the annual December meeting/Christmas party, and then a notification will be sent via e-mail.

Our next club meeting will be held on November 10th. Please watch for a meeting notification with location and time. At this meeting we would like your input for subject matter for our indoor meetings. We are looking for volunteers to give a presentations or a how to demonstration. Suggestions for guest speakers that you may have access to who are informative and interesting for everyone are most welcome. One additional thought would be locations where we could tour and hold our meetings. Put your thinking caps on and please come ready to share your thoughts and commitments.

On a similar note we need to start building suggestions for winter, spring and summer activities. So bring your ideas and your willingness to take the lead on some of the suggestions.

I hope to see you all at our November 10th meeting.

Pat Macaluso

MCR President

Editor's Notes

Can someone tell me where the year 2012 went? I have always heard the older you get, the faster time passes. I can attest to that. Already the stores are filled with holiday décor and we just finished with Halloween.

With that holiday rush fast approaching, it's becoming a busy time. Don't forget to include MCR in your holiday planning.

Our next meeting takes place on Saturday, November 10 and our annual Christmas party is on Saturday, December 8. Watch for an e-mail with full details of both events.

You will notice that this edition of the newsletter is jam packed and I couldn't be happier. Your fellow members stepped up and wrote some amusing and interesting articles detailing their fall antics.

I know you will enjoy what they have contributed. Please note that the article by John Wilcox is just the first in a series detailing his career with Oldsmobile.

And to all who made the first comeback edition of the *Rocket Fuel* so successful, thanks. There were some nice reviews and I am very grateful.

Sue Apking

Birthday Greetings

11/2 Jill Woodward

11/6 Guy Faucher

11/7 Martha Pregler

11/12 Tom Bejma

11/16 Jack Tokie

12/11 Pat Kress

12/19 Bill Tumidanski

12/23 Jake Hoover

12/26 Sharon Garfield



November 2012



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
					Jill Woodward	
4 End of Daylight Savings	5	6 Election Day, Guy Faucher	7 Martha Pregler	8	9	10 *MCR Meeting
11 Veterans Day	12 Tom Beima	13	14	15	16 Jack Tokie	17
18	19	20	21	22 Thanksgiving	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

“Be sure to check the MCR web site calendar for additional details.”

An asterisk * denotes a “club” activity.

December 2012



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
						*MCR Christmas Party, Hanukkah
9 Hanukkah	10	11 Pat Kress	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 Bill Tumidanski	20	21	22
23 Jake Hoover	24	25 Christmas	26 Sharon Garfield	27	28	29
30	31					

Working for Oldsmobile 1949-1990

Part 1

By John Wilcox

I graduated from Ionia High School in June 1948. In September, I entered Central Michigan College of Education, on a pre-engineering course. I came to realize that I would have to get more money, and so I dropped out for a year. Oldsmobile was hiring at that time, so I applied and was accepted for hourly work. I was called for my physical exam, and I also had to pass an aptitude test which, among other things, consisted of being able to fit a square peg into a square hole, the ability to use a wrench and other mechanical and mathematical tasks. I did well on the test, and so I started on July 11, 1949 in the rear axle housing department.

The rear axle housing was the part that contained the axle shafts and differential. It started out with a steel blank which was pressed into the shape of one half of the housing, then two of them were seam-welded to form the housing, suspension-mounting brackets were seam-welded on, bearing cups were welded in place, and a differential was welded in place. They were then water-tested and repaired if necessary. Once they passed, they were sent off to the machining line, and from there to the assembly line, where the axle was assembled.

At that time, we made or machined a lot of our own parts, plus some parts for other GM divisions. We made rear axle assemblies for Pontiac, for instance.

My first job was carrying the housings from one conveyor to another. Then I was promoted to running a coining press, and finally became a seam welder. In the progression, each job paid a little more than the previous one. By the way, my first wage was \$2.35 per hour.

I had worked there for about 6 months, when we started getting some axles back which were completely twisted around. This was caused from the suspension being too weak to contain the torque the engine produced. The engineers fixed that by coining reinforcements in the differential housing.

In 1949 the old assembly line was still in use. It had one spot where one line ended, and another started. There was a jog of a couple feet, and the chassis did not have a body or steering wheel on it, so one worker used a set of vise-grips on the steering gear, and three others pushed the car to the next line.

On September 6, 1950, I bought my first car, a new 98 sedan. I worked in the rear axle housing area until January, 1951, when I was drafted into the army. The Korean War was very hot then. I came back in December of 1952 and moved to a new area-the paint plant.

More about my Oldsmobile work later.

MOTOR CITY ROCKETS MICHIANA TOURING EVENT

On Saturday, September 15, 2012, six intrepid automobiles: 4 Oldsmobiles; 1 Chrysler and 1 Camaro (we don't discriminate 😊) actually left on time for our Michiana touring event, or as I would like to call it – 3 days, 3 states (if you blinked you missed Ohio), 5 museums and 430 miles.



The weather was PERFECT for the entire weekend and members of the club joined us along the way and left as they needed to, as well. Those who took part were: Sonee Lapadot, Dan Evans, Ken and Pat Kress, Clay and Barbara Cook, Pat and Suzi Macaluso, Al and Kelly Ferry, Dave and Cindy Klemm, Dave and Denise Tucker, and Phil and Jill Woodward. But enough of the statistics, let's get on with the trip!

Weaving our way along the back roads of Michigan, we drove through small towns; passed soy bean and corn fields, some ready for harvest; saw a pair of white tail deer running through one corn field; saw several sand hill cranes in the fields and even had a pair fly over us. Occasionally,



we got a glimpse of fall as a few of the trees had started changing color. These peaceful sights probably would have gone unnoticed if we had been zipping down the highway going 70mph. The slower pace and lack of cell phone service took me back to a time when I would go driving with my parents except this time I got to sit in the front seat instead of the window ledge behind the back seat.

Our first stop was a private collection in Spring Arbor, MI called Ye Ole Carriage Shop.

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngaJkKWij0>, Yeolecarriageshop.com). What a rare find this museum was! It featured “Jackson (MI)-made automobiles such as the Briscoe, Jackson, Jaxon, Duck, Orlo and Fuller. Some of these automobiles I had never heard of, but others I had. Denise got to sit inside a DeLorean and when we came across a vehicle like the one Pres. Kennedy was riding in when he was killed, we got to hear the story of when Kennedy’s car came back to Michigan and Ken Kress (and others) got to work on it before it went to a museum. How cool to have a connection like that within our own club. There was a large Coca-Cola collection complete with a soda shop that was removed from its original place of operation in Michigan and set up in the Ye Ole Carriage Shop. Best of all, for me at least, was one of the LARGEST pedal-car collections I have ever seen! Lloyd Ganton is the owner. As a boy, he had always wanted a pedal car but was too poor to own one. Pedal cars belonged only to the “well-to-do”. I think he made up for it. Today he has at least 140! I could have spent several days there checking everything out and our guides, Lloyd’s son- Troy and Troy’s son, were very gracious and knowledgeable and shared stories about different items as we walked through their museum.

The club presented Troy with a toy “Volt” (Matchbox size) as a “Thank-you” before we left.



A few of the cars needed gas and as we waited for those fueling up, the Kress’s 1959 Ninety Eight drew several onlookers. Who could blame them? It is a beautiful car. After lunch, we were back on the road heading toward Auburn, Indiana and the National Auto and Truck Museum (<http://natmus.org/about.html>). The museum closed at 5 and we needed to get there before it closed but that didn’t stop us from enjoying the scenery as we continued the back roads of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana.



At this point one Camaro had gone home and another had taken its place and we had picked up another Oldsmobile. The Klemm's met us at the National Auto and Truck Museum. The museum is a national historic landmark and located in the former factory buildings of the Auburn Automobile Company. They had a special exhibit of cars and memorabilia of the 50's including a vintage diner. We saw the world's fastest truck – the Endeavor that set speed records on the Salt Flats on Bonneville, Utah, a large collection of gas and oil pumps. more pedal cars and a HUGE collection of toy and model cars and trucks from 1894 to the present.

The most unusual exhibit was the remains of a Cord that had been buried, along with about 100 other Cords, and years later unearthed!



Cindy Klemm and I even got to go over to the carriage house and take a look at some wonderful old buggies.



Day one came to a close as we checked into our hotel, which was perfectly located on "Touring Dr.!"

Day two started off with a visit to the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum. (<http://www.automobilemuseum.org/Pages/default.aspx>). There were only about 4 other people in the museum so it was as if we had the place to ourselves. Our docents, Bob and Joan, were wonderful and VERY knowledgeable and had many interesting stories to share with us. The cars were beautiful! We saw a one of a kind Cord made for E.L. Cord but when he realized it would not be affordable for the public he had it dismantled. Years later a car club went in search of the original parts in order to reassemble the automobile. It took the club 22 years to find all of the parts before the car was complete once again. We learned where the phrase "It's a Duesey!" came from – the Duesenberg, of course. There were taillights that actually had the letters "STOP" that lit up when you hit the brakes; turn signals that when lit up were arrows; a car that was designed to look like an airplane; retractable headlights in the front fenders of one vehicle that so intrigued a few Rockets they HAD to see for themselves.



There were SO many other beauties that I don't have the time to describe them all. As the tour ended, the group got together for a picture in a Dodge, all except Dan that is, who got a call from work! On a Sunday?



I think Ken had fun "driving" his "family" around in the Dodge 😊!

After our tour we said good-bye to the Cook's and the Klemm's as they needed to get home. The rest of us headed toward

South Bend, IN looking for a place to eat along the way. We finally arrived at the Studebaker Museum

(<http://www.studebakermuseum.org>)

and stepped back in time. I never knew that Studebaker started out making covered wagons! They had the Presidential carriages for Presidents Lincoln, Grant and Teddy Roosevelt. We saw the iconic “bullet-nose” and the Avanti.



Leaving the museum we had to drive through the campus of Notre Dame just to say we were there. We were ALL amazed at the number of port-a-potties (or Joy’s Johns as they were called) outside the football stadium. There had to be hundreds! We checked into our hotel and then went to have dinner at “Between the Buns Sports Bar and Grill. It was a very nice way to relax after another day of automotive history and share our favorite

part of the trip so far. These were our highlights:

Dave Tucker: ACD museum, the cars, the setting and the site of an old manufacturing plant.

Denise Tucker: the Studebaker Museum, she really likes Studebakers.

Ken Kress: Ye Ole Carriage Shop, loved the variety for a private collection.

Suzi Macaluso: the Presidential carriages at the Studebaker Museum, they were totally unexpected.

Dan Evans: the tomato truck blowing a tire in front of us while we had to get on the highway for an unexpected detour, the pedal car collections and the “lost and found” E-1 Cord.

Jill Woodward: the Amish couple riding a bicycle built for two down the road with great big grins on their faces, and the Ye Ole Carriage Shop-loved the pedal cars.

Pat Macaluso: all the technology from the past, hidden headlights, etc.

Sonee Lapadot: wants to spend an entire day at the ACD.

Phil Woodward: Ye Ole Carriage Shop

Pat Kress: everything!



Day three dawned and before we could get started there was a little bit of automotive maintenance that needed to be done. Pat Macaluso's car needed an alternator belt and Ken Kress's car needed a quart of oil. With that done, we were "on the road again!" First stop was for gas. A woman stopped me to say that her father had a Toronado exactly like ours and she still has photos of her family standing in front of the vehicle. We made her day. We headed back toward Michigan driving through Amish country. Our last stop would be the Gilmore Car Museum in Hickory Corners, MI. (<http://www.gilmorecarmuseum.org>) Once again, it was as if we had the museum to ourselves! It was WONDERFUL to be able to get close enough to the cars to examine them without getting caught in a crowd. We were given permission to take our cars over to the Old Shell Station to get photos, so that is how we started our tour.



Photo ops done, we strolled through the exhibits at our leisure. They have an incredible hood ornament and mascot display, pedal cars, a wonderful Pierce-Arrow collection, and on and on. We took a photo of Dave and Denise Tucker next to a "Tucker", we had lunch at the vintage diner, hunted for Oldsmobiles (I think we found 3) and had a group photo taken next to an Oldsmobile race car.



Basically we wore ourselves out exploring the Gilmore grounds for over 3 hours.



We were SO exhausted we just HAD to go for ice cream once we left Gilmore 😊!

What a perfect way to end a perfect trip. As the sun started to set, each car turned and headed toward their own little home and the comfort of their own little bed.

Where are we going next?

By the way, the next time you see Ken Kress, ask him to tell you his “dirty Amish joke!”

Photos & story by: Jill Woodward

Phil's Quips:

In 1974, I was 18 years old and switching out an engine for the first time. Obviously there are many challenges in such an undertaking. Let's face it, working on cars can present many challenging situations which can push even the most patient of individuals to the edge. While I cannot remember exactly what the circumstance was, something got me to the breaking point.

While I was not normally a volatile person, I remember taking a handheld sledge hammer and throwing it against a chain link fence to vent my frustration. That might have worked, except it ricocheted off the fence, came back, and hit me in the shin which simply added to my frustration level and discomfort. Since that day I have never thrown a tool in frustration when dealing with a difficult vehicle situation (although I may have wanted to!). It's better to take a few deep breaths, walk away for a few minutes, think it over, and not do anything stupid.

Editor's Note: This has been taken from a column titled “Repair Mistakes and Blunders” from the monthly Rock Auto Newsletter submitted by Phil Woodward.

September 14-15, 2012 – Pure Stock Musclegar Drags

When we heard that the Traverse City weekend had been cancelled, we were sad and disappointed, but Jake, immediately planned to go back to the Stanton “Pure Stock Musclegar Drag Races”. Jake and Ron used to go regularly to Stanton for that weekend, until joining the MCR Club. While we have had a lot of good times in Traverse City, cruising the countryside and enjoying special events that Jack and Dorothy have planned the last few years, Jake’s roots are drag racing with his “fast” Oldsmobiles, back in his younger days. Ron and Jake have been friends since high school and have shared and enjoyed their love of Oldsmobiles that started with spending a lot of time at Ron’s dad’s Oldsmobile dealership when they were teenagers.

The Hoovers, Piskorowskis, Wittenbachs, Jack Tokie & Dorothy Maseles, Klemms & Jeff Stolowski, enjoyed watching many great cars, especially a fellow MCR member, James Kryta (1970 F-85 W-31) do quite a bit of drag racing. There were old and newer cars drag racing... surprisingly, many were awesome Oldsmobiles. By the way, James won his “shootout” division.

A special highlight of the weekend was watching Jeff’s #One, 1970 Oldsmobile 442 Pace Car and the clone of the same car go down the drag strip together. The first trip down, the #One Pace Car was driven by Jack and the clone was driven by Jeff. Awesome sight!!! Personally, the other very special highlight was for friends, Jake and Ron, being given the opportunity to take the Pace Cars down the track together, starting with pulling a smoking burn-out for the Hemmings Muscle Machines Magazine, followed by an awesome holeshot .

An awesome weekend for about a dozen MCR members that have become friends through the club!! Thanks to Ron and Ann Wittenbach for sharing their home and awesome grub after both days of racing.

Submitted by: Jake & Sharon Hoover



THE GREAT PUMPKIN CAR SHOW

OCTOBER 13, 2012

The Great Pumpkin Car show can be summed up in two words:

COLD!!!! RAIN!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

That being said, the intrepid 8 cars that made it to the show are to be congratulated, or declared “nuts” I’m not too sure on that one and I was one of the 8! Pat Macaluso called us: Hard Core Rockets. Alan Wilcox called us: survivors. I say we were: die-hard car junkies. Give us a car show and we will be there!

Due to the rain, the turnout was very light but there were some very cool cars. Most of the women kept warm by going in and out of the shops helping the Michigan economy. The guys stood out of the rain talking until they found out they could go to the food court and get coffee, sit down and talk. I, on the other hand, stayed close to the main tent in hopes of winning a door prize. Priorities, what can I say! Several of us walked away with wonderful prizes.

The rain continued relentlessly and I felt bad that I had asked Phil to spend most of the night before polishing up my Cutlass only to have it rain all over the little baby. Phil did a REALLY great job as the rain beaded and rolled off beautifully! Thanks, hon. Oh, and because of the rain, the organization putting on the show, called a halt to the voting of best cars 2 hours early and awarded prizes so everyone could go home and get dry and warm. Congratulations go out to Alan Wilcox for taking second place in the American Muscle Car 1975 and up class. After receiving his award, Alan said “I have never won anything with this car before!” You have now, Alan and it is well deserved. You have a beautiful car. Alan was the only Rocket to win. The Motor City Rockets were recognized for their attendance by the coordinator of the event which in turn brought an overwhelming round of applause.

Attendees: Alan Wilcox, Jill Woodward, Eric & Anne Drake, Michael & Donna Frank, Al & Kelly Ferry, Glen & Marilyn Reis, Dave & Cindy Klemm, and Pat & Suzi Macaluso

The Rockets packed up and moved to Tomato Brothers for lunch. Maybe next year there will be sunshine.

Submitted by Jill Woodward

Editor’s Note: This was the 5th annual Great Pumpkin Classic Car Show. It was held at the Tanger Outlet Mall, Howell, Mi. Sponsors were Paulson’s Construction; Tanger Outlets; My Crate Motor. 100% of the proceeds were donated to the Livingston County Salvation Army.



Get Well Wishes & Special Thoughts!!

This is to let you know that two of our fellow members, **Ken Kress** and **Sonee Lapadot** recently faced some health issues. In September, Ken had a major heart operation and repairs were made to his pacemaker. The procedure was successful and he's feeling much better. He's taking it slowly and is on the mend. I recently saw he and Pat in church and it was good to see him looking well.

In October Sonee underwent another knee surgery. Some of you may remember that she had knee surgery last year, developed an infection and had a long rehab. That knee never quite healed right and this recent surgery was done in essence to right a wrong. At the time of this writing, she is in rehab and undergoing therapy.

We wish them both speedy recoveries and hope to see them soon.

We're thinking of you,
Your fellow MCR members and friends.



POTTY HUMOR by Jill Woodward

This all started at the Woodward Dream Cruise when I visited the restroom of a local eatery and found out that the toilet paper had bumps on it! And NOT SOFT bumps! What's the deal with that? Are you trying to discourage bathroom breaks? Anyway, since I can't travel without a rest stop, and as a car club WE TRAVEL, I thought I would share any humorous experiences I had with you. Aren't you special 😊?

My first beauty came at the Ye Ole Carriage Shop Museum.

While sitting on the throne, I looked up and saw this sign.



Appropriate but oddly disturbing for a bathroom, don't you think? What's worse is that I actually took a photo of the sign – no, I wasn't on the throne at the time!

The next gem came in the form of the names on the bathroom doors at Between the Buns Sports Bar – here they are.



Can't wait for my next find.

Editor's Note: And neither can we.

MCR SERVICE TEAM

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