

*January – February 2020*



ROCKET FUEL: FEATURE ARTICLE — JOSH FEAR

## **MY 1953 OLDSMOBILE 88 (PART 2)**

When writing part one of the mechanical rebuild of the 88, I didn't know that I was about to get deeper into the project. The replacement cylinder heads exceeded my expectations. Along with being reconditioned, they were painted neatly and even correctly date coded for a 1953 engine! For an additional fee, I also secured set of reconditioned rocker shafts.

However, the excitement from the new cylinder heads also brought another challenge. Upon inspecting the transmission, we realized it needed a full rebuild. Thanks to Motor City Rockets member Jack Tokie, I was able to get help finding the parts for the old Hydra-matic, but also receive an education on rebuilding it.

As our schedules allowed through the summer months, we cleaned and inspected each part. After replacing worn bands, bushings, clutches, plates, and seals, we reassembled the transmission. Once the transmission was completed, the project moved forward quickly.



The transmission nearly complete (*PHOTO courtesy of Josh Fear*)

Even while working on the transmission, engine assembly work had continued. The freshly machined engine block was fitted with many new parts. The pistons were replaced with new pins and bushings before they were mounted onto the connecting rods, which were also inspected. Of course, new rings were installed.

The original crankshaft was machined, matched with new rod and main bearings, and installed. The original oil pump was rebuilt and installed, along with a new timing chain and gear set. Additionally, new stock camshaft and lifters were installed, and the questionable set of pushrods were replaced with new ones as well.

With the engine assembled, it was finished with a fresh coat of Oldsmobile green before being reconnected to the rebuilt Hydra-matic. The next step was attaching the small parts I had spent so much time cleaning and detailing. A complete set of engine decals helped the engine and transmission to look just as good as it did when it was new. Now it was looking like an engine!

The following day, the entire assembly was back in the car. The engine was hooked up and ready to break in.



Engine/transmission completed & ready for Installation. (*PHOTO courtesy of Josh Fear*)



On a Monday evening, the new engine was ready to start—and I was ready to hear it run! After priming the fuel system, it started right up and the engine break in process began. With the new engine running and the new transmission full of fresh type “A” transmission fluid, it was ready for a test drive!

A few passes up and down the driveway helped me adjust the transmissions throttle valve rod to get the shift points correct. After a few adjustments, the 88 was ready to hit the road! The last time I had driven the car, it had low compression and only ran on 7 of 8 cylinders. This time was much different. Now, the car has much more power and drives nicely down the road.

Initially, I still had a problem with the car. After a minute of driving at 55 MPH, the car would stall. After stopping for a minute or two, I could continue driving. I had experienced this problem prior to removing the engine and transmission, though I had forgotten. After additional test driving and lots of investigating, I discovered the problem.

Two years earlier, I had replaced a section of fuel line under the car due to a pinhole leak, using a section of fresh metal line and two brass unions splicing the new line into the old. The unions were causing a restriction, making it difficult for the fuel pump to keep up at higher speeds. The problem was exacerbated by debris from the fuel tank collecting behind the first union.

By the time I discovered the problem, it took almost 20 inches of vacuum to pull fuel through the line! After removing the unions and replacing that section with rubber fuel hose, the problem was solved. The temporary rubber line will be replaced, as will the entire fuel line in the future.

With the car running and driving it was time to drive the car to its first Motor City Rockets event—The Great Pumpkin Classic Car Show! On that cool Saturday morning, the 88 and I made our way to the show. The car drove fantastically, and it was a relaxing drive since the car ran so well. I had a great time at the show, and I was even more surprised when the 88 won 1<sup>st</sup> place in its class!



My 1953 Oldsmobile attending the 2019 Great Pumpkin Car Show. (Photo courtesy of Bruce Powelson)

Let me take this part of the story to thank everyone who voted for my car. I wasn't expecting to win an award, I was just happy to be able drive the car again. Now that the car is back up and running hopefully, I will be able to drive it to more of the Oldsmobile specific shows next season.



### President

I can't believe this year is coming to an end already, where did the time go. I didn't do a lick of work on my 64- 442 again!!!! Everything else keeps getting in the way, one day it will be back on the road!

Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> was our MCR meeting and, of course, it transitioned into our Christmas party! What a party it was with 57 Rockets in attendance. Cindy & Don again opened their house to us and as always, the spread for dinner was great. If anyone went home hungry it was their own fault.



Motor City Rockets' 2019 Christmas Party (PHOTO courtesy Steve Apking)

Our White elephant gift exchange was awesome, with so many in attendance it went a bit long, but some of that was because Eva Cooper was sitting in the very back of the room and kept having her gifts stolen (only kidding—it wasn't your fault, Eva). I lost track of how many times she had to come up and pick a new gift.

I want to thank each and every one of you who attended and brought unwrapped gifts for the "Toys for TOTS". With them spread across the table I would guess we had close to 75 items which Cindy & Don are taking to the Cruise 'N' News drop off.



Toys-for-Tots collection at the MCR Christmas Party 2019 (PHOTO courtesy Steve Apking)

Our 2019 MCR calendar was very full of activities. Every month but July we had an activity, and each was very well attended. The worst weather-day for an activity was our Gathering of Olds @ Bakers of Milford. We still had 11 Oldsmobiles show up and each of them went home with a trophy personally presented by Chris Baker, the owner of Baker's. What a great guy he is!

### Some things to think about for 2020:

We need a volunteer to take over the MCR Rocket Fuel Newsletter. Dale is stepping down to allow himself more time to focus on other parts of his life, one being Debbie who is officially retiring from her job and they have lots of plans. Please consider volunteering for this position. Let me know if you are interested.

2020 is also an MCR election year, so consider volunteering to run for any one of the positions.

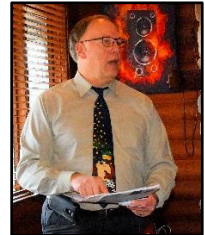
2020 is also an OCA election year; we have been made aware that Jerry Wilson, (our current President), and John Muchmore, our Treasurer, will not be running for their positions. Ken Nicholas and I will be running for the two Eastern Great Lakes Zone Directors. Please consider voting for us when the ballots come out later in the year. I will share more as we get the news.

2020 OCA Nationals will be held in Murfreesboro (TN), just outside Nashville. They will be celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the OCA. Please, consider attending as it will be one of the closer locations for us. Remember, if you are not into having your car judged you can bring your Oldsmobile for show only. **New** for 2020 will be a “driver class,” which in simple terms is your daily driver Oldsmobile—another option for you.

I would like to thank all of our Officers and Support Team for volunteering and giving their time to support our membership to make the Motor City Rockets a great chapter. The #1 Chapter of the OCA!!

I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas & Happy New Year, may your 2020 be a healthy and happy!

**P**resident, Pat Macaluso



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### **Treasurer**

*(Editor's Note:)* Dave has been ~~eating~~ working on brakes or brake dust or chimichangas calipers in Mexico, and therefore missed the deadline. I'd rather him miss deadlines than for our brakes to not work, so let's excuse him this time!

**T**reasurer, Dave Engel



## Membership Director

- Repeating from the MCR Christmas Party 2019, we're 120 strong at this time.
- 2020 renewal communications will begin going out in May 2020, with a follow-up as necessary.
- June is the official time for renewal.
- Thirty-eight members are eligible for renewal in 2020.



**M**embership, Steve Apking



## ROCKET FUEL: REMEMBERING THE PAST — SUZI MACALUSO

Well, it surely has been a great year for showing off our amazing Oldsmobile's with the Motor City Rockets! Each month gave us another opportunity to enjoy some fun adventures with and without our beloved cars.

The September Gathering of Oldsmobile's only brought out 11 cars but hey, not even the crazy weather stopped those 11 diehard guys willing to show up for the event! All were recognized by Chris Baker (owner of Bakers) with a trophy for their valiant efforts to "let the show go on!"

Our October event, "The Great Pumpkin Charity Car Show," also had challenges with the weather! It was the coldest show on record, but again, the Motor City Rockets had an amazing turnout—the largest to date. Many of our members received awards including Josh for his 1953 Olds! Lots of us had heard about his fabulous find, but it was the first time he was showing it off to the crowd. You can go to the Great Pumpkin website to watch the video of everyone receiving their awards!

In November, the club had an unbelievable number of members who met at Bad Brad's for lunch and then went to visit the Stahl's museum. As always, we check with restaurants to make sure they can accommodate us for our gatherings. Bad Brad's is a small venue and were hesitant when we first called them. We figured our number of attendees would be around 25. Well not this time! We ended up with 40 for lunch. The restaurant was amazing; they brought in extra help and the regional manager just so they could accommodate us! And, if you are wondering, the food was fabulous!

I have few words to describe our visit to Stahls! Incredible, amazing, beautiful, astonishing, extraordinary, mind-blowing are just a few of the words that do come to mind 😊 Many of you had been there before, but Pat and I had not. I am still talking about it with friends and family. If you missed this event you need to go to this amazing museum and see for yourself not just the cars, but the musical instruments as well.

And, to end the year, a record number of members attended the annual year-end meeting/Christmas Party. During the meeting, we review the years events and discuss what the club wants to do in the coming year.

We have a full calendar for 2020, I am happy to say. Please put the dates below on your calendar so you don't miss anything. I will be sending out the exact details of the January event real soon, but the date is January 4<sup>th</sup>.

**A**ctivities Director, Suzi Macaluso



## ROCKET FUEL: FACING THE FUTURE — SUZI MACALUSO

### SAVE THE DATES 📅 Motor City Rockets 2020 Activities

- **January 4** – Southeast MI Auto Show/Detroit Automotive Swap Meet, Lunch, Ladies shopping at 12 Oaks Mall Option, *(Novi)*
- **February** - Annual Valentine Bowling, Lunch & Meeting
- **March** – Annual Olds Trivia, Lunch & Meeting
- **April** – R.E.Olds Museum/Miller Farm
- **May 17** – Annual Dust-Off, Macaluso's *(Howell)*
- **June 20** – Oldsmobile Homecoming *(Lansing)*
- **June 28** - Gilmore Museum Oldsmobile and Orphan Car Show *(Hickory Corners)*
- **July 28** - August 1– OCA National Event *(Murfreesboro, Tennessee)*
- **July 31** – R.E.Olds Museum Car Capital Show *(Downtown Lansing)* *(not official club event)*
- **August 15** – Annual Woodward Dream Cruise *(Royal Oak)*
- **September 18-20** – Fall Cruise
- **September 27** – The Gathering of Oldsmobile's @ Baker's *(Milford)*
- **October 3** – Great Pumpkin Charity Car Show *(Howell)*
- **November** – TBA
- **December 5** – Annual MCR Christmas Party *(Clinton Township)*





### ***That Infamous Temperature Gauge in my 1971 442 W30***

*(by MCR member Steve Apking)*

I had broken the blade/tab of the Temp Sensor a few years back (2009) while repairing a leaking intake manifold on my 1971 Olds 442. I had soldered the tab on as a “band-aid” repair, which worked for several years. You could not fiddle with it because it was fragile—but it worked!



Fast forward to the Woodward Dream Cruise 2019. Good friends Bill & Mary Szelag were visiting. The girls were out somewhere so Bill & I were viewing under the hood of my 442. Conversation eventually turned to this temp sensor and its fragility. Although I cautioned Bill not to touch, like me, he couldn't resist, and—you guessed it! —broke it.

I quickly re-soldered it, and we were ready for a Friday evening cruise. While making our way down Woodward, the Temp Gauge went awry. Yep, that “band aid” repair didn't hold. Now, it must be replaced.

For you with similar experiences of replacing a sensor on a 48-year-old Oldsmobile, you don't simply *go get* a sensor. You see, there's a sensor for a light and another for a gauge. My 442 has the Rally-Pac gauge package so that determines which sensor I need.

Meanwhile, Gilmore's first annual Oldsmobile Car Show included a Swap meet, where I stumbled onto an AC Delco Temperature Sensor and bought it. Mind you, the part number, 12334896, had not



come up during my earlier researches.

Like most everything else, nothing stays the same for 48 years. Part number supersession upon supersession. Additionally, after reading web blogs from OCA, 442, & Camaro web sites, I discovered many owners have experienced issues. Being known for researching things thoroughly, that was my tactic with this as well, allowing me to determine the Gilmore purchase could work.

The blade/tab looking sensor You can still get a blade sensor but internally. There are temperature and and everyone has an opinion. So, I various temperature ranges and (rheostat) to dial in the gauge to read cold, halfway, or hot. Ok, I've got selection. But wait – the sensor and up – what? But then this OEM sensor worked for all these years so why question this. But my curiosity got the better of me.



has evolved to a flat top pin/button. they all do not operate the same resistance (ohms) charts out there measured my OEM sensor through cycles. Then I used a variable resistor determine what makes the gauge the data I need to make a sensor gauge resistance readings don't line

Two companies—[Wells Vehicle Electronics](#) and [Lectric Limited](#)—appeared to supersede everyone else, so I called [Lectric Limited](#) technical support, discussed my findings, and enjoyed the informative conversation! I learned that these sensors behave differently when measuring their resistance “un-powered”.



The sensor is basically a variable resistor to ground and changes its resistance with temperature. Battery voltage is sent to the gauge, then to ground, through the sensor, which drives the gauge needle between cold and hot. Apply voltage to the sensor, (basically plug the green wire harness connector to it) and observe the gauge.

After a few minutes the engine is at operating temp, unplug the sensor and measure the resistance. The technical representative was correct—the reading was lower than my earlier measurement when “un-powered”. However, it will climb a bit with power removed.

In conclusion, I elected to install this sensor. My gauge now registers between ¼ and ½ - engine warmed up. Using an infrared temperature gun, I verify the actual engine temp and now feel this set up is pretty darn close to the actual 180° thermostat installed back in 2009.

Hopefully, this provides others with an enhanced understanding of your early 70's vintage temperature gauge operation.



## ROCKET FUEL: BREAKING NEWS — PAT MACALUSO

Subject: Advance Auto Parts commercial account discount

Due to due to our limited use of this discount, it was necessary for Jerry Garfield to have our club combined with R.E. Olds chapter into one account. This allows us to continue enjoying the discounts offered. Moving forward, if you want to use this commercial account discount offered to us by Advance Auto Parts, the information below must be given when making purchases.

R.E. Olds Chapter Motor City Rockets  
Account number 1872870102  
Phone number (517) 645-7438  
Zip Code 48933

## ROCKET FUEL: MEMBERS' MEMORIES — JACK TOKIE & STEVE APKING

### *Meeting the Nicest People in Oldsmobiles!*

Jack Tokie and Dorothy Maseles were enjoying their first tailgate meal for the 2019 season while attending the [RM Auction in Ft Lauderdale](#) on March 30, 2019. Prior to this while traveling to Ft. Lauderdale, they had made a stop in Ocala to visit Jack's 1960 Oldsmobile, now in the vast collection of Jim Schmidt (the owner of NPD parts stores).



Jack Tokie tailgating in 2019

(PHOTO: Courtesy of Dorothy Maseles)



Jack Tokie with his former 1960 Olds in Ocala, Florida

(PHOTO: Courtesy of Dorothy Maseles)

A photograph of this vehicle had graced the cover of one of the many car magazines to which Jack subscribes. He recognized it immediately. The article explained that Jim Schmidt mostly collected original condition cars, and he thought this car came from Canada. Indeed, Jack *knew* the car came from Canada, and Jack still had a copy of the original title!

Jack called the Schmidt's and reached Jim's son, Rick. When Jack confirmed that the car indeed did come from Canada, Rick expressed some skepticism. However, when Jack described a tiny, three-corner tear in the headliner over the driver's head—Bingo! Rick concluded, "I guess this guy *did* own this car previously! Jack sent him a copy of the title.

Now, the rest of the story—

Jack had purchased that car at the RM auction in the spring of 2001. The OCA Nationals were being held that year in Denver, CO. The *Journey with Olds* magazine had an article stating that Rich & Pat Barnas of the Illinois Valley Olds Club were organizing a caravan from Illinois to Denver. We decided to join them.

The first rest stop of the day resulted in Dorothy and Jack meeting Erick & Anne Drake. The Drakes noticed our Michigan license plate and asked where in the state we lived. When we responded, "Traverse City," they excitedly replied, "That's where we live!" Since that day, we've been friends and encouraged them to join our Motor City Rockets group.

Once at the Nationals, Jack headed to the swap meet in search for a bumper part. He found one but wasn't sure if it was the correct one. The seller said, "Take it back to your car and see if it's the one". Somewhat bewildered, Jack came back and said to me "You won't believe it but this fellow told me to see if it was right and didn't make me pay for it first!" That was our introduction to Bill and JoAnn Ehram who are now also members of MCR!

Later that evening at dinner, Doug & Paulette Width were excited to tell us about a couple they had met that day who were recruiting them to join the Motor City Rockets. Doug told them that he and Jack had been trying to join the club since the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1997 Nationals in Lansing, but had not received a response to their inquiries.

During dinner, Bill and Mary Szelag explained that the club had been inactive for a while but was now back in existence and invited us to their next meeting at Mike Hall's home!

You can meet the nicest people in our Oldsmobiles!

*(The recollections of this article are from the historian of Motor City Rockets, Dorothy Maseles & Jack Tokie.)*



## My Second 442

*"Hey dear, look at this ad for a 1985 442 in the paper, it's near us in Commerce. Maybe we should check it out. It might be good to share with the club".* Well we did and I liked it so much I bought it. That was in 2005.

A retired Ford designer had an estate sale in Commerce and was downsizing. Based on research, I'm the 4<sup>th</sup> owner. The car was sold new from Lee Pontiac – Oldsmobile in Ft Walton Beach, Florida, with a \$14,770.00 MSRP. It was first registered in Webster & Friendswood, Texas, and then Pensacola, Florida and Farmington, Michigan. Pensacola and Farmington were the same owner. Then the vehicle was registered in Commerce Township (MI).

When I bought it, the car was in good shape. However, I did replace all four wheels and tires (two sets) along with the exhaust, fuel tank and various moldings. Repairs were made on the radio, IP cluster and interior trim, with various detailing, also. I must have done a fairly good job, since I've garnered several First-Place awards including Best of Class (BOC) at the 2013 OCA Nationals in Springfield, Illinois, and BOC achieving Senior Preservation in 2016 at the OCA Nationals in Kingsport, Tennessee. Maintaining Senior Preservation in 2018 at the OCA Nationals in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. To say the least, I'm elated!

In researching this 85 "W42" (RPO for the 442 option), I discovered that Oldsmobile had intended this 1985 model year 442 to actually be a Hurst Olds. However, the time period required to receive the necessary licensing had lapsed. So, Olds badged this a 442 since everything was already in the pipeline. The powertrain is essentially the same as a 1984 Hurst Olds—same carb, trans, camshaft and valve train (non-roller) lifters. In 1986-1987, Olds changed to roller lifters and "swirl port" cylinders heads in the interest of further emission enhancements.



Oldsmobile had been involved in **NHRA** for 14 years or more. Holding the Manufacturers Cup for much of that period. This model was chosen by the **NHRA** as their **Official Car** in 1985. Since working for Oldsmobile and a NHRA fan for many years, following Warren Johnson in his Pro Stock career, I thought this was another cool fact about this vehicle.

It's definitely not a W30 / W31 performance wise but still fun to drive. Interesting that the camshaft in this 307 is very close to my 71 W30 specifications, with evidence of a slight rumble in the exhaust at idle. With its 180 HP, 245 Ft Lbs. of torque, this "Oldsmobile" Hi-Output 307 V8 (RPO-LG8), 3.73 gears, dual outlet exhaust, 4-speed trans, Eagle GT tires and F41 suspension makes for a spirited driving experience. I know Sue loves to drive it,--with a heavy right foot, I might also add.

I've now become a bit of a pain in the a#\* with it because once you get a vehicle cleaned up nicely enough to garner OCA awards from your peers, you hate to drive it very much. Additionally, and unlike the 70's vintage 442s, most parts are really hard to get if you damage or break something.

I'm still learning from fellow members like Jack Tokie, Doug Width and others what it takes to get to a level of detail worthy of a benchmark model. While I'm not there yet I have a pretty good start on this one.



Apkings' 1985 444 at Gilmore Auto Museum's First Annual All-Oldsmobile Car Show – 24 August 2019 (PHOTO: Courtesy Jake Hoover)

Thanks for letting me share my story.

*Steve Apking* -18 yrs. **MCR** member, 33 yrs. **OCA** member



## ROCKET FUEL: MINDING OUR MEMBERS

### Birthdays

Glenn Reiss (18 January)

Al Ferry (12 February)

Deb Wheeler (19 January)

Dorothy Maseles (14 February)

Steve Apking (22 January)

Eva Cooper (22 February)

Jerry Garfield (28 January)

Cliff Carson (22 February)

Alan Wilcox (30 January)

### Anniversaries

Doug and Judy Badgley (14 February 1965)



## ROCKET FUEL: MERCHANDISING FOR TEAM SPIRIT — CINDY KLEMM

Check in with Cindy for caps, jackets, shirts, and other Motor City Rocket items!

**M**erchandising Director, Cindy Klemm





## ROCKET FUEL: SERVING THE MEMBERSHIP

Your leadership team is available to make the Oldsmobile experience a pleasure for the Motor City Rockets membership. If you have a concern or question, please contact the service member who is responsible for the area of your concern or question. (Each director's or officer's name is a hyperlink. A simple click on that individual's name will open an email directed to them.)

President – [Pat Macaluso](#)

Historian – [Dorothy Maseles](#)

Vice-President – [Erick Drake](#)

Membership director – [Steve Apking](#)

Secretary – [Alan Wilcox](#)

Merchandise director – [Cindy Klemm](#)

Treasurer – [Dave Engel](#)

Newsletter editor –

Activities director – [Suzi Macaluso](#)

Photographer – [Jill Woodward](#)



Interested in becoming a member of an exciting group of Oldsmobile enthusiasts at Motor City Rockets? MCR is a local chapter of the Oldsmobile Club of America, working together for the preservation of the Oldsmobile brand and having a ton of fun doing so! Joining the Motor City Rockets is as easy as 1-2-3.

1. **Explore** our website at [www.motorcityrockets.com](http://www.motorcityrockets.com)
2. **Print** and complete the application for new membership  
(Members renewing their membership, please use the renewal form)
3. **Mail** the completed form along with your first year's dues (\$15)  
(Longer term memberships (2-year, 3-year, & 5-year) are also available.)

## ROCKET FUEL: ONE FINAL TECH TIP

Picture this: You are at a swap meet and discover a full set of the exact style of wheels for which you have searched endlessly. The vendor assures you the wheels will fit your Oldsmobile. Do you trust this person? Are you sure?

Below is a link where you can download a template to keep in your console or glove box for that moment when you want to verify before you buy! It is from Classic Car Restoration Club.

### Wheel Bolt Circle Guide

This guide includes both an explanation on how to properly take wheel stud measurements and a printable tool that takes the worry out of getting measurements correct. [DOWNLOAD NOW](#) or [SHARE WITH YOUR FRIENDS](#)

[DOWNLOAD NOW](#)



My wife Debbie and I received a warm welcome from the moment we attended our first event after joining the Motor City Rockets chapter of the Oldsmobile Club of America. The camaraderie, the events, food, and the laughs have been wonderful! While we anticipate that experience compounding in the future, it is with sadness that I step aside after only one year as the editor of **ROCKET FUEL**.

Preparing for my last year of international ministry, I anticipate a hectic schedule both in the US and western Europe, approaching a half-century of vocational ministry. In fairness to the members and friends of MCR, it is necessary for me to allow someone else to accept the role of editor of **ROCKET FUEL**, someone who can devote adequate time to each issue.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving in this capacity—even for only a year—and for the many kind words you have extended.

