

Auspuff Roar

100

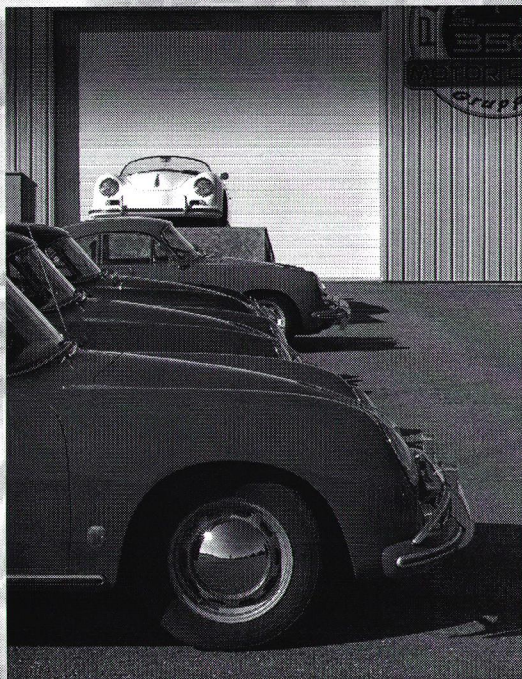


August/September 2003

www.356motorcitiesgruppe.com

ON THE COVER:

Gottfried captures a Speedster overlooking its Kingdom at the Auburn, IN swapmeet. It was very kind of Myron Vernis to have our Gruppe logo painted on the side of the building specially for this event!



The Auspuff Roar is the official publication of the Motor Cities Gruppe and is published 6 times per year. Membership dues for the Motor Cities Gruppe are \$15 per year due at the first of each year. Advertising rates per issue are as follows: Business card size—\$10, Quarter page—\$25, Half page—\$50, Full page—\$85.

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Please send materials to be published or advertising copy to:
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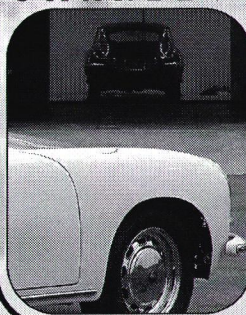
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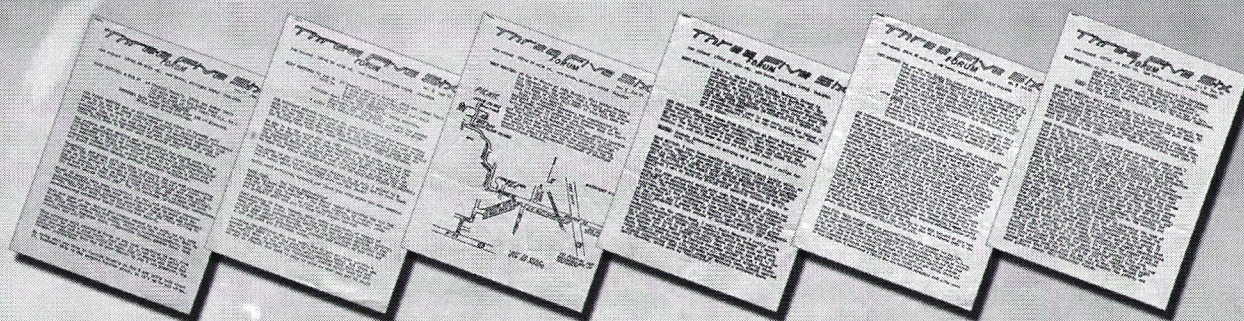
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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



100th issue of our 356 Motor Cities Gruppe newsletter!

Amazing! As I started this issue's President's Column, I sat back and wondered if some of today's star companies have published 100 issues of their newsletter, such as Microsoft, Comcast, Dell and Krispy Crème. And my conclusion – "I don't think so."

And that makes us pretty unique. And I believe that uniqueness emanates from the kinds and qualities of people serving in the leadership capacities in the 356 Motor Cities Gruppe. So I would like to devote this month's column to those members of the Board of Directors, Officers and Staff who have contributed their time and energies for the benefit of the Gruppe.

Several things really impress me about our Board of Directors, who as a quick reminder are Dan Christie, Dennis Denyer, Sebastian Gaeta, Brad Richards and Barbara Skirmants. Here are a few of those key attributes:

Paying attention to happenings going on around us and assessing effects and impacts on the Motor Cities Gruppe events. An example of this is the recognition by the Board that the Skirmants Open House was about as good a Summer Picnic that

we are ever going to see, and wisely changed the official Summer Picnic for this year to a Dinner Cruise.

Listening to the membership - By paying attention to what the members are saying, the Board felt a change of venue for the Holiday Party was appropriate. They decided to move to a new location this year, and then evaluate the change relative to the overall success of the event.

Constantly looking for ways improve an already excellent product - We already have a best-in-class newsletter; but Sebastian experimented with different kinds of paper stock, looking for that "one more thing" to make Auspuff Roar even better.

Cherishing our history - All good organizations revere and build on their heritage. Taking an interest in our past lead to this 100th issue, resulting in not only some fond memories, but also a recognition of the strengths and resolve that fostered the creation and growth of the Motor Cities Gruppe.

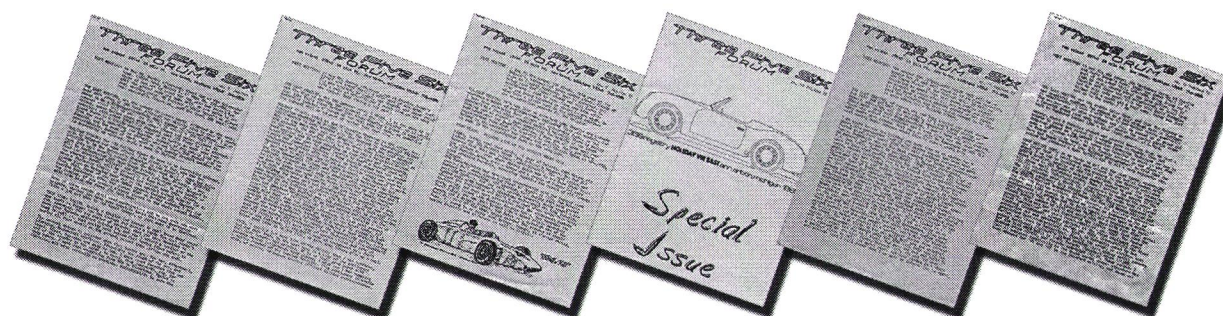
And then there is all of the ongoing stuff that happens on a regular basis every month. There's Sebastian Gaeta, with the able assistance of Gottfried Hogg, publishing the Auspuff Roar six times a year. And Gottfried, with the able assis-

tance of Sebastian, expanding and maintaining the web site. And you can't have a newsletter without names and addresses; and so there is Barbara Skirmants as custodian of the membership database and also collecting the annual dues and running the goodie store. And every other month, Ted Dunham buys the postage, affixes the mailing label and stamp to each one of the Auspuff Roar copies and then takes those boxes of newsletters to the Post Office to be mailed. The other half of the Dunham family, Lanita, has served as Secretary to the Board - faithfully recording the Board Meeting minutes and assuring the Board that there no scheduling conflicts between the Motor Cities Gruppe events and those sponsored by the PCA/SEM, the Glen stuff and other 356 Registry activities. We have Gerald VanVliet depositing the dues and other revenues, writing the checks and 'keeping the books'.

And that is why we have the best newsletter, the best web site and the best events.

So, the next time you see one of these folks, pull them aside for a moment and say, "Hey, thanks for everything!"

DAVE



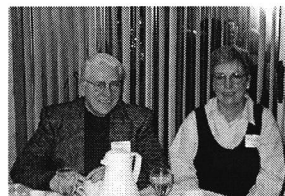
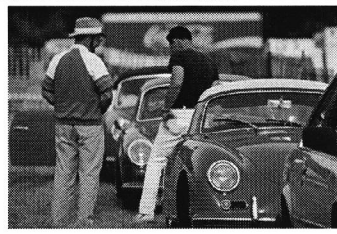
1982

A Brief History Of the Motor Cities Gruppe

Back many, many years ago, when there were just a few 356's around, there was a 356 Motor Cities Gruppe. Of course, back then it didn't have a name, a newsletter, dues or a constitution — just a bunch of guys like Vic Skirmants, Ron Roland and a few others who enjoyed driving these lovely cars on the back roads of southeastern Michigan or racing them on tracks like Waterford Hills, Grattan and Mid-Ohio. But it was the cars and the camaraderie that made it a club.

Then, in 1980, these guys formalized the club name, and became the oldest organized local **356 Registry** group. They even came up with a newsletter called the **Three Five Six Forum**. So they were organized — while being very careful not to be too organized. And everyone had a good time!

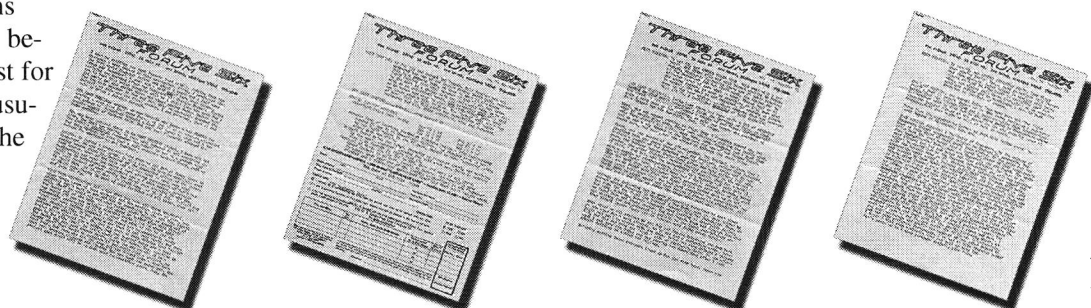
All the while, Ron Roland was putting 356 guys' names on 3x5 cards, with their address and little notations about their cars. And that became the basic mailing list for the newsletter — which usually was published when he and his wife Karen felt they had enough time to hand-address and stamp



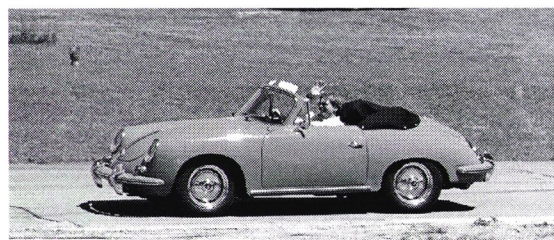
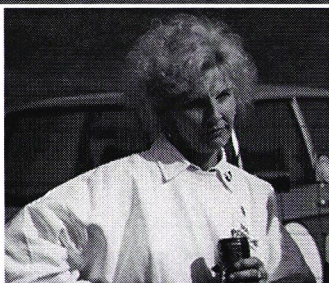
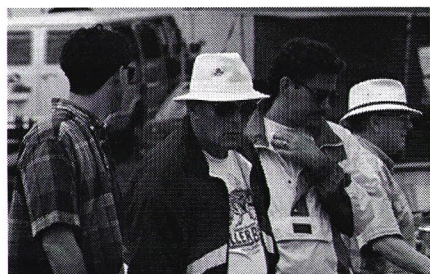
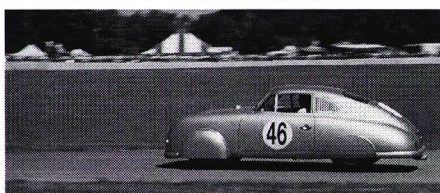
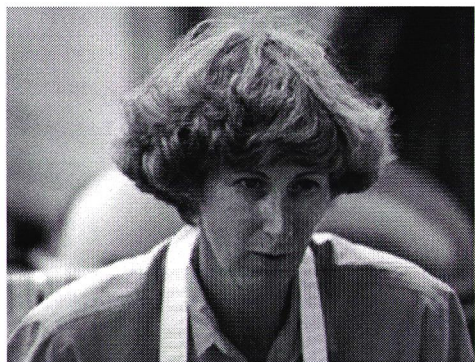
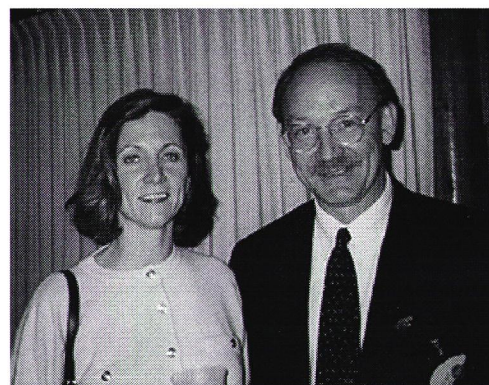
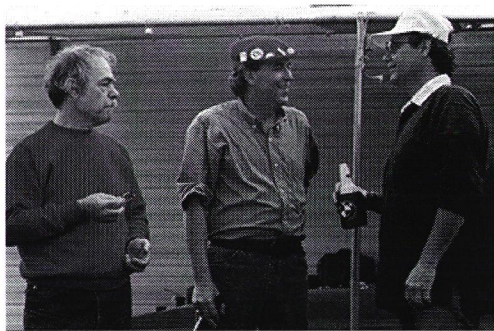
them with postage donated by other 356 owners. And everyone had a good time! And in 1982, we hosted the East Coast Holiday VIII. Planning was done on Sunday afternoons before we had computers with databases and publishing programs. But guess what? The Holiday was structured around five things: a driving tour, concours, tech sessions, a

banquet and a swap meet. How things have changed in twenty years.

Then, another 356er came along and offered to take Ron's 3x5 cards and put them in a computer and make a database so we could print labels any time we wanted — not just when we had lots of time available to get writing cramp.



1983



And we added a little structure (not a lot, mind you), came up with a name, and printed the newsletter a little more frequently. And everyone had a good time!

In 1988, we hosted the East Coast Holiday. That resulted in two benefits. One, we got to meet hundreds of great people from all over the United States with a

love for the 356. And second, this loose-knit collection of southeast Michigan 356ers became closer and the need to show their enthusiasm for these vintage Porsches became stronger. And everyone had a good time!

Then another guy came along, and offered to be President or something; and we had three or four planned get-

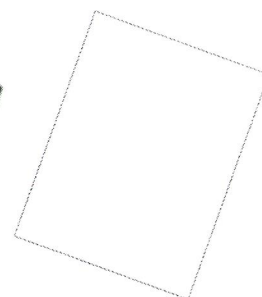
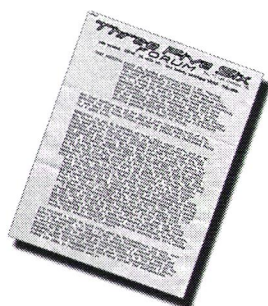
togethers every year. A second 356er with some computer publishing experience volunteered to be the newsletter editor, and we gave the newsletter a name — **Auspuff Roar**. And everyone had a good time!

Ten years after we hosted our last East Coast Holiday, we did it again. Over six hundred people came to Detroit to help us celebrate Porsche's 50th Anniversary as an automobile manufacturer. And a whole lot of people had a good time!

Finally, we set up a board of trustees and elected some officers — but we first made each one of them promise that their role was to very low key. That's because we feel that best places for solid structure is in the floor pans and rear bulkheads of our beloved tubs. We even wrote a constitution and became a legal entity in the eyes of the State of Michigan. And everyone still had a good time!

As you can see, the 356 Motor Cities Gruppe has evolved over several years. We have four time-proven events a year, and fill in the intervening gaps with new events and informal get-togethers. And although there have been many changes over time, two things have remained constant and dominant — the cars and camaraderie.

And we still have a good time!

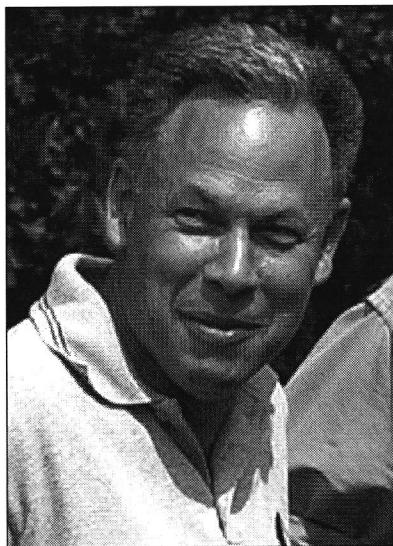


1984

Back In the Day...

Words from our past Presidents and Newsletter Editors

How exciting to think that the Gruppe is 100, and it only took 23 years to do it. Obviously, on that fall day in 1980 I never dreamed that things would progress this far. There were even serious thoughts and misgivings. Should we start our own 356 organization locally? Would the Porsche club see it as competition or sour grapes? Would there be any support from the national 356 registry? And, of course, was there really enough local interest? Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. So I called as many active 356 owners as possible and set a date for a meeting, since there was a lot of interest in regular, local, 356 driving events. Many 356 drivers - and we were drivers in those days - felt neglected in the Porsche club, that their needs weren't being met. Most of these people wanted a focus on driving their cars rather than on social activities - at least the guys did. I have tried to compile a list of all those at the first meeting, but I know I have more on the list than were actually there, and yet I am sure I missed a few. If you definitely remember being at that first meeting, as well as anyone else please call me at 586-749-9804 so we can nail down that first,



formative group (we weren't Gruppe yet). Initially, we were just as informal as the national registry from which we came. But our events were international, as quite a few of our members were Canadian. Usually we would have a tour starting in the U.S. and ending in Canada with dinner. We always had a picnic in the summer. We shunned an annual concours because we were afraid it would discourage those members who's 356 was a true driver from attending, or driving something other than their 356. Members included everyone who had a 356 Porsche in the area of the "motor cities". I wanted to reach all of these people, so the mailings went out to anyone who had a 356, many of whom never responded or sent a contributory dues. Like I said things were very informal. The name Motor Cities was chosen for obvious reasons. Detroit is not the only "motor city" in the area. Flint, Saginaw, and Ann Arbor all qualify - and I especially wanted to include Windsor. So a name with Michigan, or Detroit, or city (singular) would not fit. This group of cities became Gruppe after the Gruppe B 959, a car that even has water in the engine - sorry 356 purists.

Many of these members gathered together only two years after our inception to put on our first Holiday in 1982 at Ann Arbor, where we did have a Concours, we even drove to Greenfield Village to do it. The next six years are only a blur at this stage, but I know they were increasingly busy leading up to our second Holiday held in conjunction with the Meadow Brook Concours d'Elegance and Waterford vintage car races. This may still be the only official 356 registry track event as the local PCA region got us in as a rider on their insurance. If there ever had been any questionable relations between PCA and the registry, they were long since gone. Most 356 members are members of both today.

Going into the 90's it became increasingly obvious that my "leadership" was stifling growth, and the Gruppe was seen as my club. So I began turning things over to others. Fred and Bonnie Sheill stepped up. Barb Skirmants began taking an active role. As well as a host of others. And the newsletter eventually fell to Sebastian who has made it one of the best around. The start-up was fun. Would I do it again? Certainly. Would I do it differently? Possibly, hindsight is always 20/20. But I want to say thanks to all those unsung folks who helped, and continue to help, maybe we can put a list of those names together for remembrance. Meanwhile, I am off on another, greater calling. After four years of seminary training we are moving the Waterloo, Iowa area to serve two small Lutheran congregations. Will we be back? Probably not. But Porsches don't last forever. When our time is up in this world, by the grace of God in Jesus Christ, I hope to see you all in heaven. If you have doubts feel free to call me.

May the Lord bless you and keep you

Reverend Ronald Roland

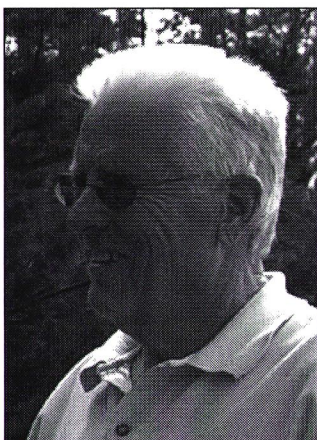


1985

For those of you who don't remember I was Gruppe President for the 1999-2000 term. I can honestly say I enjoyed the office. The only difficulty was the long drive to the meetings in some time inclement weather, as I live about 50 miles north of most members. After a hotly contested campaign David Peterson beat me out for the job. Generally Dave has done a good job, although he has not made good on some of his campaign promises: lower dues, free bi-monthly dinners, increasing the Auspuff Roar to 12 issues per year, and to take over the memberships of other 356 Clubs to join ours by force, if necessary. These promises were made at a \$1000 a plate dinner held by his supporters. I of course did not attend, however two members of his family did.

Seriously, Dave has done an excellent job and has continued to carry on the principles that has made the Gruppe a successful and enjoyable organization. Making the function of the club look easy and always fun is, in fact, not actually easy. It takes the dedication of the Board to plan the yearly calendar, allocate the funds to produce our outstanding Auspuff Roar, Website, and other activities. Recruiting members to plan and put on events is necessary and not always easy. All of these Board functions are some what behind the scenes and result in the great club that has carried on for many years. Doing all of the above without getting a lot of personal agendas and politics involved is quite an achievement. Past history indicates that this organization has been able to do just that.

I was sometime concerned, when President, that we should have more structure in the club operation. However I now realize that keeping things "low key" is a lot more fun and is more in keeping of the clubs principles. As Dave Peterson says "attend our regular membership din-



Richard Beecher

ner and sometime a meeting may break out".

Just recently it was gratifying to see the great turnout of 356's at the open house party at Barbara and Vic Skirmants'

"Three Oaks". Although I neglected to actually count there must have been at least 25 Tubs who drove through traffic jams, rain storms, over a gravel road, and for some, a long distance to attend. This is a great example of the enthusiasm of our members. I'm certain we will see a great documentation of the event on the website by Gottfried Hogh.

When asked to submit an article for our 100th edition with my thoughts about the Motor Cities Gruppe, I say "stay the course" let's continue to recruit new and young members, volunteer more, attend all the events you can, keep doing what we're doing. As for me I'm going to try to put my top down more.

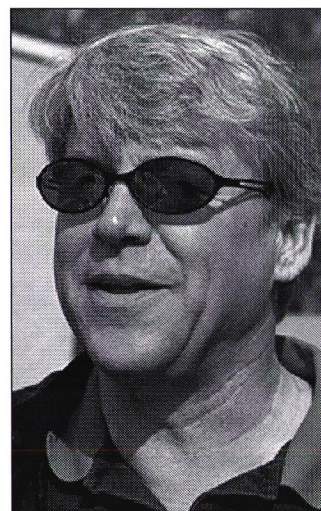
Dick Beecher, Past President

The time line was 1990 "something" B.C. B.C. stands for "before computers", because all we had to make up the newsletter was an old electric typewriter and determination. We would cut and paste, and then head for the printer. I was elected (after we wore Fred Sheill out) in the classic Army way: "If anyone would like to be President of the Motor Cities Gruppe, please take one step forward!" While I stood up straight and tall, everyone else took one giant step backwards!

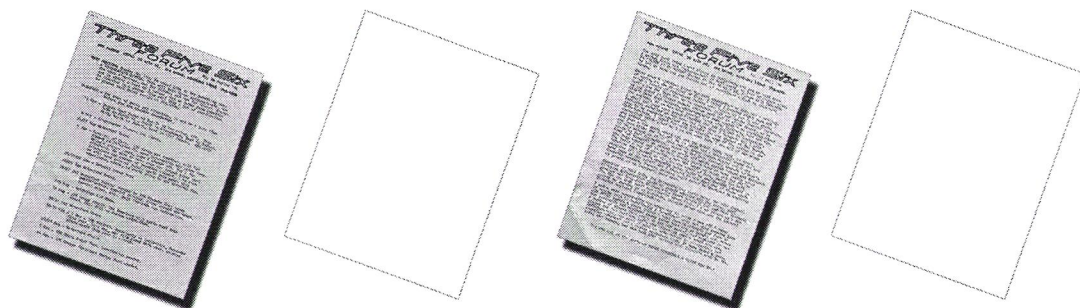
As President, I was determined to not let our beloved 356 Motor Cities Gruppe die. After all, we had the greatest regional club in the USA. Not only were we proud to have 3 or 4 contributing editors to the 356 Registry magazine, but we also had one of the founding fathers and even the Treasurer of the Registry. We also had international membership with our Canadian friends; hey, whatever became of them? I miss them!

The thing I remember most about my days as President and newsletter editor was that the whole thing wasn't about how much our little 356's were now worth, but that they are in fact great cars and so are the wonderful members in our Gruppe that love them.

Tim Walls, Past President & Editor.



Tim Walls

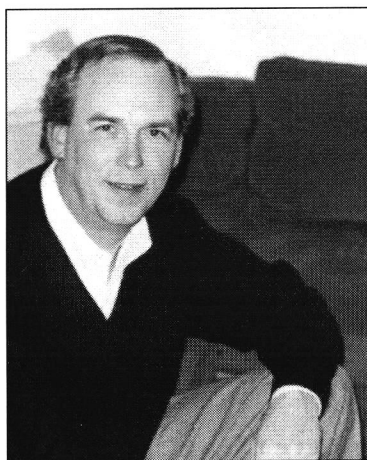


1986

To the best of my memory the Motor Cities 356 Gruppe came back to life in Ron Roland's living room following the 1988 East Coast Holiday at Meadow Brook.

Porsche was the sports car marque for the Meadow Brook concours that year and Ron Roland had made a proposal to the 356 Registry for the East Coast Holiday to be held at the same time. After a successful event Ron expressed a desire for a *casual & informal* 356 group to continue to "keep the faith".

The result was agreement to have one event per season and I volunteered to send out a newsletter four times a year.



Fred Sheill

It's hard to believe that the newsletter is reaching the 100th Issue, from *Three Five Six Forum* to *356 Motor Cities Gruppe Newsletter* to *Auspuff Roar*. In thinking back, it was a major under-

taking to type the copy (make corrections & re-type) and paste together a newsletter. Sometimes it was the excuse for a group get - together, first to fold, collate, staple, address and lick stamps, and then get to the real questions of "who is doing what to their 356 and why".

My biggest accomplishment after a number of years was to convince Sebastian *It was his duty* to assume the role of newsletter publisher. He has done an outstanding job.

From that small beginning of approximately 50 people it is very satisfying to see how the Gruppe has grown.

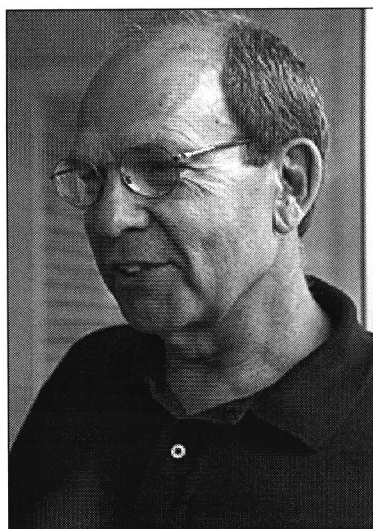
Fred Sheill, Past President & Editor

Being President of the 356 Motor Cities Gruppe has to be one of the easiest jobs around. First, I followed Dick Beecher into this position; and he left office with the coffers filled, the event calendar very solid, a prestigious bi-monthly newsletter and a membership of interested, high-spirited tub-lovers.

I was surrounded by a dedicated Board of Directors extremely willing to take on new projects and contribute their special skill sets for the club. During this time the Board committed to 1) continuing all existing activities at a high quality level, 2) building a Motor Cities Gruppe web site, and 3) bring younger members to the Board.

So as my tenure of President winds down, I will have had the honor of being a part of the Gruppe at the time we

have across all 356 clubs: the best Newsletter, the best web site, the best event schedule, the best collection of 356's, and most importantly, the best members anywhere.

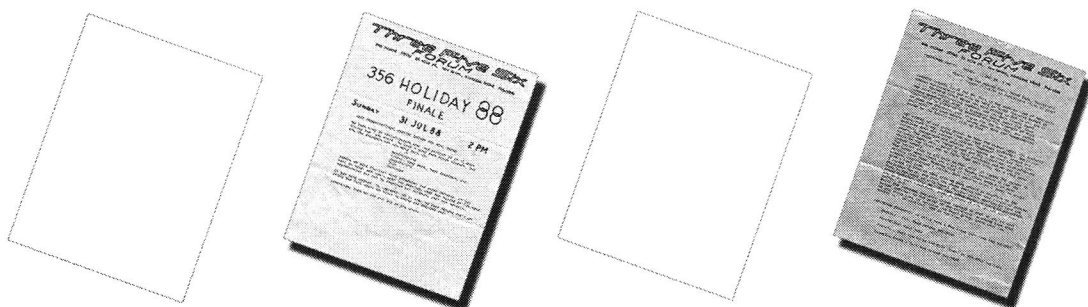


David Peterson

As I said in my opening sentence – "...one of the easiest jobs around."

David Peterson, President—Motor Cities Gruppe

What I remember most about my early days in the Gruppe was how much I actually wanted to take over the duties as newsletter editor. I first became interested around '93 or '94 when Bob Peterson was the Editor. He was doing such a fine job that I kept quiet about my wishes and instead contributed as many articles as I could. When Bob moved east, Fred Sheill took over once again. Since I knew Fred pretty well, I let him know that I wanted to do the newsletter whenever he was ready to let it go. The next issue I was his "co-



1988

editor” and by the following one I was on my own! Not much arm twisting was needed.

During the transition, Fred and I decided that the newsletter needed a name; something to give it an identity and perhaps make it seem bigger than it was. We put the word out to the membership and asked everyone to come up with an idea. At the next Social Dinner we started to discuss this matter when Vic Skirmants raised his hand. Out came the words “Auspuff Rohr” which means “exhaust pipe” in German. He suggested to change “Rohr” to “Roar” as a nice play on words. It was so good that no one even bothered to suggest another one. I even kept quiet with my “can’t-miss” name—*The Horizontally Opposed* (clever, but not nearly as good as our current name). Thanks, Vic; it’s only fitting that one of our earliest members named our newsletter.

Being the Editor of this magazine is nothing but fun. Our members are so generous with their time and contributions, it makes the *Auspuff Roar* a joy to produce. Gottfried Hogg has really dug in, given us much of his time and been instrumental in improving the graphics and picture quality over the last couple of years. Thanks to Gottfried for pushing us over the top, thanks to the members who have contributed material over the years, and thanks to all the people who actually read this stuff!

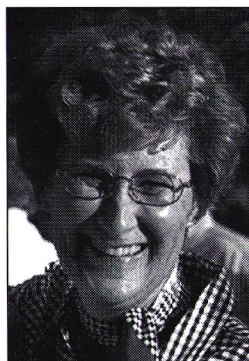
Sebastian Gaeta, Editor, *Auspuff Roar*



Sebastian Gaeta

I took a turn as the president of The Motor Cities Gruppe beginning in 1997, succeeding Barb Skirmants. Talk about a tough act to follow. Well, I’ve done this sort of thing before, having served with the National Muzzle Loaders and Southeast Michigan Porsche Club. With the Gruppe I was taking the lead of a well organized club with a dedicated board and many active car enthusiast members. Lanita & I had made many good friends right from the start of our club membership several years before. The job of piloting the club was to be easy and fun.

In 1998, I had the honor of presiding while our club hosted the 356 Holiday, a huge event, masterfully chaired by Barb



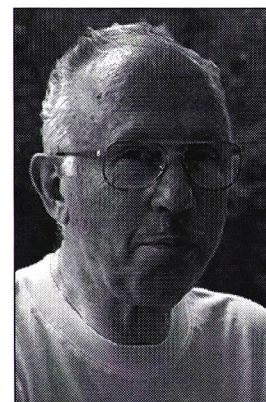
Barbara Skirmants

As we celebrate this great milestone of the 356 Motor Cities Gruppe, I say thank you to everyone that has contributed to our club. We have a local club that is the envy of almost every other 356 group in the country. Take a look at our new web site, and the *Auspuff Road* is a top-notch quality publication. We now have 356 people joining our club to receive the *Auspuff Roar* from all over the country. Just last week I got a cry for help from Bob Husselbee in the Chicago area, he is trying to get the 356 folks there active again in an organized fashion.

Our friends in the Motor Cities Gruppe mean a great deal to me, and I am very grateful for the opportunity to have so

Skirmants. The club continued to host many other great events, drawing on the talents of its members. That was also the year we lost a good friend in Tom Youk. Sebastian Gaeta was our new editor and the club was moving into the new era by being incorporated and encouraging our younger members to become more active. Each new board of officers brings with it many new talents and my term was no exception. Computers were our new best friends and those with the knowledge to use them kept us moving on to better things. It was then time to pass the gavel on to Dick Beecher and his ever amusing commentaries.

Ted Dunham, Past President

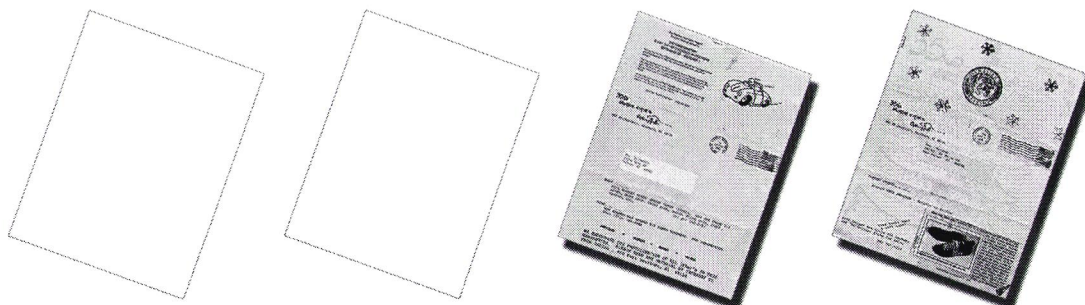


Ted Dunham

many wonderful friends. I have always been a car nut, but the car people are the most important part.

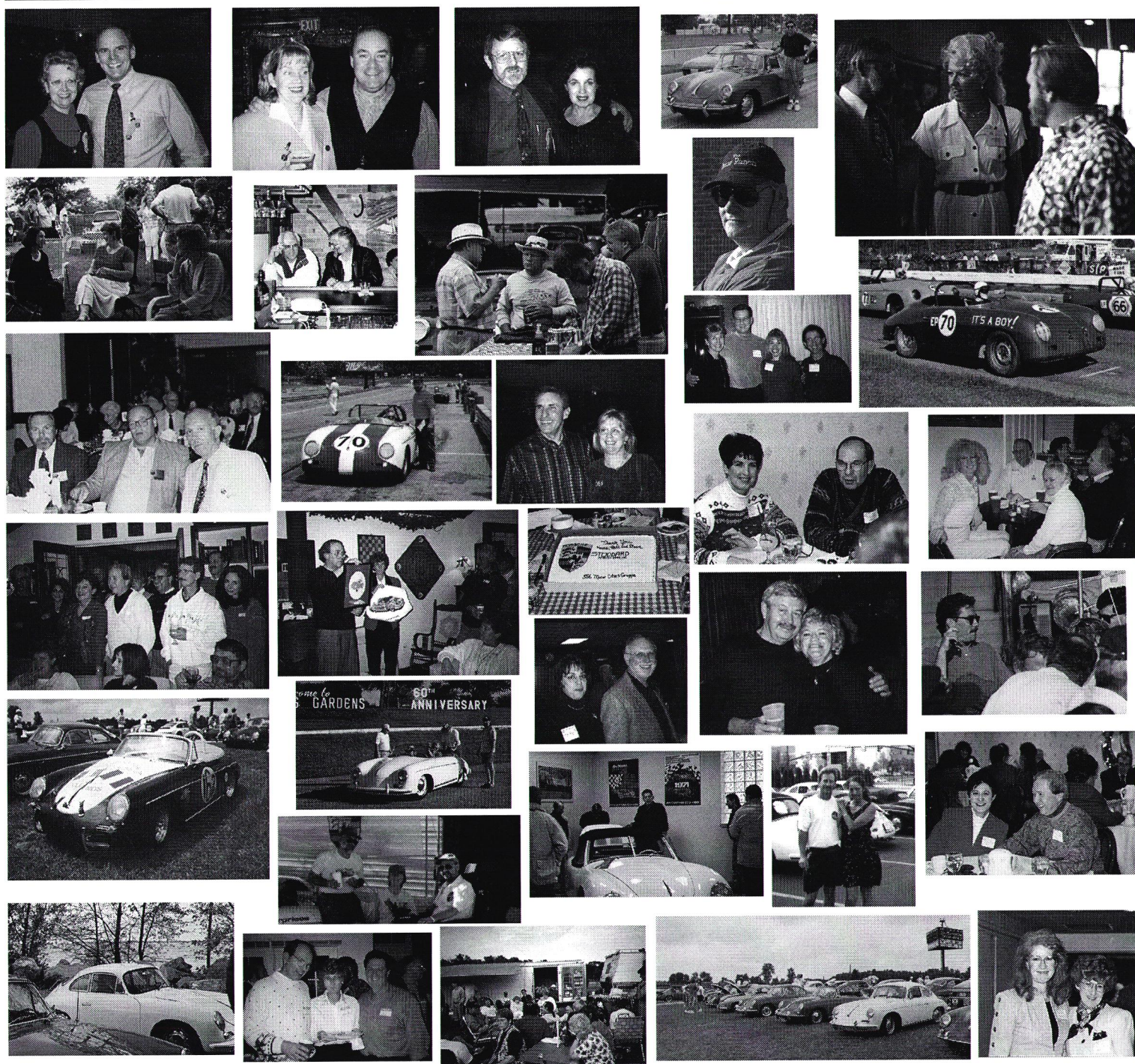
Our Gruppe has hosted 3 Holidays, 1982 in Ann Arbor, 1988, and 1998 at Waterford Hills and Meadow Brook. These were all outstanding events that our members came together as a team to produce. There is a great deal of satisfaction in working together on a large event and seeing it come to fruition. I still have 356 members come up to me at events and say our 1998 Holiday was the best they have ever attended and that makes me feel very proud of our local club.

Barbara Skirmants, Past president & current Membership Chair



1989

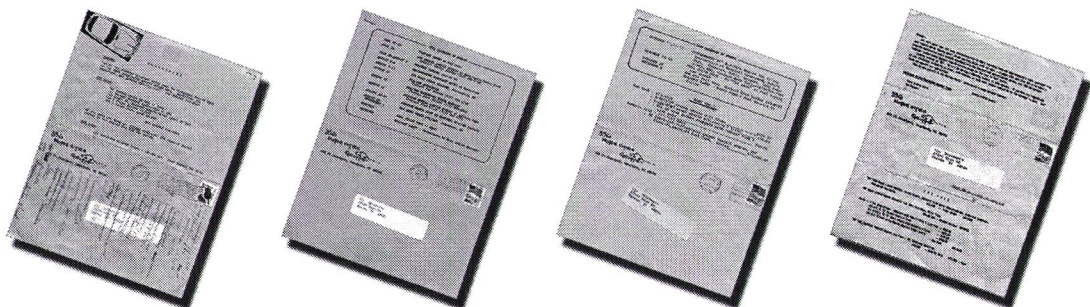
Gruppe Members Past... and Most Still Present



1990



The Events Weren't Bad, Either!



1991

MOTOR CITIES GRUPPE CALENDAR

August

24th—Gruppe Dinner Cruise Watch the website for information.

September

3rd-7th East Coast Holiday Asheville's Biltmore Estate. See Registry to enter.

6th—Watkins Glen Run

14th—Drive Your Porsche day Ferry Porsches Birthday

17th—Membership Dinner WED. 6:00 PM. At Wagon Wheel.

27th—1st annual Vintage German Auto Swap Meet. Ski Roundtop, Lewisberry, PA 717-502-8820 for information.

October

5th—Fall Color Tour

November

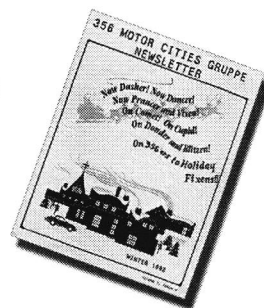
19th—Membership Dinner WED. 6:00 PM. At Wagon Wheel

December

7th—Holiday Party—New Location Baker's in Milford; see upcoming Auspuff for info

January

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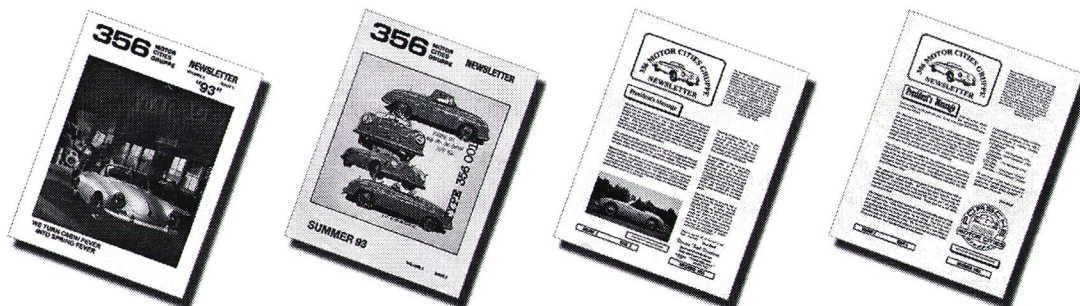
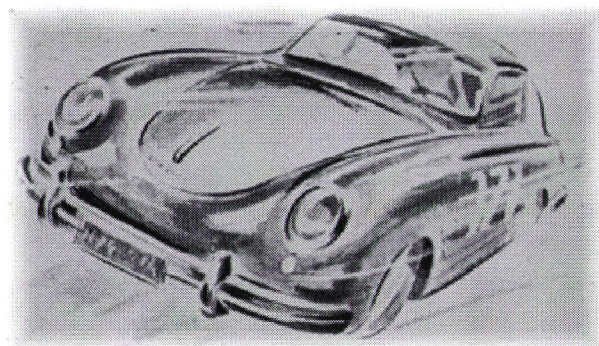
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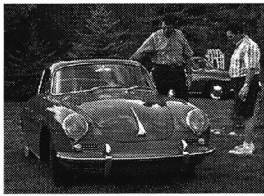
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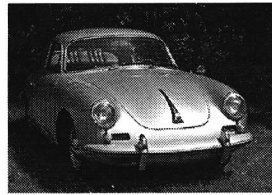


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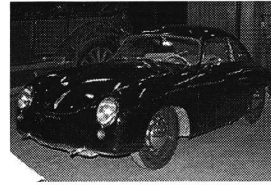
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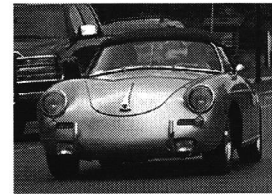
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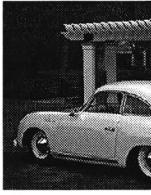
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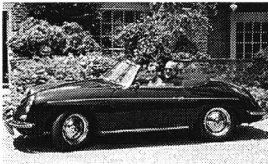
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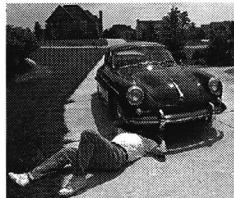
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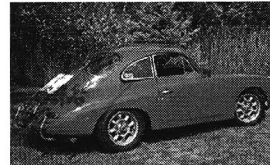
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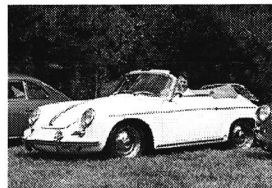
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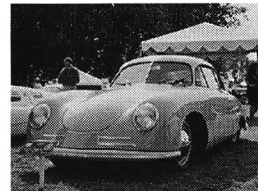
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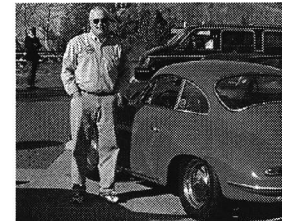
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Bill Toburen



Chuck Stoddard



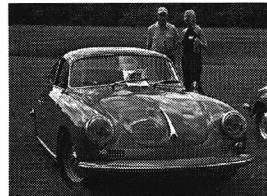
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Dan C



Chris Sloan



Christina Trupiano



David Howard



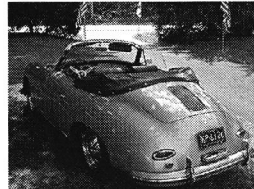
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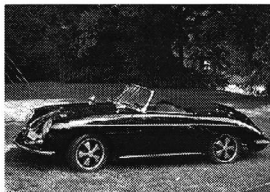
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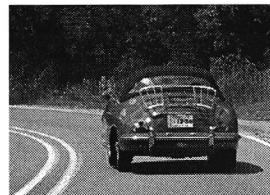
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Kathy Hurlbert



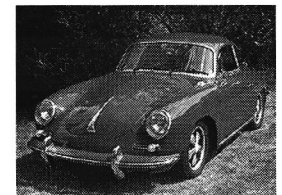
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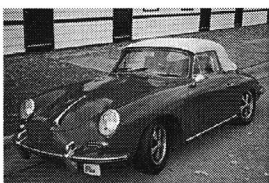
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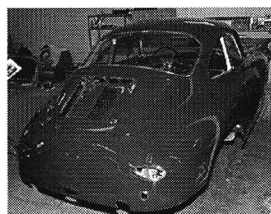
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Tom Youk



Adam Johnson



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Sebastian Gaeta

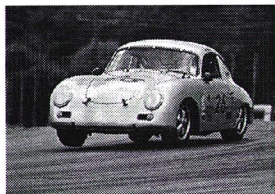


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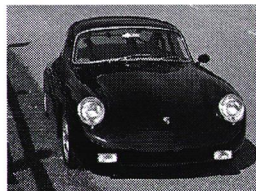
— PORSCHE 356'S AND SOME OTHERS



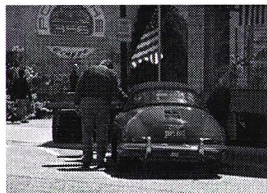
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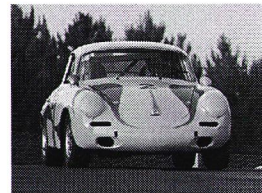
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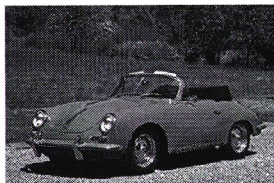
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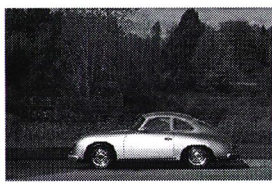
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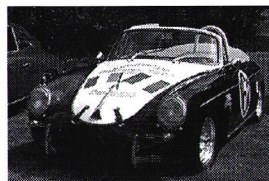
Lane Mally



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John Denyer



John Thomson



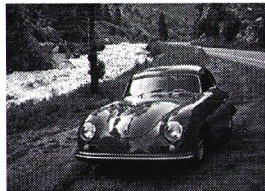
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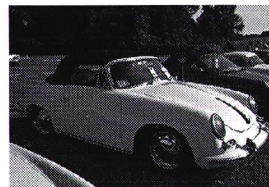
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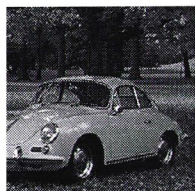
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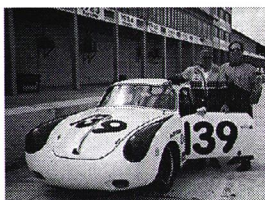
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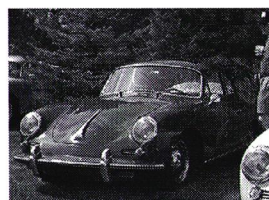
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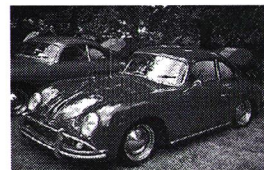
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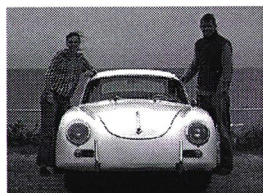
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Karen Roland



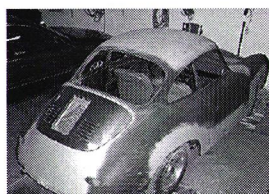
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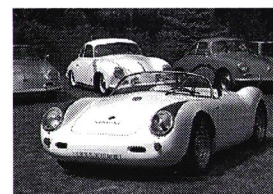
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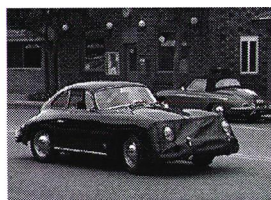
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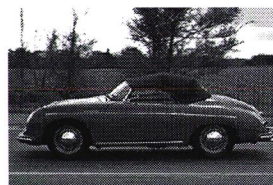
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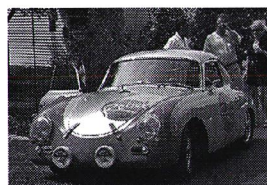
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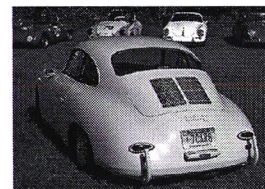
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Tim Walls



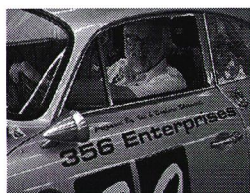
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Ron Roland



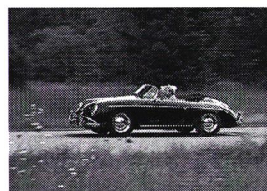
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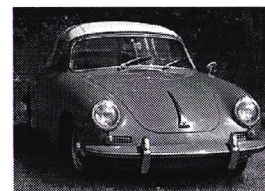
Vic Skirmants



Myron Vernis



Dick Gobba



Richard King



The Zen of Neat-o

by Brad Richards

Story by David Peterson

photography by Gottfried Hogh

The featured car this month is the third 356 we have owned – and after completing a bare metal restoration a year ago, it is also probably the final one we will own. Our first 356 was a 1964 C coupe purchased new in April 1964. Several cars followed that one – another Porsche, BMW, SAAB, Corvette, Merkur and some others that were somewhat more practical for a family of four. In 1987, I yearned for another true sports car, but was somewhat limited on selection by an “American only” edict at work. Reflecting that the one car we had owned that provided the most enjoyment was our ’64 C coupe, the decision was made to find another 356. That led to our black 1957 sunroof coupe, the immediate predecessor to the silver and blue ’59 356A cabriolet.

I first saw the cabriolet at Tim Pott’s Eurotec Motors in Ann Arbor where I was having a clutch cable replaced on the sunroof coupe. My brother Bob was looking for a 356 – and I told him that I had found him the right car; but that it’s location would be revealed only after receiving a promise that he would sell it to me when he tired of it.

When he saw it, he agreed totally with me (one of the few times), so now a Peterson owned the cabriolet.

In 1994, as expected, Bob felt the need for more speed and luxurious cruising comfort. So he bought a Nissan 300ZX and I bought the cabriolet. A month later, the engine crank snapped, and Vic Skirmants rebuilt the engine. It was at that time that we got the ‘bad news/good news’ routine played on the engine. The bad news is that it was not the original engine. The good news was that it was a 912 engine dressed up to look like a 356A engine.

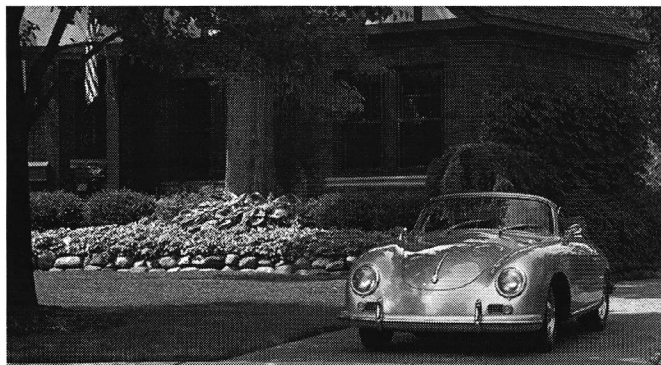
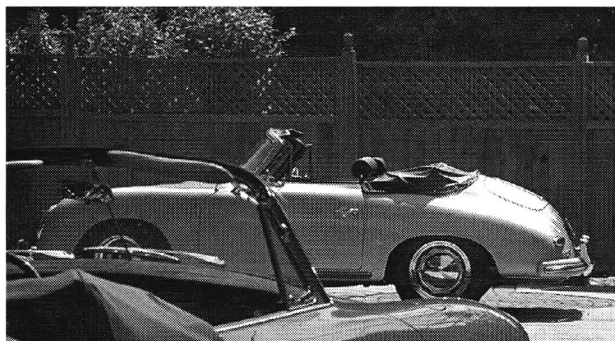
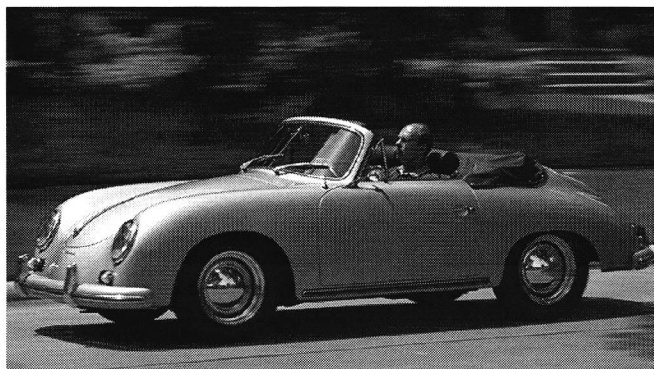
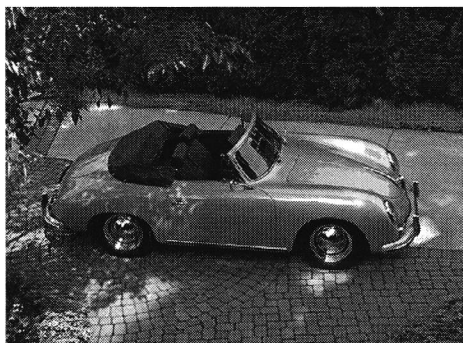
For the next seven years, we took it everywhere and enjoyed it. We took it to Washington DC. It was so hot that they closed the Washington Monument to the public for the first time in history – 106 degrees and we were driving home without AC. Mid-Ohio several times; once with Vic Rivera and I racing the falling raindrops to the nearest freeway underpass; I hustling to put the top up and Vic hustling to put on his yellow slicker (tough when your roadster doesn’t have a

top), and another time when we always parked on an incline so Barbara wouldn’t have to push the cab too hard to engage the starter. Spring tours, fall tours and overnight tours. And just little weekend trips off by ourselves. Fun car and good memories.

By the spring of 2001, the pronouncement was made (singularly by me) that the red cab was looking tired and needed freshening. The decision was made (jointly after some discussion) to repaint it and redo the interior. And that very logically lead to the eight-month ground-up restoration that took place at Ted Dunham’s garage starting in December 2001.

The transformation even exceeded both Barbara’s and my expectations.

In the process, we learned that this was a very patriotic car in 1959, coming from the factory with a red interior, white hardtop and blue exterior body. We also discovered that this was a California car, for deep down in the front footwell pocket was an admission ticket to Vasona Lake Park in Santa Clara County and a match cover from a Santa Clara area restaurant. I immediately called my brother and asked if the car had license plates when he bought it. “Yes, a pair of black California plates.” “With yellow letters and numbers?” “Yes, that’s right. But they were old plates, so I threw them out.” Oh well, at least I know it’s a California black plate car...



SAME GREAT LINES AS
JOHN DENYER'S A
COUPE, BUT THIS ONE
COMES WITH A MUCH
BETTER VIEW.

JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF SHEETMETAL
FRAME AROUND THE WINDSCREEN.

TOP FITS NICELY INTO REAR
COMPARTMENT BUT SEATING IS
LIMITED.



MAN THIS CAR IS SHINY!!

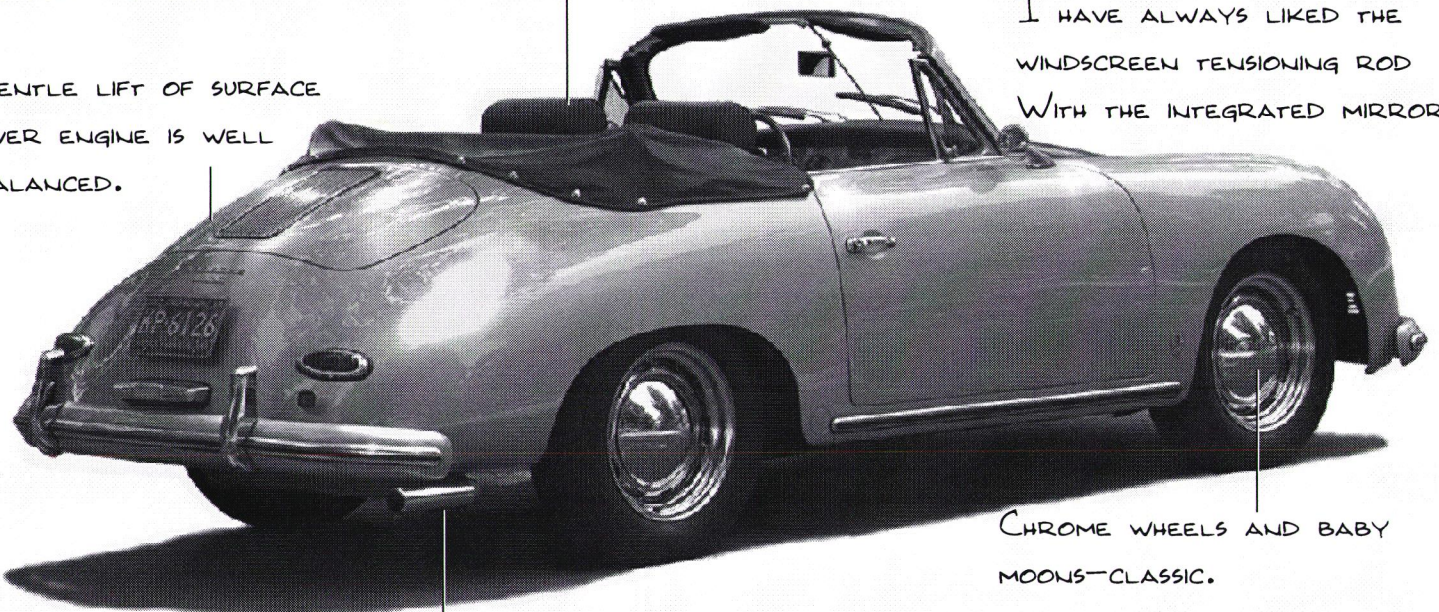
STANCE HAS BEEN DIALED IN
ON DAVE'S CAR WITH JUST THE
RIGHT AMOUNT OF RAKE.

TED DUNHAM CREATED A NICE LITTLE STORAGE AREA
IN THE BACK OF DAVE'S CAR, ASK FOR A LOOK SEE—
VERY NEAT. OPTIONAL HEADRESTS ARE COOL!

REAR VIEW AND REAR 3/4
VIEW ARE THE BEST.

GENTLE LIFT OF SURFACE
OVER ENGINE IS WELL
BALANCED.

I HAVE ALWAYS LIKED THE
WINDSCREEN TENSIONING ROD
WITH THE INTEGRATED MIRROR.



CHROME WHEELS AND BABY
MOONS—CLASSIC.

AFTER MARKET SPORT EXHAUST LOOKS...
WELL, SPORTY. SEEMS TO LINE UP WITH THE
DECO MOLDING AS WELL.

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT DAVE'S CAR IN PERSON—
THE COLOR SELECTIONS ARE AMAZING!

The Gerhard Mitter Story

by Zdenek Base



How many of us can spell the name one of the most reliable and brilliant Porsche factory drivers, Gerhard Mitter? Some people feel he was not as fast a pilot as his teammate "Seppi" Siffert, but his steady driving effort helped spread the fame of the remarkable Zuffenhausen machines around the world. I was privileged to see Mitter's driving talent in the 1965 Solitude Rennen, the last year of running on this challenging track. He drove the Porsche 904/8 Spyder to victory. After that year race, due to safety concerns, this legendary track in Stuttgart was closed to competition racing.

Gerhard Mitter was born on August 30, 1935, in Krásná Lipa, Czechoslovakia. It's a small town in northwest corner of the country, about 45 miles from Maffersdorf (Ferdinand Porsche's birthplace). World War II interrupted his childhood, and at the end came even more

devastation. The anti-German atmosphere and consequent expulsion (by post-war government decree) of the Sudeten Deutschen from the country meant not only losing their properties, but also a homeland. Mitter's family settled in a small town of Böblingen, near Stuttgart, Germany.

Gerhard learned to be a mechanic and founded a successful car repair and sales shop, which still exists today. His passion for speed became a hobby, whether he drove a motorcycle or a car. Mitter's engine set-up for racing was always done with great precision and his driving results also were soon noticed. When regional races became too small, he entered the national racing scene. Gerhard did not shy away from any type of racing; whether they were hill climbs, road racing of Formula cars, sports cars or anything between. The same variety applied to the cars he raced: Lotus-

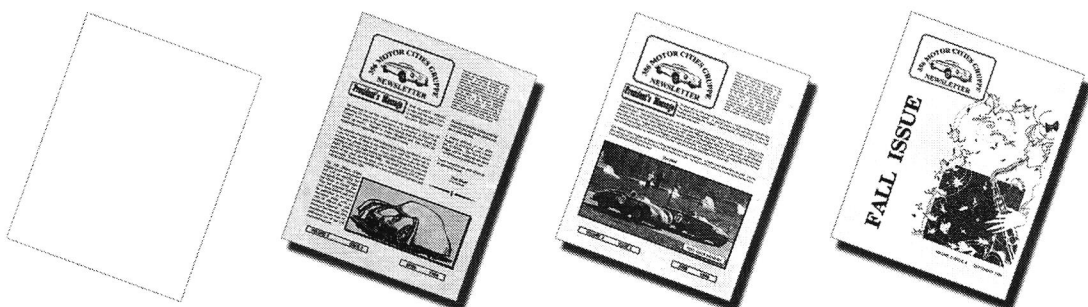
DKW, Fiat-Abarth, Lotus F-Junior, Brabham-Cosworth, BMW and, of course, many Porsches.

It would not be a complete picture to describe his talent if we didn't touch on Mitter's role in Formula racing. He got his introduction with the Ecurie Maarsberg team in July 1963 in Zandvoort (Dutch GP). Gerhard qualified 16th and due to a clutch problem in the second lap, he did not finish. A totally different scenario was played in August of the same year in the German GP. This Nürburgring drive came on the invitation of Dutch Baron Carel Godin de Beaufort, who himself was piloting one of his own Porsches, the 718. Similarly, Gerhard started from the 15th position, but drove a sensational race finishing in 4th place only behind such veterans as Surtees, Clark and Ginther, respectively. Scoring these three championship points was very encouraging. Unfortunately, this near podium finish would be Mitter's only Formula scoring. At least it was in a Porsche.

Gerhard's future engagements in this royal class of racing were limited mostly to German GP appearances in the 'Ring, his favorite track. His cars also changed, to Lotus (in 1965 and 1966), Brabham (1967) and BMW (1969). It should be noted the Formula 1 GP organizers sometimes fill up the field with Formula 2 cars, a big challenge for their drivers.

When Gerhard Mitter became one of the chosen pilots for the Zuffenhausen factory in 1965, he offered the driving skills Porsche needed. It was also a privilege to drive for this local "Schwaben racing stable." He could not possibly disappoint this prestigious racing family. And disappoint he did not. His second place in the Targa Florio race that same year was only the beginning, sort of a tune-up for better results to come.

Gerhard competed in the popular hill climb races for number of years, but with Porsche, he became the European Champion in 1966, 1967, and 1968. Such was his domination



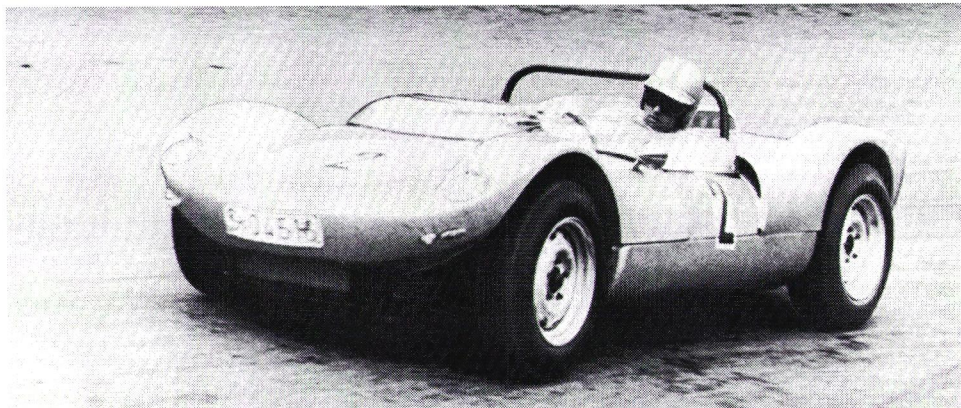
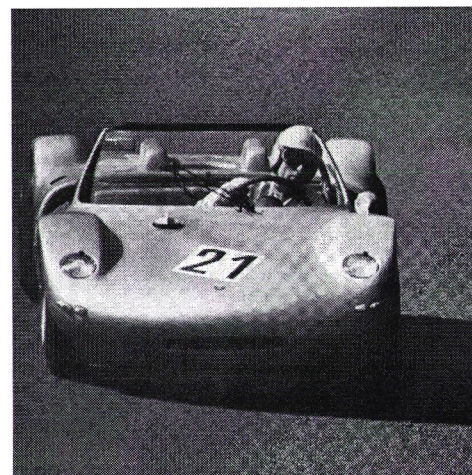
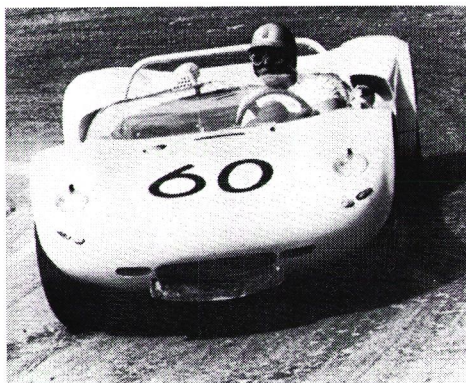
1994

that in 1968 he won seven out of eight scheduled races - Montseny, Berchtesgaden, Sestriere, Freiburg, Sierra Montana, Salzburg and Mont-Ventoux. There was only one race, Trent, where it started to rain on "his turn," and that was too much of a handicap even for this Master. After these three years, one can say, he earned the title "King of the Hill."

The World Manufacturers Championship in sports cars racing during the '50s and '60s was valued equally if not more important than the GP Formula 1 circuit. The famous fierce competition among Alfa Romeo, Ferrari, Ford, Matra, Lola and Porsche teams was complicated by ever changing rules of FIA, the world governing body of motor racing. It was never a problem for Porsche to win in its own class, but to compete with a larger engine classes for the overall victory required changes in company philosophy. That company attitude did change, and bigger displacement engines were coming.

Then came 1969, and the factory team was ready for the assault on the world title. In the past year, the title went to Ford. The improved Porsche 908 (introduced in 1968) was a beautiful machine. Ten excellent drivers were assembled: Mitter, Herrmann, Siffert, Stommelen, Ahrens, Schütz, Redman, Attwood, Elofford, and Larrousse. Could that be winning formula for the championship title? Gerhard and his teammates were wondering what kind of season it would be. Maybe he was also thinking about the profession itself, since a number of his Porsche co-drivers were no longer among them, like Beaufort, Scarfiotti, and Schlesler.

The season scheduled races started as usual in the US, with the 24 hours at Daytona and 12 hours at Sebring, they continued to England's 6-hour Brand's Hatch, Italy's 1000 km Monza, Targa Florio, Belgium's 1000km Spa-Francorchamps, the 1000km at Nürburgring, 24 hours Le Mans, back to Watkins Glenn for a 6-hour race, and finally Austria's 1000 km Ostereichring. Tough schedule indeed! Porsche had several disappointments (suspension



problems) in the first two races, but Mitter still managed to come in fifth at Sebring, finished second at Brands Hatch, won on dreadful roads Targa Florio, and finished second again in Spa. With this steady driving effort, he secured enough points for the factory to claim their first overall victory.

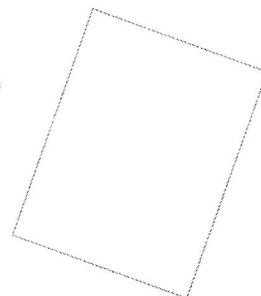
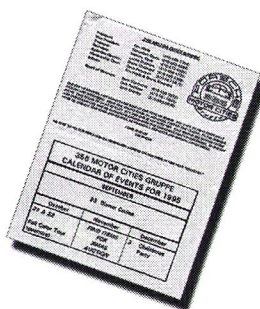
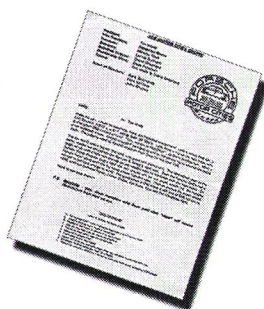
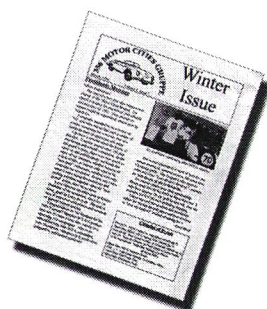
Gerhard Mitter's desire to drive open cars never left him. In 1968 he established contact with BMW's sport department. They intended to enter Formula racing and Gerhard helped them behind the scenes with testing.

The Formula 2 car introduction was planned for 1969. The first two cars were assigned to drivers Dieter Quester and Hubert Hahne, and were entered in the European Championship. What better place to show the German fans these cars than on Nürburgring in August. The third car was waiting for Gerhard on this GP weekend. It was sup-

posed to be an easy drive, but nobody knew that particular Saturday, August 1, 1969 practice run would become his last.

In the track section called Schwedenkreuz (Swedish Cross), a not particularly difficult curve, his BMW steering would not react. The car left the pavement and disintegrated. Nobody could have saved him. The BMW team immediately withdrew the other two cars, as did his long time friend Hans Herrmann. One can only imagine the somber mood which fell on the rest of the teams and the German fans.

It was a sad end to Mitters's life, perhaps in the middle of his best season yet. Porsche lost one of the most loyal pilots. He proved to the world he could really perform. Today, in Germany, some car clubs organize local races in his memory, called **the Gerhard Mitter - Gedächtnisrennen**.



1995

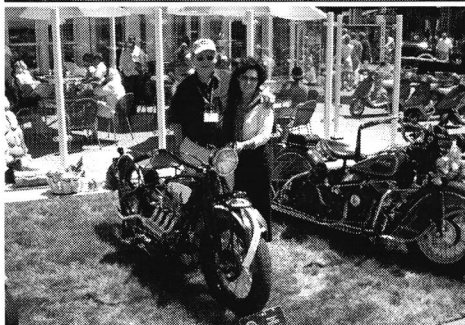
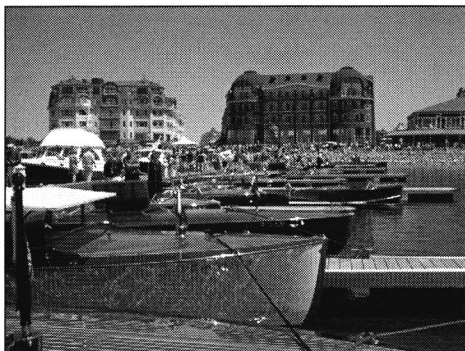
Bay Harbor Concours d'Elegance 2003

Nothing short of spectacular. I suppose if you have been a regular at Pebble Beach and Amelia Island, then you probably *have* seen it all. But the budding Bay Harbor event, just a 5 hour drive from Detroit, is enough to satisfy the rest of us when it come to a Concours event.

June is a terrific time of the year up north, not to mention the fact that there is always a nice cool breeze at the Harbor. Compared to the baking sun at Meadow Brook, the breeze, views and the other activities surrounding Bay Harbor make for a more relaxing and visually pleasing weekend.

If you are not familiar with Bay Harbor, it is a Lake Michigan bayside residential/resort area just north of Charlevoix. Within the "town" of Bay Harbor there is a main street area with shops and restaurants. They remain open during the concours while exotic, classic and antique autos and motorcycles line the streets. The motorized offerings spill out onto the grass landing of the boat launch, where the docks are then lined with the most awe inspiring group of wooden boats this side of Monterey.

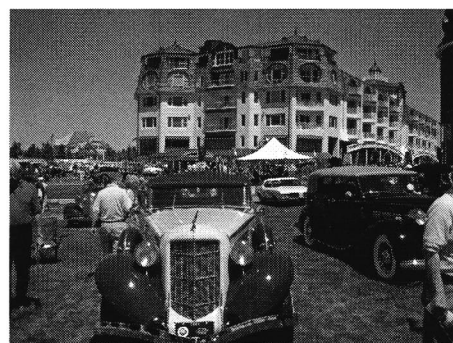
Dave Draper, a Gruppe member and owner of Time Machines (a classic car restoration shop in Charlevoix), chairs the event and is trying hard to also get a number of sea planes to attend. This year we had the pleasure of seeing a Grumman Goose docked alongside the classic wooden boats. That is until it backed out, taxied to the bay and took off with such fury you swore the ground shook. It then disappeared into the horizon, gone for the day. Or so we thought.



While hundreds stood at the boat launch to watch 4 Amphi-cars drive into the water, the Goose reappeared, zooming straight over main street to the delight of the whole crowd (see photo at right).

One would think that The Goose was a tough act to follow, but the Amphi-cars put on a great show. One by one they splashed into the bay, quickly converting from land to sea. I'll not soon forget the sight of them powering about the water, each driver (Captain?) with their first mate along side to navigate and snap some photos of their own.

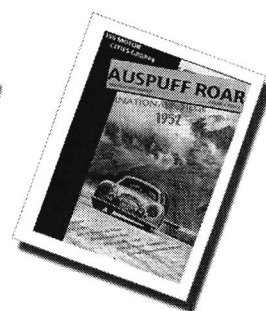
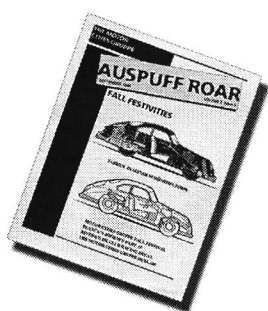
We were pleasantly surprised to see many Gruppe members there including Bill and Shirley Hallandal, Peter and Tracy Stuyk, Bob Count, and Tom Gale. Tom was



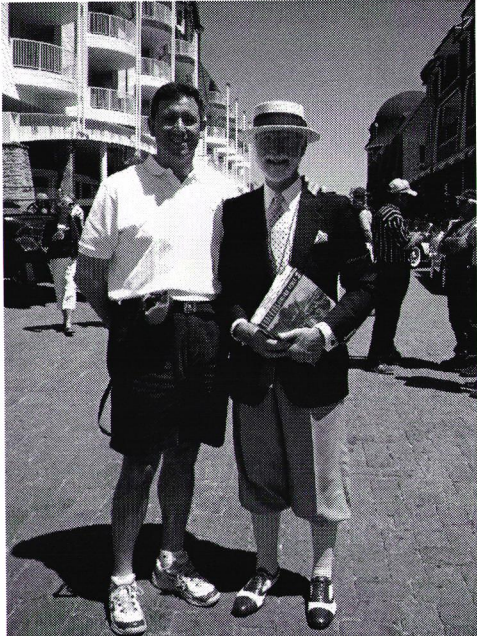
showing his ex-Goldberg/Hinz 356 GT. And Hinson was there in all his glory. Richard was born for these events. He is deeply involved in the Bay Harbor Concour, and it is easy to see why.

Perhaps the nicest surprise was to see Tord and Carmen Smedberg. Tord had e-mailed me earlier in the week to let me know that his 1929 Indian motorcycle was finally finished. Imagine my surprise to see the two of them there, winning best in class, no less. I knew the bike was done but I did not realize it was *that* done. Congratulations, Tord. Now it's time for another 356!

Look for information on next year's event in the April issue of Auspuff Roar.



1996



Oktoberfest '03

Munk's Sponsored Benefit
Co-Sponsored by Gerych's

Saturday, September 20, 2003

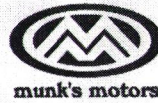
Support Oakland County Habitat for Humanity

Come Celebrate with us at Munk's Motors for an evening of cool and classy cars, tasty food, great music, and good friends. Bring your Porsche!

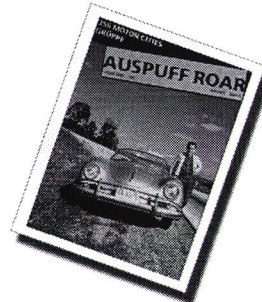
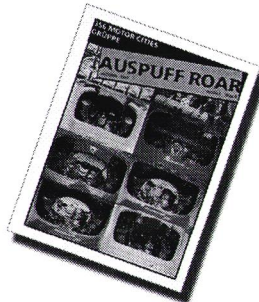
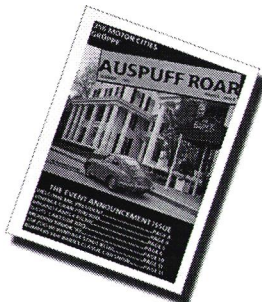
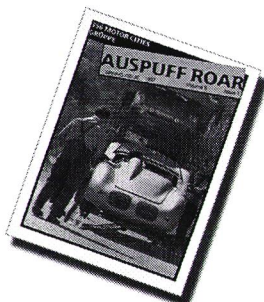


Music by **Mass Transit**
(Munk's Manager Bill Hamel's Band)

Doors open from 4 PM to 10 PM
\$10 cover charge per person.
Proceeds go to **Habitat for Humanity**



Munk's Motors
3080 West Huron (M59) in Waterford, MI 48328
(248) 681-8081 or chris@munks.com



1997

How Not to Buy a 356

A hand written letter,
in it's entirety, found in the owner's manual of
Neil Golberg's Cabriolet

8-29-76

Dear Fred,

Since receiving your letter I have refigured all of my estimates and checked them with my sources as best I can. As I told you, I would want to fix the hood, fix the vibration, fix rust spots, restitch and replace leather in seats, brace the front bumper and install new floor rugs. I am sure you are right in saying the engine has been exceptionally well cared for as I feel most pilots, realizing their dependance on mechanical things, are more careful about engines than other folks. However, the fact remains that a new engine from Stoddard's is \$1995 and most rebuilds in the area are going for \$1500. I have seen very few engines, 356 or otherwise, go 100,000 miles without some work-if only a valve job. But enough of theory, for as you say, who knows what the life expectancy of that engine is-it could go tomorrow or last another 60,000 miles.

As much as I'd like to have the car I still don't think I can pay the \$5,000 you ask. I do believe the car to be worth \$4,700 with hardtop, manuals, toolkit etc and at that price I guess I would not insist on a compression check for I would not want to pay more for the car. As you know I have a M-B 300SL that I prize very much and would also prize the 356 if you feel like you can sell it to me for this much. If you feel you cannot-I certainly understand but I hope you will realize this price was reached in my mind after much careful analysis and is not based on what a dealer would want to pay to turn for a profit. My philosophy is to try to establish a value on an item, offer that, and if not acceptable keep looking. If you feel like it is not enough, you must, of course, in turn keep looking for the right buyer.

Incidentally, my present plans are for my wife and I to leave on a long overdue vacation trip of from 3 to four weeks around September 9th or 10th. Therefore, I must know of your plans shortly if I am to buy the car. There is the slight possibility we would leave the 16th instead but I cannot be sure now. If you decide to wait till I return I cannot assure you of my interest in the car as I plan to look for one on my trip and so if we make a deal I think it should be immediately. No matter what your decision, I appreciate your honesty in our dealings on the car. Best possible regards.

Charles

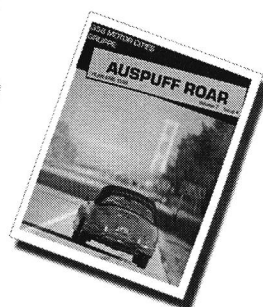
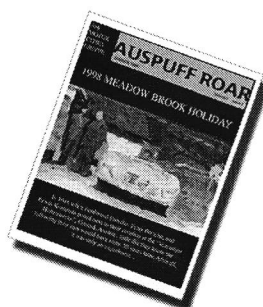
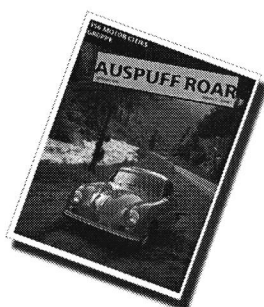
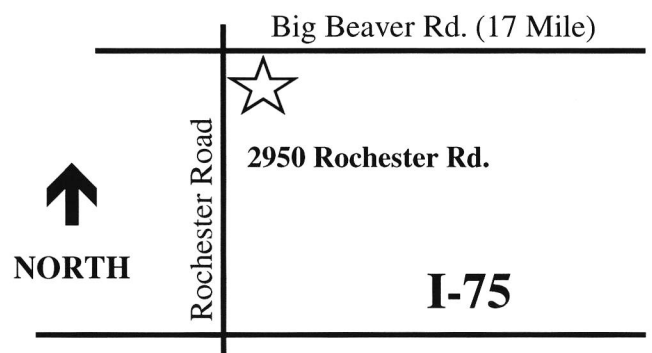
(As you may have guessed, Charles did not get the car).



Social Dinners at the Wagon Wheel

It seems that the **Wagon Wheel** is working out fine for our social gatherings. See the calendar on page 12 for dates. All meetings **ARE NOW ON WEDNESDAYS** and start at 6:00 PM.

Wagon Wheel
2950 Rochester Rd.
Troy, MI 48083
248-689-8194

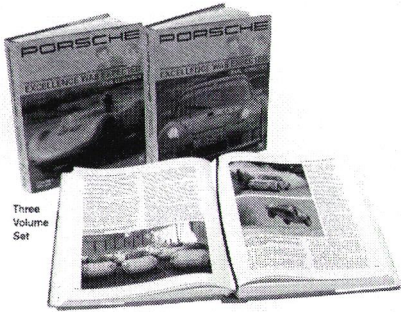


1998

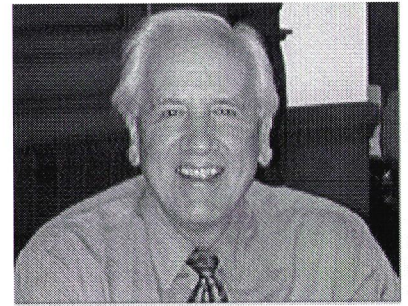


STODDARD
IMPORTED CARS, INC.

14 Time
PORSCHE
PREMIER
DEALER



Special Event



Where: Stoddard Imported Cars
38845 Mentor Ave
Willoughby, Ohio 44094

When: Thursday, September 11th, 2003
4:00PM—9:00PM

Meet the renowned author of Porsche: Excellence Was Expected Karl Ludvigsen

His new expanded, three volume, 1,574-page set contains the photos and artwork from the original version, enhanced by over 742 new black and white photos and 50 new color drawings of Porsche production racing cars which were commissioned specifically for this updated edition. All original chapters have been revised, plus 29 new chapters, which cover all developments and products through 2002.

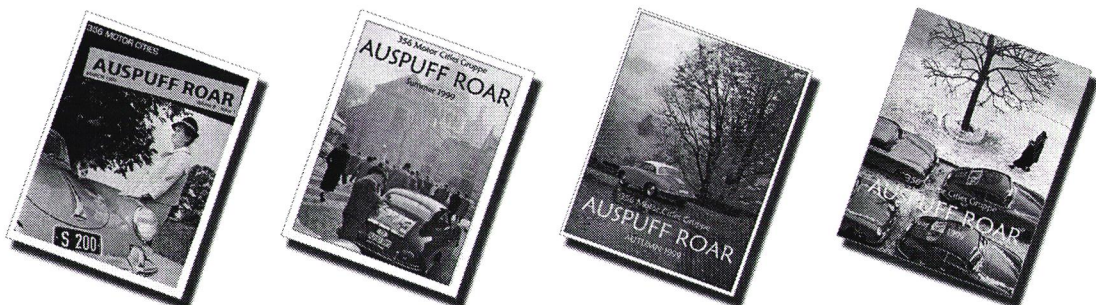
To reserve your copy, please phone our Parts Department before September 5, 2003 and receive a special introductory price of \$215.00, this includes shipping fee within the continental United States. (Checks or Credit Card orders accepted) Regular price: \$239.00 plus shipping.

OR

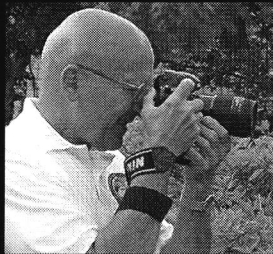
Join us on September 11, 2003 to meet Karl Ludvigsen. He will sign your book. (Price \$200.00)

"Karl Ludvigsen is among today's most respected automotive historians. He has served as technical editor of Auto Age and Sports Cars Illustrated magazines, as east coast editor of Motor Trend and as editor of Car and Driver. He is the author, co-author or editor of more than three dozen books and reports about cars and the motor industry."

Refreshments will be served.



1999



Historian's Perspective?

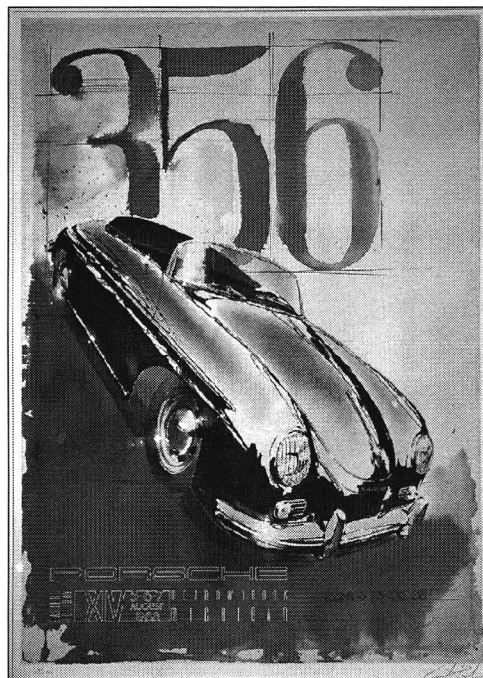
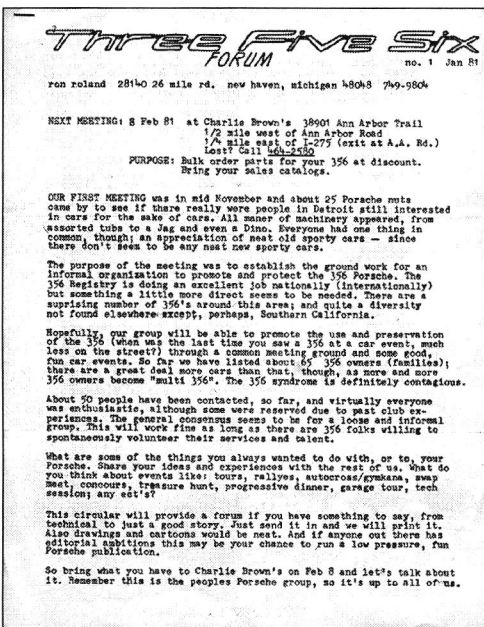
by Gottfried Hogh

It was my simple intent to put up some web pages decorated with old newsletter covers. But of course, projects expand, especially if you do them backwards, as I did this, heading into the past. That's how this issue and this article started.

that I placed into the past newsletter web pages. At the end of the past winter, over a period of six weeks the general framework was filled to about 80% and the "holes" or missing issues became more apparent to me. I also began to see a bit of the Gruppe history more clearly.

This is how it began: The Gruppe had hosted larger gatherings of tub aficionados in 1982 and in 1988, but it was the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of Porsche A.G. by the faithful in the area, specifically the 1998 East Coast Holiday in Troy, that brought the 356 Registry and the 356 Motor Cities Gruppe to my ken.

How did I become interested? Well, as is the case for many of our Gruppe members, the relationship with Porsches goes back some considerable time into the past. I first became aware of Porsche in about 1954 (at the age of 15) when I saw a reference to the company and in the then popular illustrated magazine LIFE. Somewhat later I learned of the relationship of Dr. Ferdinand Porsche to the Volkswagen.



MOTOR-IN-REAR AUTOS are the sleek, costly \$4,584 Porsche convertible, a favorite of U.S. sport-car fans, the sturdy \$1,495 Volkswagen, the biggest-selling German car.



Soon after, I started to note the occasional, somewhat rare "356 tub" in the Detroit area. Any foreign automobile type was a rarity in the region during the mid 1950's. Several Porsche examples I observed at that time stand out in my memory to this day. One encounter occurred when I visited the old, downtown J. L. Hudson department store. It may now appear an unusual site to see a 356, but I distinctly remember a maroon or dark red (1956 or thereabout) 356 A coupe that was on display on one of the upper levels in the large store. At the time I was a high school student at Cass Tech. I would frequently walk downtown after the school day to board the Mack Ave. bus for home (near Mack and Cadieux). Once or twice a week I'd walk through some of the downtown stores, and this 356 sighting was on one of those store visits. I clearly recall being surprised at seeing an auto, even if a small, sports car, inside and on one of the upper floors of the store. The time I spent

After receiving a set of old Auspuff Roars from Sebastian, and even older 356 Forums and Newsletters from the Vic and Barb Skirmants collection, I started to scan the covers into my computer with the object of familiarizing myself and also the visitors to the Gruppe web site with some of the earlier publications of our group. Since I'm in the habit of organizing items in my computer on the basis of dates and time series, I set up a group of "buckets" (i.e., directories named 1982, ..., 2003) into which I placed the accumulating set of scans, and from which I then generated the standardized "thumbnail" images

How did I arrive at this pass, to write some words on the history of an organization to which I've only belonged fewer than half a dozen years and to which I'm somewhat peripheral? After all, I'm just doing a bit of photographic work and making some "web construction" contributions to the Gruppe. Well, someone has to give the "outsider's" perspective and perhaps I'm qualified as the newcomer to the newsletter and a relatively recent "tub fanatic".



2000

looking at the shiny new Porsche can't have been longer than about 5 minutes, but the event is indelibly etched in my memory. The details are now vague, but Dan Christie's current 1955 Pre-A comes nearest to what I saw at that time, almost half a century ago.

Porsche turns 50 and we're celebrating. Twice!

This year's 356 Registry Holidays will feature the largest gatherings of early Porsches ever assembled, with Porsche #1 and hundreds of other significant cars that made the marque what it is today.

Troy, MI. July 30-Aug. 2
Porsche will be featured at the world-famous Meadow Brook Concours, as well as at Waterford Hills vintage races. There, you'll see factory drivers demonstrate several famous racing Porsches at speed, from a Spyder to a 962. Enjoy tours, dinners, swap meets, racing action, concours, with plenty of bull sessions and opportunities to meet friends old and new. Call 810-558-3692 for event and member info.

Monterey, CA. Aug. 7-11
The West Coast Holiday promises to be one of the most memorable Porsche gatherings ever. Held the week before the Monterey Histories, a full five days of Porsche events include racing, concours, tours, tech sessions, swapping, shopping, and a gala dinner at the Monterey Aquarium! Event HQ is the Monterey Hyatt. Don't be left out of this premier Porsche event. Call (714) 962-2875 for registration information and schedule.

Join us for the events of a lifetime! 356 Registry membership includes our bi-monthly color magazine, a trouble-shooting guide and more. 6,000 members can't be wrong! Holiday registration open to members only. Car ownership is not required. Dues are \$25/year (USA), \$35 Canada, \$45 overseas. Send payment to: Barbara Skirmants, 356 Registry, 27244 Ryan Rd., Warren, MI 48092. Fax 810-558-3616 or write for information.

Closer to the present: In my youth I drove VW's and later my cars were leased Ford models, including a string of ten Mustang convertibles during my last ten years working for Ford Motor Co. at the Research Lab in Dearborn. To me, cars were a bit more than utilitarian objects, but I had little time even for my photographic hobby during that period.

A brand new and very "vanilla" 1986 911 Carrera was the first Porsche I purchased. In April 1998 I retired and started to look for some interesting activities to pursue. I never thought it would involve learning about, acquiring, photographing, and now even writing (a bit) about old Porsches. Perhaps I should have first seen and then heeded the warning signs posted on the car lift at Neil's "Stuart Tool" Saturday morning meeting area.

It was a couple of small adverts in the June 1998 issue (#78) of Excellence that led me back to the 356 and to the C Cabriolet I finally acquired. It and also drew me into the Gruppe. Specifically, there was an invitation to celebrate the Porsche turns 50" at the Troy, Meadow Brook Concours,

and Waterford Hills events. Toward the end of the issue I noticed the Skirmants' "356 Enterprises" ad. There were also the numerous 356's being offered for sale in the Classified Section of that issue. It also had the '356 Market Update' as a part of that number. Among the 'Porsche Tubs' being offered for sale I found several that appeared interesting and accessible. After a number of telephone calls, several to out-of-state locations, I made contact with Dennis Ross residing in the northern suburbs of Detroit, in the Bloomfield Hills area. He had placed his Cabriolet on the market and I arranged to go to his place to inspect the red 356-C. There were a few items I needed to cover before I made the decision to purchase.

During six weeks in June and early July 1998 I started the practical learning process about Porsche 356's and about "Porsche 356 people". The learning process is continuing. Further details of acquiring my Signal Red 356-C Cabriolet are of little interest here. The most significant aspect of that introduction to the type was learning from Dennis Ross that: 1) Vic Skirmants had rebuilt the engine, and 2) Ron Roland had restored the body/chassis.

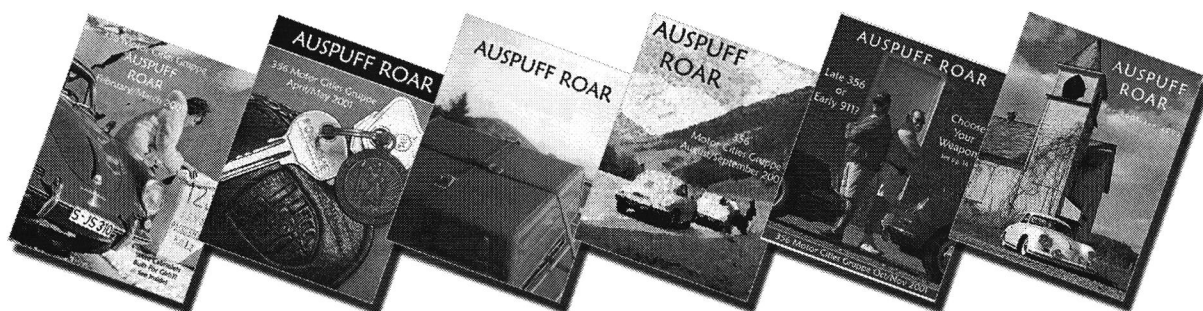
In scouting out the provenance of what I now call my "64P356", I met some interesting people and established a couple of friendships. I still recall my initial drive to Warren, to meet the Skirmants', visit the "356 Enterprises" shop, and also join the 356 Registry and our 356 Motor Cities Gruppe. While I quickly gained an appreciation for Vic's industry and competence (and of some of his relationship to Porsche and to Latvia) and Barbara's competence and indefatigable industry, it took me a little longer to sort out the differences between the distant 'Registry' and the neighborly 'Gruppe'.

After my introduction to Victor and Barbara Skirmants, I learned from the latter of two neighbors in Ann Arbor who were 356 owner/drivers. She mentioned the names Sebastian Gaeta and Bill Rohrer and gave me telephone numbers and addresses. My first call was to Bill, and I learned that he owned and had restored a 356-B Cabriolet and that he lived only about half a mile from my house. We arranged to meet. I walked over to his Berkeley Street residence and was immediately struck by his friendliness and impressed with his 356 knowledge. Bill had pulled his beautiful Aetna blue Cab out of the garage and he invited me for a short ride. It was brief, but (as they say) quite spirited, consider-

ing that we remained in the residential confines of southwest Ann Arbor streets. I was hooked on the 356! It did not take much more 'marketplace haggling' with Dennis Ross to come to a purchase agreement and then to transferring the Signal red 356-C Cab to my possession. And it was just in time for the "Porsche turns 50" 1998 East Coast Holiday.

There have been ups and downs for me with this oldest example of Porsche automotive engineering in my group of three Porsche sports cars (1964 356, 1986 911, 2000 Boxster). The 'downs' are relatively minor and include a faulty clutch (broken spring) and a broken speedometer cable. To some extent I had expected such issues in a three dozen year old car. By far the biggest 'up' has been the circle of friends and acquaintances I acquired along with the 'tub'. That was quite unexpected, as is the number of photographs I would eventually take of my 356 and those of 'tubs' belonging to Gruppe friends and to complete strangers. Sebastian has figured large in initiating the latter photographic activity. While it is quite normal to take photos of ones own car on a sunny day, it's quite another to come to actually enjoy taking a pictures of old rusty tubs (or parts thereof) at far flung locations, such as a broiling Auburn, IN and a rain inundated Hershey, PA. Well, it's for a good cause, for a good 'Gruppe', and for a good friend.

Which brings me back to this issue of the Auspuff Roar and this particular, rambling contribution. Only by stretching definitions a bit was I able to justify the 'history' label pinned on the front of the article. Certainly Thucydides, Gibbons, and Toynbee have nothing to worry about from me here. Yet I hope that these very personal historical notes strike a chord within some fellow Gruppe members. Perhaps they will lead you to reflect how you came to your relationship with the 356 type. Maybe there is a story there for a future newsletter article.



2001

The Auburn, Indiana All Porsche Swapmeet held so much promise this year that I was looking forward to it even more than Hershey. Auburn, located within a few hours of Chicago, Detroit, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Cleveland, Louisville, Columbus and even Pittsburgh, seems to be a terrific location. The word spread throughout the Porsche community regarding the second annual event, and interest seemed to be high. Gruppe member Myron Vernis, who chairs the meet along with Bill Ramsay, had done an outstanding job last year and it promised to be even better this year.

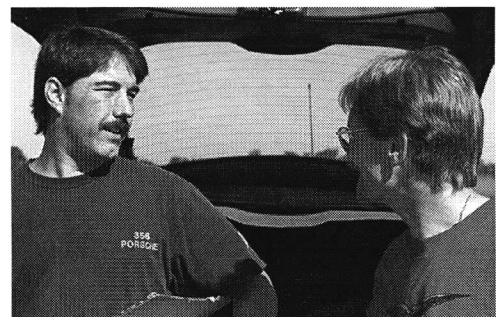
The event is held at the Kruse American Heritage Village which houses a terrific car and WWII vehicle museum. Myron secured the large parking lot on the North side of the building for both the swap area and the Porsche parking. Clean indoor restroom facilities were greatly appreciated as well as the tubs of ice cold bottled water that were available to all.

I arrived at about 8:30 (late for a swap??) and sold four items as I was unloading my car. "Here we go again" I thought as I recalled last year when I sold practically everything I brought with me. After unloading the car, I walked behind the table and proceeded to stand there for five hours without selling one more item. What the ..?

The vendors were there and they had great stuff to sell, new and used. Bargains were everywhere, just no bargain hunters. We were stunned. A few items available were a Nardi wood wheel for \$160, nice original "C" hubcaps (without crest) for \$2 each (!) and an original "C" owners manual-in very good condition-for \$10.

What gives?

I called Myron to give him my take on it. I was prepared to write a big story about how I believed that eBay was killing the local swapmeets. I thought that people were perhaps getting too comfortable buying Por-



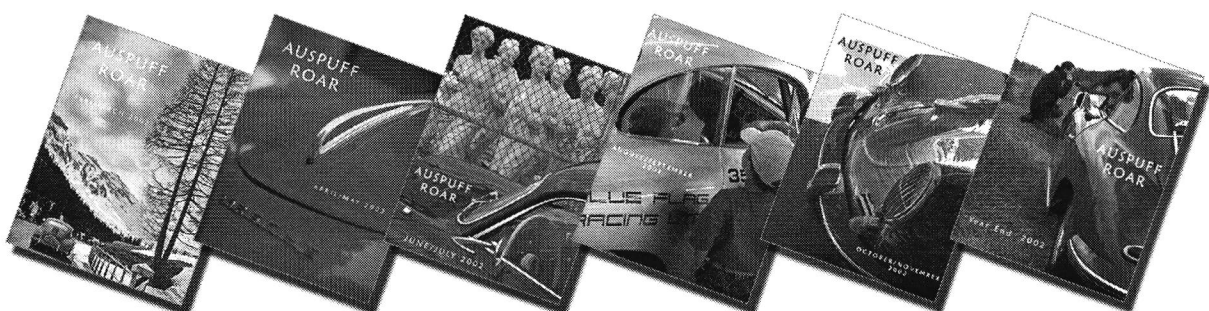
sche parts from around the world with a few clicks of the keyboard, and forgetting how much fun it was to actually hold the item in their hands and chat with the seller. I was ready to scold the readers for not attending and then rally the troops for next year.

I am still going to rally the troops for next year, but there will be no wrist slapping here. After patiently listening to my rant, Myron said that while he was not into censorship of any kind, and that I had every right to print whatever my opinion was, he reminded me that even the huge

California meets were poorly attended for the first few years, and that while disappointed for the vendors, he was extremely optimistic for the coming years.

Oh yeah!, I remember Dennis Frick telling me that they got less than 30 people at the inaugural Central Pennsylvania Region swap (now known as Hershey).

After thanking Myron for his level headedness, I quickly began to change my attitude regarding the story I would write and about the people who did not attend.

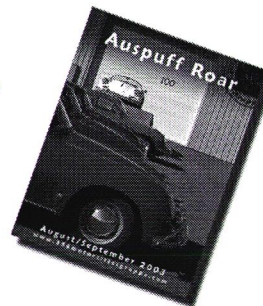
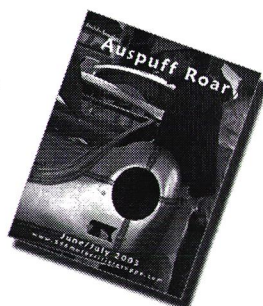
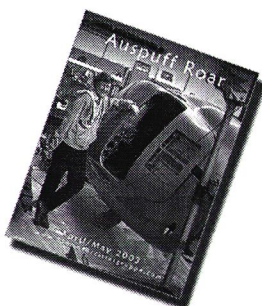
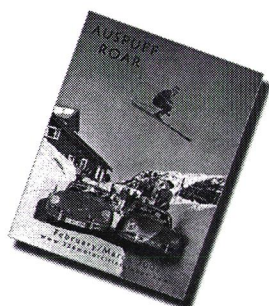
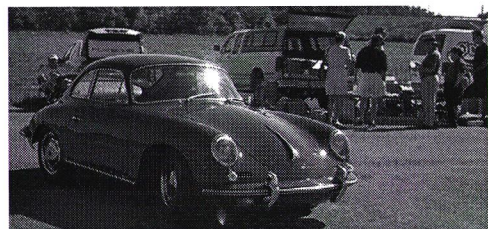
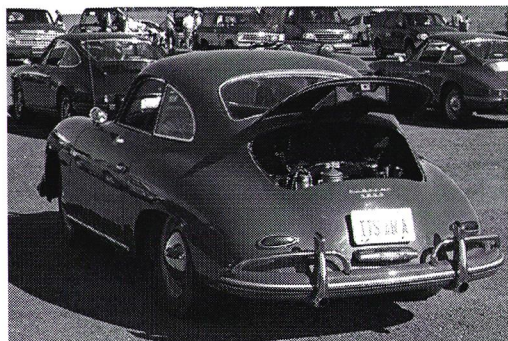
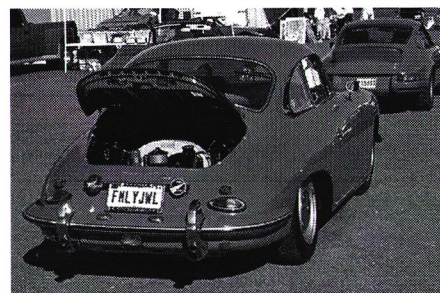
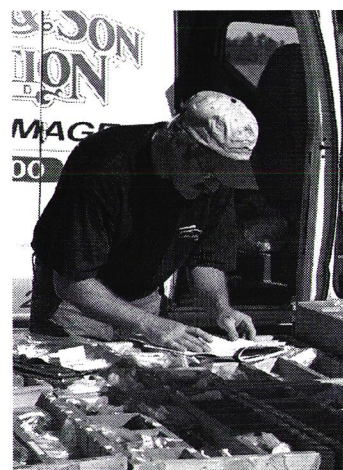


2002

But I did not want to write a “fluff” story. I hate “fluff” stories. So here we go with the big “halftime” speech: Hey Guys, this event is terrific. If you have no need for parts, come anyway to see the cars, the town, the people and the Museums. Both the American Heritage and the Auburn, Cord, Duesenberg museums are within minutes of each other and are worth the trip alone. The city of Auburn is a car town, no ifs ands or buts. There is always something going on there. The restaurants are terrific, the hotels are easy to get to and the potential for this event is immense.

You could even do what my 10 year old daughter, Isabella, and I did: take the backroads in the 356 the entire way, enjoy the countryside, and look forward to making this event the huge success it should be.

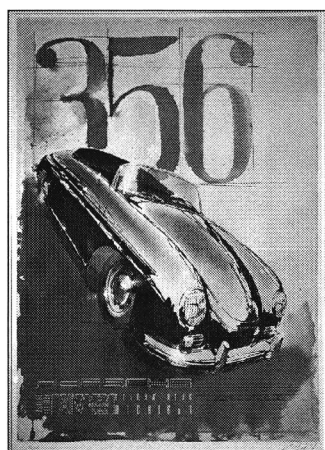
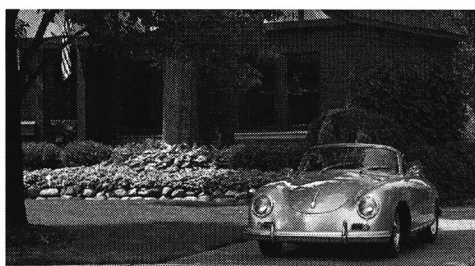
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