

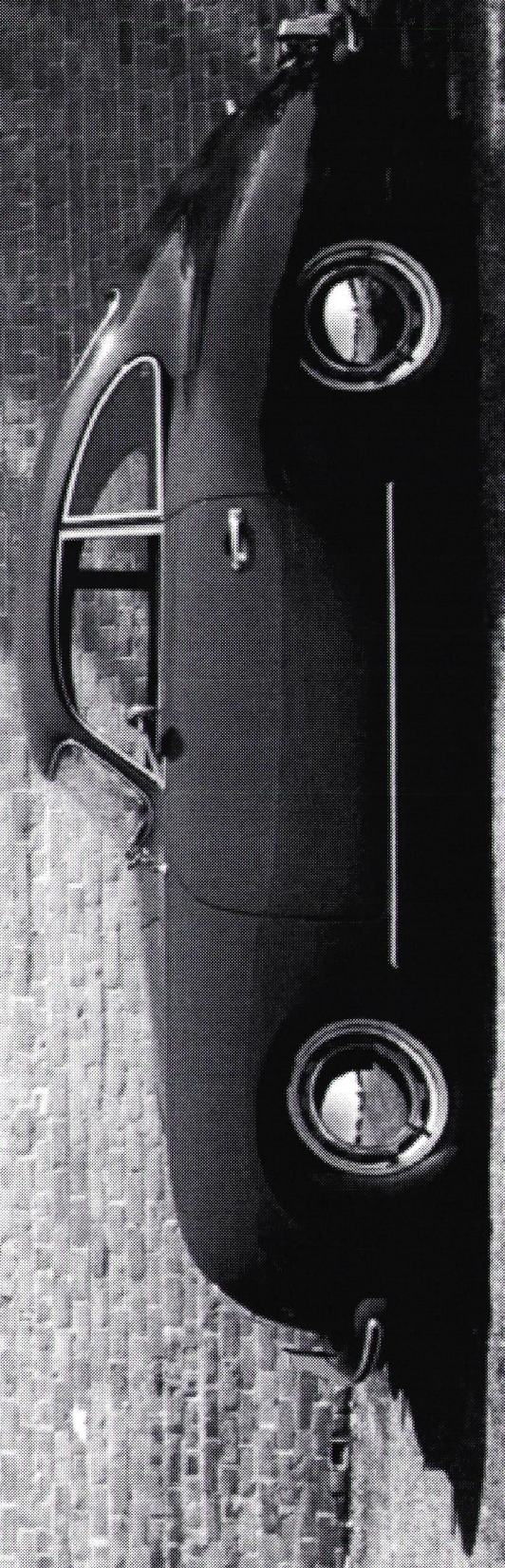


356 Motor Cities Gruppe

AUSPUFF

ROAR

Aug/Sept 2000





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## **ON THE COVER:**



Dan Christie's '55 coupe sits near a brick wall with a faded Motor Cities Gruppe logo painted on it. Where is this top secret location? Who painted the logo on that wall so many years ago? The answer is simple: Dan produced the image of the logo on the wall using his tremendous talents, Adobe Photoshop and his computer. Great work, Dan.

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 is \$15 per year due at the first of each year. Advertising rates per issue in the Auspuff Roar are as follows: Business card size—\$10, Quarter page—\$25, Half page—\$50, Full page—\$85. Please send membership dues to Barbara Skirmants 27244 Ryan Rd, Warren, MI 48092. Please send any materials to be published or advertising copy to: Sebastian Gaeta 4070 Brookview Court, Ann Arbor, MI 48108



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# MUCH OF WHAT I KNOW OR HAVE LEARNED FROM BEING A CAR NUT FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS

By Dick Beecher

me the money for this wise purchase knowing that my position as Director of hamburger-grinding at the local Kroger store would provide me with the necessary income to pay them back. With hamburger at 3 pounds for a dollar, my position was secure. I even ended my promising football career to work and support my car ownership experience.

We started the meticulous restoration process. The real fenders were spot welded on the car by my expert mechanic friends. We would “lead in” the seams later, but now the entire car would get a coat of dull primer to stop the other rust from advancing. With my Grandmother’s backing, I purchased four Kelly whitewalls on time from the Shell Station. Enough money was saved to purchase a dual exhaust system. The restoration process completed, I was ready to take my steady out for a date in my “way cool” 41 Ford. Now, when I bought the car it smoked a little. Most of the smoke came from the engine breather. With many acceleration runs to properly show off the mellow sounds of the “smitty” mufflers,

*(Continued on page 4)*

**I**nstead of writing one of my highly technical and informative articles concerning 356 Porsches, I have decided to share some random observations from years of auto enthusiast experiences.

## Wise Car Buying and Ownership

When it became time to obtain my first car (about one hour after receiving my driver’s license at age 16), a couple of opportunities presented themselves.

My Grandfather’s last car, a 1947 Buick Roadmaster which had not been driven for many years and had low mileage was available. This dark green beauty had been

polished and detailed by me for a few years as the early subject of my lifelong compulsion to rub paint. The Roadmaster quietly glided down the road with its straight eight purring. As a “family” deal, I could have purchased the Roadmaster on a reasonable payment plan with my Grandmother. Alas, it was not cool in the early 50’s to drive a smooth, reliable Buick Roadmaster.

The other opportunity was a very cool 1941 Ford 2-door sedan. This somewhat faded maroon car, with the rear fenders starting to separate from the body by rust action, was more acceptable to the teenage buyer at that time. I convinced my parents to front

## PRESIDENT’S LETTER



*(Continued from page 3)*

the engine started to smoke a lot. On this first date in my new car the passenger compartment filled with much blue smoke. The more we drove, the worse it got. The smoke was so bad that we had to open the windows on this early winter night. The smell was so bad that it even overpowered my liberally applied Old Spice aftershave as my date moved over to take deep breaths out of the window.

After the above experience I consulted with my expert mechanic friends. Instead of buying some fender skirts, they convinced me to overhaul the engine. We obtained permission from expert mechanic friend Harold's father to use their garage for a week to pull the engine and perform the overhaul. Six months later Harold's father lost his patience and ordered us to "get that damn car out of my garage". One week later, we completed the overhaul. When we tried to start the engine it wouldn't turn over, so we towed it and let out the clutch. The rear wheels just skidded. My expert mechanic friends advised me that "it may be a little tight". We finally towed the Ford to the local gas station/garage where we hung out. After a few weeks the car started with their rebuild of our expert mechanic overhaul. Approximately one year later, the

Ford's engine suffered an untimely death as a result of insufficient antifreeze allowing the coolant to freeze causing the block to crack.

I should have bought the Buick.

### **Using Your Car as an Attention Getting Device or "Showing Off"**

After the rebuild of the 41 Ford, it ran quite well. The dual exhausts with the "smitty" mufflers were a great source of pleasure to me. Once while cruising around Central High School in the big city of Flint we observed a friend, driving a Chevy with duals on a straight 6, get stopped by the police. We turned the corner and slowly "burbled" by the police. The cop waved me over. I wasn't doing anything! He asked me to "rev" the engine. "That's excessive noise" he said and gave me a ten-dollar ticket. I had to grind a lot of hamburger to pay for the car repairs and now a ticket too.

While driving to school one day, some friends pulled out of their driveway in their 51 Chevy. This was an opportunity to show off the performance of my powerful dual exhaust equipped flat head V8. I down shifted into second, the pipes roared and as I pulled around them to pass, my hood

flew up and wrapped itself over the windshield and top. My ex-friends in the Chevy pulled over, not to help but to compose themselves from their laughter.

I should have bought the Buick.

### **Selecting a Practical Family Car and Convincing Your Wife to Let You Do It**

Now my wife Diane is a wonderful companion, spouse, mother, money manager, etc. Our marriage has been a happy one for forty years. However, suffice it to say that she has never shared my passion for cars. Once she expressed her opinion on a proposed car purchase. "I don't care what you buy just as long as it has Power Glide." Unfortunately the Ford Cortina G.T. did not have a Power Glide option and Diane became very adept at shifting the Cortina.

When it came time in our lives to obtain a second car, now that we had two small children and I had a sometime company car from the dealership where I worked, we began the search. Really I must confess that the search was already over but the convincing that this was the right second car was just beginning. Early in our marriage Diane seemed to not be able to fall asleep until things were very quiet and I had drifted



off. My tossing and turning kept her awake. The thought of obtaining this “practical second car” had me staying awake all hours. My friend’s father had offered to sell me one of his cars, which really excited me. This 1953 Alfa Romeo 2 litre Sprint Aluminum Superleggera body Touring Coupe would be an excellent second car. Equipped with the cushions off our Danish modern couch, the luggage Area behind the seats would be a perfect place for the kids. The nearly straight pipe three-inch exhaust would provide a sort of bellowing sound as Diane went about her errands. In the small town of Davison, I always knew her whereabouts.

I couldn’t sleep thinking about owning this car. Diane would say “quit tossing around and go to sleep”. My response was “I can’t”. Finally she said, “ If you can figure out a way to buy it, go ahead”. The next day I was at the bank obtaining a home improvement loan to buy the car.

Owning the Alfa provided an opportunity to buy my wife a practical gift. The Alfa was somewhat difficult to start in the winter. My diagnosis of the hard starting problem was that the eight quarts of thirty-weight oil became very thick in the cold weather. Also, the car wasn’t driven enough in the winter to

keep the 6-volt battery sufficiently charged. I really didn’t want Diane to drive the Alfa, however, it was our “family” car and sometimes she really needed to use it.

With my diagnosis of the starting problem and Diane’s birthday in mind I went to Sears and bought a dipstick heater and a battery charger. To make the gift somewhat more “personal” I added a hand blown glass animal/flower thing/knickknack. Although my wife has always received gifts with appreciation and enthusiasm, these offerings were not well received. The glass thing was returned and I never bought anything “practical” again.

Our next family car was a new Buick.

### **Taking Advantage of an Off-Handed Remark**

When attending the Detroit Auto Show in 1988 I lusted or the new Porsche 944. Coincidentally I had received the first bonus of my career. Now bonuses at that time were not like they are today, however, we were feeling flush. Diane made the remark that if I was going to get bonuses I should get a new 944. I had one

within a few months.

Seize the moment.

### **Drivers and Vehicles I Fear**

Over the past few years I have developed some strong perceptions on certain types of drivers and the vehicles they drive. Usually found flying down a subdivision or suburban street at least 20 miles over the 25 mph speed limit is the dedicated “Mom”. Usually driving a mini van or in the more affluent areas high level S.U.V.s like Navigators or Escalades. Sometime known as “soccer moms,” these women rush their kids to hockey and soccer practice or ballet lessons and in their overpowering zeal they work to be certain that “the children miss no opportunity in life whether they really want to be involved or not.” These drivers seem oblivious to the fact that some other children may be in the very streets they are speeding through. Watch for them, a vehicle is only a tool for them to satisfy the need to nurture “the children” at all costs.

If you are driving a vehicle, like a Porsche, with great brakes and stopping ability and you are closely followed by a girl peering over the steering wheel in a SunFire, Cavalier or Sebring, be

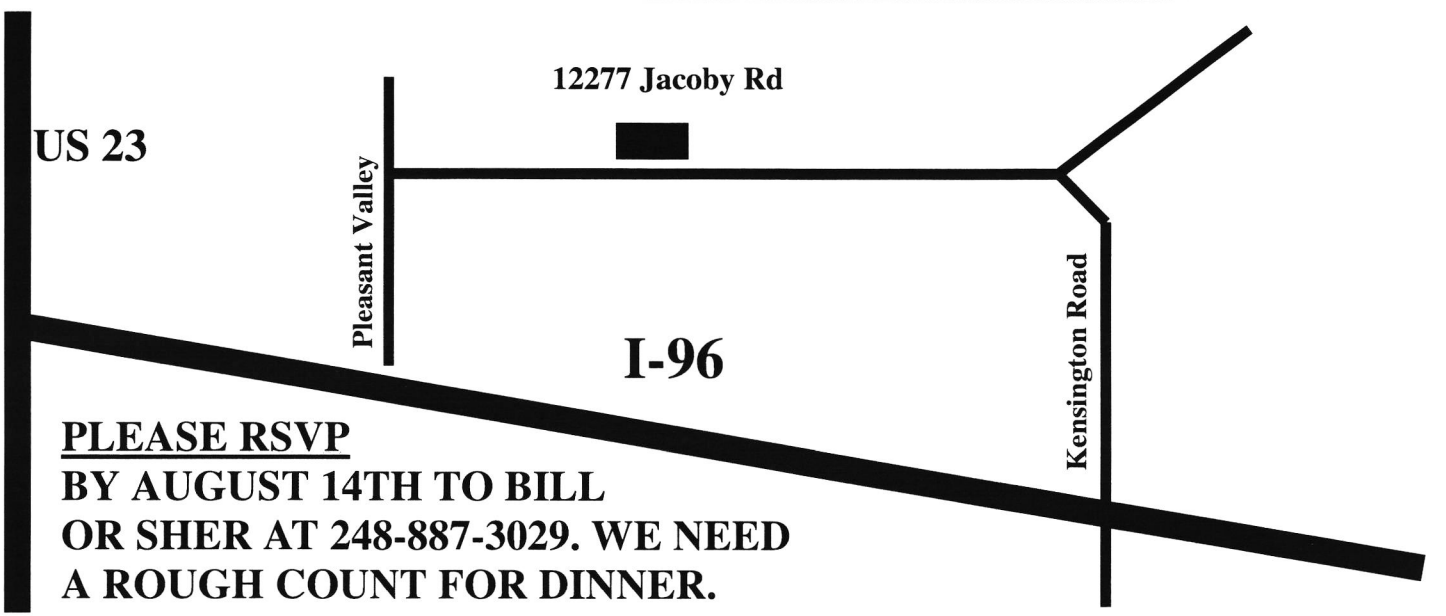
*(Continued on page 21)*



Motor Cities Gruppe  
Combination Twilight Garage  
and Progressive Dinner  
All in one fun filled evening  
Wednesday, August 16th 2000

Hosted by Ted and Lanita Dunham  
and Bill and Sher Toburen

The evening starts at the home of Ted and Lanita Dunham (see map below) for hors d'ourves at 5:00 pm. We then leave at 6:00 to Baker's in Milford for dinner. Afterwards it's on to Bill and Sher Toburen's for dessert.



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**OR SHER AT 248-887-3029. WE NEED**  
**A ROUGH COUNT FOR DINNER.**





**What a  
Difference  
Three Years  
Makes!**

**T**he car in these pictures is the Convertible “D” purchased new by my friend Horst Klose in 1959.

The picture to the right is just after he bought it. His lovely wife Marianne snapped this photo while they were travelling through Pennsylvania on route 6, which is a fabulous road to drive if you are going through the northern part of PA. You may also recognize this picture as the cover of the Auspuff Roar, Dec. 1997 (Vol 6 Issue 4).

The picture above was taken in 1961 at the waterfront in Cleveland. It appears that after three years, Horst became somewhat disenchanted by the candlepower that the stock 6v headlights produced. To help them along, Horst added two Marchal driving lights atop the overrides and one Hella with a clear lens on the bumper (Sorry, Neil, but Horst no longer has the lights).

Also note the different license plates. When Horst gave me the picture I commented how neat it was that he got the number “356” on his plate in 1961. He replied that he hadn’t realized it until I pointed it out to him just then. He said that, unlike today, the numbers 356 didn’t really mean much to the owners back then as the cars were simply known as “Porsches” or “1600 Supers” etc. Oh well, what a difference forty years makes!

Sebastian





**W**hen he visited us in October 1950, Charles Faroux had suggested to my father that a Porsche car should be entered for the Le Mans 24-Hours Race. The Frenchman Auguste Veuillet, our importer and general representative in France, was also thinking along similar lines. He had discussed his plans for Le Mans with my father; my father's response was to take his slide rule out of his pocket and after making a few calculations he said, 'That may well be possible, as far as performance is concerned!'



# Porsche Rennsport: the Early Years

And so it began, the long and proud history of Porsche in the world of motorsports. Although Porsche had initial success when they began racing, it was limited to class wins in the smaller displacement classes. Porsche, after all, had to turn it's production vehicles in to suitable cars for the track. It would still be a few years before Porsche would build a car meant strictly for racing in the 550 Spyder. Later in this article we will make a case for the Competition (nee America) Roadster being the first, but since virtually all of them were sold to outside customers and there were so few made, most consider the Spyder the first vehicle built solely for racing. Many Spyderys were also sold to

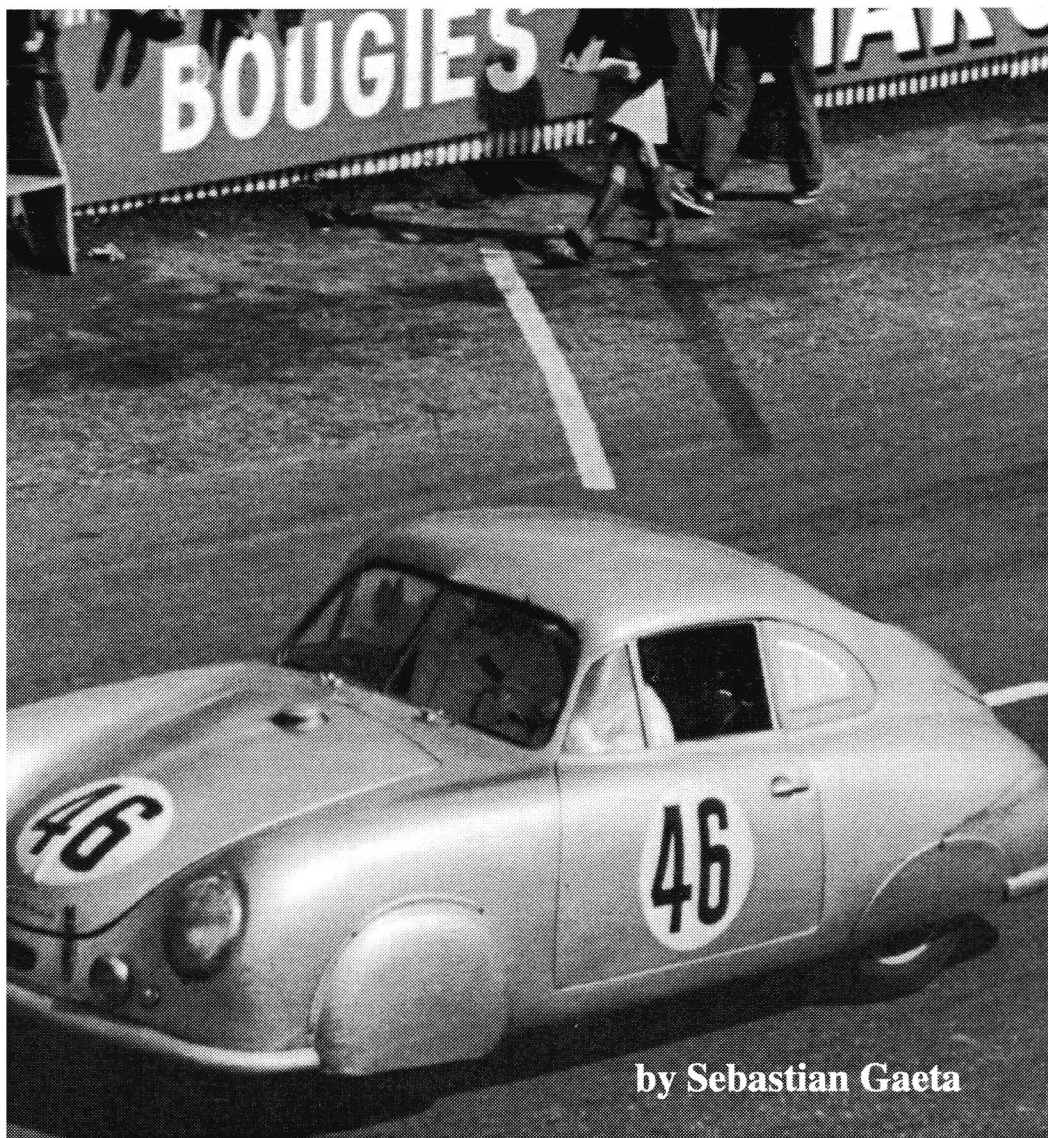
private individuals, but these sales satisfied any homologation rules and also provided much needed funding for the racing department.

Porsche began its racing career to not only gain considerable experience for development of their vehicles, but also to expose their company to the many racing fans across Europe who were their most likely future customers. In essence, while Porsche raced so that they could sell more cars to the public their Italian counterpart, Enzo Ferrari, sold his cars to the public so he could afford to race (this in itself proves why a Porsche is a more practical an desirable car to own and drive on a regular basis. Porsche

cars were, and are, high performance touring cars who's design lends itself nicely to the race track, while Ferraris were and are race cars massaged into streetable versions of themselves). To begin this endeavor the engineers at Porsche recognized in 1950 the need for larger displacement engines than the current 1100 and 1300cc units. While Mahle's chrome plated aluminum cylinders enlarged the 1100cc powerplant to 1300cc's, it was the Hirth rollerbearing crankshaft that allowed the dimensions of 80 by 74 mm that expanded displacement to 1488cc, or, the famed 1500, which debuted in 1951.

These were important and exciting times for the fledgling race





by Sebastian Gaeta

### The class winning aluminum bodied 356 SL at Le mans, 1951

department at Porsche as the 356 began to make its mark in motor racing and in record runs. Ferry Porsche preferred the lighter and stiffer Gmünd chassis for these applications. In June of 1951, Veuillet and Mouche drive an 1100cc Gmünd car with rear wheel spats and taller gears to a class win at Porsche's first attempt a Le Mans!

In the spring of '51 it was rumored that Porsche would debut it's 1500 in racing form later in the year. That August the rumor became truth as Paul von Guillaume and Count von der Mühle drove one to a 1500 class

win and third overall in the Liege-Rome-Liege rally. The racing career of the 1500 was off to a great start. Meanwhile, Huschke von Hanstein and Petermax Müller earned a 2nd in class in an 1100 in that same rally, further cementing Porsche's name as a force to be reckoned with in the racing world.

Between September 29th and October 4th, 1951 Müller, Walter Glöckler, von Hanstein, Richard von Frankenberg and Hermann Ramelow attempted world record runs in 1100 and 1500 Gmünd coupes at Montlhéry, an autodrome near Paris.

The runs were as expected; world record breaking and dramatic.

In Coradt's book, *Driving in it's Purest Form*, he quotes the October 20th 1951 issue of *Das Auto-Motor+Sport*, written by C.O. Windecker, which exemplifies the drama involved in these exhausting runs: *In the middle of the night, just after Petermax Müller had taken the wheel, the engine could suddenly be heard on the other side of the motodrome, revving hard ... then silence ... then again that horrible howl, and then for endless seconds nothing. The handful of Germans on duty this night, gradually lulled as the car circled the track with clocklike regularity, jumped up; the French officials, in their heated timing shack, were suddenly alert; was the record attempt finished? Had the car gone to the devil? Had Petermax Müller gone over the lip of the craterlike amphitheater? Seconds seemed like an eternity... then the aroused onlookers saw the car's headlights and the flash of the signal that announced Petermax Müller's intention to pit. What had happened?*

*On the previous day, the transmission of the world record car had suddenly locked up. In a fraction of a second, R. von Frankenberg, who was then driving, recognized the danger and disengaged the clutch. And then some Porsche-friendly angel must have guided his hand to take the shift lever out of fourth gear and slot it into third. The Porsche finished its record run in third gear.*

*The pursuit of victory was enough to drive one to despair. At first it appeared to be child's play, as the transmission was still whole and the 1.5 liter Porsche with its shining silver light alloy bodywork reeled off its laps at 3500 to 3700 rpm. The engine sounded thoroughly healthy. No one present doubted that the record set by a three-liter Citroen in 1929, 10,000 km in 72 hours with an*



average speed of 145.5 km/h, would be broken. The Porsche ran effortlessly at an average speed of 162 km/h. Then came the transmission problem; it marked the beginning of difficulties, of struggle, and nervous tension in the pits. "We will just have to calculate it precisely..." said Herr Bamminger of Bosch, who was of course present. He pulled out his slide rule and began figuring. "How many revs is it allowed to turn?" he asked. "No more than 4500." "Then we can make it."

And the car continued to turn its laps. And the tension increased. R. von Frankenberg was behind the wheel again. "He's revving too high... if the engine goes to the devil, it's all over!"

Get some paper. "450" was written in large numbers. And the next lap timed.

"He's driving too fast again!"

Walter Glöckler runs to the little shed, brings back a big hammer, and waves it menacingly at von Frankenberg as he comes by again.

At the next pit stop, von Frankenberg had an excuse. "I was driving by the oil temperature gauge instead of the tachometer!" And strange as it may

seem, that was a reasonable explanation.

The following are the world records established by Porsche in the 1100 & 1500 cc classes, with the record average speed and the previous record in parenthesis :

1100 cc class:  
500 miles  
161.83 km/h (158.0 km/h)

6 hours  
162.82 km/h (159.4 km/h)

100 km  
162.96 km/h (159.7 km/h)

1500 cc class:  
2000 miles  
159.04 km/h (153.7 km/h)

5000 km  
159.19 km/h (147.2 km/h)

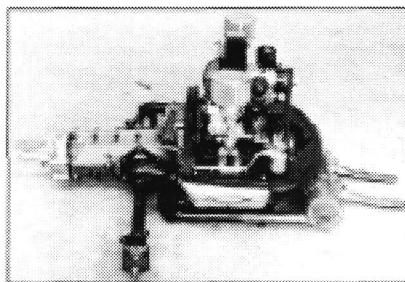
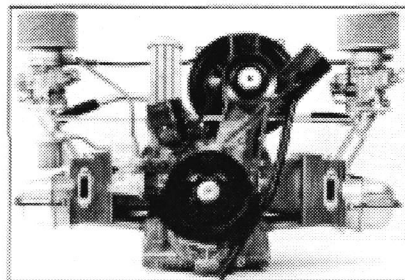
5000 miles  
156.39 km/h (144.3 km/h)

10000 km  
154.29 km/h (126.3 km/h)

24 hours  
158.98 km/h (152.0 km/h)

48 hours  
156.66 km/h (147.9 km/h)

72 hours  
152.32 km/h (145.5 km/h)



### The venerable 1500S

Production 1500's began doing well at U.S. racetracks in the hands of privateers. At the 1951 Mt. Equinox Hillclimb in Manchester, Vermont, Max Hoffman won his class in a 1500 Cabriolet by such a wide margin that Briggs Cunningham made him run it again because he didn't believe the time. Six weeks later, Cunningham drove a 356 to a class win at Palm Beach Shores, FL.

Max Hoffman then imported 3 Gmünd SL's to the U.S. and sold them to customers who raced them with great success. One of these customers was Johnny von Nuemann, owner of Competition Motors in North Hollywood. In his initial race in the car, he was leading at Pebble Beach when his brake linings failed, retiring the car for the race. Deciding the car needed to be even lighter, he sliced off the top, fitted a snug tonneau and added massive amounts of negative camber to the rear. To top it off, he painted the whole car red, the color it still wears to this day. With this new configuration ready for the race at Torrey Pines, von Nuemann easily defeated the 1.5 liter Simcas in the modified class that had



**ALTHOUGH NOT IDENTIFIED AS BEARING THE 1100 OR THE 1500, THIS IS THE RECORD BREAKING CAR THAT RAN AT MONTLHÉRY, FRANCE 1951**



dominated for so long. In that same race, Bob Doidge won the 1500 production class in a standard coupe.

Gmünd 1500's were also doing well in Europe. In 1952 a 1500 won the Liège-Rome-Liège rally overall with Porsches finishing first, third, fourth, ninth and tenth overall. Not bad for only it's second attempt to win the race.

The Mille Miglia was the first road race entered by the factory with a 1500 driven by Konstantin Breckheim and Giovanni Lurani. The VW gearbox failed leaving them stuck in third gear, but they still finished 46th overall and ended up winning the 1500 class!

Late in 1951 Porsche developed the 1500S with larger Solex carbs, 8.2:1 compression and most significantly, a new camshaft. This new Cam had symmetrical timing marking the first departure from the pre-war VW Cam timing. Valve lift was increased 1mm for both the inlet and exhaust valves. All of this obviously allowed for a higher rpm's, and also boosted horsepower to 70 bhp DIN @ 5000rpm, pretty impressive in those days for that displacement. The engine's peak power by SAE ratings was 82 bhp @ 5400 rpm.

Porsche had bigger plans for this engine than merely stuffing it into the back of production 356's. In October of 1950, designs were finished of a

car body unlike any that had been seen before at Zuffenhausen. Although it was to be built on a type 356 chassis, the flowing lines and low beltline of this "America Roadster" made it look more like a Jaguar than Porsche. The story gets very muddled and complicated at this point, but I will do my best to condense and simplify the story. Perhaps current Gruppe members and "America Roadster" owners Ron Roland and Heath Hurlburt, as well as past Roadster owner Vic Skirmants could give you more details when you see them at a future event. Here goes.

A car that looked astoundingly like the design Porsche had finished was built by a local shop to order for enthusiast Heinrich Sauter. It was steel rather than aluminum and weighed in at 1300 lbs. The Porsche engine was enlarged to 1500cc's but not by the factory. It is unclear how much support came from the factory in building this car. In 1951, Sauter campaigned his roadster, dubbed "le petit tank" by a future owner, with little success. He retired from the Eifelrennen at the Nürburgring, the Liège-Rome Liège rally and the Freiburg-Schauinsland hill climb.

Unfazed by the lack of success of this one off car, Porsche went ahead and built their own version in two different series. The aluminum bodied car ran the factory 1500S engine and weighed 1580 lbs. As we

know from past articles, Reutter was not particularly adept at building bodies in aluminum, so Porsche contracted Gläser to do the coachwork. Johnny von Neumann claims he took delivery of 3 roadsters built by Drauz, adding more mystery to the car. To make matters worse, Porsche did not officially catalogue the car making research virtually impossible. To the best of our knowledge, 16 were produced, although Gläser claims they built 20, and a former Gläser employee who later worked for Porsche made the outrageous claim that "fifty to sixty" bodies were built.

Regardless of how many were made, one fact is clear: Porsche delivered the car that Max Hoffman had been Hounding Ferry Porsche to build. It was raced successfully in the U.S. by well known drivers, and at the inaugural SCCA race weekend at Thompson, CT three America Roadsters raced in the 1500 class.

The early Rennsport years at Porsche proved to be valuable not just in recognition for the company, but also for validating and improving the philosophy they had in the design and building of their unique cars.

Sebastian



**An "America Roadster" leads a C-Type Jaguar at Golden Gate Park in 1952**



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| 644-521-074-42     | Seat hinge for the right side of your Roadster's seat. Two seats, two right sides. We have four, so two happy people, or one sad person (see above). These are also OEM and etc.                                                                         | \$35.00  |
| 695-424-153-02     | Shifter housing. For 356B T6 with lockable shifter. We still have a couple left.                                                                                                                                                                         | \$35.00  |
| 999-064-010-02     | New part. Oil pressure relief piston plug. This is an exact copy of the original part. It will allow your engine to maintain the proper oil pressure whilst looking good. All 356B and 356C, and even 912. A correct part at a decent price.             | \$11.65  |
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| NLA-105-103-01     | Cam gear, "O", without gear, or dowel pin holes. Marked "Made in Brazil" Ok for street use.                                                                                                                                                              | \$60.00  |
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| SIC-632-101-00     | Interior light with chrome bezel. This is a perfect reproduction of the discontinued original. It will fit all 356B T-6 and 356C. It is also the correct interior light for all 911/912 through 1968. 92 mm opening.                                     | \$36.50  |

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# MOTOR CITIES GRUPPE CALENDAR

## AUGUST

5th-6th—Waterford Historic Races

16th— Twilight Tour  
Hosted by Ted and Lanita Dunham and Bill and Sher Toburen. This will be a condensed version of a progressive dinner. Please see the announcement on page 6.

19th—Woodward Dream Cruise.

## SEPTEMBER

8th-10th—Watkins Glen  
Vintage Gran Prix

14th-17th— Registry East Coast  
Holiday, Roanoke, VA

19th—Membership Dinner at  
the Brass Pointe restaurant on  
10 mile and Orchard Lake  
Road.  
Starts at 6:00 PM.

## OCTOBER

14th-15th— Fall Color Tour  
An overnight tour to Ontario  
Canada hosted by Barbara and  
Vic Skirmants

## NOVEMBER

21st—Membership Dinner at  
the Brass Pointe restaurant on  
10 mile and Orchard Lake  
Road.  
Starts at 6:00 PM.

## DECEMBER

3rd— MCG Holiday party at  
Waterford Hills' Oakland  
County Sportsman's Club

## JANUARY

16th—Membership Dinner at the  
Brass Pointe restaurant on 10  
mile and Orchard Lake Road.  
Starts at 6:00 PM.

## FEBRUARY

OPEN

## MARCH

16th—Membership Dinner at  
the Brass Pointe restaurant on  
10 mile and Orchard Lake  
Road.  
Starts at 6:00 PM.

## APRIL

OPEN





**W**hen you're looking for the best roads to exercise your reflexes and suspension relatively near home, then it's best to head west and south around Ann Arbor, Chelsea, Dexter, Manchester, and the like. Thanks to meandering rivers, a profusion of lakes, and occasional changes in topography, the tree shaded two lane country roads don't run perpendicular to one another like the squared off farm fields that we traditionally find in the counties north of the city. There are dips and swoops and turns and blessedly, not many cars on the road ... especially on the weekends--except during the fall color season.

Many aficionados have taken the back roads to the Mid-Ohio races to watch our own Vic Skirmants, John Chatley, Lane Malley and Don Munoz compete, they know how much fun it is to get off the

Interstates. If you're lucky you've spent some of that rare vacation time touring secondary roads of upper Michigan or if venturesome gone as far west as Montana, Utah Colorado, and northern California, or south through Virginia, Kentucky and the Carolinas. Those that have come

home all a'twitter about how much fun it is to get into a rhythm and flow along with the road. Ask Vic and Barb Skirmants, they attended an Arizona 356 function via the Dakotas and tour of our magnificent national parks. They intend to do it again with Gordon Maltby, editor of 356

# Tiptoeing through the tulips

**Richard Hinson**





*Registry*, when they head to Durango for the west coast holiday.

Our 356 Spring Tour brought some of that to mind. For those of us who have to take our pleasures one day at a time it produced many wonderful memories starting at the home of our hosts and tour director, Sebastian and Narmeen Gaeta.

Vic and Lucy Rivera coasted into the driveway after their uneventful run from home. The gear shift lever in the roadster had sheered off at the last corner. Dunham was first on the scene to disassemble the shifter and discover the problem. Bill Rohrer was just rolling in and volunteered to go back home to retrieve the part that would put Vic and Lucy back on the road. Skirmants arrived just in time to get his clean fingernails dirty again and in ten minutes the white Roadster was driving up and down the

driveway.

Bill Milliken, who is expecting his Cabriolet to be finished any moment now by Don Marrah, was given the keys to Sebastian's 911.

While the repairs were being made, the rest of the 50-plus people who turned out for the tour, were noshing on fresh fruit, scones, gooey cinnamon rolls, shortbread and other delectables; washing them down with an assortment of juices or rich hazelnut coffee that Narmeen had prepared.

The short delay gave everyone the opportunity to introduce themselves to faces we had never met. Even our membership chairperson, Barb Skirmants—who knows everyone—commented on all the new friends who turned out. It was obvious that it was indeed time to get out and

smell the roses and tip toe through the tulips.

The overcast, chilly morning turned to sun as the 25 cars pulled out of the neighborhood. Tops and windows went down to capture the fragrances of spring. In addition to the 356s, there was a beautifully done early Saab, Tord Smedberg had a hard time blending in in his 355 Ferrari, Denny and Dayle Zamler brought out the rarely seen pristine, yellow Lotus Elan, and there were several early 911's that have recently captivated

**ABOVE: COMING AND GOING.....PORSCHE'S OF ALL KINDS FILLED THE CIRCLE AT NARMEEN AND SEBASTIAN'S HOME BEFORE THE START OF THE TOUR.**





many.

For those who weren't able to attend, perhaps you can borrow the 80 mile route from a friend and enjoy an early Sunday morning getting in the rhythm.

As always the wind-in-the-face stokes the appetite and the Common Grill in Chelsea lived up to its reputation with a wide range of temptations whether you wanted to sample hot and cold hors d'oeuvres and desserts or wander around the pastas, seafood or meats. I can see why it's a favorite spot of the car clubs and media gang who haunt the back roads whilst testing cars.

Table conversation is usually animated when the 356 gang gets together. One upmanship surfaces in a good natured way. But never have I seen it prompt such spontaneous indulgence. John Denyer had parked on the street like many of us and did a bit of window shopping while waiting for the bulk of the cars to find a spot to park. A couple of doors down from the Common Grill was a motorcycle shop with an eye-catching display in the window. Even a non-motorcycle devotee could see that the styling on the '55 Areil was

something very special. It had a Square-4 engine which I was told contributed to it being a very smooth running machine when it was set up properly. For an English motorcycle to have no vibration at speed was a bit of a rarity.

John Denyer suggested that Tord may want to wander next door with him while they were waiting for their orders to arrive. In less than fifteen minutes they came back. After a coin toss, Smedberg won the option to make an offer on the bike. The table banter turned hot and heavy. The tonality was in justification.. "It's a bargain at that

price ... If I move the piano it could easily fit in the living room or foyer ... I may have to put a couple of light cans in the ceiling to light it properly ... It could probably be turned for a quick profit on E-Bay ... It could be ridden for a year or so and still turn a profit ... If you don't buy it I will."

Jeez, a guy goes on a run into the hinterlands and spots a treasure and convinces himself to put a deposit down. It sounded like any one of us trying to justify why the "investment" in our 356 was a prudent one.

Denyer and Smedberg could hardly wait to get home and check out the latest issue of *Hemmings* and EBay to see if the bike was as rare as they thought or worth the asking price.

**ABOVE: THE GANG ENJOY AN ICE CREAM AT "YESTERDAY'S COLLECTION".**

**BELOW: WE'RE ALL SMILES BEFORE THE START!**

**ABOVE RIGHT: VIC RIVERA'S SOON TO BE REPAIRED ROADSTER.**

**BELOW RIGHT: THE EXPERTS REPAIR RIVERA'S SHIFTER IN SEBASTIAN'S WELL EQUIPPED "SHOP."**





Alas, there was a more pristine one on E-Bay that had not been bid up to the asking price of the doggie in the window in Chelsea. The information highway turned them into wiser bidders. We'll have to see if the transaction went down. If nothing else, it provided an insight into how nostalgia can stoke enthusiasm.

After a dessert of 37% butterfat ice cream, many made the trek to "Yesterday's Collection" on Jackson Road where they were tempted by models, literature, magazines and memorabilia. One of their new displays featured a latest collector models from Franklin Mint. My impression from their past models were that they were kind of clunky. But these were very enticing. Everything from the grand classics like Duesenbergs, Packards, Mercer, Chryslers, Hispano Suiza, and Isotta Fraschini, to Bugattis, Jaguars, Porsches, Renault 2CV, Mini Cooper and a host of fire engines and construction models. There were hundreds of them. And the prices were very affordable for the quality proffered. Father's Day was just around the corner and if you don't live near Chelsea, there is a **Franklin Mint** store in Somerset Collection North. Yes, they do have a catalog which lists the prices.

When it was time to leave, I sheepishly mentioned to Vic Skirinants that I'd been having trouble the last few gear changes getting the Convertible D into reverse and other gear shifts felt vague. It's these moments when I curse my lack of mechanical skills. Actually, I felt like a jerk intruding on Skirmants' weekend escape from the business. But I didn't look forward to being stranded like Rivera would have been if they hadn't performed miracles. His immediate answer was, 'Let's take a look at it.'

As it turned out, a pilot bolt had



backed off and the connecting linkage wasn't lining up. That may not be what he said but that's what registered back there in the mechanical region of my cortex. I managed to double clutch my way into reverse and made it home and saw Skirmants a few days later. Tout de suite the repairs were made and I had the opportunity to linger while he continued to build a race engine for one of his competitor/customers.

We really are lucky to have such a group who looks for ways to help others have a good time.

I hope we see more of those new faces at the fall color tour or the picnic or the Mid Ohio barbecue where we celebrate seeing the 356's run at the vintage races.

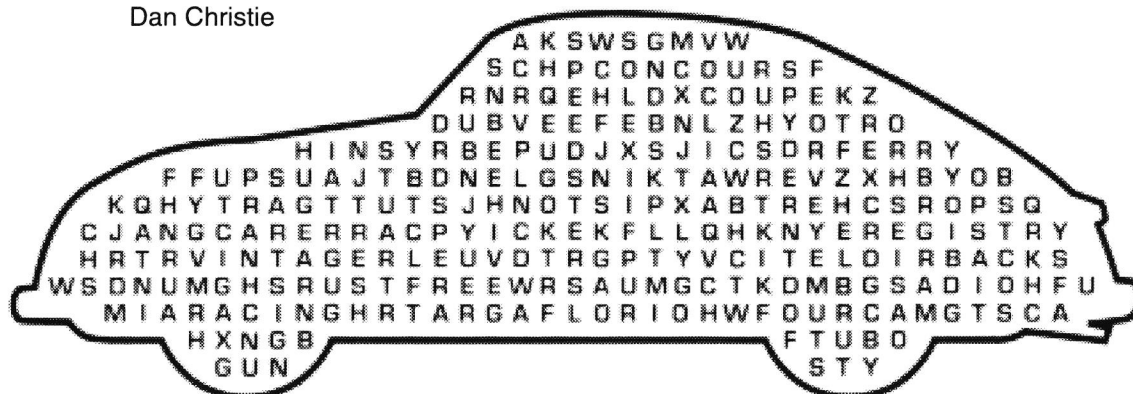
Note: If there's interest from 15 or 20 couples, I've been talking with the chamber of commerce in Lexington, just north of Port Huron to put on a tour/soiree sometime before the snow blows. They want to show us their quaint town, shops, antique stores, bed & breakfasts and enjoy their jazz. Admittedly, the route won't be as stimulating as the roads we just enjoyed, but perhaps the hospitality will make up for it. Let me know eh?



# 356 WORD SEARCH

Find the words that are contained within this 356 shape. The words can be found horizontally, vertically or diagonally. They may read backwards or forwards. Have Fun...

Dan Christie



AUSPUFF  
BEEHIVE  
BENTWINDOW  
BOSCH  
CABRIOLET  
CARRERA

CONCOURS  
COUPE  
CYLINDERS  
DRFERRY  
FOURCAM  
GMUND

KARMANN  
NURBURGRING  
OUTLAWS  
PISTON  
PORSCHE  
RACING

REGISTRY  
RUSTFREE  
SOLEX  
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**T**his issue I'd like to cover some miscellaneous suggestions, personal opinions, and prejudices. I'll start with the prejudices. A couple of years back I wrote about how to tighten the flywheel gland nut. I mentioned using a four-foot pipe and 3/4' drive handle and putting most of one's weight on it. I have used this technique for 36 years and never had a problem; never lost a flywheel, and only two very used old gland nuts started to yield. You can feel this as you tighten. Simply unscrew that one and install another one. I was glad to hear from others who agreed with my method. As far as replacements go, the only gland nut to use is an original Porsche replacement. There are others on the market, but I wouldn't recommend them. They might work fine if you use the torque specs for an old Normal, but they will stretch if you over-torque them as I do; I personally wouldn't use the Normal torque specs on a Volkswagen, let alone a Porsche.

Also a while back I talked about the rear axle boots, mentioning that the split seam should be parallel to the ground, not vertical, because the seam was not designed to flex in that direction. Recently I found another reason for not putting the seam vertically, at least on the driver's side. A customer complained of a sticking throttle after he had re-installed his transmission, with new axle boots. One of the problems I found was that the throttle rod from the transmission bellcrank to the engine was rubbing on the rubber seam of the axle boot. There was plenty of room when the car was on stands

# TECHNICAL

By Vic Skirmants

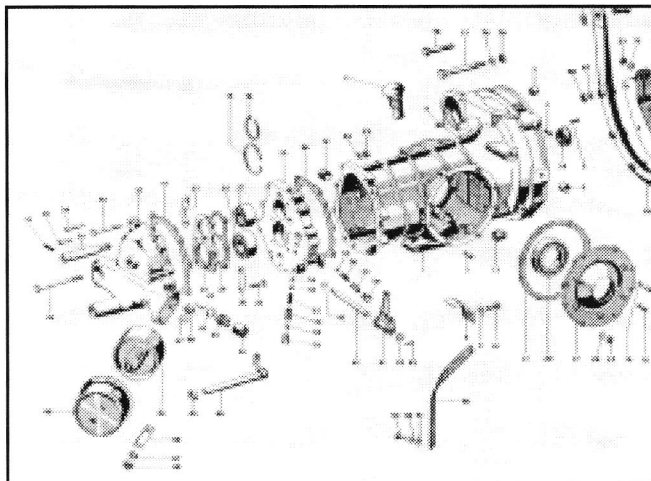
with the axles drooping, but when on the ground, there was interference. In this case, a very noticeable notch had started to wear in the seam.

Moving right along, let's talk about transmission installation. For those of you who hadn't noticed yet, your transmission is part of your rear suspension. No, it doesn't move up and down; unless your mounts are really bad! In which case you'd better replace them soon. Anyway, the transmission position determines the location of the inner pivots of the swing axles. There are shims at the front mounts (only on dual-mount models) to move the trans either

forward or backward, depending on whether they are installed between the chassis mounts and the trans mounts, or on the nut side of the chassis mounts. You will also notice a steel cup over the rubber trans mounts from mid-1957 through 1965 (not counting those wild-and-crazy single front mounts on the first few hundred of the "B" models; whose stupid idea was that, Ferry?). This cup lends additional support to the rubber mounts in shear, thereby decreasing flex under acceleration without going to a stiffer rubber. This cup is at least as thick as the spacing shims; don't just throw these cups on your 1956-57 car and re-install the trans as usual! By effectively moving back the

transmission in this way, you have increased your rear wheel toe-in. A worse case is to leave these cups off of a car that once had them. Without compensating for the decreased thickness of the mount, you will thereby move the

(Continued on page 22)





# New Automobile Restoration Program

At Washtenaw Community College

*Did you know that this year an Automobile Restoration Program was started at Washtenaw Community College? If you are active in the classic car or special interest car hobby, the fabulous facilities and instruction available at Washtenaw Community College could be just what you've been looking for in Southeastern Michigan.*

**T**his past Winter our first semester course was offered. It was attended by adults with vintage sports car projects. They brought bench-top projects to school, occasionally their cars too, and we went on many field trips to restoration shops and service providers. This past Spring we also offered weekend workshops and afternoon clinics.

WCC's facilities include a large and well appointed auto service facility, a comprehensive auto body repair and paint facility, a fabulous lab for teaching all kinds of welding techniques, and a wonderful machine shop.

More information will be published in WCC's Live Work Learn magazine, which will be mailed to all residents of Washtenaw County in August

## Registration starts July 24.

Class capacity is limited to 15, except for ABR4000 which is limited to 20. For information you can also visit our web site at [www.wccnet.org/depttrestore](http://www.wccnet.org/depttrestore), or contact Dina at (734) 973-3443, or Peter Pleitner at (734) 668-0087, or better yet e-mail him at [pleitner@dundee.net](mailto:pleitner@dundee.net).

*We hope that you take the time soon to acquaint yourself and your friends with one of the only programs of this type in the United States.*

## Fall Semester Classes and Workshops

This Fall Semester, starting September 5, we have scheduled three classes and three workshops.

### Classes

- ♦ **Vintage Automobile Engine Rebuilding**  
Thursdays 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
(ASV112/CRN93241)
- ♦ **Automobile Restoration - Introduction**  
♦ Tuesdays 6:00 p.m. to 10 p.m. and  
Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 P.M.  
(ABR115/CRN93814)
- ♦ **Final Paint and Assembly to Show**  
Tuesdays and Wednesdays 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
(ABR129/CRN93815)

### Weekend Workshops (Starting Fridays at 1:00 p.m.)

- ♦ **Introduction to Automobile Restoration**  
September 29/30/31 (12 hours total)  
(ABR4000/CRN93826)
- ♦ **Welding and Fabrication for Restoration**  
October 20/21/22, and 27/28/29 (40 hrs total)  
(ABR4002/CRN93745)
- ♦ **Painting a Classic Car**  
November 10/11/12 & 17/18/19 (40 hrs total)  
(ABR4001/CRN93744)



(Continued from page 5)

afraid. This young woman will be wearing sunglasses and a baseball style cap with her ponytail pulled through the opening in the back. These girls are very cute but their radio is so loud that they can hardly hear the person they are speaking to on the cell phone. The cell phone conversation contains the word "like" at least 10 times per sentence and they don't have enough reflex action to possibly stop as quickly as you can in an emergency situation. Pull over and let them by.

When you are stopped at a light or intersection and you feel an unusual dull sensation in your head, stomach or even your heart, look around you. Somewhere within a quarter mile is a young man with his cap on backward driving a small truck or compact car with a killer bass system. I think young men think more about driving than girls do, and the guys have somewhat of a charmed driving life so I am not as afraid of them.

When the vehicle designers conceived vehicles such as the Dodge Durango, Jeep Grand Wagoneer, Lincoln Navigator, Suburban, etc. they must have done the front ends with much thought for the "Loom" factor. The "Loom" factor is the phenomena that no matter how fast you are going when you pull into the left lane to pass, one of the above vehicles will

immediately loom in your rear view mirror. These usually black, Darth Vader type vehicles will nearly press against your rear bumper. Now, if you were going 80 when starting to pass you are faced with the need to go 90 to get by the line of traffic. The ownership of these vehicles will turn a mild mannered accountant into an aggressive road bully. Currently the high price of fuel to run these gas-guzzlers furthers aggressive behavior. This behavior is known as road rage. I cringe and stay in the right lane in their presence.

#### **Driving Ability and Knowing the Limits of Your Car**

I thoroughly enjoy driving. I would rather drive on a trip than

fly, if time permits. I consider myself a good driver and when traveling with friends, I am usually the one who drives.

I am not an aggressive driver. Driving for me is not a competition. For example, when on an event such as a club tour, I actually enjoy looking at the surrounding countryside. Trying to keep up with a group of speeding cars on a Sunday afternoon on public roads is not fun for me.

I don't think I know the limits of my cars or care to reach that limit. Club driver's education events seem to be the right place to test the "limits", not on a two-lane country road.

There were times in which my driving skills exceeded that of the

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## ***Driving Ability***

*(Continued from page 21)*

most experience race drivers; racing back from a day at the Waterford races, hurtling over the hills and curves of country roads near Elkhart Lake or cutting and thrusting through traffic in Hartford, Connecticut. Unfortunately these flights of madness were fueled by large quantities of beer or Manhattans. The fact that some of my friends and I are still alive proves there must be a higher power. I am not proud of those times and still suffer remorse when recalling them.

I am sure that some of my thoughts expressed in this article will place me in the "curmudgeon" status. One would think that all I know could be told in this long letter, however, I know even more and have more opinions. Why does my wife have to use one of the cars when it is raining and they all are clean? Doesn't everyone wax the underside of his or her car each winter? How can that kid in our neighborhood drive a convertible with the top down when it's dirty? This is very important stuff that I'll have to think about.

In the meantime, please wave when you pass me when I'm driving in the right lane.

Dick

## ***Technical***

*(Continued from page 19)*

trans forward; this will decrease the rear toe-in, maybe even putting the rear suspension into an actual toe-out situation. This is not very conducive to good handling!

All of the above is predicated on your having re-installed the axle tubes in the trailing arms exactly where they originally were. You will notice three large bolts and nuts holding the axle tube to the trailing arm. There is a fourth

**"A larger difference means too much toe-in, a smaller difference means not enough toe-in"**

identical bolt holding a large, thick washer. This is strictly a marker to tell you where to re-install the axle tube. The tube should be pushed right up against the washer.

If your car is original and none of this has been altered, your rear alignment is probably alright. If things have been changed and your SC handles like a 1952, you will have to check the rear toe-in. If you can take it to a shop, fine. If not, you can check it pretty easily yourself. Borrow a friend, a piece of chalk, and a tape measure. Put the car on a fairly smooth surface. Put a chalk mark in the center of the tread of each tire forward of the ground contact patch, and as high up as you can get and still run the tape measure under the car without contacting something. Measure the distance between the two chalk marks. Now push the

car forward until the chalk marks are to the rear, and about as high up as they were at the front. Take this measurement and compare to the first. You want the rear measurement to be about 1/16 to 1/8" more than the front measurement. A larger difference means too much toe-in, a smaller difference means not enough toe-in. If the rear measurement is smaller than the front, then you've got the dreaded toe-out! If you have toe-out, move the axle tubes forward in the trailing arms. If you have too much toe-in, move the tubes rearward.

How do you know if the rear wheels are symmetrically toed-in in relation to the centerline of the car? Now you have to check the rear wheels to the front wheels. The way to do this is to run a string parallel to a rear tire forward to the centerline of the front wheel and measure the string's distance from the front hub. Do this on both sides. If the dimensions are identical, you're all set. If one is larger, that side is toed-out in relation to the centerline of the car and the other is toed-in. You then have to move one axle tube one way and the other the opposite way. Fine. Now how do you run those parallel strings? You say there's a body in the way. I made an H-shaped bracket that fits against the edges of the wheel. The two arms of the H are equal length. The string is then run against the arms so as to clear the body. I said you could check the toe-in easily; I didn't say the complete operation was easy. It takes a lot of fiddling, adjusting, measuring, readjusting, and re-measuring.

Vic

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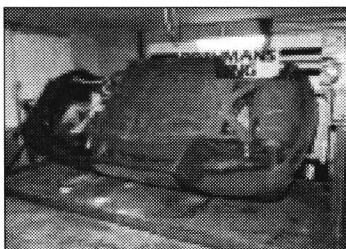
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