



This newsletter is published by 356 Motor Cities Gruppe, an organization dedicated to the preservation of the 356 automobile. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of 356 Motor Cities Gruppe. Submissions to the newsletter are welcomed and will be considered for publication by the editors. We especially appreciate submission by PC disk in either TEXT or WordPerfect 5.1 format. Advertising is welcomed from commercial sources as well as members. Subscriptions are available for \$10.00 yearly. Please send your name, address and phone number to: 356 Motor Cities Gruppe
469 Fort Dearborn St.
Dearborn, MI 48124

President's Message

With the winter season fast approaching, it is time to reflect on the past 356 year. It has been a year full of interesting events for 356'ers.

Vic Skirmants kicked off the year with a tech session on making sure that your 356 wheels were heading in the correct direction (alignment / camber / castor). Sebastian Gaeta initiated a great spring driving tour of the Ann Arbor area back roads (it's been overheard that he may host the spring tour again next year). Barb Skirmants' BBQ at the Mid-Ohio vintage races in June drew around a 100 car enthusiasts. Frank and Rita Malik hosted the summer picnic with the largest turnout ever, which could have been due to the featured guest - roasted pig.

The Gruppe was well rewarded by the planning of Phil and Nancy Planck for the fall color tour to the Auburn-Cord Museum. Fifteen 356's enjoyed the excellent tour route with interesting stops, great scenery and typical fall weather - cool but sunny. Long distance awards go to Noel Negelspech from Lima, Ohio, and Randy Waldron, who drove his 356 from Columbus, Ohio.

The capper is our annual Christmas party to be held December 12th at the Smedburgs' (details inside). We will once again hold the Auction Fund Raiser, which was such a big success last year. Please bring an interesting item to the party to auctioned off. Bonnie and I are putting together a special traveling picnic basket. Please give me a call about your auction item.

The Gruppe is finally getting organized with a membership approaching 110 and growing. Dave Peterson has sorted through my notes on dues and will soon have a roster available for the asking. Tom Youk and I are putting together the by-laws for approval and Gerald Van Vliet will handle applying for non-profit status. The art work for a club badge is complete and out for quotation to produce a metal-baked enamel badge. Projected delivery time for the badges is mid-January.

Congratulations go to Gruppe members who recently competed at the SCCA National Runoffs in Atlanta, Georgia, and placed as follows:

E-Production

- 4th Place - Vic Skirmants (356)
- 10th Place - John Thompson (356)

G Production

- 4th Place - Vic Skirmants (356)

GT4 Class

- 3rd Place - Russ Theus (Toyota)
- 10th Place - Tom Downey (Nissan)

To sum it up - it has been a great year with a lot of people stepping forward to support the "Motor Cities Gruppe". A special thank you to all.

Fred Sheill



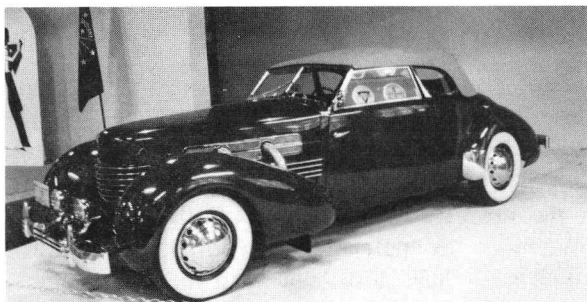
SKETCH OF PROPOSED CLUB BADGE

VOLUME 2

ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 1993

FALL COLOR TOUR



BEAUTY & CLASS ARE FOREVER



THE CROWD ENTERS THE MUSEUM



ALL LINED UP FOR A "FAST" LUNCH

A special thanks to Phil and Nancy Planck for planning the day so well. Good food, fun antiquing, excellent roads and great company. Nice job!



IF DR. PORSCHE EVER MADE A BUS...



BEAUTY & CLASS REALLY ARE FOREVER

the MAGIC TOOL KIT

First I would like to say that this article is not about the Fall Color Tour. Rather it is about the lessons learned while traveling with people of the same mettle. Our "mettle" of course being the kind that likes to rust,

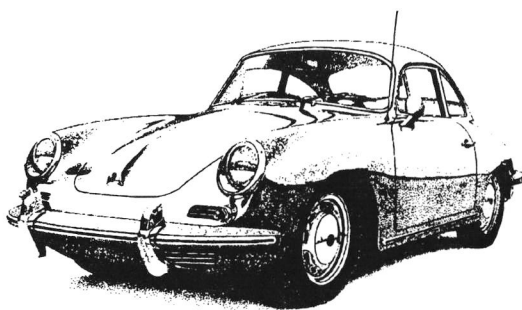
On our march to Auburn, Indiana, one of our troops had the misfortune of a mechanical breakdown, but I won't go into detail since it is covered elsewhere in another article.

Let us instead focus on my tool kit. Now I am in no way taking credit for the roadside repair; that credit belongs justly to Ted Dunham and Tord Smedburg. But I am very proud of the performance of my kit during that minor emergency. This is no ordinary tool kit - its contents were assembled at the advice of Ron Roland. These items were detailed to me by Mr. Nuts'n Bolts in a handwritten letter responding to my request for a list of tools and parts for a travel kit. It certainly gave me what turned out to be a false sense of security on my trip through New England.

When Dave Peterson's car quit, my initial reaction was "No problem, we'll all band together and fix this in a snap." For the most part that's what happened, but my technical contributions were unsubstantial to say the least. I quit suggesting a loose coil wire after repeated attempts produced no response from Ted or Tord. I decided to let the experts handle the situation and stood back, ready to help to in any way if I was needed. Not one person complained of being separated from the rest of the caravan, instead they all offered advice or help. That's when I realized that if this were happening to me and I was alone, it could be a long walk to a telephone. The term "safety in numbers" certainly applies here.

Then I heard Ted request a particular tool that I just happened to have in my tool kit. ALRIGHT - OFFICIAL

PARTICIPATION! I ran to my car, opened the hood and pulled out the tool kit. I could faintly hear the gasps of the crowd as I unfolded the mother of all tool kits. As I maneuvered through the elaborate flaps, pockets and secret compartments, everything seemed to be moving in slow motion (much like the first time your high school coach puts you in a game). Anyway, this baby was custom made for me to accommodate all the tools prescribed by Mr. Roland. If it turns, tightens, adjusts or removes something on a 356, it's probably in there. I was walkn' tall.



The only problem is that I don't know much about turning, tightening, adjusting or removing. If you don't believe me ask Bob Peterson about the time I handed him a chisel when he asked me for something to remove his horn button. Is this bad? It could be, especially if you're broken down on highway one-four-niner off of Lake Minniwahunga in the Upper Adirondaks. But hey, I'm prepared, as long as it's a loose coil wire. Anything more serious and I go to "Plan B," which consists of my top ten list of things to do when broken down in a 356.

Am I in fact the atypical 356 owner, or am I part of a new breed? It is true I don't know much about fixing them, but take heart veterans, I don't wear

gold chains or constantly wonder how much my car is worth. To top it off, the only thing I own that says "Porsche" on it is my car. The fact of the matter is that I come from a new generation of auto owners - we grew up with cars that had long warranties and/or parts that required special proprietary factory distributed tools. The long and short of it is that the necessity to fix cars was not part of my adolescence.

In my humble opinion I have learned quite a bit about these cars, but it is mostly from reading about them. All of my knowledge is in theory and not in application. I know that a Bosch "050" distributor is correct, but that an "009" will work, although it has different advance (whatever an "advance" is). Now ask me to change a distributor and I'll change the subject.

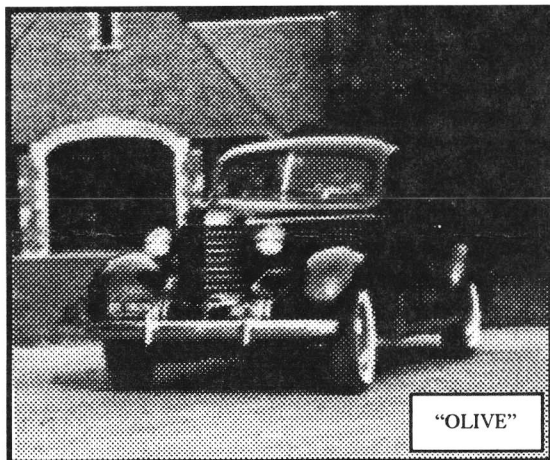
The real point of all of this is that I love the fact that I don't feel like an outcast among a group that is pretty talented when it comes to fixing, restoring and racing these cars. That no matter what our technical ability, we all dig our cars equally. I guess I don't have to tell you this, it's like I tell my wife: "If I have to explain it, you won't understand". So on I drive with Blind Faith as my co-pilot, still feeling warm and fuzzy knowing that if I am in need there is help just around the corner. If that falls through, there is always my trusty tool kit or "Plan B" waiting.

Sebastian Gaeta



A Spouse's Perspective on Life with a 356

I guess that I should have known my husband David had a penchant for old or "seasoned" things when I married him, for in 1962 our sole mode of transportation was a 1937 Oldsmobile named "Olive". We had to borrow a car for our honeymoon up north. Olive sustained a cracked block, so with mixed feelings she was traded in for our very first new car, a sporty Olds Cutlass F-85. Mind you, this was about the only new thing that we owned.



Nonetheless, in 1964, we managed to figure out how to replace the Olds with a beautiful Ruby Red 356 C coupe. Immediately after taking delivery, we cleaned out the remainder of our savings and took off for the unexplored West for four weeks. What a time we had! Eight thousand miles later, we returned to a still mostly unfurnished flat, determined to quickly earn enough money for our next Porsche trip.

Four years, 88,000 miles and two daughters later, David sat on the porch roof shooting movies of his beloved Porsche being driven away by its new

owner. The years flew past, filled with normal sedans, station wagons and sporty cars. But David never forgot his red 356 C coupe. When nostalgia got the better of him, and he started looking at car ads and stopping and talking to strangers just because they owned ANY Porsche, I knew where he was heading.

I kind of liked flying to various parts of the world, but here we are, back on the road again, in a well seasoned 1957 black 356A sunroof coupe. David, being the car and safety fanatic that he is, has made me used to very reliable transportation, so I wasn't prepared for

the "adventures" or the lack of room for the luggage or for my body either. Of course, the 57 has somewhat less space than the 64....and all of our other cars, but I agreed to pack less if we could buy some interesting things along the way. Little did I know we would need that extra space for the tool bag, the metric socket set, four extra quarts of oil, a few essential parts, the Charlie White copy of the 356A Shop Manual, two old bath towels and the portable cellular phone. If I wanted space for antiques, etc. acquired along the way, it seems that I must leave practically all the clothes at home. In fact, each trip tends to further limit how much luggage we take because there are always a few more parts and a few more tools than were required for the last trip.

This was borne out by my Trip to Hell and Back; known to most other folks merely as the 1991 356 East Coast Holiday. We encountered our first sign of trouble just outside of Hamilton, Ontario. By the time we arrived in Boston, we knew we had a cracked

fanbelt pulley, but were hopeful that the generator shaft and bearings were not damaged. Most of the five days of vacation with David's sister and husband were spent tracking down pulley parts, having them made, and installing them; which also meant that we had no transportation of our own other than Boston's old reliable MTA.

Finally, the car is back together, and we are cruising north on I-95 to Portsmouth, New Hampshire. We departed early with anticipation of some good antiquing and a stay in a charmingly delightful B&B in Kittery, Maine called the Gundalow Inn. Our optimism on the state of the generator was soon dashed -- it froze up 25 miles from Portsmouth. We sat on the side of the freeway being gawked at by passersby, waiting for a 356er to assist a fellow Porscheophile in distress.

Gentle Ben stopped, driving a rather ratty 59 coupe. He was not on the way to the Holiday (in fact, had never heard of it), but was heading to the Portland, Maine airport from New York City. He had given the car to his wife as a wedding gift and then received it back in the divorce settlement. Ben drove the car only on weekends, and most importantly, knew nothing about Porsche mechanics.

However, Ben was eager to be of assistance and offered to help in any way. David was greatly encouraged by this offer and suggested that Ben drive me to Portsmouth to seek help from Holiday attendees. All I could see was my face plastered on milk cartons all over the country, searching for this "missing person". I deterred from going with Ben, but David persisted. Now, Ben caught on long before David and offered to wait by his car while David and I "discussed" the situation. When I confronted David with why he

- continued on page 5 -

A Pilgrimage to Zuffenhausen

As with all things romantic, the details have faded, but what remains so vividly are penetrating feeling of wondrous exhilaration which will always radiate from my innermost being whenever the shape and sound of a 356 Porsche enters my consciousness. My love affair started early in my college years, circa 1959, when one of the truly cool upperclassmen appeared with a 56 Speedster and moved through space with incredible grace and took corners in a fashion I had never thought possible.

My trusty 58 Volksy was a distant cousin, I knew, but it was now clear how very distant they were. My hero, Bill Reinicke, and his stunning Porsche, became my fixation. Somehow I could be that cool if I had that shape. This had to be the ultimate car, simply because it looked right, even compared to the XKE which graced the same fraternity parking lot. But then a B coupe appeared on campus, doing all those same wonderful things as it glided through the Berkshire Mountains surrounding Williams College. Could there be any more valuable pursuit for this graduate? Why even worry about gainful employment! Much to my parents amazement, I had a focus in my life at long last, and it was the plan to find a few friends to share a drive around Europe for a month, then be dropped off to pick up my own 356B cabriolet.

After some persuasive discussions with my parents, in June, 1963, I joined three other newly minted grads in one of the most horrendous driving experiences I have endured (survived?). We laughed, drank, ate, drove our VW Microbus around Europe and wallowed in the joys of being 21 with no agenda for 30

deliciously uncomplicated days. When we were leaving Munich for Stuttgart I

sensed it was actually going to happen. There was going to be a Porsche, and it was going to have enough power to pull hills, even mountains, and the top would fold away at will.

On the morning we arrived at the plant in Zuffenhausen, my three pals came to the realization that I was actually going to drive off in some amazing machine with an extremely attractive friend who had just completed her junior year of college in Munich so she was fluent in the native tongue. We were not only about to abandon them to the Microbus, we could actually find out where we were by asking someone and understanding the answer. It blew them away.



MECCA - WAITING FOR DELIVERY

That day at Zuffenhausen provided us with the full spectrum of human emotions from complete joy to the depths of disappointment. At the designated hour, my three pals and designated passenger/interpreter, along with two other Americans who were also picking up their cars, were greeted by the factory representative, a dead ringer for James Bond, except more impeccably dressed. We were to have a plant tour followed by a brief

explanation of the car we would be driving away. So the seven of us were ushered to a catwalk to view the assembly floor which seemed so simple.

The cars were on dollies, moving in a straight line from the back to the front of the plant, with uniformed mechanics moving briskly between their work table and the cars. The doors were open and the assembly seemed very uncomplicated, no rushing around, no high levels of noise, only a sense of care being taken. The same feeling pervaded the body shop next door where the cars seem to be forming themselves. The logic of the process amazed us.

After marveling at the sight of handcrafted cars being built, we were taken to see our own masterpieces. The good news was that 2 of the 3 were just as the owners had hoped, except that moment of seeing the car was much more exciting than any of us could have imagined. There it was, my 356B, dark blue, red interior, international license plate and full of gas. A coupe.

In the smoothest possible fashion, James Bond apologized for having prepared a car where the top was quite unmovable and immediately asked if I would be willing to accept a silver cabriolet which had been ordered by a German customer, but just canceled. I would be receiving a Silver rather than dark blue Cabriolet, but it would have the larger engine. In a few minutes they would switch the radio and instruments for use in the USA. With the change to this car, the total price would be \$3956, a small increase over the amount I had expected to pay, and they were terribly sorry for the mixup.

- continued on page 7-

A Spouse's Perspective Continued...

wanted me to drive away with a total stranger, he said "But he owns a Porsche". He had to be an OK guy, right?? And he probably was merely offering to be of help, but does this tell you anything about the Porsche mentality?

We were rescued by a couple sponsoring the Holiday, and spent the afternoon replacing the generator with an old one (no charging, but good cooling). Winds that night during the rain storm reached gale proportions and many of the Porsches parked outside got very wet inside -- including ours. Driving back to Michigan was great fun too, because we couldn't stop anywhere since stopping and restarting the engine runs down the battery as does driving with the headlights in the evening. I still don't know which was the bigger basket case when we arrived

home, David or the car. At that point I didn't think I ever wanted to step foot in the car again.

The electrical short that occurred during the 1992 Fall Color Tour was relatively minor in comparison, largely in part because Ted Dunham and Tord Smedberg and a few others were behind us in our run from Chelsea to Allen. With their expertise and Sebastian Gaeta's custom tool case, we were back on the road pretty fast, albeit the antiquing in Allen came up short.

Our salvation in all this is that the Porsche people have been fabulous, pausing in their own trips and adventures to help or just offer moral support. We can't thank them enough. It certainly does help you understand real priorities.

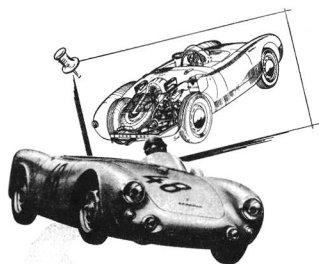
Anyway, David is still into old

and seasoned things, because he recently persuaded me into selling our perfectly fine fifteen year old house in Farmington Hills and buying a very seasoned seventy year old home in Royal Oak with a million hours and dollars to be spent on it. This doesn't leave much time for anything Porsche, but as long as he stays interested in "seasoned" things he'll keep me around. There does seem like a pattern here.

Barbara Peterson



BARBARA'S ORIGINAL 1964 COUPE

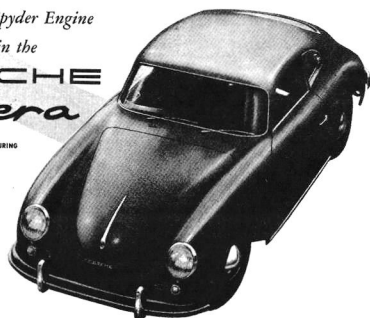


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Sebastian's Gift to Barbara - PLAN "B"

10. Panic. Pull out the magic tool kit and then realize you can't fix anything anyway.
9. Open engine lid, stare blankly and then check the coil wire again just for the hell of it.
8. Cross fingers, say nice things about the car in German and try the key again.
7. If it turns over, but doesn't start, check the fuel cock.
6. Pull out your Harry Pellow book on breakdown procedures and become discouraged when it says "...be sure and check for spark." What the heck is spark.
5. Wish real hard you had taken up Bill Toburen on his offer to teach you all this stuff.
4. Start to imagine your wife saying "I told you this would happen. Why do you mess with these stupid things? Wouldn't a Miata be better?"
3. Start walkn'.
2. Call AAA, request a flat bed car-hauler, walk back to car and wait two hours. Be totally dismayed when an old fashioned "hook" shows up.
1. And the number one thing to do when broken down in a 356: ride to the repair shop in the back of Cap'n Hooks' tow truck and tell the mechanic that it may just be a loose coil wire.

Sebastian Gaeta

A Pilgrimage Continued...

I was thrilled. Why had I not ordered that particular silver color the first time? After a spin around the block with each of my buddies, I left with a wonderful friend and that soaring shape and sound.



For the next two months, I roamed with others and by myself, alive with the beauty of the surroundings. Among the highlights was wandering through the Swiss Alps one memorable afternoon, climbing high into the mountains which looked exactly like the opening scene from the Sound of Music. After getting as far south as Naples, Italy, and north as Edinburgh, Scotland, I flew to the USA from London, the car entrusted to a Brit who seemed appropriately impressed with the value of my Porsche, at least his shipping charges seemed more appropriate for a Rolls.

Having virtually lived in my silver bullet for two months, stroked its delicious shape and nurtured it much more carefully than I did myself, I

returned with indelible memories. As to pure driving experiences, while in Munich, feeling immortal after an evening at the Hofbrau Haus, two natives and I followed what I was assured was part of the Nurburgring course through town. The scene will never be fully reconstructed, but the

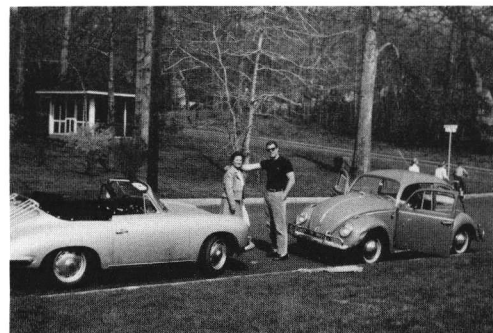
general memory was a four-wheel drift in the rain around a corner none of us could have negotiated sober in daylight. Then there was the other sideways travel, this time entering Loch Lomond, via the Bonnie Banks. Not realizing how impossible it was to negotiate an unexpectedly sharp, unmarked, narrow, crowned asphalt curve on the wrong side of the road when the surface is dry, I tried it wet. This would have been the first swim I had attempted with my seat belt on. Only two tires were actually in the water, so I credited myself with brilliant driving.

Then there was the couple who took me in to their home after an evening at a delightful pub near London when they found I was alone and driving around aimlessly, and definitely in need of a hot tub and a square meal. What I did not know when I accepted the invitation was that he owned the local garage and was eager to drive my car, in part payment for their spectacular hospitality. Try sitting in the passenger seat at 75 mph on the

wrong side of the road as you are passing a hay wagon and the car coming at you is going much too fast and is much, much too near. Somehow the hay wagon we were passing blinded my buddy. We missed a dramatic meeting by inches.

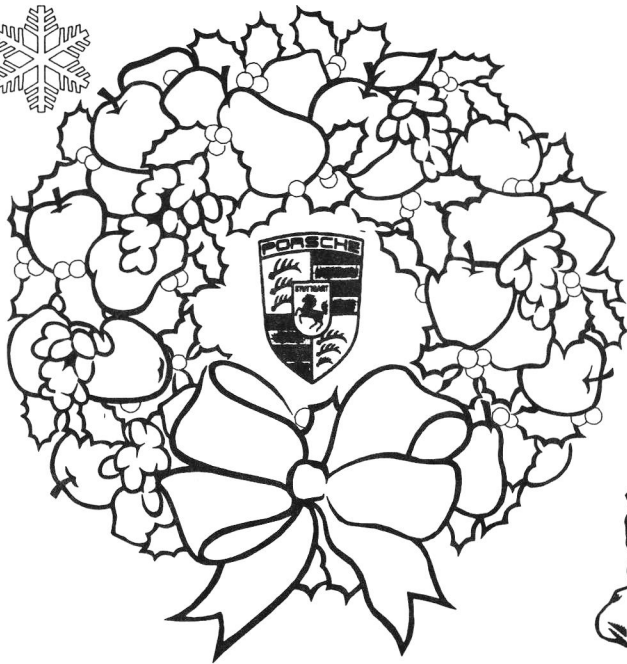
As my wife has pointed out to me on more occasions than I care to remember, I did a dumb thing in selling that wonderful machine when we moved from New Jersey to Michigan, thinking as I did at the time that one should not have a German car in Motor City. So, after a 6 year love affair, I sold the car I had driven for 6,000 miles in Europe and another 40,000 in the USA, ending a magnificent chapter of my life. But what a wonderful chapter to recall. Now I am in the midst of putting together a 65 Cab. By next summer, on the 31st anniversary of that exhilarating moment in Zuffenhausen, I will be again surrounded by that sight and sound. Oh joy.

John S. Bell



RELATIVE RELATIVES

WE ARE SORRY TO REPORT THE PASSING OF WAYNE POTTER,
SON OF JACK AND BARB POTTER, AFTER A LENGTHY BATTLE
WITH LEUKEMIA. OUR CONDOLENCE TO HIS WIFE AND PARENTS.



356'ERS HOLIDAY GATHERING

AND AUCTION !

**SUNDAY
DECEMBER 12TH
3:00 - 8:00**

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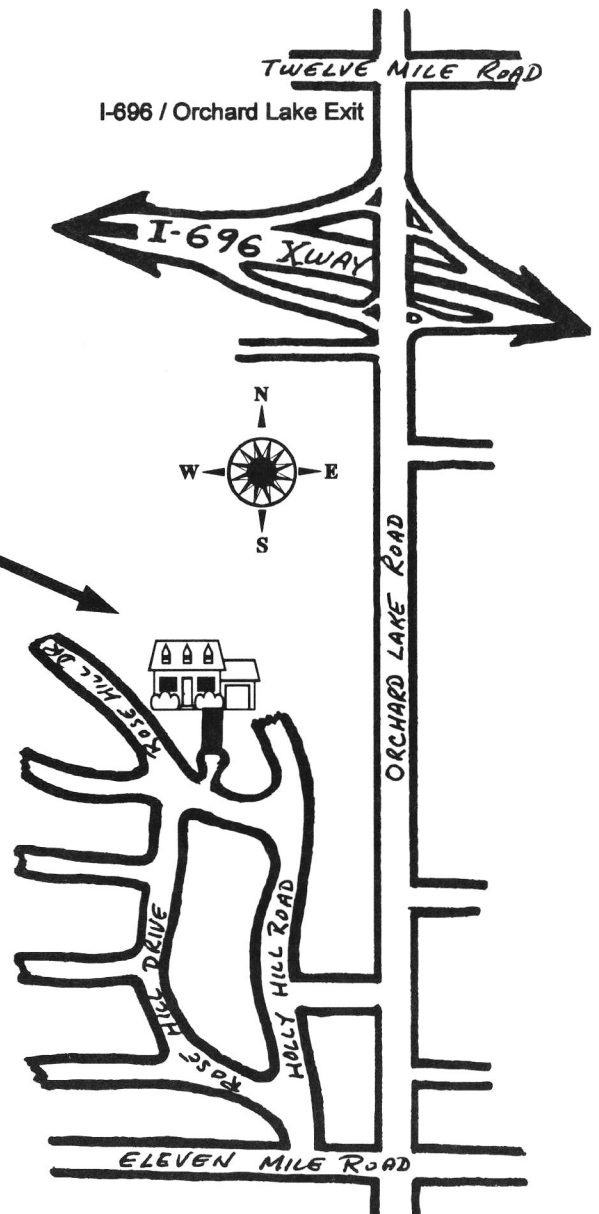
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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR...

thanks to those who contributed to this edition of the newsletter. Sebastian Gaeta continues to submit entertaining articles, and the unique perspective from Barbara Peterson reflects just a few of the trials and tribulations that are accepted [semi] good naturedly ("Boys and their toys" I believe is how my wife phrases it). John Bell's reminiscing, what seems like a dreamscape to most of us, allowed us to experience an exciting episode in his life. And last, but not least, the President's Message from Fred Sheill.

Since I received no / zero / zilch / zip response on format, structure and potential new sections or departments, I'll continue with the existing format. If you have suggestions, please feel free to send them to me.

Again, if you are submitting articles or want-ads, please type, write or print (very clearly) - especially where names or numbers are concerned. Optimum is if you can include an IBM compatible PC file in either WordPerfect or ".TXT" format.

Bob Peterson
27310 Wellington
Franklin, MI 48025
(313) 539-9629
(313) 539-0740 [fax]



356 Registry, Inc.
Barbara Skirmants
27244 Ryan Road
Warren, MI 48092
(313) 558-3692

Most of the members of our 356 Motor Cities Gruppe are also members of the 356 Registry, but there are still some of you "LOST" out there. The 356 Registry is a non-profit, all volunteer organization of almost 5,000 members. In addition, we have 120 Canadian members and 150 international members. We publish THE REGISTRY, a bi-monthly 40-50 page glossy cover magazine with color photos. Articles cover a wide range of interests, including restorations, mechanical tips, research, book reviews, club events, "how-to" technical features and vintage racing reviews.

The magazine also provides classified advertising free to its current members. The paid commercial advertising relates only to 356 Porsche parts, service or products. Simply put, it's the best bargain for \$20 you can make today.

Barbara Skirmants

CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE: 1961 356 B Cabriolet, #153975, engine #87266. Ruby Red / tan leather seats. New interior, including carpeting; engine rebuilt by Vic Skirmants; solid body with mostly new undercarriage, including new longitudinals - extremely tight. Has rollbar, Simpson belts, camber regulator and new chrome wheels. Exciting car to drive. \$28,000. John Bell, 74 W. Long Lake Rd, Suite 102, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304, (313) 644-0210.

FOR SALE: 1979 911SC Targa. Silver / black leather. Air conditioning, power windows and 2 tops. 63,000 miles, stored winters and in excellent condition. \$16,000. Chris Podges, (313) 851-4544.

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