

356 MOTOR CITIES

AUSPUFF ROAR

Volume 8 Issue 1

MARCH 1999



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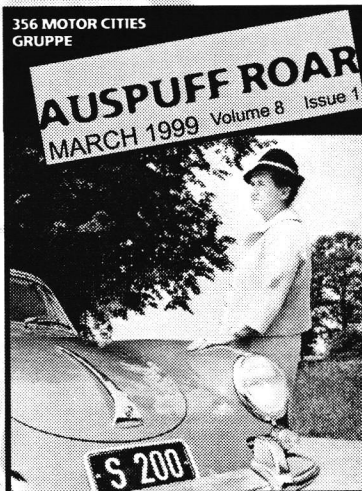


Photo from Liebe zu ihm

Frau Louise Piëch-Porsche, sister of Ferry Porsche and mother of current VW/Audi Chairman Ferdinand Piëch, died in early February. Having co-founded Porsche Konstruktionen in Gmünd in 1947 and establishing Austria's main importer of V.W.'s, now known as Porsche Holdings, she played a much more pivotal role in the Porsche company than most history books describe. She was 95.

The Auspuff Roar is the official publication of the Motor Cities Gruppe and is published quarterly. Membership dues for the Motor Cities Gruppe is \$10 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—\$40, Full page—\$65. 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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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

By Dick Beecher

Here it is 1999 and I'm President – it was a tough campaign! Thanks to the board for placing me in this office. I can assure you, like Jimmy Carter before me, there may be lust in my heart, however, there are no interns or scandals that may bring about impeachment proceedings... you may be stuck with me for a couple of years.

My work with General Motors required moving 11 times in 24 years. Therefore, I was not much of "joiner" of clubs and organizations. We were P.C.A. members in a number of locations, however, we were not active or involved in many of the activities. In fact, some of the regions were not particularly friendly to a new member, so the atmosphere did not encourage involvement.

Our last transfer brought us to the Detroit area. One of my quests to buy another 356 (my wife, Diane, thinks I am always on a "quest") re-

sulted in contacting Ted Dunham who suggested a visit to Neil Goldberg's Stuart Tool on a Saturday morning. The Saturday morning "Breakfast Club" gatherings are, by my wife's definition, a bunch of guys sitting around eating bagels, drinking coffee and thinking of ways to spend money on cars. The Breakfast Club, however, provided the opportunity to meet other Porsche enthusiasts many of who are members of the 356 Motor Cities Gruppe. We offer our thanks to Neil for his ongoing hospitality.

We have found the 356 Motor Cities Gruppe to be a friendly enthusiastic organization. The Motor Cities Gruppe inspired me to become more involved in the club activities. Retirement provided more spare time so we decided to become more active and volunteer to work on the 1998 356 Registry East Coast Holiday. Participating in the Meadowbrook Holiday was a lot of work while at the same time,

a most rewarding experience. The Holiday activity led to involvement with the Meadowbrook Car Club and Concours in the Park committee. We attended three or four meetings monthly with the last six months almost a full time job dealing with caterers, tent rentals, hotels, busses, etc. My involvement wasn't nearly as demanding as Chairman Barbara Skirmants, Co-Chairman Gerald VanVliet or the registration efforts of Barbara and Dave Peterson. The entire Committee worked together to put on a very successful and memorable event. If you have the opportunity to be involved with any club event, I highly recommend it.

1998 was a great year for the Motor Cities Gruppe. The Mid-Ohio Vintage Weekend provided a test of the watertight qualities of my cabriolet as well as the hail resistance of the yellow finish. In spite of the weather, a good time was had by all. We hope to continue with "Barb's

(Continued on page 4)



The scene in front of Dick Beechers house at a Motor Cities Gruppe Garage Tour last year.

(Continued from page 3)

Barbecue" at Mid-Ohio which has been hosted by the Skirmants. We all need to assist with the event by helping with the work and increasing our financial contribution.

Bill Toburen's suggestion resulted in tours to the garages of four members. This is a great opportunity to drive our cars and check out the recent projects. Please volunteer if you would like to host a garage visit next summer.

The summer picnic held at the beautiful home of the Thomsons in Ann Arbor was well attended with great food and companionship.

In September, a group of four 356's, two 911's and a van headed out to Watkins Glen, New York for the fiftieth anniversary of the Watkins Glen races.

Jan and Tom Downey hosted the fall tour. The tour started with great food and coffee at the Downey's beautiful new home. The tour was just the right distance and time for a Sunday, ending at Canter-

bury Village for dinner. 1998 will be a tough act to follow.

The Board of Trustees met once prior to our first membership meeting of 1999. We would like to meet periodically to discuss the nuts and bolts of the club's operation, when needed, and bring recommendations to the membership for your consideration. This activity would keep business discussions to a minimum allowing more time for a more social, low-key membership meeting. After all, we are in this to have fun.

Speaking of meetings... Would anyone object to having them in Davison or Higgins Lake in the summer? Seriously, we will have the meeting in a location that is most convenient to the members. We would, however, consider suggestions for a more central location that offers the benefits of the Brass Pointe without affecting our meeting attendance.

Looking forward to 1999 we need to have volunteers to plan and host many events for the com-

ing year. The events are Winter Dinner, Spring and Fall Tours, Summer Picnic, Garage Tours, Mid-Ohio Vintage races (Barb's Barbecue) or any other you may propose.

For the present, we look out at many inches of snow and think about last winter when we even drove our cars on some mild winter days. Until last evening when it got warm and rained hot water, I couldn't even get the Porsches out of my lower level garage.

We are looking forward to heading south for the months of February and March. Our time in Florida will coincide with the Vintage races and the 12 Hours of Sebring in March, which we hope to attend. I know I'll wish the cabriolet would be with us in Florida. *Maybe, a quest for a trailer...*

Looking forward to being with all of you.

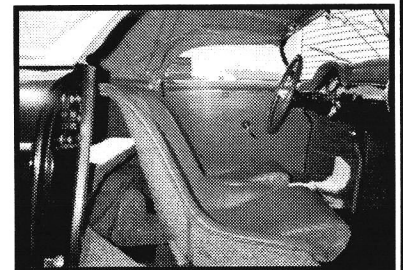
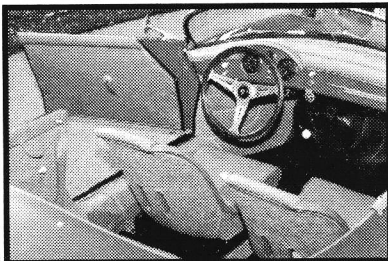
Dick Beecher

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MOTOR CITIES GRUPPE CALENDAR

MARCH

16th Members social meeting
at the Brass Pointe, Ten
Mile Rd and Orchard
Lake Rd, 6:30 PM.

APRIL

OPEN

MAY

18th Members social meeting
at the Brass Pointe, Ten
Mile Rd and Orchard
Lake Rd, 6:30 PM.

JUNE

5th Stoddard Imported Cars
all Porsche Swap Meet, Wil-
loughby Hills, Ohio with a
Model and Literature meet the
night Before. Please call Stod-
dard's at 800-342-1414 for info.

24th-27th Mid Ohio Vintage
Gran Prix and Barb's Barbecue.
Please call Barbara Skirmants at
810-558-3692 to make reserva-
tions

JULY

20th Members social meeting
at the Brass Pointe, Ten
Mile Rd and Orchard
Lake Rd, 6:30 PM.

AUGUST

TBD – Motor Cities Gruppe
family Picnic

SEPTEMBER

21st Members social meeting
at the Brass Pointe, Ten
Mile Rd and Orchard
Lake Rd, 6:30 PM.

OCTOBER

TBD – Motor Cities Gruppe
Fall Festival hosted by Sebastian
Gaeta

NOVEMBER

16th Members social meeting
at the Brass Pointe, Ten
Mile Rd and Orchard
Lake Rd, 6:30 PM.

1st Annual Porsche Swap Meet

12th Annual Teileschwaben



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Thanks to all of you, last year's swap meet was a huge success. Along with the Northern Ohio Region PCA, and all of you, \$10,000 was raised for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, a Porsche "S" model bike was given away and lots of fun was had by all. The cars and the weather were beautiful. Only because of your unmatched enthusiasm, we know this year's meet will be another memorable event in Stoddard's swap meet scrap book.

Our event, held in cooperation with the Northern Ohio Region PCA, is Saturday, June 5th. As always you can buy or sell your Porsche product or just show off your cars and admire others. The selection of Porsches and Porsche parts and memorabilia is impressive. You won't be disappointed.

Vendor spaces are 10' wide by 20' deep. The cost is \$15.00 in advance. Preregistration is necessary due to the popularity of the event. Gates open for vendors at 7am and at 8am for the general public. Call: 440-951-1040 or 1-800-342-1414

In conjunction with Stoddard's Teileschwaben the Midwest Porsche/VW Literature, Model & Memorabilia Meet will be at the Travelodge Hotel-Mentor, Ohio (1/2 mile from Stoddard) Friday, June 4th, 6pm to 10pm. For more information on this event call Myron Vernis at 330-836-4770.



All proceeds from vendor spaces will be donated by Stoddard and the Northern Ohio Region PCA to benefit the Make-A-Wish Foundation. There will also be a raffle. The raffle ticket proceeds will be donated to the **Make-A-Wish Foundation®** Of Eastern Ohio

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Miscellaneous Ramblings *Of a snowbound man*

By Dennis Denyer

If Porsche ever comes out with a snow-blower, I'm buying one! Preferably a Turbo model and maybe even an all-wheel drive.

It's kinda hard to think about Porsches at this time of year and in this weather, but then again, all we can do with Porsches is think about them in a Michigan winter.

I actually saw three Porsche's on the road in all of this snow! A Carrera Cabriolet, a Boxster and a 944. Wide tires look cool in the summer but they must be hell in the snow.

A package from Theodore Kazinski couldn't have gotten me out of the house during all of that snow.

I read where the court ordered this Oakland County Madam to wear an electronic tether. If they want to monitor her activities, wouldn't it be better to have her wear a motion detector?

The thaw came at the right time, I couldn't see in either direction when pulling out of my driveway.

I went to the North American International Auto Show and, if you missed it, you missed a good one. Ford and Chrysler stole the show with their concept cars. Chevrolet was hosting therapy for insomniacs in

their booth. The T-Bird and Chrysler P/T Crewzer were really neat, the Dodge PowerWagon won the "POWER" award with 780 pounds of torque! The new little Jag looks better than their Lincoln counterpart.

The time is right for Porsche's Sport Ute, I think they were the only exhibitor without one in their display. BMW, Mercedes, Lexus, Infinity, Rover... all of the prestige lines have one.

I'm sure glad I didn't see Clinton sitting in a Porsche at the show.

A couple days into "snowweek", people were stopping their cars in the middle of I-75 to clear ice from their wipers. What's up with that!!!

Did you notice that the first day with clear, dry roads, everybody was still driving at 20 MPH on the Expressways?

Garage Tip - Hockey pucks make great jack-pads when using jack stands under your Porsche. They're the right size, thickness, more durable than blocks of wood and they're cheap.

Did you remember the Stabil in the gas tank this winter?

Auspuff Roar and The 356 Registry magazines are God-sends in the winter. Could you find anything better in the mail on a snowy day?





Friends,

I wish to thank everyone most sincerely for your wonderful efforts, collective and individual in making the Tom Youk Engine Raffle such an incredible accomplishment. The assistance it provided was invaluable. Two years of the best that medicine has to offer, even with insurance, has been staggering. I have been overwhelmed by your many kind thoughts and expressions of support, and feel that I cannot find the words to adequately express my appreciation.

Upon looking back over these many years, being a part of this Gruppe was rather a staple of life one took for granted; waiting there if you cared to partake.

Some years ago, however, I was aghast to find that our group's collection of rather odd characters, (... come on now, we know it's true ...) no longer seemed peculiar to me (Yipes!). After my initial alarm, how could it be? Either advancing age must surely have arrived ahead of schedule, or perhaps it really only proved you could get used to almost anything. I wasn't sure.

I then realized that I did not care what the cause, and I began to savor the unique, rest in the familiar and delight in the constant little surprises of people you thought you knew.

We have shared more than I ever dreamed possible as we have traveled, and supped, and chatted and discovered what lay around the bend in the road. Stopping by a stream, or a bridge to gather into a photo, or joining in the laying out of a picnic feast, or standing, freezing, looking in wonder at the mountains and lakes. The sum?...: Beautiful memories. It's been a most wonderful trip.

Many thanks to you for your companionship.
Your gestures of friendship are my treasure.

Melody

Spring Mystery Tour

Hosted By Dennis Denyer

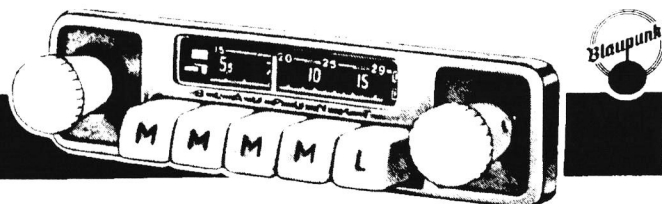
The date and time will be announced by a special mailing. This will be a mystery tour that you **MUST** pre-register for. Instructions will be included in the mailer for registration.

PHOTO FROM CHRISTOPHORUS



This is our Eighth Annual Spring Tour, and although it will be a little different format than in years past, you are guaranteed by Mr. Denyer to have a blast. So get your “Little honey” ready (And your wife too!), and be there!

BLAUPUNKT
das AUTORADIO

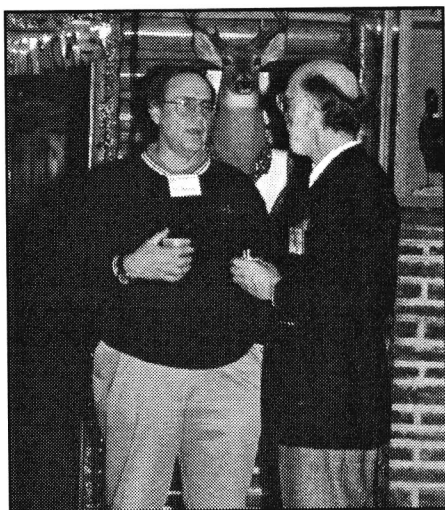




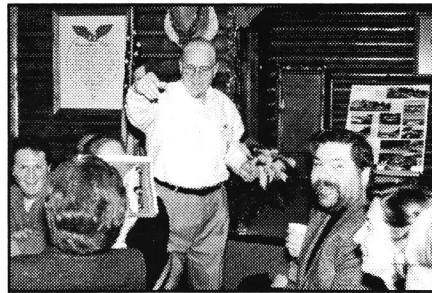
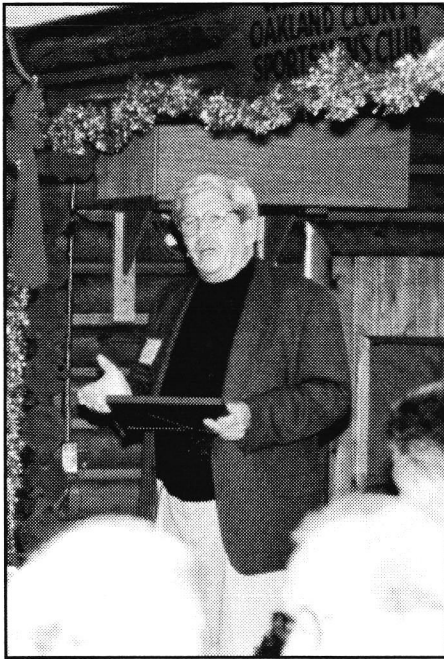
The Motor Cities Gruppe Holiday Party was held on December 6th 1998 at the Oakland County Sports-
mans Club on the grounds of Waterford Hills Race-
course.

This year we used a different format which was more relaxing for our spouses and significant others. In years past we would do a "pot luck" dinner with every person bringing a dish to pass. It's no secret that the men in our gruppe are better in the garage than in the kitchen, so it was always up to our lovely ones to handle this part. Being the consummate entertainers that they are, our wives/girlfriends spent more time working than enjoying. Thanks be to Barbara Skirmants who stood up and said "Enough!" So this year it was a catered, pre-registered affair that went off without a hitch. I have a strong feeling that this may be the format for years to come.

The auction this year was once again a big success, netting the club the necessary funds to put on the great events that we do year after year. The genrouisity of people both donating items and buying them at our auction is overwhelming. We don't have the largest local 356 club in the U.S., but we probably have the best!



Motor Cities



Gruppe 1998 Holiday Party

Gottfried High Photos

Well, I did it.
I've been threatening

to do it for a few months now, and I finally did it. And now I feel like I've shunned an old friend, like I stepped on some one's toes, like I've *betrayed* somebody.

I bought a 911.

For several years now I have freely given my own Demo to my customers to drive while their cars are being serviced. I made a promise to them that they would always have wheels, and our rental company is chronically out of cars. This constantly left me to drive a used car home at night, which in turn made me a good friend of the mechanic who handled our used car inventory. This one had grinding brakes, that one had no heat etc., etc. It got to the point where a couple of days a week I would just pull right into the service department on my way to work. Great for the dealership, as we like to actually repair our used cars before they leave our lot, but tough for me as I was tiring of this constant "road test". Oh well, you know what they say about Cobblers' children...

So I bought one. Just something to drive home when I didn't have my demo. It's purple (*Aubergine*), but it's a dark purple, which is very cool. So why do I feel like I'm cheating on my 356? After all, I don't consider myself to be a just a Porsche enthusiast, but a Porsche 356 enthusiast. I wanted to get a 356 for my "driver", but the heating system just wasn't going to cut it. The heat on this '72 911, while not up to today's standards, is more than adequate. In the recent 20° weather, I actually had to turn it down a bit on my way to work, and I was only a few miles from home. The car is tremendously more comfortable than my 356, and it is amazing how only two extra cylinders could be so much smoother and more powerful.

YOUR CHEATIN' HEART (AUTOMOTIVELY SPEAKING)

BY SEBASTIAN GAETA

So why do I feel like I have betrayed my 356? Peter Stuyck had already ordered me a Mr. "T" starter set of gold chains and necklaces, but had to cancel it when Doc Block informed him that was for 1974 and later 911 owners only. Dodged a bullet there. First Porsche I've owned with a sunroof and I'm really looking forward to it in the spring....

I kind of look down and shuffle my foot when I think about it, but why? The 911 is great to drive both in traffic and on the Interstate, and, to coin a Hinsonian phrase, it's got that *ZOOM* factor. One day in February it was nice enough outside to put the 911 through it's paces on my own private Nurburgring just west of Ann Arbor (And no, Mr. Hinson, this route is not all *that* flat!). I've driven this route literally hundreds of times, and let me tell you, I was through those corners a good 15mph faster than in the 356.

It's also got 12 volts which means that it cranks fast, has headlight switch positions that are "On-Low-High", rather than "Off-Dim-Flicker", and I carry a set of jumper cables in case I have to jump *someone else*.

So just why do I feel guilty? I don't know. When I bought my 356 it wasn't for economic reasons. I paid less for this 911 than I did for my 356, and it's in much better condition than the 356 ATP (At Time of Purchase). It was just that I liked the 356 better, and I really liked the people

who owned them. They even treated me like one of them when I would attend Gruppe events in my Karmann Ghia oh so many years ago. The same still holds true today. So in spite of the 911's superiority, **I still like my 356 better than the 911.** To prove it, my 356 will sit inside as soon as I get it back from the Skirmants trans/engine rebuild, while the 911's spot will be moved to the driveway. So do I still feel guilty? No, I guess not

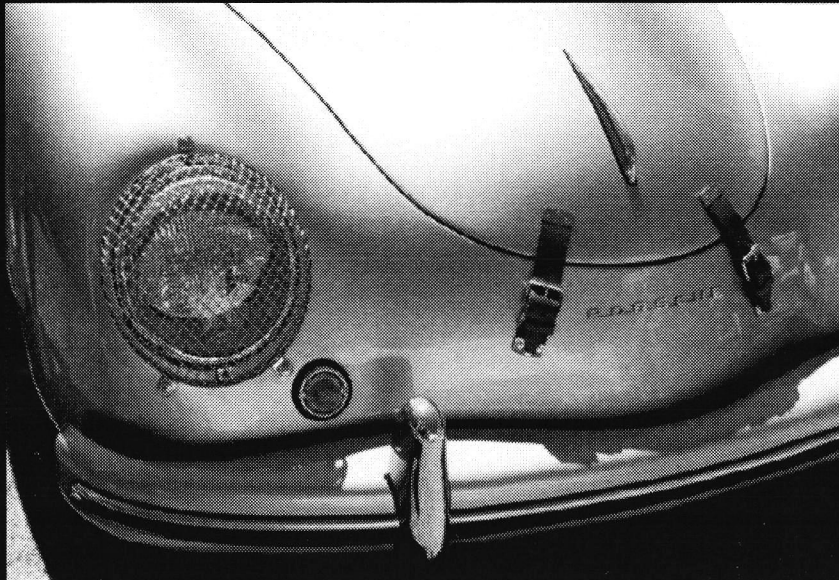
I read an article in the Registry a few years ago who's premise was that we like our 356s because they don't do what they are intended to do as well as the cars we drive today, and that provides us with a certain thrill. You must pay more attention in the corners, while selecting gears etc. You feel like your input means more to the driving experience of your 356 than it does to your modern everyday car. I truly believe that.

My 911 is only a '72, but feels thoroughly present-day compared to my "C" Coupe. I can only imagine what a current 911 feels like compared to the '72. Maybe someday I'll be writing an article about how my '99 911 puts my '72 to shame, but one thing will remain the same: my 356 will be warm, cozy and covered in my garage, waiting for it's next regular adventure, while the 911 sits outside. It's only fitting that one would treat his first true love (automotively speaking, of course) in such an adoring way.

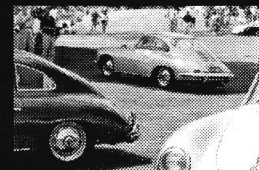
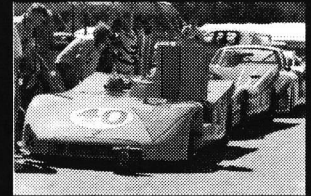
Sebastian

TNN NETWORK "MY CLASSIC CAR" MEADOW BROOK 1998 VIDEO

Gottfried Hogg Photos

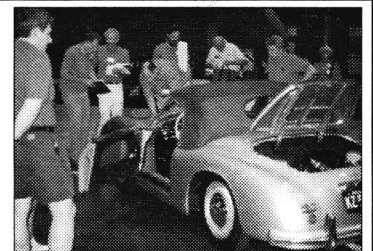


You can now purchase the video covering the 1998 Meadow Brook weekend, including some of our Holiday at Waterford Hills. \$19.95 + \$3.25 shipping. Please call Dick Beecher to order your tape at 810-653-6599. He will be accepting orders after April 3rd.



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Many of us, who are forced to endure endless days of lake-effect gray, think that the automotive aficionado from California has it made. Those poor souls in San Diego suffer the monotony of great weather and become inured to the fabulous scenery and thousands of miles of smooth empty roads that are at their beck and call when they venture off the clogged freeways. They have cars that hold up beautifully and are pursued by collectors from all over the world. There are painters who brazenly charge \$15,000 to \$30,000 for a concours paint job and customers who blithely write the checks. There are a bewildering array of iconoclastic wizards when it comes to entrusting the mechanicals to someone.

But that special painter is south of Long Beach. And the guru mechanic is ensconced up near San Jose. The guy who knows 4-cam engines has moved from Fresno and is now operating out of Idaho. And the interior man is over near Riverside or Escondido. Doing the car ain't exactly easy. Especially when every town has an expert whose rates don't always reflect skill.

Obviously there are a lot of car junkies out there. They're just spread out over the landscape. Consequently, they have a harder time gathering together. Still there are thousands of places to go and things to see on the weekend. No matter what you want to do you can do it. You can pack the skis, roller blades and the bikini and do Mammoth and Manhattan Beach-on the

Auction meister and 356 restorer Ted Dunham in action at a recent Holiday Party.

We're Blessed...

By
Richard Hinson

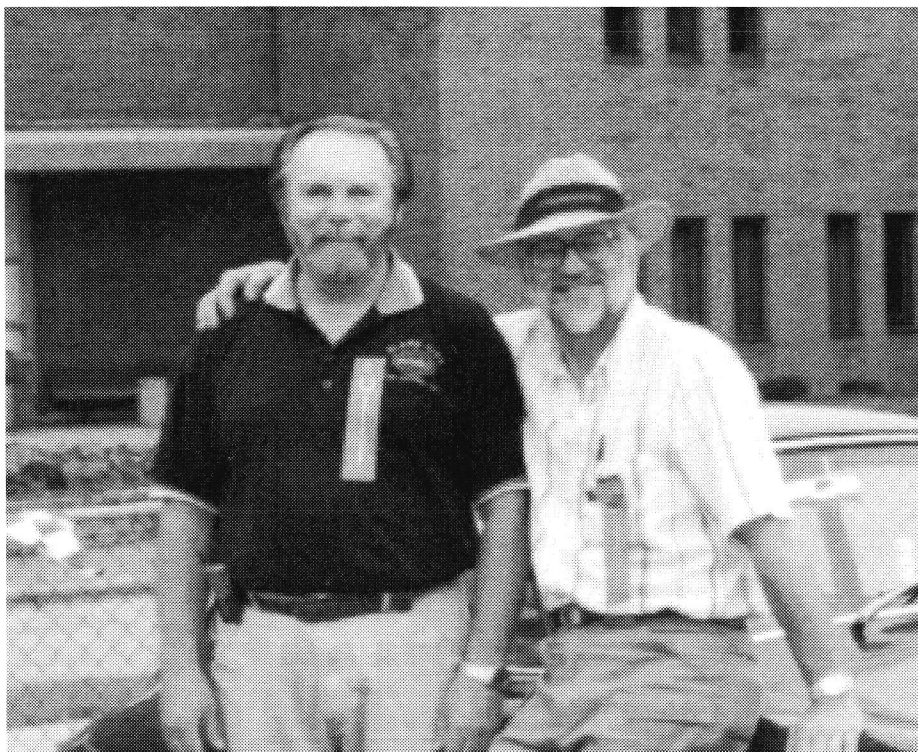
same weekend.

I shamelessly lust for the roads they have. And on those cold slushy February days I live on my vivid memories of driving the back roads from Santa Barbara to Monterey in wonderful vintage sports cars or the latest sports sedan. Or if those are washed out from the last storm you can drive for hours in southern

California and Arizona immersed in the aroma therapy that wafts around the windshield and mixes with the sounds of an exhaust echoing off the trees and rocks. It's laugh-out-loud pleasure.

But we in the Motor Cities Gruppe have something I haven't seen in other geographies. Our roads may





John Denyer (left) and Victor Skirmants. Vic is best known for building the world's best 356 engines and transmissions. John is best known for doing ground up restorations on cars fresh off of ground up restorations.

not tantalize ... except for the backroads that are south and west of Ann Arbor-over near Saline, Chelsea and Hamburg. (Sebastian has taken us on his favorite tour routes many times and we never tire of them. In fact, his routes are often used by the editorial staffs of the buff books and engineering staffs of the manufacturers including guys like Bob Lutz when they're testing cars. They're very good roads and surfaces, lots of good sight lines and minimal traffic. But they're basically flat. There are however surprisingly good restaurants in the area when you've OD'd on working the pedals.)

I think we are particularly fortunate because we have an abundance of talent of all kinds that help enhance our camaraderie and driving experiences. Part of that is because we live in the concentrated backyard of the manufacturers and their suppli-

ers. Even in the bowels of the stodgiest car company or supplier are rabid enthusiasts who like mingling with the enthusiasts whether they be drivers of Porsches, Aston Martins, Morgans, Ferraris, Jaguars, Alfas, Miatas or street rods.

We also have the editorial offices of *Automobile*, *AutoWeek*, and *Car and Driver* in our backyard and this group has informed opinions of what works and what gives pleasure by virtue of driving hundreds of cars a year. We've had representatives from all of them come to speak at our dinner meetings.

And let's not forget, the car industry is finally accepting the fact that putting people in charge who have more than a passing passion for their automotive product-rather than the focus of the financial wizard-has helped their business and given us approachable friends and

supporters like Lutz, Eaton, Gale, Runkle, Mays, Nasser, and Leydordf.

But there is an extra dimension. There is that special Midwestern culture. That Midwestern camaraderie, where people extend themselves. There is a willingness, a delight in actually putting themselves out to help others. They get up at all hours to solve a problem on a car that isn't theirs. They schlep cars on trailers to where they think the best work will be done. Then go back to monitor the progress.

We're surrounded by extraordinary knowledgeable mechanical artists and craftsmen.

To our great benefit, **Vic Skirmants** stuck his neck out years ago when he committed to focusing his efforts on 356s. It wasn't always skittles and cream with nearly a year's backlog of work. He built engines and transmissions-for himself. Went racing. Won some races. Improved his products. Set his sights higher. Won some more races. In fact, scored more points racing Porsches than anyone else in the country. Was recognized inter-



Neil Goldberg and Sebastian Gaeta stand next to Neil's 928 at the 1995 "Eyes on Classic Design"

nationally for his driving skills and mechanical reliability and people began queuing up for his services. Now it's, get in line.

I'm one of those in line now to have an engine and transmission gone over. And I didn't have to send the engine to California to have the best work done. Skirmants is less than a half hour away. His 500th engine was recently rebuilt if that helps put it into perspective.

He's got a garage full of engines and transmissions, including race engines, from all over the country and abroad waiting to be built to his demanding standards. If his seven-day-a-week schedule wasn't enough to make a strong man cry uncle, he has two unique race cars that are begging for his attention. The sleek Dolphin and a mongrel which had to have been designed by a backyard racer with little sense of style, balance and skill in shaping the sheet metal. But it has a history. Or at least a story.

Let it be said, if you didn't win the Tom Youk Memorial Engine Rebuild and you ain't had your name on the list and put down your deposit, I suspect that the new Dolphin will push your place in line back a bit. A man has to have a little personal pleasure along with



Rick Olivero, the man with the flawless paint.

providing pleasure for us. Looks like we'll get some vicarious pleasure out of making a trip to Waterford and Mid Ohio to watch him sort out and race the new car.

As a certified mechanical idiot, I like the fact that his parts development talents have made it more fun-that means more power and torque-and reliable for all of us to jump in the car and head in any direction knowing that because of his talents the odds of our getting to the destination and back are greatly enhanced.

There are two other genius nearby who collaborate regularly-Messrs **Dunham** and **Goldberg**. Neil has shelves of tools that he feels compelled to test on every neat car that rolls into his parking lot and is lucky enough to get asked to go on the hoist. His mantra is that he learns from his mistakes. So he likes to practice on other people's cars. Smart guy.

The result is that when the garage door at Stuart Tool finally closes behind one of the cars Goldberg's touched, it has been gone over with a magnifying lens. The word 'fastidious' doesn't quite encompass his approach. And he's very persuasive about what he feels needs to be done. Woe be the owner who ignores the "suggestion". If you can afford it, it should be done. Kind of like the old days when you brought your car into the dealer. They fixed it because they knew it needed it. If you didn't want a car to reflect the standards when it was built, why did you bring it to the gurus?!

Dunham, the tempering influence of the duo, has such broad based, high quality skills that the phone rings incessantly to get on his list.



Dennis Denyer leads a round of tall tales at last years Picnic.

He has the wealth of experience from his days as chief mechanic of the GM air fleet to solve problems. His hands-on skills are legendary be they trouble shooting, mechanical, electrical, fine tuning body and engine panels, and paint. At the moment they are tweaking the engine sheet metal on the 4-cam engine that will go in Goldberg's Carrera Coupe. When one has to assemble a potpourri of parts from various cars, they go into the opertory of Goldberg/Dunham for reliability refinement and cosmetics so they look like they belonged in a Goldberg concours winner.

This team is supported by people like **Dennis Denyer** who takes nasty, greasy, rusty parts and removes the gunk so that decisions can be made to buy new-if available, refurbish, or prepare for refinishing. *Everything* goes through this process including nuts, bolts, washers and screws. **John Denyer** has already set the standard for helping the owner justify the money and selecting sources to "do the job right". We all use John's script when we're trying to explain and justify the costs to our friends and loved ones.

If you wonder whether the job *is* being done right, you ask **Doc**

Block, our intensely learned and positive historian, who's willing to stand his ground in the face of the experts. Experts in this case are those who have tools in their hands and/or proffer the solemn promise of the previous owner that it's an original car.

In addition to the collective experience of Goldberg, Dunham and Block there's the reference car bought to settle the "what's right" questions on C Coupes. They also have access to Chuck Stoddard, Brad Ripley and Brett Johnson—including their pager numbers and their daily schedules.

Need an interior? Then **Russ Taggart**, **Harold Mandrell** or **John Wagner** have years of experience. They are also in high demand by not only the 356 crowd but by the OEM for work on prototypes. But like Skirmants, Goldberg and Dunham, there is a waiting list.

One of our eclectic 356 colleagues is in the process of building a new body for his RS60. For many years it was in the hands of a renown west coast guru. But now the owner is retired and the long-distance relationship seemed to drag beyond what was reasonable. **Fred Leydorf** decided it would be a lot more fun and psychically more reassuring to be able to monitor the progress more conveniently. Here in the backyard of automotive prototype metal crafters he tapped **Ed Scutchfield** to build the body. Those who have seen it say it's so beautiful that they are questioning whether to polish the aluminum or paint it. He could also have turned to **Mike Kleeves** who's just west of Port Huron. Mike is another of those extraordinary craftsman. He has been challenged to "correct" the

body on a 550 owned by another of our club members. A thankless job having to correct another guru's work. A tour of his facility will find Mike and his team working on custom street rods, Ferraris, Alfas as well as Porsche panels.

Add to this the good fortune of having someone to ask on any given Saturday where to find proficient repair craftsman. You'll hear that there are two sources to rebuild generators for imported cars, a host of parts refinishers and platers, a couple of companies who do high

If you wonder whether the job is being done right, you ask Doc Block, our intensely learned and positive historian, who's willing to stand his ground in the face of the experts".

quality chroming for the vintage car constituency, as well as financing and insurance specialists for vintage vehicles, sports rods and boats. The old boy network chaired by John and Dennis Denyer are always willing to proffer opinions and experiences.

What about paint? Some projects have been trailered down to Ohio to use either Stoddard's or Rick Bennett. On rare occasion Vic Rivera and a few insiders have been

able to use a local guy who specializes in painting Harley Davidson motorcycles. You can imagine how difficult it is to get on his list. We've seen the extraordinary quality of the work that **Rick Olivero** does. But rumor has it that because of space limitations it's harder for him to have overlapping projects and he may decide to forego new projects. (Anyone have a building that Rick could use?)

If you have been impressed by the cars at Meadow Brook Concours d'Elegance you've undoubtedly seen work done by **Autometrics**. They actually don't like to work on collector cars because it's so time consuming and the owners are so fussy. But for street cars and the occasional "favor", **Larry Smith's** operation produces beautiful work.

Our good fortune is that most of these resources are very close by ... at most an hour away.

If you're willing to go a bit farther north, up in the Charlevoix area, then be aware that **Dave Draper**, owner of an outstanding car collection—including a 550A Spyder, has gathered together some of the best craftsmen extant and is doing great work—design, engineering, assembly, mechanical, paint and interiors. Draper has just purchased a very sophisticated paint booth. His customers insist on the best quality paint so he made the investment ... along with bringing on board a top-notch painter.

His old business and social contacts had him busy from the first day they opened the doors of Time Machines. When Ted Dunham and I were there in the fall he was working on a couple of street rods, a Bugatti Type 55, a drop head Morgan, a Ferrari 246 and Califor-

nia Spyder.

In the last few years there has been a great surge of interest in 356s locally. The cognoscenti have always had a high lust factor for the bullet-proof reputation and high fun-factor of these cars. The racers led the way. And early Porsches are high on the list of collectibles for those with fond memories of the cars of the '50s and '60s. Once the ball got rolling it has attracted lots of new local collectors. The quality of the cars rivals anything you'll see in California. They may look like garage queens but most are getting lots of time on the road.

This camaraderie led to the support of the many volunteers who helped stage the 1998 highly acclaimed East Coast Holiday under the direction of Barbara Skirmants, Dick Beecher and Gerald Van Vliet.

There is always a willingness to help one another, to share, to keep

the faith and stage events. There are a lot of us who wisely leave the mechanical side of ownership to those with the talents. Some on occasion will dismantle an engine or carburetors but the pressures of work usually results in several boxes in the garage or basement waiting to be brought to Skirmants, Goldberg, Dunham for their assistance.

We are also wise enough to recognize the contribution of the wives or non-mechanical sorts. There are parties and tours and trips to events out-of-state and picnics and concours d'elegance and gatherings and publishing or contributing to *Auspuff Roar* that take just as much time to put together as an engine or transmission or carburetors or suspension.

And we have a supportive but raucous camaraderie because of the breakfast clubbers or tire kickers society that gathers at Stuart Tool each Saturday. You're invited but

come prepared to be picked on. Those who bring food and drink are traditionally treated with greater tolerance and deference-until the food is gone.

Maybe its the proximity and intensity of our group. Maybe its the weather that forces us to gather together in the winter months for solace. Maybe its the escape from the stress of work. I prefer to think it's because we enjoy one another and respectfully pay homage to the talents who make the Motor Cities Gruppe such a delightful group. From my perspective, it's a blessing.

There may be a need for a reference list of who does what in our area. From mechanical to parts refinishing to paint to detailing. Let Sebastian Gaeta know if you see the need and we'll put the expanded old boy network on the case.

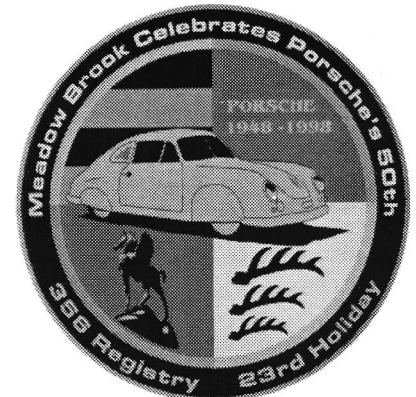
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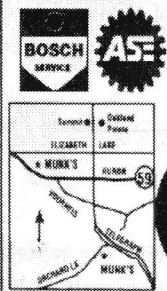
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