



The *ROCKET FUEL* Newsletter



THE BEST EVER



The number 13 could be considered unlucky for some but not for the Motor City Rockets. You see this was the 13th year for the Woodward Dream Cruise and it proved to be very lucky for our club. We had a completely new venue thanks to the efforts of Jeff Pregler. The old location, Wendy's, where we had gathered in the past had been sold and turned into a Coffee Beanery. Try as we might, they wouldn't offer their space to us. The search for another location began and Jeff came to the rescue. Our new spot was the Charter One branch bank at the corner of Woodward and Long Lake. con't on pg 3

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Greetings from the President

Well, summer is almost over and it's been a busy one for our club. We've gone to many events with the trip to the 2007 Nationals being the highlight. Two more activities this month (Frankenmuth and Traverse City) and then we'll get back to regular meeting times and soon the Christmas party will be here. While my first commitment is to keep the focus on our regular club events, we also have our commitment to host the 2008 OCA Nationals. For those who have been to one of these you know the feeling to see all those beautiful Oldsmobiles. For those who haven't, you must attend this one. It's in your back yard.

It's now less than a year to the 2008 Nationals and we'll be in overdrive from now on. So much has already gotten accomplished through the efforts of the executive committee. Specific committees like hotel/banquet, off site tours, sponsor/advertising, meet magazine and raffle have been working very hard. If you haven't checked our web site lately, do so. Our web master, Brian Lorway, has done an amazing job regarding the Nationals. As the date gets closer, those of you who volunteered will be getting a call notifying you where you'll be needed. If you haven't yet signed up, please do so. Don't worry if you can't be there every day, whatever time you can volunteer will be used and appreciated.

Steve Apking



TECH TIP"

PLEASE SEND YOUR TIPS TO
KELLY AT MRMBUX@AOL.COM
OR SUE AT
S442APKING@AOL.COM

Editor's Notes

We're happy to announce that Jeff Pregler has taken on the activity director position for our club. He will take over officially in October. Those of you who attended Woodward witnessed his hard work. He found the new location, secured the necessary permits and worked very hard throughout the entire day.

Thanks, Jeff for everything.

Don't forget: The Frankenmuth Autofest is Sept. 7-9 and the Traverse City Trip is Sept. 21 - 23. Contact Steve for details or go to our web site. Please let Steve know if you're planning to go so we can give a head count to Dorothy for Traverse City.

If anyone would like to plan a dinner cruise for Oct. 6, let Steve or Jeff Pregler know.

***Sue Apking &
Kelly Ferry***

The Best Ever con't from pg 1

We were further north along Woodward and it got us out of all the hustle and bustle of the old location. We were welcomed wholeheartedly by bank management and bank employees honored us by wearing MCR tee shirts. In our new spot we had room to breathe and our cars had no worries about spectators getting too close. We also had the advantage of being next door to Little Daddy's restaurant where the management welcomed us with open arms. Now in the past we have sometimes been done in by the weather but this Aug. 18 was ideal, not too cold, not too hot. Early arrivers set up on the grass as usual and others parked in the bank's lot. We all had assigned spots with several guest spots open too. Although the bank was open until 1:00 p.m., that was not a problem. Parking was still available for customers and the drive up was open but after closing, those spots became ours and they quickly filled up.

When we arrived, fellow members signed us in and gave us a placard to put in our windows. The placards were courtesy of Jon Magnusson. Red, white and blue sawhorses with MCR initials on them kept our entrances and exits protected.

Along with our display of Oldsmobiles, we had the OCA road show tent set up and we signed up 4 new members. The day continued with some members cruising, others sitting enjoying the sights and still others hitting the sidewalks. Everyone took a turn helping out with either parking, working at the OCA tent or manning the entrances.

The highlight of the day was a surprise visit, by none other than "Doc Watson. We were very excited to meet him and hear his many stories. He was gracious with his time and signed autographs for us. His son, Jason who oversees the Horsepower Heritage Museum in Grand Blanc, was there too and set up a display of automotive art. Jason and Steve Apking had been in contact for months in making this happen. We were grateful they pulled it off.

Our day was full but it wasn't over as Paulette Width invited us over for dinner. It was in honor of her husband, Doug's birthday. We had great chili and delicious cake.

The day was a success and it looks like the close to 40 people who attended started a new tradition at Woodward. Best of all we were able to give the bank a check for \$685.00 to be given to a charity of their choice. As usual, thanks to everyone who made it happen. This might have been the best WDC ever. Again we proved that this club can make great things happen.

Sue Apking





SEPT 2007						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7 Frankenmuth	8 Frankenmuth
9 Frankenmuth	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21 Traverse City	22 Traverse City
23 Traverse City	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 Jeff Pregler	1	2	3	4	5	6

UPCOMING EVENTS: OCT 6 DINNER CRUISE TBD
 OCT 20 MCR/OCA MEETING TBD
 NOV 17 MCR/OCA MEETING TBD

Welcome New Members

We extend a warm welcome to these fine folks. Hope you can join us at the next meeting.



Skip & Sally Church
 Jon & Chris Detway
 Bill Layton
 Gar Martin
 Jeff Mayo
 Tom Stoner



**A Brief History of
The First 100 Years of the Automobile Industry
in the United States**

Chapter 7 - 'Looney gas' survives and changes engine

by Richard A. Wright

After revolutionizing the [auto](#) industry with his electric self-starter, Kettering turned to another problem just beginning to cause worry. Cadillac engineers complained that Kettering's self-starter and battery ignition system was making spark plugs misfire, causing knocking in the cylinders.

But Kettering didn't think the plugs were misfiring. He suspected it was a problem with the fuel. As engines were designed to compress the fuel/air charge to a greater extent, engines were able to extract more power from the fuel. But the greater the compression, the greater the knock, Kettering found. The higher compression was causing the fuel to ignite before the spark. This pre-ignition was causing the knock.

The more efficient high-compression engines were necessary not only to make [cars](#) run faster, but because experts had determined in 1915 that the world's oil supply would be depleted by 1940.

Kettering assigned an assistant, Thomas Midgley Jr., to search for a compound to make the fuel less volatile, less likely to pre-ignite under compression, while retaining its high density of energy. Even though new discoveries of oil in Texas made it clear that the predictions of running out of oil were greatly exaggerated, Kettering and Midgley continued the search because higher-compression engines ran better and more smoothly, provided much more power and delivered greater fuel economy.

A number of chemical compounds were tried, including tellurium, which showed great promise for halting premature ignition, but smelled strongly of garlic. Its smell was so strong and it so completely defied all efforts to banish it that the researchers gave up and searched for something else.

In 1922, Midgley announced he had found it -- tetraethyl lead. It would eliminate premature ignition, he said, and could increase gasoline mileage by 25 percent.

The first ethyl gasoline went on sale in Dayton in early 1923. It was called "premium" gasoline. GM formed the General Motors Chemical Co., with Kettering as chairman and Midgley as president. It contracted to buy tetraethyl compound from DuPont.



GM then approached Standard Oil of New Jersey and the two companies formed Ethyl Gasoline Corp., which proved to be a very profitable venture. Until it all blew up in October, 1924.

An explosion in Standard Oil's research lab in Baywater, N.J., left 35 men seriously ill from inhaling fumes of tetraethyl lead. Eight were hospitalized and five of them died, one of them in a straightjacket because he had gone quite mad.

Newspapers headlined the effects of "looney gas" and a nationwide panic was started. New Jersey suspended sales of the compound and sales across the country collapsed.

Rumors circulated about poor devils who had gone crazy while motoring. This extremely important advance in automotive technology was in grave peril. In addition to being technologically important, it was extremely lucrative.

GM and Standard hesitated, hoping to ride out the storm of damaging publicity. Six more men died at DuPont's tetraethyl plant. GM and Standard ordered sales halted.

Scientists at Du Pont were well aware of the dangers in manufacturing tetraethyl lead, but they also knew it was perfectly safe in the greatly diluted form in which it appeared in gasoline (less than 1/10th of one percent by volume).

A federal committee appointed to investigate came to the same conclusion. Du Pont was willing to handle the risks and there was no danger to the public. A little over a year later, after an intensive advertising campaign, premium gasoline was back on the market.

Aiding in acceptance of ethyl was the popularity of the cars built by Walter Chrysler's new company, cars with high-compression engines.

One problem that GM had in its battle with Ford in the early '20s was that it was up against a myth, a legend, a national folk hero. Henry Ford himself was one of the most famous men in history. His attitude toward workers was suspect in many ways, but his \$5 day had made him legendary. His peace ship venture had ended in failure and bickering, but his attempt had made him a hero. He had beaten the "vested interests" in breaking the Selden patent. And the Model T held an almost sacred position in the American mind.

But GM found a way to fight this: installment credit, a concept which was anathema to Henry Ford.

The automobile had quickly become not only a necessity to Americans, but also a status symbol. Pushed on by "easy-payment" credit, ownership of a [car](#) had become a symbol of success.



Installment buying spread to many product lines and was the driving force of the prosperity the '20s. Used-car dealers used easy-credit plans to clear their lots and to cut into sales of Ford's Model T, the most successful entry-level car ever built in America. The price of the Model T had dropped to as low as \$265 in the mid-'20s. Ford's solution for all his woes to cut prices. But he refused to offer a time-payment plan and thereby contributed to his beloved Model T's decline.

But Ford's opposition to credit buying did not stop his greatest constituency, the farmers, from mortgaging their land to buy Model Ts and Fordson tractors. The auto industry had given the American farmer the means to an agricultural revolution from which everyone benefited but the farmer.

With modern farm machinery, farmers were able to increase their yields, thus driving down the price of their crops. At the same time, their own costs increased, because the new technology was not cheap. This paradoxical problem of increased efficiency undermining the prosperity of the farmer persists to this day.

The American farmer, aided by tractors, modern farm implements and new fertilizers and pesticides, became the wonder of the world. And low crop prices drove more of them off the farm and into the cities. The Great Depression started with the stock market crash in October, 1929. But a rural depression preceded it by several years.

By 1925, almost three-quarters of all automobiles sold in the United States were sold on credit. Still true.

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On August 5, eighteen members of our club in twelve Oldsmobiles attended the 29th annual Meadow Brook Concours d'Elegance. We were invited to participate along with other car clubs in the area and felt it an honor to be included. The beautiful grounds of Meadow Brook Hall was the location. We decided to arrive together and placed our Oldsmobiles from oldest to newest in our designated spot. We were able to set up canopies and it helped because in the morning it rained. But by noon the rain stopped and we were able to walk the grounds and see the array of beautiful cars from around the world. There were three famous Alfa Romeo "B.A.T. mobiles" and one of the most valuable cars in the world, a 1931 Bugatti Royale Type 41 with a massive 12.8 liter engine, only one of 6 produced. There was also a display of super cars you can buy today. Among them were Ferrari, Lamborghini, Bentley and a new Bughatti Veyron with a 1001 HP engine. Along with the cars was a spectacular display of automotive art with the artists in attendance. And for the first time ever the show featured a selection of historic 4 cylinder motorcycles. The Concours also celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Class of 1957 and among the selections was a 1957 Oldsmobile Super 88 Convertible. All in all, the day turned out nicely. Hope we get invited again next year so more members can experience a Concours d'Elegance.



Alfa Romeo "B.A.T."



1957 Oldsmobile Super 88

Sue Apking

ICE Very Important Information submitted by Pat Macaluso

A recent article from the Toronto Star, "the ICE idea", is catching on and it is very simple, yet important method of contact for you or a loved one in case of an emergency . As cell phones are carried by the majority of the population, all you need to do is program the number of a contact person or persons and store the name as "ICE". The idea was thought up by a paramedic who found that when they went to the scenes of accidents, there were always mobile phones with patients, but they didn't know which numbers to call. He therefore thought that it would be a good idea if there was a nationally recognized name to file "next of kin" under. Following a disaster in London The East Anglian Ambulance Service has launched a national "In case of Emergency (ICE)" campaign. The idea is that you store the word "ICE" in your mobile phone address book, and with it enter the number of the person you would want to be contacted "In Case of Emergency ". In an emergency situation, Emergency Services personnel and hospital staff would then be able to quickly find the contact information under "ICE". Please forward this. It won't take too many "forwards" before everybody will know about this. It really could save your life, or put a loved one's mind at rest. For more than one contact name simply enter ICE1, ICE2, ICE3 etc.



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MCR MERCHANDISE

To view our merchandise please visit



<http://www.motorcityrockets.com/merchandise.htm>

To Purchase please contact

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MCR WEB SITE

www.motorcityrockets.com

The MCR web site includes:

- * **An Event Calendar** – Where all MCR members can schedule or post club events
- * **Chat Application** – Rocket Chat – Where MCR members can host chat rooms
- * **An Archive Area** – Where all prior years event photos and documents are stored
- * **An Event Photo Gallery** – A display of current year event photos
- * **The Bulletin Board** - Club member details and National updates - register to gain access.