



*Wisconsin Society of  
Automotive Historians*  
**WSAH**

**President:** Kenneth E. Nimocks  
[knimocks@netnet.net](mailto:knimocks@netnet.net)

**Secretary:** Dan W. Manola  
[sponge19501924@yahoo.com](mailto:sponge19501924@yahoo.com)

**Director:** James F. Morris  
[jim@jetfire.com](mailto:jim@jetfire.com)

**Director:** Donald R. Luebke  
(920) 375-2804

**Vice President:** Michael E. Keller  
[mk612gp@gmail.com](mailto:mk612gp@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Gary L. Koehnke  
[gary7140@att.net](mailto:gary7140@att.net)

**Director:** Donald E. Chandler  
[lrchandler@tds.net](mailto:lrchandler@tds.net)

**News Editor:** David G. Tesch  
[dgtesch49@gmail.com](mailto:dgtesch49@gmail.com)



**News/Letter**

Autumn 2015



*Auto Club [Iola, Wisconsin] - 1910*

**A Few Words from the President**

Prior to our 19 September Cross Plains WSAH meeting, Jim Morris and I will meet with the Iola Car Show staff to discuss positives and concerns regarding Iola 2015 as well as future shows. Many of you are aware that there were some significant changes this year and it is important to address some of those changes and determine whether they need to be modified, kept as is, or discontinued. My opinion is that the show was an overall success, however the Theme area seemed to suffer, and I truly believe it was because of the changes in our involvement. It seems there was an element of over-promising and under-delivering, with too many people presuming the leadership position. I have told the staff - and I will repeat it when we meet - that *I* don't need to be the person in charge, but *one* person must be. I have notes with feedback from our members and show participants which I will share at the Iola meeting, then report on at our WSAH meeting.

Once again, I would like to have each of you think about whether you would like to list yourself or another member as interested in running for an elected position in WSAH. We have not had formal elections in some time, so it appears that the membership is satisfied with the status quo, they don't have a burning desire to hold an office, or they aren't comfortable in "challenging" the existing officers. I can only speak for myself, but even though I have had this position for a couple of decades, there is no reason for me to be President-For-Life, as I like to put it. If there is any interest, we can plan on listing candidates by the spring meeting and having elections by the summer meeting if not before.

You will be seeing that you are again receiving a paper copy of our newsletter, which has a new look and format. I had promoted the idea of moving to an email-only newsletter, however in discussions with Editor David Tesch, we decided that a paper copy might be preferred. David is okay with the extra effort in printing and mailing, and our treasury can certainly support the expense.

We have not had a new-member recruitment focus for as long as I can recall, so I ask that each of you consider talking with at least one prospect. I have found that most people don't really know what we are about unless we directly tell them. They might well have an interest if asked. They might assume that there are some requirements other than simply an interest in anything remotely automotive or history related, including the machines, people, and places.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all at Hill and Valley. Get there early, well before 10:00 a.m., and you might be able to catch a ride with one of the cars going on the tour through the hills in the Driftless Area of southwest Wisconsin.

### **Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians** **Minutes from Summer Meeting (July 10, 2015)**

The Summer meeting for the Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians took place on the grounds of the Iola Old Car Show outside of the main publication building. President Ken Nimocks called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. with the following members present: News/Letter Editor David Tesch, Treasurer Gary Koehnke, Secretary Dan Manola, Vice President Michael Keller, President Ken Nimocks, Director Jim Morris, and members Dan Sharpee, and Gene Steinfeldt. President Ken Nimocks gave a brief summary of the April minutes and explained anyone wanting to read complete minutes could contact him.

**Treasurer's Report** - - was read by Gary Koehnke, listing income of \$30.00 of which \$15.00 was in membership renewals and \$15.00 in DVD sales. Expenses incurred were our contribution to Wisconsin Automotive Museum of \$1000.00, \$160.00 to Bricco Video for production of the Grengs DVDs (20 copies @ \$8.00), and National dues for Ken Nimocks. Total expenses were \$1210.00. Checking account beginning balance and ending balance were shown on the report and our treasury remains in good condition. Motion to accept treasurer's report was made by Mike Keller and seconded by Dan Sharpee. Ken reminded Dave to charge for supplies he needed as News/Letter Editor.

**Car Show** - - A post show meeting will take place and some of the topics which will be brought to attention are issues with vendor perks, negative comments heard by various attendees, and how and why the particular theme was chosen. Mike Keller suggested an Asian Invasion theme attracting the many non-domestic vehicles so common in recent years. Mike also suggested we inquire as to renewing the bench program the Iola Show had in past years. As for the attendees we should not have to explain a particular theme, it should be clear and easily understood. We may include vintage trailers in the future such as the various camping and travel trailers of past years. The theme and posters have been completed for 2016. It was suggested we have a broad selection of models and years in future themes.

**New Business** - - Since our project of the Grengs collection DVD, it was felt we should continue with future projects. The collection of Larry Menard was mentioned, also a project to do the Wisconsin Automotive Museum collection. There was discussion as to whether we could do the filming of a collection ourselves. Also included for consideration is the Paul Oman collection.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was called by Mike Keller and seconded by Gary Koehnke. President Ken Nimocks adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m. Information for the fall meeting will be announced in the News/Letter.

Respectfully submitted  
Dan Manola, Secretary

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**Dues are Due: *Please Note:*** Dues for 2016 remain at \$5.00 and should be paid at the autumn meeting or mailed to the treasurer. Make checks payable to WSAH and mail to Gary Koehnke – WSAH, 931 Beta Street, Neenah, Wisconsin 54956-1357. Please keep your membership active by paying before December 31, 2015.

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**WSAH Website: <http://wisconsin-auto-historians.org>**



## What happened

# 'On the Same Day as the Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians Meeting' in Automotive History?

September 19<sup>th</sup>

1887 Dr. Graham Edgar was Born

Dr. Graham Edgar [developer of the Octane Rating System] was born on this date in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Although not a household name, evidence of Edgar's work lines every highway in America. His rating system measures a fuel's ability to resist any form of abnormal combustion, in other words, its ability to burn cleanly. Ratings of 87 and 90 are normal for everyday unleaded gasoline, while racing gasoline will often have a rating as high as 115. Almost every gas pump in America sports an octane rating sticker. In the early days of the automotive industry, there was no way to tell if gasoline would knock in a new engine, or if a new gasoline would knock in any engine. The only way to find out if it would knock would be to fill up your tank and crank the engine. This problem was solved in 1926 by Dr. Graham Edgar of the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation [then a division of General Motors and Standard Oil]. **Dr. Edgar devised the Octane Scale by testing the knocking tendency of every compound that was similar to gasoline.** He found that *Isooctane* would not knock in any engine under any operating conditions, while *N-heptane* would always knock in any engine. By mixing *Isooctane* and *N-heptane* in different amounts, he obtained fuels of all qualities, the percentage of *Isooctane* in the mixture being the *Octane Number*. Commercial gasoline was compared to these mixtures in test engines to determine their octane number. When the scale was developed, commercial gasoline had octane ratings between 40 and 75, and the best were brought up to a rating of 87 by the addition of tetraethyl lead, making leaded gasoline. Today, due to environmental reasons, tetraethyl lead has been outlawed in the United States and many other parts of the world. It is not necessary because new and better processes allow oil companies to make gasoline for automobiles with octane ratings as high as 94.

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### Internet Informational Source

An extremely interesting/historic/"interactive" website is the 'Yellowstone Trail'. The Yellowstone Trail was the first transcontinental automobile highway in the United States through the northern tier of states from Washington through Massachusetts. Yet too

few people are aware of its existence or its social, political and economic effects on either the local communities or the nation. The Yellowstone Trail began in South Dakota in 1912. It quickly expanded to run from the Twin Cities (Minnesota) to the Yellowstone National Park in Montana. While the intent of the founders was to create a highway from coast to coast the marking of the whole route took considerable time. In 1914 it was formally extended to the Idaho border in the west and to Chicago in 1915. By 1917 the entire route was firmly established. **In 1918, Wisconsin was the first state (actually, the first government in the world) to establish long-distance highway routes, identify them by number, and then use the numbers to mark the state system of roads.** By 1926 most states and many

countries had implemented the idea. This type of marking was so well received that, on November 11, 1926, the American Association of State Highway Officials, in conjunction with the Bureau of Public Roads of the United States Department of Agriculture implemented a plan to identify interstate routes and use the same type of numeric identification as Wisconsin had created. These "U.S. routes" traveled on state highways then and now, not on a non-existent federal road system. Many years later, the state highways which constitute the Interstate Highway System were identified with a similar numeric system. **This site includes interactive maps of 'all' counties in the state of Wisconsin that the route passed through including alterations/changes/dates.**

This extremely historical informative/detailed/interactive web-site is:

<http://www.yellowstonetrail.org/>

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