

Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians



Carhart Chronicle

SPRING 2023

MEETING AT HARTFORD – GEORGE TALKS TATRA, THE IOWA 80 TRUCK STOP & MUSEUM, AND, THE CARHART CHRONICLE WINS AGAIN!

SPRING MEETING

**SATURDAY, APRIL 29TH, AT
THE WISCONSIN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM,
IN HARTFORD, WISCONSIN**

The Spring meeting will be held on Saturday, April 29th – be there by 1:00 p.m. - at the Wisconsin Automotive Museum located at 147 N. Rural Street in Hartford. Members are admitted without cost – simply tell the gatekeeper you are with WSAH, who can also direct you to the meeting room. See the President’s message for more details.



THE GOLDEN QUILL AWARD

The editor is pleased to announce that the Carhart Chronicle has again received the Golden Quill Award presented annually by *Old Cars* magazine. The award recognizes club publications with “great content that serves and entertains members” and is “presented with professional editing, attractive and easy-to-read layout, and quality images and image reproduction.” The Carhart Chronicle thanks Gerald Perschbacher and the editors of *Old Cars* for this honor.

It is always best to leave on a high note. This is my last issue as editor of the Carhart Chronicle. Though I have enjoyed writing and editing it - and have appreciated the kind compliments it has received from members - the time has come for me to focus on *AutomobileChronicles.com*, my own blog devoted to “Automotive History - Then and Now.”

WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our WSAH Spring Meeting will be on Saturday April 29 (after a bit of confusion on the date by your president) at the Wisconsin Automotive Museum in Hartford. Tell the person at the entrance window that you are with WSAH and you will be admitted at no charge (covered by WSAH as a benefit of paying your dues). You may also bring an interested guest.

Our meetings at the museum are usually very well attended and this time we will start with something different: At 1:00 p.m. member George Tesar will give an informative presentation on what promises to be a very interesting look at Tatra, one of the oldest vehicle manufacturers on the planet. Did you know that? Did you even know of the existence of Tatra? Well then, you truly need to attend. I won't go into any more on Tatra, but I do want you to know that George spent much of his youth in the Czech Republic, although he was born in the USA. I had read about the Tatra 77 and correctly assumed that George would know something about it. Well, he sure does, and that sparked the idea of having him educate us!

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WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT CONT.

Here's something to think about. I often wonder if we should be just a social group of "car guys" who are interested in both the vehicles and the stories behind them; that is, automotive history. There is quite a bit of interest in being involved with the Lola Car Show but, with only a few exceptions, little interest in anything to do with spreading the doctrine of WSAH as proclaimed in our mission statement. The Membership Survey Questionnaire that was included with the Summer 2022 Carhart Chronicle generated almost no responses. As far as I know, the only actual responses were from the SAH and WSAH presidents. My recent request for help in writing, or at least for ideas, for an opportunity to gain exposure for WSAH at Lola (more than 100,000 attendees) garnered zero responses. And so it goes. There are more examples but there is no need to go further.

As part of the ideas for expanding our membership, there has been a lot of discussion about a major update to our website. I wonder how much a website contributes to enticing a reader to join WSAH. I suppose the only way to know is to ask that new member. (I use the singular here because we have very few new members in a year's time.) I also wonder how many of our own members have gone to our website, even one time. Conversely, would an outstanding website be more effective, or would it be lost in the thousands of other websites devoted to everything automotive, including history. That is speculative, so difficult to know. Don't get me wrong...I would love to see us have that outstanding website; all it would take is a lot of work, updated knowledge, time and, well, more.

It's time for everyone to seriously think about what you can do to help at the Lola Car Show in just a couple months. We tend to have plenty of help when it isn't needed and not enough help when it is needed. This year, with Independence Day on Tuesday and the show beginning on Thursday July 6th, we can expect to need a lot of help on Wednesday to get 50-60 vehicles situated in the Special Exhibit and Lindsay rooms. I will likely be there on Tuesday and Don Gullikson will likely be able to help with any vehicles arriving earlier than that, but any help will be greatly appreciated. The other times when extra help is needed are mornings - gates open at 6:00 a.m., just a few hours after I normally go to bed - and Saturday after 4:00 p.m. for breakdown. I will send out more on this later, but please think now about helping.

As always, I truly look forward to seeing you at the Wisconsin Automotive Museum, especially those members who I have yet to meet. I'm thinking, no...hoping, that we won't have a blizzard on April 29th!

Ken Nimocks

APRIL MEETING AGENDA

1:00 p.m. George Tesar presentation on Tatra automobiles

2:00 p.m. meeting call to order

Introductions

Secretary's report and minutes from January 21, 2023, meeting

Treasurer's report and budget proposal including donations

Old and New Business discussions

Lola Car Show report 2023 and 2024

Next meeting/event

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 21, 2023, MEETING

The January, 2023, meeting of the Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians convened at 1:05 p.m., in a lounge at the Experimental Aircraft Association at Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Before moving to more suitable quarters in a downstairs meeting room at the EAA, the minutes of the past meeting were approved and the Treasurer's Report submitted by Treasurer Gary Koehnke was also approved. The members welcomed new member Gary Kaphingst and his wife to WSAH.

The meeting then turned to discussion of a budget, with President Nimocks observing WSAH had operated in the past without a formal budget, but adoption of the plan to increase membership at the previous meeting made adoption of a formal budget to allocate available funds a priority. On the motion of Ralph Kalal, adopted by acclamation, a budget committee was formed as a standing committee to develop an annual budget and present it for approval to the membership each year. The committee is to consist, *ex officio*, of the President, Treasurer, and chairperson of the Membership Committee. So, currently: Ken Nimocks, Gary Koennke, and Greg VanArk.

The meeting then moved to a meeting room and discussion moved to consideration of the improvements to the WSAH website contemplated by the plan to increase membership and other suggestions for attracting new members. John Gunnell suggested giving copies of the

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JANUARY 21, 2023, MEETING MINUTUES, CONT.

Carhart Chronicle away as an inducement to join. Jessica Zdanowicz spoke about the use of Google analytics to measure website traffic. After further discussion, on the motion of Jim Morrison and seconded by George Tesar, the members voted unanimously to determine the cost of having a commercial website designer create a new website for WSAH.

The meeting then addressed the proposed designs for the WSAH T shirts, with Greg VanArk presenting the prototype. Jessica offered suggestions for making the WSAH logo on the shirt more attractive and promised to send a design to Greg. Once the design is settled, an email is to be sent to obtain each member's preferred size.

President Nimocks reported that Society of Automotive Historians president Bob Barr had requested a Zoom meeting with WSAH officers. Ken indicated he would find out more about the topic to be discussed and contact officers to obtain dates and time to suggest to Bob.

Don Gullickson then reported on the status of Lola and WSAH participation in this year's event. Early registrations are eligible for 50% off on advance tickets purchased online. WSAH is being solicited by Lola for assistance in creating content for posters and filler pieces in the directory related to the overall event theme "Unforgettable Fifties." WSAH is also invited to participate in other presentations related to the theme. The deadline for WSAH to concur in these requests is May 1st.

George Tesar then took the floor to propose that time be set aside in conjunction with meetings – such as 20 minutes following meeting adjournment - for members to become better acquainted by informing each other of their respective backgrounds and interests. The suggestion was not made as a formal motion, but met with overall approval.

The next meeting date already having been determined at the October meeting, this meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

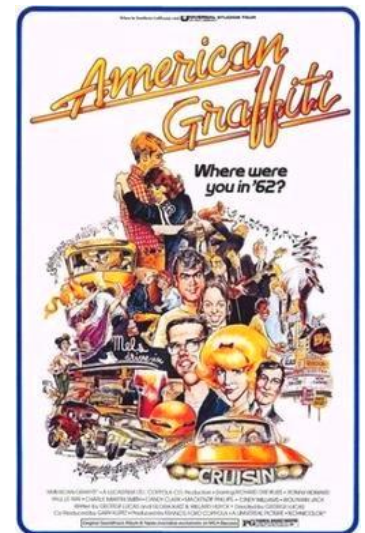
Ralph Kalal, for
Dan Manola, Secretary

IN MEMORIAM: CINDY WILLIAMS

Those WSAH members who participated in the setup for last year's Lola Car Show had the treat of meeting and working with the several female stars of American Graffiti, including Ms. Cindy Williams. Ms. Williams died on January 25th, after a brief illness.



Born in 1947, she attended Birmingham High School in Los Angeles, where she and Sally Fields competed for the best parts in the school's drama department. She then studied theatre at Los Angeles City College and at the Actors Studio West. Though it was her role as Shirley on *Laverne and Shirley* that made her a national star, it was her role as Laurie in *American Graffiti* as the girlfriend of Ron Howard's character Steve that first brought her national acclaim as an actress. (The movie was nominated for best picture in 1973.)



American Graffiti movie poster

In noting Ms. Williams passing, the *National Review* wrote, "Images of her in later years

show a woman who accepted aging with more grace than many of her peers, and she never lost any of her humility: To commemorate *American Graffiti's* 50th anniversary, she trekked well off the beaten path to rural Wisconsin for an appearance at the Lola Car Show."

While there is a touch of East coast disdain in that passage, it captures the true nature of the star who members met last year at Lola.

THE IOWA 80 TRUCK STOP & MUSEUM

Automotive history arrives in trucks. Without trucks, there would be no cars. So, it's fair to take a respite from today's era of trucks as luxury vehicles and examine real trucks – trucks from an era when trucks were trucks and the men who drove them worked almost as hard as the trucks did.

Those are the trucks on display at the Iowa 80 Trucking Museum at Wolcott, Iowa – just off Interstate 80 and next to the Iowa 80 Truck Stop, otherwise known as “The World’s Largest Truck Stop.” It is a day trip from most of Wisconsin, located in eastern Iowa, near the Mississippi River. The Iowa 80 Truck Stop also pumps gasoline and diesel, and DEF in bulk.

It is also the technology of the past.

In the “nothing new under the sun” or “what’s old is new again” vein are two Walker electrics – in whatever the equivalent of “barn find” condition is for a truck. Walker produced electric trucks in Chicago from 1902 until World War Two halted production in 1942. The first displayed is a 1911 Model 43 that delivered milk in downtown Chicago: range 50 miles, top speed 15 miles per hour, load capacity of three tons.



Then it's time for a visit to the museum.

The Trip Advisor website gives this museum five stars, and it deserves all the accolades posted in visitors' reviews. You may never find another public place outside of Disney World that is so scrupulously pristine. It is as though you were entering the private collection of a person who really loved trucks and put a lot of time and money into amassing – and that's the right word, because these are massive trucks – a magnificent collection covering decades of trucks.

It seems that way because that is how this museum began. The Iowa 80 Truck Stop was opened in 1964, just as construction on Interstate 80 was being completed. Its founder, Bill Moon, collected trucks and trucking memorabilia. With the success of the truck stop, he built the 76,200 square foot museum to house the collection and opened it to the public.

As you enter the museum, the first exhibits are completely up to date – at least if you think electric vehicles are the technology of the future.

Also on display is a 1918 Walker Electric. In “barn find” condition, this truck was employed by the power company to lift and install power poles.

In period, you would not have seen the Museum's 1926 Autocar looking as clean and colorful as it does on display. An early cab-over design, this truck has a dump body, is powered by a four cylinder gasoline engine and top speed of 30 miles per hour. Autocar was considered a top quality truck brand during its one hundred years of production, 1887 through 1997.



A decade later, dump trucks have gotten bigger, but not all that much different in appearance. In an era when automobiles were

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THE IOWA 80 TRUCK STOP & MUSEUM, CONT.

experimenting with streamlining, the 1937 Mack AC High Lift Coal Truck had a cab design that was typical of trucks manufactured twenty or more years earlier. This Mack produced 71 horsepower from a 4712 cubic inch four cylinder engine and was one of 40,299 AC models produced in 23 years of production – over 6,000 of them for United States and British military forces during World War One.



As this 1924 Brockway shows, this same open cab style was common before and after World War One. Driver comfort was not a priority.



These were also the halcyon days when gas stations were truly service stations prepared to meet whatever need a motorist might have, from filling the tank and cleaning the windshield to towing a vehicle in for repairs. In homage to that era, and the truck's essential role in it, the Iowa 80 Museum also offers its own Texaco gas station of the time,



complete with a 1932 Chevrolet Master wrecker with a 207 cubic inch engine and a top speed of 35 miles per hour. Note that this

time the driver has an enclosed cab.

The names Packard and Pierce-Arrow bring images of luxury automobiles owned by wealthy – the financial aristocracy. But



they made trucks, too. Both brands are on display at the Iowa 80 Museum. This is a 1919 Pierce-Arrow Model X-3. As the cab makes clear, none of the luxury for which the marque's automobiles

were known carried over to the truck line. But the pricing did – this cost \$4,500. Pierce-Arrow nonetheless advertised it as the "cheapest truck to buy" because the quality of its materials and construction meant lower costs for repairs and that minimized operating costs.

Due homage is paid to over-the-road trucks, as well.

This is what moving vans looked like in the 1940's and 1950's. This 1945 Chevrolet Master towing a trailer had a top speed of



45 miles per hour, powered by a 231.5 cubic inch engine that produced 81.5 horsepower. One of the first moving vans with an enclosed trailer, the truck and trailer were donated to the Iowa 80 Museum in their current condition by the family company that had purchased it new.

There was a time – and it was not that long ago – that General Motors was in the business of manufacturing big trucks, under both the GMC and Chevrolet brands. Though independent brands competed strongly against GM's large trucks – as is well illustrated by the variety of brands on display at the Iowa 80 Museum – the company competed in the large truck field and formally entered the heavy truck market in 1966. The zenith of General Motors' heavy truck models were the Chevrolet Bison and GMC General introduced in 1977. The GMC General substantially outsold the Chevrolet Bison, largely because the

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THE IOWA 80 TRUCK STOP & MUSEUM, CONT.

company's franchise agreements required GMC dealers to be able to service the entire product line. No similar requirement was imposed on Chevrolet dealers. Consequently, Chevrolet left the heavy truck market in 1981. GMC heavy trucks remained in production until 1987, the year after General Motors entered into a joint venture dominated by Volvo.

The type of large truck GMC produced in the 1940's and 1950's is represented at the Museum by a 1952 GMC CFI towing a



Gramm trailer. Powered by a four cylinder Detroit Diesel (another GM brand) and equipped with a four speed transmission and two speed rear axle, the top speed was 55 miles per hour.

That last hurrah of General Motors heavy trucks is represented by a 1986 GMC General conventional and a 1986 GMC Astro cabover. The General is notable for the longer hood, designed



to allow the buyer to select the specific engine best suited to the intended use of the truck. The Astro, in contrast, was handicapped by the engine it came with – a Detroit Diesel 8V – that developed a reputation for leaking oil and excessive oil consumption. This truck is equipped with a 13 speed transmission and capable of 80 miles per hour.

Cabover designs were not popular with drivers because the driver sat directly over the front wheels. That made for a bouncy, uncomfortable ride. Also, in the event of a collision, the driver was far more exposed than in a conventional cab truck. Once length restrictions on heavy truck and trailer combinations were repealed, the market for cabover tractors disappeared.

In the heavy truck market, the winner was Kenworth. As you gaze up at the two on display at the Iowa 80 Museum, you might get the impression that they appear aloof, almost smug. The red one is a 1958 "Bullnose" KDC95C



that was purchased brand new for \$25,000. It was still in service three million miles later in 1998. It was donated to the Museum by the original owner. The orange Kenworth is a 1952 KCK825C used to haul cattle – for 30 plus years. It was retired from service in 1999.

There is also technology on display at the Museum.

You may have heard of the Ford and Lincoln automobiles experimentally manufactured out of stainless steel. Well, Ford wasn't the only one – Autocar manufactured trucks



with stainless steel bodies. Unlike Ford, this wasn't a one-off. Autocar made 13 of these and the 1966 Autocar DC05T on display is one of the 8 survivors. These trucks were made one or two at a time for Edgcomb Steel Company – manufacturers of stainless steel.

Perhaps the most striking technology on display is one that didn't succeed in the market. Motorists, including truck drivers, in the early twentieth century were beset with tire

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THE IOWA 80 TRUCK STOP & MUSEUM, CONT.

troubles. This could have been entirely eliminated had the wheel design used by the Avery Tractor/Gasoline Farm Wagon been adopted by other manufacturers. There are only six known to exist, so this is one very unique vehicle. It cost \$2,500 – as much as an average house - but was advertised as doing the work of eight horses. It could haul 100 bushels of wheat, pull a three-bottom plow, or run a threshing machine through a power takeoff.



For an additional \$500, you could get it with tires that could have made tire changes unnecessary. Consisting of a series of rubber plugs that were pressed into the hard rubber tire on the wheel rim, these not only provided superior traction on soft ground (such as a field) and were puncture proof (since they were solid rubber), but were easily replaced when worn – simply pull out the old plug and press in a new one.

I can hear you now, though. This is all very nice. But this is the Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians. Even if we cut some slack to allow trucks into the category of “automotive,” exactly what does an Iowa museum have to do with Wisconsin automotive history?

The answer is Jude Ubersox of Shullsburg Wisconsin.

His truck is on display in the Iowa 80 Truck Museum.



Between 1962 and his retirement in 1990, Mr. Ubersox drove over three million miles – and all without an accident. His place in Wisconsin’s trucking history is explained by the vanity plate his truck wore during the time he was behind its wheel: “1ST CDL.” He was the first driver to be issued a Wisconsin CDL, personally presented by then-Governor Tommy Thompson.

The Museums summer hours – 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., except Sundays when it opens at noon – begin on Memorial Day. There is no admission charge.

WISCONSIN SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS

WISCONSIN-AUTO-HISTORIANS.ORG

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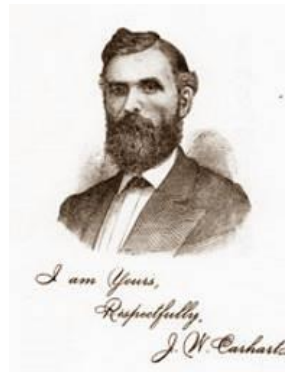
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THE REV. DR. JOHN WESLEY CARHART



THE *CARHART CHRONICLE* IS NAMED IN HONOR OF THE REV. DR. JOHN WESLEY CARHART, CREATOR OF THE “SPARK” STEAM CARRIAGE, CONSIDERED THE FIRST TRUE AUTOMOBILE, AT RACINE, WISCONSIN, SEPTEMBER, 1873.

**MEMBERSHIP INVITATION
to the
WISCONSIN SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS**



The Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians (WSAH) is a non-profit organization affiliated with the Wisconsin Historical Society and is a chapter of the national Society of Automotive Historians.

The purpose of WSAH is to engage in educational activities and to preserve, advance, and disseminate knowledge of the history of the automobile. WSAH publishes a quarterly newsletter, the Carhart Chronicle, featuring information about WSAH activities and articles on unique events in automotive history. Visit our website at www.wisconsin-auto-historians.org to learn more.

WSAH holds meetings four times a year, with its annual meeting held in conjunction with the Iola Car Show in July. Other meeting sites include the Wisconsin Automotive Museum in Hartford and the Automobile Gallery in Green Bay.

Dues for WSAH are \$25.00 per year.

Membership in the national Society of Automotive Historians, Inc. is encouraged. Please access the SAH website at www.autohistory.org for information.

TO JOIN WSAH, send this form and your check for \$25.00 payable to WSAH to:

**Gary Koehnke, WSAH Treasurer
1696 Delta Drive
Neenah, WI 54956-1392**

We will promptly acknowledge your new membership.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

Address _____

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