



**NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 21 AT 2:00 PM
AT THE HILL AND VALLEY CAR SHOW & TOUR
IN BAER PARK, CROSS PLAINS, WI**

IOLA HIGHLIGHTS

THE IOLA CAR SHOW IS SOMEWHAT LIKE THE THREE-RING CIRCUS OF OLD – there is always something happening and there is something for everyone. Iola boasts of 2,500 cars on display. With photographic



contributions from Jim Morris and Donald Gullickson, as well as your editor, here are some highlights of this year's show.

At the other side of the building housing

Continued page 4

HOW RUXTON KILLED KISSEL

WE ALL KNOW KISSEL DIED. But did you know it was murdered by Archie Andrews and his dream car, the Ruxton?

You won't see a Ruxton at the Wisconsin

Continued page 6

WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

IF YOU ARE READING THIS, THEN I DON'T NEED TO POINT OUT the changes to the Carhart Chronicle. Ralph Kalal has volunteered to take on the Editor/Publisher role and I am encourag-



ing him to make it his own - format, content, whatever...it's a big job that deserves creative freedom.

And speaking of big jobs, I can't thank

Continued page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

JULY MEETING MINUTES - P. 2

DMV DONATION TO WSAH - P. 3

WSAH OFFICER CONTACTS - P. 4

WSAH DAY IN HISTORY - P. 5

HILL & VALLEY SHOW AND TOUR - P. 5

MINUTES OF THE JULY 12, 2019 SUMMER MEETING

With perfect weather, though a little on the warm side, the Wisconsin Society of Automotive Historians were able to sit down and enjoy a comfortably controlled and quiet area for our Summer meeting. The room we occupied was a bit of a challenge to navigate amongst the maze of retired rooms of the F & W Publications building, yet very roomy and plenty of table space and much needed chairs were available. The meeting was of course, as in the past, on the grounds of our annually attended Iola Car Show. The meeting was called to order by President Ken Nimocks at 2:04 p.m. Members in attendance were the following: President Ken E. Nimocks, Vice President Don Gullikson, Directors Jim Morris and Don Chandler, Treasurer Gary Koehnke, Secretary Dan Manola, and members David Tesch, Dan Sharpee, Robert Barr, Gene Steinfeldt, Russ Schultz, Randy Nimocks, Terry Nimocks, and James Wheary.

Treasurer Gary Koehnke read the treasurer's report and Dan Manola made a motion to accept the report which was then seconded by Dan Sharpee. Although not read at the meeting, but published in the Carhart Chronicle, a motion was made by Jim Morris to accept the minutes and seconded by Robert Barr. Ken noted that a certificate for a night's stay at the Hotel Northland in Green Bay and two donated passes to The Automobile Gallery were presented to the couple who donated the Automobile Quarterly collection. The process of viewing or doing research of any kind would require a request for the needed issues or volumes to Ken for delivery at our next meeting and a signing out sheet to know who has requested the issue.

A new member, Ralph Kalal, has agreed to take over the position of Carhart Chronicle Editor and spoke with Ken as to his duties as such. Ken will be in contact with him. Ralph has a website, automobilechronicles.com and is employed at RockAuto. Member

George Tesar will meet with Ken in Green Bay to discuss collaborative efforts with The Wisconsin Historical Society. Among ideas are having volunteer WSAH members willing to put on Public Service presentations.

WHS has an automotive archivist and would be available to assist in adding historical information we could share with them. They also have software which Jim Morris might utilize to record information on the knowledge and talents of our members.

Ken introduced a book he is reading and willing to share with members when he is finished called "Are We There Yet?": The American Automobile Past, Present, and Driverless by Dan Albert. It is a complimentary copy from the publisher. A motion by Gary Koehnke and seconded by Randy Nimocks was made to donate \$25.00 to the Wisconsin Council for Local History. Ken mentioned that one issue of the donated AQ's was missing, Volume 48 Issue #2. A motion to purchase the issue was made by Jim Morris and seconded by Don Gullikson. Our Fall meeting in Cross Plains will be Sept. 21, 2019. Various ideas as to why the falling attendance at Hill and Valley and other car events was discussed with no one reason as to its cause.

Iola Car Show - Issues which seemed to have risen from this year's show included car clubs committing to having X amount of cars and those not showing up and better direction by volunteers in parking the vehicles. A future theme, 70's vehicles, which Ken had presented was considered, but later dropped by the Iola Car Show staff. Requests by many attendees had been made asking for what next year's theme would be. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:12 by Don Chandler and seconded by Jim Morris.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan Manola, secretary

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE, CONT.

David Gilbert Tesch enough for all the hours, creativity, and even personal expenses that he put into the Carhart Chronicle (the name is even his creation). Many of you know that we had some serious discussions regarding accounting and that Dave simply said he would publish a number of issues without compensation rather than be involved with keeping track of expenses. Through any of this, "Gilbert" and I have maintained our friendship and I am grateful for that. I hope to have our deep and extensive conversations far into the future.

So, the dust has settled on the Iola Car Show - both literally and figuratively - and a few of us will have a post-show meeting with the staff. We have notes from our own observations and those of others, but we can certainly use your input, both positive and negative comments. With a lot of changes this year it was not easy to know when we would need help. We managed to have just enough good workers when we needed them but they were scrambling to keep up. There were slack times when those who wanted to could get out to see some of the show and swap areas or sit around and share tall tales and true from the legendary past.

There is a brief mention in the minutes of a discussion at our Iola meeting regarding decreased attendance at, as well as participation in, the Hill and Valley car show as well as many other car shows and events. Reasons may be the aging population, less enthusiasm by younger people in general but specifically for the types of vehicles that older people are interested in, the expense of restoring or modifying vehicles, busy lifestyles, and more. To attract younger participants, I believe we must embrace their interests (or at least force ourselves to accept them). I know that some people hate hot rods or don't look twice at sports cars and tuners, ignore muscle cars, race and off-road vehicles, customs, and despise any deviations from factory original specs. Some

might think that only perfectly preserved classics from the early 1930s or Ferraris from the 1960s deserve any respect, but if every car on the planet was a Duesenberg Model J or Ferrari 250 GTO (one recently sold for a reported \$80 million) it would be pretty boring.

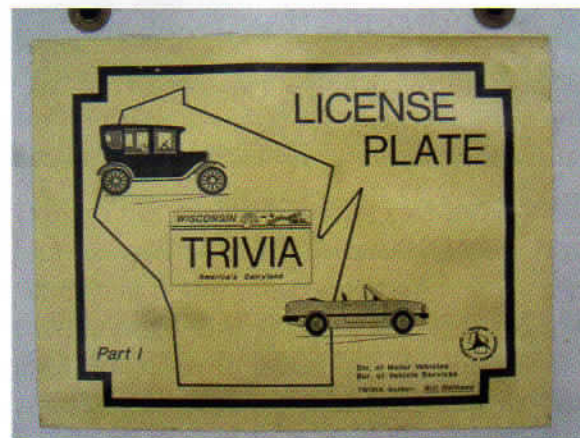
And...when it comes to interest and participation, are your dues due? Treasurer Gary Koehnke has a good system for keeping track of who has paid dues, but he should not have to send out reminders. I hope that everyone will want to keep up their membership, but I understand that interests, and life itself, sometimes change. Our WSAH is more active than ever, so it should be easier to attract new members, but we also need to retain our current members if possible.

Ken Nimocks

DMV DONATES TO WSAH

PRESIDENT NIMOCKS REPORTS:

When the Wisconsin DMV group was packing up to leave the Iola '19 Car Show, they asked if our WSAH would be interested in having their display of the history of Wisconsin vehicle license plates. It seems they would no longer be using the display or the sturdy wooden container in which they kept the display and other materials.



Jim Morris volunteered to take the display

Continued, page 4

to the Wisconsin Automotive Museum. We figured it is something that should have a visible permanent home. Jim will photograph the plate examples and the informational placards that go with them. Jessica Z will put the photos and information on our website at wisconsin-auto-historians.org.

As Jim says, "The opportunity to save auto history can pop up at any time."



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THE CARHART CHRONICLE HONORS THE REV. JOHN WESLEY CARHART, CREATOR OF THE FIRST TRUE AUTOMOBILE, THE SPARK STEAM CARRIAGE, IN RACINE, WISCONSIN, SEPTEMBER, 1873.

IOLA HIGHLIGHTS, CONT.

the WSAH booth was the Lindsay collection featuring a 1935 Cadillac Fleetwood V-12 roadster, a 1935 Packard 1208 Dietrich convertible, a 1937 Cord 812 supercharged phaeton, a 1955 Cadillac Eldorado, and a 1956 Packard 400.



A feast of MOPAR was available for those who cherish big, late-50's executive hot rods. Particularly rare and flashy was a loaded 1959 DeSoto Fireflite, with swivel bucket seats and under-dash record player.



For Chrysler letter-car fans, there were several 300's, including this 1959 300E.



The theme of this year's lola show was "Calling all Car Clubs." The Auburn Cord Duesenberg Club (motto: "For Those Who Have Never Relished the Commonplace") responded with three Auburns and a coffin-nosed Cord.



The Classic Car Club of America displayed an eclectic group that included a Studebaker Champion, a Franklin, and a 1937 Packard 1501 rumble seat coupe.



Among the many rows of cars on the display field were this Christine clone 1958 Plymouth Fury with license plate "PUREVIL."



If you missed lola this year - well, there is still the Hill & Valley Show in Cross Plains in September - and lola again next year.

HILL & VALLEY SHOW AND TOUR

The Tour portion of the Hill & Valley show starts at 10:00 a.m. and travels 22 miles through the areas around Cross Plains. Pancake breakfast available 6:45 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. Show admission is free.

WSAH DAY IN HISTORY

**AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY IN AMERICA BEGINS:
THE DURYEY MOTOR WAGON COMPANY IS
ORGANIZED, SEPTEMBER 21, 1894.**

The Duryea Motor Wagon Company was the first business founded in the United States to manufacture gasoline powered automobiles. Charles and Frank Duryea had demonstrated a gasoline powered



automobile in 1893 in Springfield, Massachusetts, but the company was based in present-day Peoria Heights, Illinois. (The brothers had been forced to relocate their shop outside of Peoria proper. The neighbors had complained of noise and gasoline fumes, and the City Council had declared the operation a public nuisance.),

Though the common image of a Duryea is a four wheeled vehicle, the company's first product was the tricycle pictured here - the Duryea trap. One is preserved at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan and another is on permanent display at the Peoria Riverfront Museum in Peoria, Illinois.

HOW RUXTON KILLED KISSEL, CONT.

Automotive Museum in Hartford But Kissel was one of the companies that manufactured the Ruxton and it was the Ruxton that administered the *coup de gras* to Kissel.

Today, the remaining Ruxtons from the fewer than 150 manufactured are full classics with large price tags: a Ruxton roadster manufactured by Kissel sold at auction last May for \$747,500. It was a very advanced and beautiful automobile - this is a 1929 Ruxton sedan (in original colors).



Its genesis was a concept car built by the Edward G. Budd Manufacturing Company. A manufacturer of steel automobile bodies, Budd regularly built prototypes to promote the business. In 1926, a Budd engineer, William J. Mueller, proposed a front wheel drive car. When completed in late 1928, the automobile was 10 inches lower than other cars of the day, with an overall height of 63 inches and a striking 6 window four door body designed by Joseph Ledwinka that accentuated its low stance. There were no running boards – the car sat so low that it was easy to step directly into it.

The Ruxton solved the basic problem of front wheel drive: traction. The engineer who had designed the prototype, William J. Muller, had also designed a split transmission that put first and reverse gears in front of the differential with second and third behind. This created a compact transaxle unit that placed the engine well

forward to put weight over the front axle, yet keep the length of the hood proportional to the rest of the car.



Production Ruxtons featured 100 hp Continental 8 cylinder engines and were also available as a roadster or phaeton.



Woodlight headlamps were standard, and many Ruxtons featured a horizontally striped exterior color scheme designed by Joseph Urban. Introductory pricing was \$3,195 - about the same as the L29 Cord.

Archie Andrews had amassed a fortune in real estate and the stock market. He was a Budd director and also a director of Hupp Motor Car Company and Gardner Motor Company. Convinced that front wheel drive was the technology of the future, Andrews talked Budd into assigning him rights to build the car with the intention

Continued, page 7

of having Hupp build it. But Hupp declined.

Andrews then formed New Era Motors, Inc., to which the production rights acquired from Budd were assigned. The car was named after William V. C. Ruxton, a governor of the New York stock exchange and one of the original New Era directors.

Ten Ruxton prototypes were manufactured in Pennsylvania to attract investors and New Era announced plans to produce 12,000 Ruxtons during 1929. Andrews turned to Gardner to build it, but Gardner also ultimately declined. On October 23, 1929, New Era reached agreement with Marmon Motor Car Company to produce the Ruxton. The deal hinged on exchanging New Era common stock for Marmon stock.

Fate was not on Archie Andrew's side. The day after reaching agreement with Marmon, the stock market crashed and so did Marmon's stock. The deal with New Era was stillborn.

Moon Motor Car Company now enters the picture. Moon had production facilities in St. Louis, Missouri, and a dealer network. Ruxton needed both. Archie Andrews had what Moon desperately needed: money. Moon gave New Era 150,000 shares of Moon common stock in exchange for the rights to manufacture the Ruxton and for production tooling. As part of the deal, Moon also issued an additional 100,000 shares of stock that were to be sold on the open market to raise \$500,000 to finance Ruxton production.

How Archie Andrews ended up owning that 100,000 shares of Moon stock remains a mystery. But combined with the 150,000 shares Moon had given New Era, it meant Andrews now controlled Moon.

Losing control of the company had not been the plan contemplated by Moon's officers. They refused to give Andrews a seat on the board of directors. Andrews called a special meeting of stockholders and, voting his majority of shares, elected new directors

who then fired the Moon officers.

They didn't go quietly. The former officers barricaded themselves in the Moon plant. Andrews had to get a court order, which the sheriff delivered by crawling through a window at the Moon plant, to eject them.

Andrews had won. But it was a hollow victory – the Moon plant turned out to be in poor condition, which left New Era again without the facilities needed to begin production of the Ruxton.

This appears to be where Kissel first becomes involved.

The mechanical key upon which everything in the Ruxton design depended was the transaxle. The Moon plant clearly was not capable of manufacturing it.

The Kissel Motor Car Company did have the ability to manufacture these components. Initially, New Era looked to Kissel only for the transaxle. After transmission tooling had been moved to Hartford, it was decided that Kissel would also produce the entire automobile, along with Moon.

The agreement between New Era and Kissel provided for a loan of \$250,000 to Kissel, of which \$100,000 was to be paid immediately. Kissel was to produce 1,500 Ruxtons per year, "provided the market will absorb that amount." Kissel was also to produce their existing Kissel line. Should Kissel fail to meet the terms of the agreement, Kissel's stockholders, i.e., the Kissel family, were to transfer ownership of the Kissel voting common stock to Andrews in exchange for New Era preferred stock.

Andrews may have seen the writing on the wall, or may have been scheming a takeover all along. New Era did not come through with the remaining \$150,000 of the loan.

Though Ruxton production at Kissel began

Continued, page 8

7

in 1930, with an estimated 25 Ruxtons ultimately built (including the roadster pictured), it soon ended. Without the remainder of the loan, Kissel couldn't pay the mortgage bonds on the plant.



George Kissel blamed Archie Andrews. Andrews blamed the depressed stock market, claiming he'd not been able to raise the money.

That seems unlikely. In September of 1934, the New York Times reported Andrews spent \$137,342.62 annually to keep, staff, and operate his yacht, *Sialia*

More likely, Andrews was deliberately withholding the cash. The chances of the market absorbing 1,500 Ruxtons might be slim, but Andrews would gain control if Kissel were financially unable to continue.

If that was the plan, it backfired. Andrews, it appears, underestimated George Kissel.

George Kissel didn't barricade himself in the plant. He had Kissel file for a voluntary receivership – a state court version of voluntary bankruptcy reorganization for the benefit of creditors. That move froze the assets of Kissel and gave the Wisconsin county court control of the company.

Rather than Andrews gaining control of Kissel, it turned out that George Kissel had delivered a mortal blow to New Era. Production of Ruxtons at Kissel ended. With Kissel in the hands of the receiver, Kissel produced no more transaxles. That meant Moon could not continue Ruxton

production. On November 15th, Moon filed for receivership. New Era filed for bankruptcy liquidation less than a month later.

The Wisconsin court ultimately asked George Kissel to operate the company in receivership. The family retained control and Kissel produced other products until it was sold to the West Bend Aluminum Company in 1944.

Marmon ceased automobile production in 1933, reorganized in bankruptcy and became a manufacturer of automobile parts and four-wheel drive vehicles. Over the years, it expanded and acquired other businesses. Now known as Marmon Holdings, Inc. and owned by Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway, Marmon's revenues in 2017 exceeded \$7.7 billion.

Gardner survived until 1932 by producing funeral cars. Though profitable, it then chose to liquidate.

Moon's assets exceeded its liabilities when it filed for receivership, but it had no cash for operating expenses. Litigation over the assets continued until the final distribution in 1965.

Archie Andrews became Chairman of the Board of Directors of Hupp in 1934, but lost control of the company the following year. He died at age 59 in 1938.

George Kissel died at age 61 in 1942.

And Ruxton?

There is disagreement about how many Ruxtons were built. Some claim Moon repeatedly assembled, disassembled, and reassembled the same cars to give the appearance of greater production. The highest serial number for a surviving Ruxton is under 140.

Nineteen are known to exist today.