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## A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

It's been a while since the last issue of <a href="The Spark">The Spark</a>. Since that time several things have happened within our organization. But more on that in a little bit. Right here, I would like to cover a couple of things very briefly -- The Spark and and the individual SAH member.

\* \* \*

First, The Spark. So far, we have done two very short newsletters and three issues of The Spark, each of which contained valuable information for the automotive historian and chapter news. Publication has been irregular, but certainly not spare. I think it's already proved a good source. In order to make it even moreso, The Spark -- beginning with this issue -- will be produced roughly every two months. Frankly, I don't have the time to promise delivery on the same day each month. However, I am going to shoot for delivery during a preset bimonthly schedule. In other words, you will be getting The Spark sometime during the following months as long as I am editor: January, March, May, July, September and November. There may be times when this is simply impossible. If so, delays should be brief. One of the most important meanings of all this is that you will get six issues of The Spark each year, rather than four as originally planned.

Now, what I'm going to need from you is some cooperation. The kind of cooperation that makes our SAH chapter different from other clubs, in that all members participate. All I want each of you to do is give some thought to our chapter in relation to your own interests. Once you have done that drop me a letter for publication or write a little piece for all of us to share on your own area of interest/expertise. Let the rest of us know what your current projects and needs are.

And, by all means, let us know each time you have something appear in print. The important thing is that we share our knowledge and experience in the interest of preserving history.

\* \* \*

The second thing I wanted to mention is the individual SAH member. I think anyone who goes so far as to join a chapter of an organization is already aware, to some degree, of the role individuals play, or at least should play, in the organization. It's easy to look around at all the largest clubs and see how small groups work in and control nearly all of them. This situation lends itself to criticism. In truth, though, it is as often a problem caused by a lazy membership as it is by the powerhungry few. The members of any organization who take the most out of it are those who put the most into it. The SAH is no exception. There is something every one of us can do. Most obviously, all of us have an area of special interest about which we could write an article or prepare a bibliography for submission to one of the SAH publications. But there is much more that could be done elsewhere, too. There are a number of committees that could use your help. How about looking in the big blue SAH Directory you got a while back and seeing what committees there are? While you have that directory out, look up the addresses of Walter Robinson, Dave Brownell and some of the other SAH leaders and drop them a line outlining your feelings about the SAH overall. Right now, Brownell is heading up a task force that could change the whole shape of the SAH with their findings. Let them know how you feel! As an example, several of us in the Wisconsin Chapter feel strongly that chapter members should not be compelled to join the National. We feel this deprives our chapter of the memberships of many state historians who could be valuable assets to us. We feel automotive history is not best served by the existing rule, and we wish to see it changed for the good of our chapter, for the

good of the SAH and for the good of automotive history. If you agree, let the National know. If you don't agree, let the National know. But please, do something. The SAH is your organization! Be an active member!

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#### DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Those of you who were in Madison a couple of months ago for our first mid-winter meeting know that we are well on our way to becoming an active and effective group. We were able to transact some important WSAH business, to attend some extremely valuable presentations by Wisconsin State Historical Society (WSHS) staff, and to generally have a good time. Suddenly, the realization of some of our long range goals -- the production of a Wisconsin automotive history, for example -- seems much more possible.

I am continually amazed at the diversity of interests that are expressed in our group. At the midwinter meeting I had occasion to talk to O.J. Thompto about aspects of his interest in service stations, to David Babb about the activities of the International Edsel Club which he heads, and to Roy Scroggins about a forthcoming article of his on hub caps. Those were just some of the specialty interests expressed. My own interests are just a bit more traditional: series L and KB Lincolns, Henry Leland, automotive advertising and how to meet Bo Derek.

Some work that I.am presently doing involves a massive archive of Bruce Barton's personal and business correspondence. Among others, Barton corresponded with such automotive giants as Alfred Sloan, Charles Kettering, Paul Hoffman (Studebaker) and Henry Ford. Barton was, among other things, the leading periodical and book writer of the Twenties.

In this capacity, he wrote to Henry Ford and suggested that he interview the automaker for a segment of a periodical series that he was writing.

The title was, "The Greatest Mistake that I Ever Made." The series guested celebrities in each segment for the title role. The answer to Barton's inquiry came for Dearborn by return mail but was not signed by Henry Ford. Instead, a subaltern responded for the master. He suggested that Mr. Barton could as well leave Mr. Ford out of the series because Mr. Ford, "... simply doesn't make mistakes." An enviable accomplishment, but didn't David Lewis credit Ford with the costliest mistake in American industrial history?

Well, of course, your WSAH Board of Directors doesn't make mistakes either. But just in case we falter in our plans for the July meeting in Iola -- unwrapped elsewhere in this SPARK -- or in any other respect, why don't you nudge us a bit. I am sure that each of us is more receptive to criticism and suggestions than Henry Ford.

\* \*

As all but our most recent members know, the WSAH is affiliated both with the national SAH and with the Wisconsin State Historical Society (WSHS). The way that our by-laws read, you have to belong to the SAH to belong to the Wisconsin SAH. We do not have a similar provision regarding membership in the WSHS.

That's good because I don't believe in forced memberships, but I do want to urge you to consider membership in the WSHS. It is the oldest state historical society in the country -- it predates Wisconsin statehood by two years -- and many think the best. The WSHS offers a range of programs and services that literally stagger the imagination. Even the success of our mid-winter meeting was largely a result of their efforts to accommodate us with presentations by their staffs.

I have recently supplied the WSHS Office of Local History with a list of our members and each of

you on that list will receive an invitation to join the WSHS if you aren't already a member. I personally urge you to join. You get a membership discount because of your Wisconsin SAH membership and I think that you will find the benefits of membership in the WSHS to be well worth the dues. Our organization has already benefitted enormously from our association with the WSHS and I think that each of our members can benefit from an individual association. Think it over.

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#### RESEARCH COLUMN

CHRIS HALLA (509 W. Fulton, Waupaca 54981) is looking for information, reminiscences and data on or related to Harley Davidson motorcycles and the company that makes them. If it has to do with Harleys, Chris would like to hear about it . . . .

TIMOTHY K. TILTON (185 Cty. NN, Rosholt 54473) is interested in road tests, driving impressions, technical articles, etc., concerning both the Porsche 914 and early Datsun two-seaters . . . .

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#### WHAT'S HAPPENED

While it's some distance in the past now, and attendance was excellent, it might still be a good idea to mention briefly our Feb. 29-March 1 meeting in Madison. The meeting opened with lunch at Porta Bella, where everyone had a chance to chat, get acquainted and put away plenty of good Italian food.

From there we moved over to the Wisconsin State Historical Society. There we were greeted by Shel Stromquist, who was instrumental in helping us gain affiliate status with the WSHS, and entertained and informed by members of the WSHS staff.

Assistant State Archivist, Max Evans, opened by giving us information on the various archives held by the WSHS and how to gain use of them. Research Coordinator, Dale Treleven, talked about the Research Division, its services and projects. The Editorial Division's, Paul Haas, wrapped up our meeting with WSHS staff by discussing the writing of history.

That evening, we all enjoyed dinner together at The Wisconsin Center, after which we viewed films made available by University of Wisconsin Extension and The Edison Institute. What happened to some of us later in the evening is discussed elsewhere in this issue of The Spark. (We warn you, it is a sordid manner, and the names of the perpetrators have been omitted in the interest of their families and friends. Suffice it to say that they know who they are.)

On Saturday morning, March 1, we readjourned at the Wisconsin Center for our business meeting and discussion groups. Director, Matt Joseph, opened the meeting. That was followed by an Archives Committee report. A draft was considered and discussed by members in attendance. (A more complete synopsis appears elsewhere in this issue. Contact Matt Joseph for more complete information or with specific questions.)

A few moments were spent discussing our relationship with the National affiliation, services, quantity and quality of publications. Participants then broke up into discussion groups for the remainder of the morning. Topics included writing and publication, history and automotive history, the automobile in Wisconsin and the structure of the electric automobile industry.

THE SAH/WISCONSIN BOARD of Directors met in Montello on April 2, 1980. Matt Joseph, Chris Halla and Bob Lichty attended. George Tesar was unable to attend. The Board asked Walter Wray to sit in as a non-voting guest as he has in the past.

The first order of business was our July 12 meeting during the car show and swap meet at Iola. The meeting will begin with an open business meeting at which it is hoped all SAH/Wisconsin members will be present. Current Directors will officiate during this meeting. The first thing on the agenda will be the announcement of election results and introduction of new officers. (A Nominating Committee, consisting of Gary Busha, Bill Pettit and Don Luebke, was named to come up with a ballot which will be mailed to you shortly.) Following will be a Treasurer's report, Committee Reports, membership drive discussion and a message from Director Matt Joseph. After that, new business may be brought up and discussed.

The initial meeting will run from 1 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. A brief Director's meeting will be held from 12 noon to 12:45 p.m. This will allow all of you plenty of time to browse around the car show and swap meet grounds, both before and after the meetings. By the way, will those of you who volunteered to work our booth at the car show on Saturday and/or Sunday, please get in touch with Chris Halla (509 W. Fulton, Waupaca, WI 54981 -- (715) 445-2214) right away about your preferences for shifts? Please do it now!

The matter of Director's meetings was also discussed in Montello. There will be four each year. The remaining two this year, and next year's first, will be held on July 12 in Iola, October 25 in Madison and Feb. 27-28, 1981 in Milwaukee. Details will be forthcoming. Other meetings will be held around the state (out-of-state) as needed.

Dave Brownell is heading a task force with the duty of re-evaluating the National. The Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Chapter agreed to take a unified stand on several of the pertinent issues. Mainly, we are opposed to any outstanding raises in dues -- at least for the time being -- the origination of any paid positions within the SAH, and the by-law stipulation that to join the SAH Chapter one must be a member of the National. We also support reduced membership rates for senior citizens and discussion on corporate and institutional memberships, and on the matter of doners. We cannot speak for our entire membership unless we know how you feel, so take a few minutes to let us and the National know.

Another matter we talked about was our membership drive. This is something all of you should be thinking about. Bring you ideas with you to Iola, and in the meantime, do anything and everything you can to get us some new members.

A formal budgeting system was considered and put aside for future consideration. The Awards Committee will be meeting and reporting at the July meeting. The Archives Committee report has been accepted and adopted. The Archives Committee has been disolved . . .

THE IOLA OLD CAR SHOW, SWAP MEET AND CHICKEN ROAST will be very important to our SAH Chapter. Krause Publications has designated us the sponsors for a special display of Wisconsin vehicles. The display itself will be handled by Bob Lichty, Chris Halla and Krause Publications, but it is up to our members to make for a good showing, which will be located at the special display. We will want to have a well mannered booth with plenty of our members on hand to chat with spectators and sell memberships. Let's make everybody

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#### ARCHIVAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Acquisition/Collection Guidelines for a Wisconsin Automotive Archive

### Subject Matter And Sources

Materials to be collected should relate to the following subjects and sources:

#### (Of Central Importance)

- Manufacturers of automobiles<sup>1</sup> and particularly those which operated partly or entirely in Wisconsin.
- Manufacturers of engine chassis and body parts and componants installed on automobiles on an O.E.M. (original equipment manufacturer) basis who operated in Wisconsin.
- Individuals and groups who have made a contribution, or contributions, to automotive invention, design, manufacture, distribution, performance, etc.
- Records of legislation and administrative actions relating to all phases of automotive activity and regulation.

- 5. Materials relating to aspects of competative automotive activities such as racing, hill climbs, economy runs, etc., and particularly materials relating to these activities in Wisconsin.
- Automotive museums and preservation associations and the individuals active in them.

# (Of Basic Interest)

- Manufacturers, distributers, and retailers
  of automotive aftermarket parts and componants and of accessories, equipment and consumable supplies. This includes items intended
  for repair and renovation, as well as those
  which are decorative or functional in purpose.
- Materials relating to the activities of organizations and individuals involved in the automotive repair sector. (e.g. repair garages, service stations, component rebuilders, body shops, etc.)
- Advertising agencies and others involved in the advertising, marketing and promotion of automobiles and automobile related items, services and activities.
- 4. Governmental agencies, bureaus, and other governmental units involved in the general oversight of highways, roads, and other aspects of the surfaces on which automobiles were and are operated.
- Organizations and Trade Associations that have dealt with automotive topics such as safety, pricing policy, etc.

6. Authors, journalists, and publishers involved in the preparation and sale of automotive topic books, journals, magazines, newsletters and newspapers.

### (Of Peripheral Concern)

- 1. Franchised new car dealerships and dealers.
- Used car dealerships, dealers and wholesalers.
- 3. Car rental agencies and agents.
- Financial institutions as they relate to and are involved in automotive related activity.
- 5. Schools and other organizations involved in offering automotive topic courses.

#### Types of Materials

Materials to be collected should include the following types and should be related to the subject matter areas and sources listed above:

- Personal, official, and corporate correspondence and manuscript forms.
- Corporate reports, records, financial reports, statistical compilations, and other similar printed materials -- both for internal and external use in the automotive industry.
- Relevant advertising and sales promotion materials and artifacts. This includes audio-visual materials.
- Relevant directories of those individuals and companies involved in various phases of automotive history.

- Technical manuals, service bulletins, and reports dealing with the technical and repair aspects of the automobile.
- Memoranda, drafts, and other documents involving laws, litigation, and regulation of the automobile and the automotive industry in Wisconsin. This includes such topics as labor relations, safety, pricing, etc.
- Photographs and graphics showing automobiles and the manufacturing, servicing, and sales activities pertaining to them.
- Memoranda, drafts, and other documents relating to automotive design, invention and technology in its development stages in Wisconsin.
- Maps, guides, and other documents pertaining to the roads and highways in Wisconsin.
- Various periodical publications devoted either wholly or in substantial part to automotive topics in a Wisconsin context.

# Potential Clientele For A Wisconsin Automotive Archive

The potential clientele for a Wisconsin Automotive Archive will probably include the following types of individuals or groups -- both members and non-members of the Society of Automotive Historians, Inc., and its Wisconsin Chapter, Inc.:

- Members of the general public with a specific or particular interest in this field.
- Professional historians and automotive historians.
- 3. Writers, journalists, editors and researchers.

These individuals and groups might be expected to seek information, data, and illustrative materials for the following purposes:

- To research a specific Wisconsin manufactured vehicle.
- To research a particular manufacturer, time period, geographical area, or other specific aspect of automotive history in Wisconsin.
- To gain background or supplementary information of a specific or general nature for an interest or project that relates to automotive history.
- 4. To find graphic or photographic materials for illustrative purposes.

Respectfully submitted,

The Wisconsin Matt Joseph, Chair
Chapter, Inc. Society William Cameron, Secretary
of Automotive His- Walter Wray
torians, Inc. Ad Robert Lichty
Hoc Archives Committee James Flammang

### Notes

In the context of the interests of this set of guidelines, the terms automobile, car, and vehicle are used to denote and include all self-propelled, non-rail, land surface transportation devices. Devices intended primarily to be used as or coupled with farm machinery and stationary power sources are not included in this definition.

#### LETTERS

I have just been browsing though my July 1922 issue of Ford Owner and Dealer, which I received some 58 years ago, but have just gotten around to reading in detail. As perhaps you will remember, this magazine was published in Milwaukee by the Trade Press Publishing Company, H.A. Apple publisher and editor. This issue is listed as Vol. 17, no. 4, and has 192 pages, not including the cover. Of the 192 pages, about 66 are editorial and the rest are ads. For instance, there are 78 full-page ads, 42 half-page ads, 64 one-quarterpage ads, and 50 one-eighth page ads. Because I am interested in Wisconsin automotive history, I found that of these, 22 full-page ads are by Wisconsin firms, 21 part-page ads by Wisconsin firms, to say nothing of quite a few want ads inserted by Wisconsin individuals.

If any of you remember the eccentricities and vagaries of the Model T -- and know where the Model T weaknesses were -- you can guess what most of the ads were about. For instance, 23 of the ads were for improvements on the Model T ignition system -- most of these being patented timers which as you may remember were mounted on the forward end of the cam shaft. Some were for special take off gearing for magnetos, others were for completely new ignition systems such as the Atwater-Kent system that did away with the four vibrator coils mounted on the dash.

I would guess that riding qualities were the next greatest Model T weakness as there are some 17 ads for shock absorbers and springs.

If you were ashamed to be seen in a Ford Model T, you had a total of 11 different bodies you could put on your Ford chassis. Some of these were what might be called sport coupes, but the majority were speedster bodies and psuedo-racing, Indianapolis-style bodies. If you wanted to further disguise your Model T, there were ads for wire wheels, side curtains with a different pattern, cowl ventillators and even a Klaxon horn. As everyone know who has ever owned one, restored or driven one, the thermo-siphon cooling system left much to be

desired. There are no less than seven ads for water pumps, which were a very popular Model T accessory back in 1922.

Incidentally, in order to catch up with the modern trend you could buy foot accelerators from several manufacturers. These tied in with the gas and spark controls under the steering wheel, resulting in an early version of "cruise control."

In case you didn't know, the famous Shaler tube patching system came from Waupun, Wisconsin. This is the one where you clamp a little tin container over the hole in your tube, which contained a rubber patch on the bottom side and a fire kindler on the top. Once you got the unit securely fastened over the hole in the tube, you lit the combustible material which gave off a beautiful bluish-green light, particularly at night, and this vulcanized the rubber patch.

I still don't know how great the contribution of Wisconsin firms to the development of the automobile was, but at least their contribution to the Modle T Ford was more than significant!

Sincerely yours,

William T. Cameron

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### WSAH DISCUSSION GROUP: EARLY WISCONSIN HISTORY

# by Wally Wray

The early Wisconsin History individual discussion group covered a great deal of ground, and raised a number of points of general interest. We wandered a bit from the central topic, however, and delved into sources worth investigating in the pursuit of automotive history. Perhaps not surprisingly, many of these same sources are also worth a second glance in finding cars and parts.

Published sources were mentioned first, with Old Cars, Antique Automobile, Cars and Parts, and Automobile Quarterly among other various club publications being among the best current publications.

The Best of Old Cars, vols. I and II contain a number of valuable articles, and have the added advantage of being readily available. A partial list of books containing material of varying interest value follows this presentation.

Among more obvious sources are local museums, historical societies, libraries, newspapers, and local chambers of commerce. Classified ads in both hobby and local presses are less obvious. Not only are research materials, including cars and parts, available, but quite often additional information is offered. Obsolete ads can be useful to historian and collectors because subject material may not be sold, or the name and address of the original purchaser may be available. Also, copies and information of historical value may be obtained through query. Although advertising for information at times proves to be slow, it may provide results later.

Another less known place to search for published historical information is the rural dealer of tractors and implements. These dealers were popular sources of machinery and information in bygone days, but some may still have brochures, phamplets and flyers available. Manufacturers are another source of potential help in automotive/machinery literature.

The advice of one member of the discussion group, based on personal experience, makes a lot of sense. Specifically, he suggests using imagination in searching out who may have had contact with the type of material you are seeking. People in varied professions, who have access to non-public buildings where automotive literature may turn up, are good sources to investigate. These people might include: veterinarians, contractors, and others involved in paper drives, bazaars, rummage sales, etc.

Remember: auto-related materials, i.e. photos, charts, layouts, may seem worthless today, but time may turn them into valuable documents in the future.

Books that may be of some help:

The Four Wheel Drive Story by Howard Wm. Troyer, McGraw-Hill, 1954.

The American Car Since 1775 edition of Automobile Quarterly, Dutton, 1971.

Old Time Steam Cars by John Bentley, Arco Publishing, 1969.

Steam Car Edition, vol. 1, Floyd Clymer, Clymer, no date.

Those Wonderful Old Automobiles by Floyd Clymer, Bonanza Books, 1953.

Runabouts and Roadsters by Bob Stubenrauch, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1973.

The Horseless Age, vol. I (reprint) Clymer, date unknown.

The Agricultural Tractor 1855-1950 by R.B. Gray, Amer. Society of Agric. Engineering, 1954-1975.

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# REPORT: SADIE HAWKINS DAY RESEARCH & FIELDTRIP COMMITTEE

During the recent (Feb./Mar.) WSAH meeting in Madison, several members deemed it their duty to perform research in the matter of resources available to future interested parties on subsequent visits to the State Capitol, and to prepare a report for the use of said interested WSAHers. This investigative field trip was performed during Friday evening and early Saturday morning, and while it will be readily admitted by its participants that no great effort was expended to leave no stone unturned, several items of doubtful interest were uncovered. As this report will hopefully indicate, significant areas for future fact gathering missions certainly do exist.

These investigations began immeadiately following discussions subsequent to viewing of afterdinner films. A representative number of WSAHers participated, paying a visit to Madison's renowned

"Our Lady of the Lake." Though none who attended the kickoff ceremonies thusly will likely express any envy for her somewhat frigid surroundings, they will no doubt admit to the fact that her motor was definitely running. Nor, as events proved, was she the only lady encountered with a running motor!

Immediately upon regaining Madison's cold concrete, several of the group separated themselves from the mainstream of thought and departed for parts unknown. A solitary five intrepid souls thereupon embarked upon their mission of discovery. As was later reported in regular session, they know who they are!

First stop was an establishment wherein it was possible to investigate the various elements of human nature uder the affluence of incohol, whilst surrounded and predictably influended to some degree by homo sapiens femalis, and musicus rock-N-rollus. An effort was made to participate in ambient activites, with the equally predictable result that the finer points of later activities became somewhat less sharply defined!

One outstanding specimen of femalis erectus tallis was observed in company of a somewhat lesser duo who provided a lesson in current biological terminology. Hereinafter, four WSAHers know who to address as F.T. (Please use you own imagination to fill in the words.)

The hardly creative phenomenon known as "closing time" was experienced, and the group set forth in search of further discoveries.

F.T. displayed previously unknown talents of procurement (therein closing another establishment), and the group moved off in mini-convoy on tour of metropolis, punctuated by a stop for solid sustenance. Thusly, a final set of doors were closed and locked (is ther a message here?).

A not-too-rapid conclusion to the evening's activities finally resulted with a certain amount of verbalizing. Certain parties later reported nocturnal knockings and such goings on, while still others experienced a series of unexpected phone calls. As for the perpetrators of these acts, they know who they are!

This report concludes with a comment or two on certain remarks made Saturday morning at breakfast and later. During the breakfast hour, one of the group who had early on taken leave of the previously described tour, approached several participants and was overheard to say, "You \*!\*!\*!\*!, why did you have to pick the one night I had my wife with me?" An envious remark, if ever one was heard! This same individual later made disparaging remarks in regular session, alluding to behavior unbecoming WSAHers. Those five with foresight enough not to bring along chaperones, well, they know who they are!!!!

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#### SAMSON TRUCK

#### by Wally Wray

The Janesville Machine Co. was founded in 1882 for the purpose of manufacturing farm equipment, and in subsequent years built a line of plows, tractor plows, corn planters, and cultivators. General Motors purchased the company in 1919, and consolidated it with their Samson Tractor Company, formerly of Stockton, California. The new corporate entity, the Samson Tractor Division of General Motors, began operations in Janesville on May 1, 1919. In addition to their unique four wheel drive, skid steer tractors, they produced two sizes of trucks. These 3/4-ton and 1-1/4-ton vehicles were produced through the 1923 modle year. The business venture was not a success, and the plant facilities were converted to other purposes, becoming the Chevrolet assembly plant in which, in greatly expanded facilities, it continues to this day.

Examples of both Samson tractors and trucks exist in the hands of collectors, and in October of 1978, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Staley of Pennsylvania donated their restored 1922 truck to the Rock County Historical Society. Mr. Richard Hartung

of the Janesville-based RCHS accepted their gift after they drove it from their Pennsylvania home.

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Director:

Matt Joseph

Associate Director:

George Tesar

Secretary:

Chris Halla

Treasurer:

Bob Lichty

Awards Committee:

Chris Halla (Chair)

John Kress Jim Flammang George Tesar Gary Busha

Nominating Committee:

Gary Busha (Chair)

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