



A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Okay, okay! So I got off schedule by just a hair more than a little bit. But honest, my intentions are good. You know how it is, right? At any rate, I'm not going to bore you with a catalog of the misfortunes that have befallen me of late. Just please accept my apologies for this late mailing of The Spark, number seven.

As you will recall, my publication schedule called for number seven to appear in November, with number eight due in January. Well, considering the fact that this issue is being written on December 23, you are probably reading it in January 1981. Rather than change the existing schedule, issue number eight will be in your hands in late January or early February, and number nine will appear as planned in March. That will put us back on schedule and back on the road again, barring another month like the one I just had.

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During 1981 you will receive six issues of The Spark. That means a lot of work for me, especially if I have to continue to write much of each issue without the help of the rest of the membership. I know you've heard it many times before, but won't you please help out by writing an article, designing a cover, compiling a bibliography or doing something else to help The Spark? Our common interests are serious historical research and preservation of auto history. Let's make future issues of The Spark reflect that.

Chris Halla

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The November 8 WSAH Directors' meeting was an important one, and those who attended realized some of the strengths we have as a group and some of the challenges we can expect to confront in the future. Among the accomplishments we are able to report to our membership are: acquisition of tax exempt status with the IRS; selection of Wally Wray as our society historian (SAH, that is); completion of planning for the mid-winter meeting in Milwaukee in February; and progress in the matter of establishing a society archive with the Wisconsin State Historical Society. We have also done some further planning on the Wisconsin Automotive History Project, and you will be hearing more about this from Chris Halla, who will function as the Project Coordinator.

One note of concern that occupied considerable discussion at the Directors' meeting was the matter of an increase in International SAH dues. Bill Cameron and I were at the annual banquet at Hershey when it was announced that national dues will increase from the present \$10 a year to \$20 a year. The announcement that we heard did not make it clear when the dues increase would take effect. Since no one has received written notification of this new rate hike, we think that it is next year's dues that are at issue. The WSAH Directors are unanimously opposed to this quantum leap in national dues without a very substantial demonstration for the need for it. There was a general feeling at our meeting that the increase would be difficult to justify and that it will very quickly limit our growth -- and perhaps even cost us membership. Clearly, if this happens, our costs per member will increase and we may find ourselves in a very bad financial condition. The WSAH Directors have asked me to express our concern to the national, and I will do so around the first of the year. In the meantime, if you have any thoughts about this that you would like me to communicate to the national, please let me know directly.

Bob Lichty, our Treasurer, has resigned his position in the WSAH, and I have, with the unanimous approval of the Board of Directors, accepted his resignation and appointed Vince Ruffolo to replace him for the remainder of his two year term. I would like to thank Bob for the instrumental role he played in forming the Wisconsin Chapter. He will remain a member of our society and continue his active interest in our activities. At the same time, we welcome Vince in his new position.

We have recently heard about the formation of a Southern California Chapter of the SAH under the guidance of Bill Cannon (founder and publisher of Skinned Knuckles), and I want to extend our Chapter's congratulations to him and the members of this new group. I am sure that we can expect great things from this region if Bill's past efforts are to be taken as an indication of his success in the projects he is involved in. His publication, Skinned Knuckles, is undoubtedly the one that I most eagerly await in any month's mail. If you don't subscribe to it already, I suggest that you have a look at it. It is brimming with helpful advice on restoration techniques, new products and high spirits. I particularly think that Bill's philosophy of encouraging amateur efforts in restoration is a needed one. We all tend to be somewhat intimidated by what we see and hear from the big buck restorers. We forget that most of the cars that we own and love will never benefit from these efforts. It is up to us to do what we can to preserve and restore these cars.

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I am not privy to the most advanced efforts of developmental laboratories and others in solving our energy problems, but I am an interested observer of their activities. Two things have occurred to me in the last two months.

-- The easiest thing to recycle is automotive myth, and it gets recycled at an incredible rate.

-- For the most part, energy is neither conserved nor wasted, its use is simply moved to a less visible plane.

The example of the first statement that comes to mind is the man who approached me (and others) at Hershey with a proposition to market the Pogue Carburetor. He said that he had located a working model and that if he could only get \$10,000 he would convert any modern automobile to a capability of 200-plus mpg.

One of the leading automotive writers recently reported on a famous fraud of the post World War I era. It involved adding a green fluid to water and running an automobile on it successfully. The progenitor of the fraud ended up in prison. It was later disclosed that the green stuff was acetylene dissolved in acetone. This will mix with water and run an internal combustion engine, but with very severe damage to the valves and head.

The writer of the article suggested that the corrosive nature of the fuel might be controllable with modern materials in the combustion chamber, and that an acetylene/water fuel might now be cost effective. Yes, but where does the acetylene come from? From dripping water on carbide. And where does carbide come from? You get carbide by applying enormous amounts of energy to specific, naturally occurring substances. You see, this also illustrates the second proposition in that it moves the use of energy to a less visible place.

Alas, it is an axiom of automotive history and progress that there is no perpetual motion . . . and no free lunch!

Matt Joseph

WHAT'S HAPPENED

The main thing that's happened since our last issue of The Spark is that your Board of Directors met in Madison on November 8. Some substantial steps toward the maturity of WSAH were taken.

First off, we have finally acquired IRS tax exempt status. A future issue of The Spark will detail exactly what this means to us all. Wally Wray has been selected as society historian. His position will be better defined as time passes. Our Awards Committee has been inactive since its formation, so the board decided to let it remain dormant until our July 1981 meeting. While there is a wide variety of opinions on the subject of awards, all of us agree that it is of very low priority at present.

As of the November 8 meeting, Bob Lichty resigned the post of WSAH Treasurer. His resignation was accepted by the board and Vince Ruffolo was appointed to fill the vacancy.

The formation of an Oral History Committee was discussed and agreed upon. Chris Halla was asked to act as Chair while the committee is in its formative stages. More information on this will appear in a future issue of The Spark. In the meantime, if you would be interested in serving on this committee or in doing interviews of specific subjects, please let Chris know by writing him at 509 W. Fulton Ave., Waupaca, WI 54981.

Progress was made on the Wisconsin Automotive History Project, with an editorial board being selected and some assignments being made. Details may be found elsewhere in this issue.

Finally, the most exciting news is that Ray Scroggins and Phil Hall have just about completed planning for our big Second Annual Mid-Winter Meeting in the Milwaukee area on Friday, February 27

and Saturday, February 28. And what a meeting it's going to be! Just to whet your appetite there will be films, tours of Brooks Stevens' museum and the Excalibur factory, plus Friday dinner (supper) and Saturday lunch at an excellent eats joint called the Black Steer. There are even rumors that the WSAH Bad Boys, who made their first appearance in several Madison taverns last year after decent folks had gone to bed, will appear at the Milwaukee area meeting. Their sole purpose, it is rumored, will be to lead our weaker-willed members astray. Whatever happens this is going to be one great meeting. We'll send out details as soon as we get them from Ray and Phil. If you're the anxious type, or if you're planning on making the meeting alone, you should get in touch with Phil right away. Write: Phil Hall, 754 N. 113 St., Wauwatosa 53226.

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KRAUSE CAPTURES CUGNOT

The Society of Automotive Historians' prestigious Cugnot Award for outstanding book of 1979 has been awarded this year to G. N. Georgano, George Marshall Naul and Krause Publications for their Complete Encyclopedia of Commercial Vehicles. The award is presented annually during the SAH Dinner Meeting for the most outstanding historical automotive work published in the previous year. The awards ceremony took place on Friday, October 12 in Hummelstown, Pa.

This year, for the first time ever, SAH presented two awards: one to the creators of the work and one to the publishers of the work. George Marshall Naul, U.S. Consulting Editor to the Complete Encyclopedia of Commercial Vehicles, accepted on behalf of himself and editor G. N. "Nick" Georgano. Chester Krause accepted the Publisher's Award for Krause Publications, of which he is president. This year's awards committee was made up of James J. Brad-

ley, Donald Butler, and John A. Conde, all names familiar to the automotive historian.

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THE WISCONSIN AUTOMOTIVE HISTORY PROJECT

The Wisconsin Automotive History Project (WAHP) is the name we have chosen to call our encyclopedia of the Wisconsin auto industry, at least while the work is in progress. Once all the information and photos are ready to be put into book form, we can decide on a permanent title. For the present, WAHP might be easiest to remember.

However, the most important thing isn't the name, it's getting the project going. To this end some steps have been taken. First of all, an Editorial Board has been named. Chris Halla is project coordinator. Phil Hall, Gary Busha and Matt Joseph are also on the board. They will direct the project and do the final editing.

The book will be a combination of encyclopedic listings and essays. In this way we can present both the facts and figures as well as present the social and historic impact of the automobile on Wisconsin. Hopefully every member of the WSAH will be willing to do some of the writing. The greatest need here is for volunteers to write the encyclopedic listings of each manufacturer. Please go through your list of Wisconsin-built vehicles and let Chris know which listings you would like to write. (Chris Halla, 509 W. Fulton, Waupaca 54981). He will send you a format sheet to follow. Please write soon. We want to get going on this section.

With any luck at all, every WSAH member will have an assignment (or several) in hand by the time our mid-winter meeting adjourns.

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RESEARCH COLUMN

Wally Wray (Chicory Hills, Rt. 2, Argyle 53504) is looking for free, non-returnable steam car photos, especially of the in-progress restoration type -- plus any tips on steam car restoration. Wally also seeks information pertaining to the history of Kissel.

Tim Tilton (c/o Krause Publications, 700 E. State St., Iola 54945) is interested in information and photos pertaining to the Porsche 914.

W. T. Cameron (7495 Clearwater Rd., Minocqua 54548) continues his search for any and all information on the Cameron car, the Cameron brothers and the corporation they headed.

Chris Halla (509 W. Fulton, Waupaca 54981) would like to hear from anyone who owns an old Harley-Davidson motorcycle suitable for photographs.

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Director: Matt Joseph

Associate Director: Wally Wray

Secretary: Chris Halla

Treasurer: Vince Ruffolo

Directors-at-large: Bill Cameron
Tim Tilton
Phil Hall

Newsletter Editor: Chris Halla

Associate Editor: Gary Busha