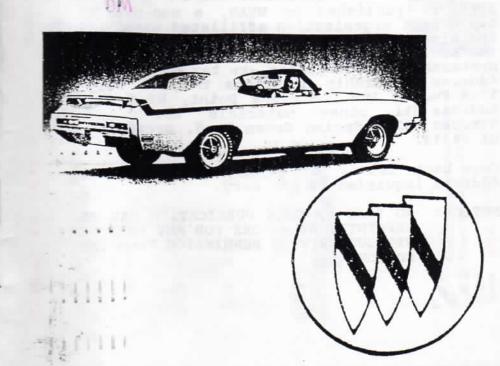


SPARK



WSAH
KEN NIMOCKS
3765 SPRING GREEN ROAD
GREEN BAY, WI 54313-7565
(414) 865-4004

SEE NOTICE FOR

IOLA MEETING

2PM SATURDAY

JULY 10, 1993

MICHAEL KELLER 2909 13TH STREET WAUSAU, WI 54401

WAUSAU,





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Some back issues of <u>SPARK</u> are available. Address inquiries to Bob Gary.

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EDITORIAL NOTES

Surprise, surprise!!! Finally, an our attempt to revive organization's publication! Looking back at SPARK NUMBER 38 I found that time does indeed fly . . . that issue was sent out in 1990! Chris Halla said good-bye as Editor, our organization was celebrating our 10th year, I was just beginning a term as President and wondering how I could follow an act like Bill Cameron. Our good friend, the late Ken Knauf, was the newly elected Vice-president.

The feature article in that issue was 19 pages long: The Automobile as Pre-eminent Artifact of Our Civilization by Matt Joseph, taken from his popular lecture at several events in 1989. Wally Wray also wrote about our Treasurer Bob Gary's tour of the Tucker plant as an 18 year old shareholder in the

company.

To put things in perspective, Associate Editor and current Secretary Doc Quandt was not yet a member of our organization and we had not yet discussed getting involved with the Iola Old Car Show. Thinking back in detail, time begins to slow down a bit. In introducing myself I wrote that of my three sons, I had one each in the Air Force, college and high school. They are now, respectively, a college junior, a trucker and a college freshman. In 1990 I was somehow able to juggle a full-time teaching job while I got a masters degree, was president of the teachers' union, Interiors, NimTrim Auto and building a new house and shop. I must have used all my energy that year, because I sure am tired now!

Doc retired in 1986 after 41 years as a physician, just in time to become the

coordinator of volunteer efforts for the Hartford Heritage Auto Museum. He is the author of The Classic Kissel Automobile (1990) and became an active and helpful member of our group immediately upon joining. I think it appropriate to quote Doc from his response to one of the questions on the recent survey that was sent out to members: "I believe a person becomes a member when (s)he sees and accepts a position or task in which (s)he can contribute usefully."

It is the hope of Doc and myself that this publication will be the link to members that will revitalize our organization. We have a healthy treasury and some members that are willing to get involved and help out. Let us know how we're doing and what

you would like to do!

Ken Nimocks

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I'm going to start right out here and say some things that could easily be misconstrued, so let me set the tone first. To begin, I'm neither bragging or complaining . . . just stating the facts from my vantage point and wondering how things chould be the start of the same start of

things should be changed.

Okay, here it is: this is NOT the Ken Nimocks Society of Automotive Historians. It shouldn't be and I don't want it to be. But consider this: I'm on my third (?, I'm not sure) term as President, I have become the central figure for our Iola Car Show venture, and now I'm trying to edit and publish SPARK. Remember the tone now . . .

not bragging, not complaining, but seriously thinking this is not the way things should be!

It's mostly my fault. When no one else would be President and I was asked, I said I would, because what would happen to our organization if no one was President? when no one would publish the SPARK, I said I would, because what would happen to our organization if we didn't have a publication of some sort? Iola just sort of gravitated (or do I mean levitated?) to me and I've truly enjoyed all the fun and contact with people, but it has been a lot of work also. Something like 200 hours a year. five weeks at a full time job. For free. But, a lot of it is fun. And if I didn't do it, maybe it wouldn't get done and we wouldn't have that fat treasury, and what would happen to our organization if . . .

Now, let's get <u>REAL</u> serious. What <u>WOULD</u> happen to our organization if I backed out of a couple of things? I would like to think that others would get right in there and take over and nobody would even miss me. Sure, I have a big enough ego that I don't mind the credit or the publicity that some of these things bring, but believe me, I really don't need it. (I'll get all the fame I can handle when the movie <u>Ashes</u> to <u>Ashes</u> gets national distribution. Ask me

about it sometime!)

I don't believe that any organization wants to, or should, have one person doing so much. (This would be a good time to put in a plug for some of the members who are doing some things; Doc, Bob, Duane, John, Don, Dan, and I know there are more. Thanks!) I certainly don't mean to imply that I'm the ONLY one who does anything. My point is that I shouldn't be doing so much,

because then it becomes MY organization and that's not what any of us want. But if there are not enough of you that have any interest in keeping this going, then why don't we just disband the whole thing and I'll get back to all my hobbies and for-

profit ventures!

That brings up one final point. What ARE we going to do? There have been several suggestions that have generated interest, but ideas without action aren't going to fly. Let me say that I understand as well as anyone out there that we all are involved in too many things. I've heard people say, at various times and in various organizations, "Let Joe do it. He's retired (or laid-off, or doesn't have kids, etc)." As if to say Joe has a lot of time on his hands. Ha! You will be hard pressed to find anyone in our group that doesn't have a dozen things going on at one time.

So, the question then changes from, "What are we going to do?" to "Does anyone want to do anything at all?" The responses to the survey (see the brief report elsewhere in this issue) seem to indicate a willingness to keep something going and maybe considering some fresh ideas to create more interest. There also remains the question of keeping up a formal chapter of SAH, something I have mixed feelings about and which will have to be decided by the

membership as a whole.

Whatever direction is taken, at least one thing is certain: it is time for someone else to take over as president. We are due for elections at the next winter meeting, so there is plenty of time to round up a successor. I would like to continue with my Iola Car Show involvement, especially since methods of cutting down on my personal

workload for the show have been discussed. Publishing SPARK is something I could do without, but once the format is established and initial steps are taken (as they obviously now are) I could probably handle it. However, anyone who wants the job is welcome to it!

In closing, let me assure you that I am willing to do whatever work it takes for WSAH as long as there is an interest in keeping it alive. I simply don't think it is good to have one person in charge of the organization, the fundraising, and the publication.

Ken Nimocks

MEETING MINUTES

WINTER MEETING OF THE WISCONSIN CHAPTER OF THE SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS, HELD AT THE HARTFORD HERITAGE AUTO MUSEUM ON FEBRUARY 27, 1993.

Those in attendance were Dale Anderson, David Babb, Bill Cameron, Don Chandler, Bob Gary, Matt Joseph, Duane Kasten, Dan Manola, Ken Nimocks, Gene Wendt, Bob Schmelzer, and Val Ouandt.

The meeting was called to order by WSAH president Ken Nimocks at 4:10 p.m. The minutes of the annual WSAH meeting held in Iola, Wisconsin on July 11, 1992 were read by secretary Val Quandt. These were distributed to each and approved as read, by Bill Cameron.

Ken Nimocks reviewed that our society had earned a flat amount of \$1,500.00 for its work at the 1992 Iola Auto Show. The

theme for this years' 1993 Iola Show is going to be Great Anniversaries of American Cars. This is notably for the Cadillac, Buick, and Ford, celebrating 90 years. This year the show is July 9, 10, and 11. plan is to have cars under three tents. Gary commended Ken Nimocks for his past and present work staging the Iola Show. There was a discussion of the pros and cons of the designation this year as being the one hundred year anniversary of the American automobile. Problems arise in determining the exact beginning or origin of the American car. The Duryea brothers had their early car in 1893, but there was no concerted factory production of cars until about 1896. So it is rather a moot point and an area of some disagreement.

Looking forward to the next year auto show in Iola, there are early plans for a theme of Wisconsin cars and engines. That would include amongst others the Kissel car in Hartford, the cars made in Kenosha and Racine, Janesville, and motors in Milwaukee and Waukesha. A logistical problem is that Iola will help physically in transporting

vehicles to their show.

Matt Joseph took this occasion to air his problems with the national Society of Automotive Historians. During the two years he was their president he used \$1,700.00 to conduct the business of this society. For inexplicable reasons, Matt was blamed for misuse of these funds and was asked to leave his position with the society. That there was no basis for these charges was further corroborated by Bob Gary who had been the treasurer of this society. Bob Gary resigned from his position with the society after numerous letters from him unfruitful in reversing their claims.

Treasurer Bob Gary gave his report for 1992. Total income was \$1,572.04 of which \$1,500.00 was Iola Car Show profit and we now have a balance of \$3,807.87.

Discussion then followed about feasibility of our forming a separate and society for free standing automotive made of our Wisconsin. Mention was affiliation with the State of Wisconsin Historical Society. For this we would need to amend our articles of incorporation. Member David Babb then made the following motion which was seconded by Bill Cameron That the secretary and reads as follows: draft a statement of our wish to be separate from the national Society of Automotive Historians, and of our desire to set up a organization. separate and independent This is also to be reflected in our by-laws. This information is then to be sent to our 41 members, and would be up for approval at a later meeting.

Don Chandler suggested that all the written materials in the foregoing dispute with the national SAH be collected and kept in a distinct folder for record and file.

Ken Nimocks requested that the sum of \$100.00 from our treasury be spent as a donation to the Hartford Heritage Auto Museum, the site of this meeting. This was

unanimously voice approved.

Bob Gary is interested in writing up and collecting information on cars built in the state of Wisconsin, together with Wisconsin produced accessories. He wished that there be a standing committee formed to further this idea. Krause Publications in Iola would be in a position to publish this for us. This might be the basis of a committee of our whole since no further action was taken at this meeting for a

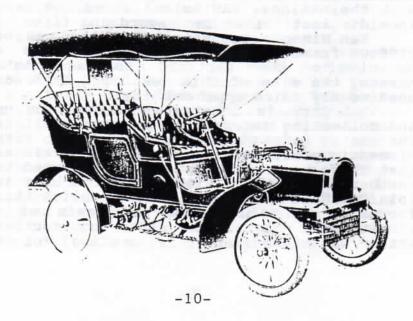
standing committee, and something held over for the future.

Finally, Ken Nimocks brought up the question of interest in continuing or actually reactivating the former small WSAH publication called the SPARK. While no concrete plans were laid, there was sentiment for a once or twice a year publication like the SPARK, incorporating with it a manner of a newsletter, or the latter as a separate mailing. There are already materials that could go into a first issue.

This meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m. It was preceded by a two hour visit to the museum, and the meeting was followed by a fine dinner at the Main Street Cafe in Hartford, table set for 14.

This report is respectfully submitted,

Val V. Quandt, M.D. (Ret.) Secretary, WSAH



NOTICE OF NEXT MEETING

(It's time to get back to our old tradition of an annual meeting at Iola . . . the Special Exhibit is organized to the point where we can now break away for an hour or so.)

Date: SATURDAY, JULY 10, 1993

Time: 2:00 PM

Place: KRAUSE PUBLICATIONS BUILDING *

(* The building will be locked, so meet in the Special Exhibit tent first, and we will go as a group to the meeting room. Be prompt or you'll be locked out!)

Agenda: Call to order

Introductions of members and guests Approval of 02/27/93 minutes

Treasurer's report

Old business

Discussion of SAH and SHSW

affiliation
New business
Future events
Next meeting date

(Please bring any business items to the meeting or contact Ken Nimocks prior to the meeting if you have a business item but are unable to attend)



THE CLASSIC KISSEL AUTOMOBILE

by

Val V. Quandt

The Kissel Motor Car Company existed in the small town of Hartford in Wisconsin between the twenty five years of 1906 to 1930. As such it was the second longest lived automobile manufacturing company in the state of Wisconsin. It was second only to the American Motors plant in Kenosha, Wisconsin which started as the Jeffrey and ended more recently as the Chrysler Corporation. The Catalog of American Cars, 1805-1946 and published in Iola, Wisconsin, lists some 80 auto companies with origins in Wisconsin. Many consisted only projected or prototypal vehicle. Kissel is one of only forty five American cars listed as classics by the Classic Car Club of America for the years after 1925. So Kissel has a fine pedigree.

The year was 1906 and about fourteen years after the first American car appeared on the streets in America. German immigrant Louis Kissel and his four sons were interested in starting up an automobile manufacturing company. They incorporated in Wisconsin in that year as an auto

manufacturing business.

This was a family undertaking. With the exception of the initial few years the officers were George Kissel then only twenty five years of age as president and his brother Will the secretary treasurer and two years older. These positions were maintained for the duration of the company. This arrangement and shrewd management accounted for the stability and staying

power of the Kissel Motor Car Company.

Kissel always prided itself with producing a quality car with a beautiful body and often years ahead of its competition. Much of

the credit for the body design must go to Fred Werner who joined the company in 1907. He had considerable experience in Germany before that time designing automobile bodies

for early German cars.

Herman Palmer was the other half of the German duo who for the same period lent his considerable talents in engine design to the company. With this background and input it is possibly no small wonder that the initial Kissel offerings early on and until 1918 were called the German sounding Kissel Kars. Anti German war sentiments then caused them to delete the Kar for car.

The early models were four cylinder and came as a touring and runabout or roadster in design. The first order of one hundred cars came from Joseph McAffee in Chicago, who liked what he saw in Hartford. By 1909 a six cylinder series was added and remained a staple for the duration of the company.

In 1914 Kissel came out with a new idea. This was a metal and glass top for winter use which could be removed and replaced with a soft Pantacote top in warm weather. This was patented by Kissel in America. The idea, however, was not entirely new, as it had originated earlier in Germany.

Also original with Kissel was its double kick up frame. This consisted of a design where the frame was elevated or kicked up over the front and rear axles. This gave a lower center of gravity for the

passenger compartment.

In late 1917 Kissel was designing a new roadster. This was its Kissel Speedster. Conover T. Silver in New York had a hand in helping design this car which early on was called the Kissel Silver Special. In the color of chrome yellow in time it was nicknamed the "Gold Bug." This was the car that was owned by celebrity notables. This included such names as Mary Pickford and Amelia Earhart to mention a few. This model achieved national attention.

The Kissel Kar Klub originated in 1954. Charter members included Gene Husting and Ralph Dunwoodie. Both of these members have contributed widely to the history and memory of the Kissel. There are two hundred Kissel cars in the registry of the Kissel Kar Klub. About half of this number are in a

reasonably restored condition.

For a brief period in 1918 Kissel was marketing a twelve cylinder model with a Weidly engine. Somehow this model enjoyed only very brief success. It lasted only

about a year.

With American involvement in European War that began in 1914, Kissel in 1917 was engaged in the manufacture for the military ordnance department of a three ton ammunition carrying truck. subcontracted with the Four Wheel Drive Company of Clintonville, Wisconsin, to make two thousand of these trucks. Kissel had an order for another fifteen hundred of these trucks when the order was cancelled by the military with the rather abrupt ending of the war and armistice signing on November 11, 1918. This caused financial losses for Kissel and was the basis for litigation and a settlement with Kissel that occurred a decade later in American courts.

The Kissel Speedster referred to was a model that remained a favorite with buyers for the next decade. In its early years it accommodated two extra passengers through the addition of two outrigger seats called "suicide seats." These seats could be pulled out from the rear deck compartment and pushed back again out of sight when not in use. This was a conversation piece of sorts and certainly quite impractical in use. By 1926 the Kissel Speedster had added a rumble seat for additional passengers.

Kissel tended to gain economically from the European War years. There was a carry over into 1919 through 1921. But Kissel and the rest of the American economy suffered in 1922 through 1924 from poor sales brought on by inflated post war prices before there was a corresponding increase in wages. This brought on what was called the "buyers

strike."

Starting in 1917 and for the next several years Kissel used the appellation "Hundred Point Six" for its six cylinder cars. This was a compilation of what Kissel claimed to be one hundred desirable features in its cars under headings such as comfort,

efficiency, and quietness.

This motor had a bore of 3 5/16 inch and a stroke of five inches. By 1919 Kissel developed a slightly larger engine six by increasing the stroke to five and a half inch. In time this was called the 6-45. In 1922 a slightly smaller six was added with a shorter stroke of five and one eighth inch. By 1924 the 6-45 had been discontinued. The Kissel cars in the 1918 to 1922 period were called the "Custom Built Kissel." Kissel used and deserved this descriptive by virtue of its luxuriously hand built bodies.

The Kissel Motor Car Company in 1917 announced and sold a seventeen passenger bus. It was called the Kissel "Deluxe Coach Limited." It was built much like a passenger sedan by lengthening the regular 124 inch wheelbase to 202 inches. Passenger entrance was on the right side through a row of four All of these were seats. upholstered in Spanish leather. The door latches to the four passenger doors were all controlled by a switch at the driver seat. All windows and the windshield could be lowered for ventilation. There was room for a half ton of luggage on the vehicle top.

Kissel was stimulated to meet its competition in 1925 by introducing eight cylinder models. Here Kissel featured the Lycoming engine. This model Kissel precision reworked to meet its high quality standards. The eight cylinder models remained with Kissel for the remainder of its production years. This culminated in 1929 with its luxurious model 126 which claimed a top speed of one hundred miles an hour.

A further development in 1925 was the Kissel hearse ambulance. By 1927 this was further developed to a quite outstanding array of hearse ambulances. By virtue of conversion the vehicle found use both as a hearse and an ambulance. This was especially adapted as the National hearse ambulance of 1927.

In 1928 Kissel renamed its cars White Eagle. All of this was an attempt to increase its market share at a time of dwindling sales. Kissel also added taxicabs to its offerings in 1928. In its attempts to market these taxicabs Kissel hired a number of officers with earlier Yellow Cab and General Motors Cab experience. Mr. H.C.

Bradfield was one of these and the Kissel cabs were called Bradfield taxicabs. A large consignment of these cabs was ordered by the New York taxicab market. Unfortunately with a regressing economy Kissel could not adequately collect on the vehicles manufactured and adding to its financial woes.

Kissel was struggling with a \$750,000 mortgage debt incurred a decade earlier. Some \$250,000 had been repaid in 1928. Kissel could not meet its interest payment in April of 1930. While Kissel was selling more commercial cars such as trucks and hearse ambulances it was doing less well with its passenger car sales.

Kissel had produced trucks as early as 1911 and by this mid decade it was producing trucks all the way form three quarter ton to the large five ton behemoth. Kissel also made a range of trucks adapted to use such as postal trucks, and delivery trucks. It made numerous fire trucks. The Hartford Heritage Auto Museum has several fire trucks

on display form the 1920's.

During its last year in business Kissel was involved with the attempt to produce a new front wheel drive car. This was called the Ruxton, and the front wheel drive engineering was that of William Muller. It was trying to beat the Auburn with its L-29 to market. In that enterprise with the much discussed Archie Andrews and his New Era Company, Kissel made an estimated twenty six bodies for the Ruxton. Also in an agreement with Andrews that never materialized Kissel was to make a stated number transmissions. Except for the lower profit, and the "Cat Eye" headlamps in the Ruxton, it bore a rather strong resemblance to the White Eagle at the time. The Moon Motor Car

Company ended up making several hundred of these Ruxtons. Moon and Kissel both ended up going bankrupt. Kissel succumbed and went into a volunteer receivership in September of 1930.

Except for an abortive attempt to produce a car called the "Royale" together with Reo in 1934, the Kissel was now

automotive history.

Kissel rose again as the Kissel Industries in 1932. It manufactured marine outboard engines in the former Kissel auto factory site. This outboard industry then existed for another fifty nine years, first as Kissel Industries, then the West Bend Company, then further the Marine Division of the Chrysler Corporation, and then finally Bayliner and Brunswick after 1984 until 1991 when the plant closed.

Hartford Heritage KISSEL

147 NORTH RURAL STREET HARTFORD, WISCONSIN 53027 Val U. Gunn J. F

I REALLY WANTED TO DRIVE

by Loyd Goplin

March 17, 1993

(Editor's note: The following story was written down and sent to me by my mother. She tried to keep it in the words my stepfather used when he relayed it to her. The story is the result of a request by Steve Meudt, Editor of the Wisconsin Capitol Model T Ford Club's Three Pedal Press, to have Loyd write down some of his Model T experiences. I am forever indebted to Steve Meudt and Don Chandler for helping me get Loyd behind the wheel of a Model T again for the first time since 1927! For me, that ride was one of the most outstanding experiences I've ever had involving cars, and like the rest of you, I've had plenty. To be able to see someone so dear to me (Loyd has been my Dad for 41 of my 45 years, my father died before I was born) have so much fun excitement is and description . . . I still get choked-up every time I think about it! K.E.N.)

Sometimes, when I was a boy in grade school, I would go to my Uncle Hilman's on Friday night to stay all night. Then he would take me with him on Saturday morning to the cheese factory. He would let me sit on his lap and help him drive his car home. I would watch every move he made.

One Saturday when I was around eleven years old I was at church for confirmation class and on the way home I walked by a farm where our neighbor, Olaf Dalberg, was going

to take some cattle to his other farm, which was just past our house. Olaf asked me if I would drive his car to our house and take his wife, Mandy, with me. It was only a mile. When I stopped in front of our house, my Mother came out and said, "You 'stinker' 'you . . . what do you think you're doing, driving that car!?" Mandy told her that I

did as good as Olaf.

The next day my Dad was gone and my Mother said, "If you can drive Olaf's car, you can drive ours!" It was a 1919 Model T Ford. She said if I could get it started and get it up to the house, we would go to the neighbor's and get a setting of eggs to put under the setting hen. I ran to the tobacco shed as fast as I could. I knew how many times my Dad turned the crank with the choke out. Then I gave it a fast turnover and it started! I let it warm up before I started out. We got the setting of eggs alright!

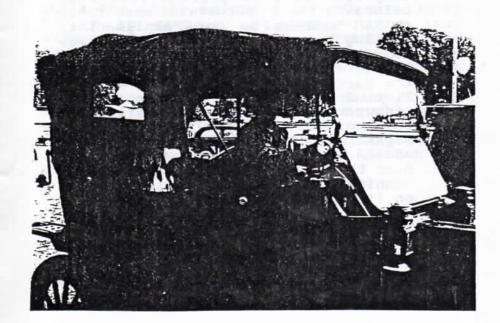
In a few days Mandy came over to our house and wanted me to drive their car and take my Mother and her to a funeral. It was about ten miles away. We went, and I drove in my first funeral procession. From that day on I drove. (I am now 81 years old and am still driving a Ford. I drive for the Commission on Aging, driving "old" people to the doctors and hospitals three or four

times a week.)

In 1924 my Grandfather got a new car and I drove a lot for him. I was thirteen by then. This car had a starter and a spare tire. In a few years I sent in twenty-five cents to get my first driver's license.

Last fall our son, Kenny (Nimocks), who helps organize the Iola Car Show, wanted us to meet him at Cross Plains, where the Model T Club was having an Antique Ford Car Show.

Kenny had asked his friend, Don Chandler, if he could do him a favor and find someone to give me a ride in a Model T. Steve Meudt gave Kenny and I a ride, and while we were riding I started telling how I learned to drive on a Model T when I was around eleven years old. We got down the road a ways and Steve asked if I would do something for him . . . drive his car! He said no one had driven it but himself since his Dad passed away. I got in the driver's seat and did all the right things, including driving across a busy highway. Kenny's hat blew off, so I had to back up and turn around in the street to go get it. One of my other sons, Randy, was waiting for us back at the park. You should have seen the grin on his face when he saw I was driving a Model T again! It was a thrill!



CLOSING NOTES

Unless this copy of <u>SPARK</u> was handed to you by someone else, you are currently on the WSAH mailing list and are therefore aware that a survey was sent out earlier this year. An official statistical compilation should be done at some time, but for now, here is a quick overview:

- The purpose of the survey was to get an updated and accurate mailing list as well as ideas for the direction of WSAH.
- Fifty surveys were mailed and 13 were returned. Of the 50, several were not to individual members, that is, they were sent to persons listed as belonging to a corporate membership or SAH members on our complimentary mailing list. Some members who see me often and have expressed their thoughts personally did not fill out the survey. In checking our mailing list, I believe the 13 represent half of our currently active members.
- Regarding our purpose, no one felt we should be a "social" group only, but more than half thought we should combine social functions with a focus on literary and historical projects.
- The most popular response by far regarding a publication is to alternate <u>SPARK</u> and a newsletter.
- Eight respondents felt we should pay a stipend for publishing/editing a

newsletter or <u>SPARK</u>, two said no (one of these said expenses should be covered), and three did not answer. (Neither Doc nor myself expect compensation, but I favor paying someone if that's what it takes.)

- The majority of respondents said they would help by getting involved in literary or historical projects and by writing an article for our publication.

Iola update:

If all goes well, you will receive this issue about two weeks before Iola '93. Because I will be at a conference in California from the time this is mailed out until the night before Iola, I'm not going to try to organize helpers at the last minute. Instead, I have contacted the persons who have helped before, sent them their passes, and figure they will know what to do.

Again this year, I'm not going to beg for help, but I would like anyone who wants to join in the fun to be able to. Thus, if you wish to help but were not contacted by me, get in touch with Doc Quandt and let him know when you can work.

Dr. Val V. Quandt, WSAH 431 Summit Avenue Hartford, WI 53027 Days (414) 673-7999 Eves (414) 673-3159

Note: Help is needed most on Thursday all day for setup and Sunday afternoon for

teardown. Help for parking is needed every morning from 6:00 until about 11:00. Although your offer to work Friday or

Saturday afternoon is appreciated, the work is usually done by that time.

Just an interesting observation: More than half of our help on the days of the show comes from non-members. These are friends of some of us that do organizing, and they have helped out and enjoyed it so much, they volunteer for the next year each time! Bob Gary, Doc and I will see to it that these helpers become regular members.

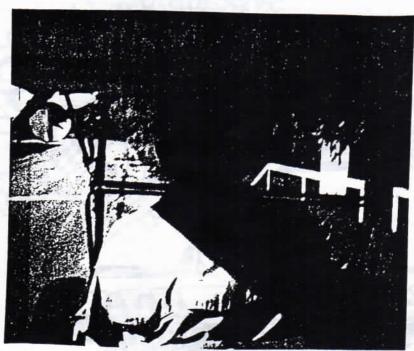
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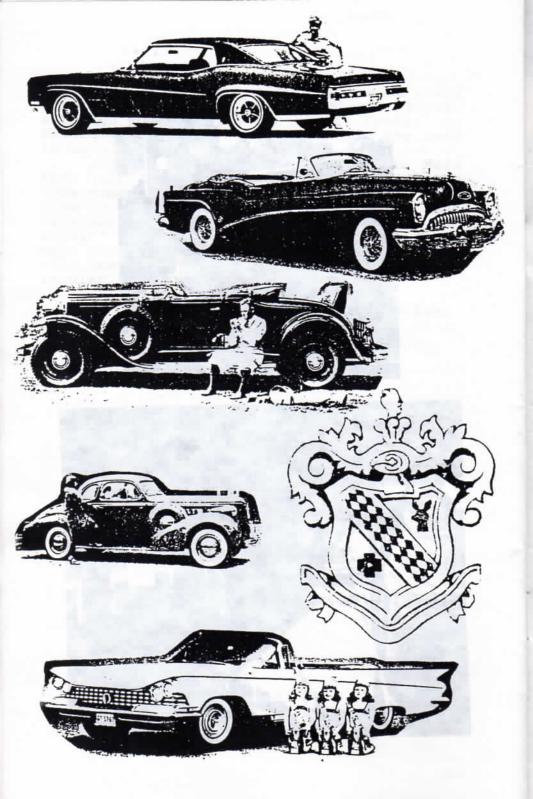


OLD CAR SHOW . SWAP MEET

lola Old Car Show, Inc. P.O. BOX 1, IOLA, WI 54945











The Society of Automotive Historians ≅

WISCONSIN CHAPTER

