Denali Park Tour Sees explosion of Color

On Friday, September 13, 2013, a group of Antique Auto Mushers met at the Fred Meyers store in Eagle River and started north under overcast skies. The weather was a continuation of what we had been experiencing in south central Alaska for more than a month, and it would follow us the next day as we drove into Denali Park.

Lunch stop was at the South Denali pullout near Mary Carey’s café. Then we drove on to the park Visitor’s Center to gather our Right of Way passes. These are highly restricted passes issued to visitors destined for property of an in holder in the Kantishna mining district 92.5 miles into the park. They are not available to the general public.


The day was overcast and varied from cloudy to foggy, misty and rainy. The road became soupy, but that was better than dust. Denali was invisible, but we did see a few moose, caribou, sheep and bears.

All things considered, the fall colors turned out to be the star attraction. The various trees and shrubs offered their own hues, ranging from green to yellow, purple, red and orange. Amazing, and for us seasoned visitors of many years, it was just another way that Denali Park had of astonishing us with its unbounded beauty.

The next day, the sky opened up, and we were able to see a real show—just not on a drive all the way back to the end of the road.

We thank Art and Tamea Isham (especially Tamea) for chairing this event, doing the scheduling and arranging for the all-important ROW passes.

Meeting Agenda
At this month’s meeting, the nominations committee (Sara Stoops, Brian Anderson and Scott Hulse) will present the slate for 2014. Nominations from the floor will also be accepted.

Also, pursuant to a recommendation by the Board, our treasurer, Donn Reese, will make a presentation concerning the need to raise our dues to cover yearly expenses.

October Meeting
Our October 9 rolling meeting will convene at 6:30 p.m. at Robbie and Marianne Robinson’s clubhouse.

After the meeting we will do a drive about led by Jerry Roach.

Many thanks to Mike Wiedmer, who put together the cluise after last-month’s meeting. Special Thanks to Mike for keeping it abbreviated!
Running Board Reflections

In last month’s Running Board I wrote that among the many reasons I enjoy our hobby is knowing that someone has got your back. This month I want to continue that theme.

In August my wife got much needed road-side assistance during her State Fair outing; and in September I needed help tracking down what now appears to be a rare commodity: 20” rims for our 1931 Reo Speedwagon. Scott Grundy in Fairbanks, a member of both our club and the Vernon Nash Club, mentioned that he and other Fairbanksians were headed to central Pennsylvania’s green hills for the fall Hershey Meet. In passing I asked that he keep a look out for potential Speedwagon rims. Within minutes Scott had passed the word around, complete with pictures and specifications, to at least ten Vernon Nash members. Since then Scott has tracked down several Fairbanks-area leads and recommendations and for all his (and their) help so far I am truly amazed and grateful. We belong to a fine hobby.

October is now here, and our frenetic summer has wound down. We tidied up Northern Lights for the third and last time in 2013; toured Denali National Park; the frozen chosen showed their cars one last time at Kendall Toyota; and the Model A’s enjoyed a final tour to Seward. With the exception of a potential drive-around after the October meeting, our car activities are done until February’s Fur Rendezvous. With some sadness I’ve been spending a few days winterizing our fleet for their long hibernation.

At the October meeting, the nomination committee will present a slate of recommended officers and at the November meeting we will tally the vote. You still have time to give serious thought to running for any one of the club’s leadership positions. If you are interested, please contact Sara Stoops, Brian Anderson, or Scott Hulse–our nominating committee.

Until next time, get out and enjoy our fall colors, as a long winter is fast closing in.

--Mike

MSSRA President, Neil Knoll, Bruce Campbell, Ralph Centoni and Mike Wiedmer pose with Ralph’s trophy-winning 1931 Cadillac 370A 4-dr sedan at the Jay Ofsthun Show on August 4, 2013. This was but one of the many events on an AAMA 2013 calendar.

2013 Officers
President: Mike Wiedmer 243-7005
Vice President: Bryan Anderson 345-9244
Secretary: Pam Tanora 868-1575
Treasurer: Donn Reese 245-7203
Sergeant at Arms: Sara Stoops

Members at Large
Kurt Rein 344-5554
Tom Cresap 694-7510
Tam Isham 688-3671

Past Presidents (10 years)
Howard Hansen (2012)
Donn Reese (2009–2011)
Jeff Hassler/Donn Reese (2008)
Jim Fredenhagen (2006-2007)
Fred Schurman (2005)
Fred Schurman (2001-2003)

Tinkering Times Staff
Editor: Tom Cresap
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One Man’s Treasures

Our ads are intended for members and others who wish to sell cars and related items. There is no charge, and the ad will run for three consecutive issues before being removed. To pull an ad, extend it or to place a new ad, contact Tom, 694-7510.

For Sale: 1957 Chevrolet 2-dr hardtop BelAir; Red and White; all original; 4 owners from new to present; 68,000 miles; appraised at $38,000 three years ago; asking $35,000. Wayne Weiler, 345-4632 or 240-9491. theweiler@gci.net (2)

For Sale: Classic Auto Restorer from October, 1994 to April, 2000. $50 OBO. The cover of October 1994 has a 1957 Thunderbird on it and a complete write up inside. Also, British Car magazines from June, 1988 up to May, 2003 with bonuses also for $50 OBO. John Osnes, 346-3609 (12)

For Sale: 1930 Model A Tudor; restored: runs great; Reduced: $12,000 OBO; Clark Fair, 262-1724 or 262-4916. (11)

For Sale: One Good Year 7.10X15 nylon bias ply tire with 1.75" WW. Nice tire $45 obo. Scott Grundy 907-457-3526" (1)

For Sale: 1928 Model A Tudor. Oversize intake valves, B sized intake/ carb, B cam, Snyder 5.5:1 head, new Babbitt, 47# flywheel, V-8 clutch, Mitchell O/D, 200 miles since overhaul; LED turn signals, 12volts, alternator, dual electric wipers, tachometer, new gray upholstery, cream powder coated 21" wheels; new tires; 2" receiver trailer hitch w/trailer plug. $20,000 or best offer. Also, 10’ tear-drop trailer, door on right side, 21” cream A wheels, rear deck lid for kitchen. $3,000. Darren Folkers, 223-0097 or dfolkers@gci.net (11)

For Sale: 1931 Ford Model A Tudor; restored; runs great; Reduced: $12,000 OBO; Clark Fair, 262-1724 or 262-4916. (11)

For Sale: 1930 Model A coupe with rumble seat; restored several years ago; driven several hundred miles since; 6 volt alternator, cowl light turn signals; manifold heater and more. Runs well. I need to make some room in my garage. $17,500 It would probably cost more than that to build one to match. Roger Severson, 441-5431, or sever@gci.net (11)

Secured Enclosed Storage
West Downtown Anchorage location
9’x18’x7-1/2’ high space
$125/month
2 or more spaces—$100 each Hurry!
Dave Syren, 274-9046 or 440-2982

Schedule of Events

* October 9–6:30 p.m. Rolling Meeting (Jerry Roach, 338-2856)
* November 13–7:30 p.m. Regular Meeting (Refreshments: Allens)
* December 15–4:00-8:00 p.m. Christmas Party (Tam Isham, 688-3671)
* January 8–7:30 p.m. Installation of Officers (Refreshments: Christmas
Kendal Car Show Ends Season in the Cold

On September 21, we stretched things a little by participating in an outdoor show at the Kendal used car lot on the Old Seward Highway.

We are not in the practice of putting ourselves and our cars in jeopardy of freezing, and certainly this date threw up some red flags in that regard. The event, however, was something we participated in out of respect for the late Ken Stout, who had made arrangements for it not long before his death.

As we had anticipated, the temperature and accompanying north wind made things downright uncomfortable.

We were saved by the forethought of Dennis Allen and Donn Reese, who brought a skirted canopy and a space heater.

Thanks to all for showing up and braving the conditions.

Letter

On our long distance tour (June 27- July 8) Kurt Rein brought Myron VanSickle, a guest from Maryland. After his return home, we emailed him some trip photos, and this was his response:

Hi Tom,

Thank you, for sending me these wonderful pictures. I do appreciate getting them. As I told you while on the trip, this was a vacation of a lifetime. I still can't put words, how awesome the trip was, when tell my family and friends about it. All of you were great to be around, and all of you are good people, and I like to be around good people.

Thanks again,
Myron VanSickle

Thanks for the Recognition

Tom and Marcy stand at the end of the Denali Park road, mile 92.5, during AAMA’s September 13-15, 2013 Denali Road Trip.

Marcy and I want to thank the club for the hand-made Alaska card, the tulips and the well wishes the group surprised us with while we dined at Romano’s after the meeting September 11. We were totally surprised and pleased with your recognition of our 50th wedding anniversary.

On the subject of recognition, we just received the following email:

Hi Tom,

Just read that great story ["Stop Bugging Me"] by Rich Golding. We will publish the AACA Fall Rummage Box within the next week, and I would love to use that story showing a special way to promote a region's newsletter. Is there any chance that I can get permission for this, plus a Publisher version of the article?

Wayne Burgess
AACA VP Publications

The Rummage Box is an on-line resource published by AACA. The contents are available to chapter newsletter editors to use in their publications. Nice that Rich’s work is being recognized there. Permission has been granted.

Again, in this issue we are offering the work of two other club members who gift us with something outside the realm of simple reporting on activities: the second installment of Walt Sonen’s report on Japan’s approach to the automobile and the first part of Bruce Campbell’s tale of a trip he and his wife, Marl, took into Canada.

Thanks, everyone, for the recognition, the help and for reading the Tinkering Times.

–Tom
Reflecting on the Japanese Approach to the Automobile

Part II
by Walt Sonen

We live in Seldovia, off the contiguous road system, and by special dispensation we are allowed to drive snow machines and 4-wheelers on public roads. We have 5 or 6 tiny Japanese trucks running around registered as snow machines. They are everyday drivers, mind you. One fellow here had his converted to left hand drive, cute.

I'm told that some enterprising Alaskan chap (in Palmer perhaps?) brought several van loads of them from Japan. They didn't make the 10-year cut [in Japan] and sold here for less than seven grand a pop, a bargain when compared to an enclosed side-by-side 4-wheeler for $15,000.

This leads to the Keirin-Sha, a special class of vehicle in Japan. Length, width and the engine capacity of 660 cc are all maxed out. Until about 25 years ago it was 360 cc, but the rule changed when more zip was required to ease the flow of traffic. Occasionally, the rattle of a diesel may be heard from a delivery truck, and many of the gas rigs are turbocharged. In Japan, these small vehicles wear a yellow license plate and qualify for considerably reduced insurance and registration fees. One might suppose that the economy of operation and relative ease of maneuvering and parking are attractive as well.

These ubiquitous little vehicles have always fascinated me. They are produced by at least 6 manufacturers. At a minimum, each has one model of a van, a cab-over style pick-up and a four-place sedan, but most have at least 2 models of each and sometimes more--offering a sports car for example (yes, a 660 cc sports car)!

Most manufacturers will offer a van oriented toward packing kids and groceries, one designed for workmen and supplies and one for deliveries. Several makers even offer a factory model with a drop down wheelchair ramp deployed astern.

A car that I investigated with more than a walk-by, look-see, was a Nissan March, a 4-place sedan. It is scarcely larger than the Keirin-Sha class and the standard engine is a transverse mounted, 3 cylinder, 1200 cc gas engine with front wheel drive. Bare bones, it will leave the showroom for about $13,000. With the plethora of options--custom grill, colors, interior appointments and electronics--it would go for considerably more. One popular option that I thought interesting is the four-wheel drive. For a little over $1000 you can have an electric motor mounted adjacent to the rear axle to power the rear wheels in tandem with the front. This is good for 3 minutes of sustained power--not an electric car but, hey, that would be good enough to get you up and down your pal's slippery driveway at Stuckagain Heights without chaining up, no?

Japan, Inc. is very protective of their car industries. A recent fly has buzzed into the ointment in the form of emerging nations who, after many decades of accepting Japanese imports, are crying foul because now they, too, make tiny cars that could be adapted to fit the Keirin-Sha format and undoubtedly could be offered at a much lower price. They want in. The official line so far remains a steadfast 'no,' but taking all factors into consideration, the officialdom may be squirming a little in their seats. As the world turns....

--Walt Sonen

Here and There...
Bruce and Marl Drive Canada’s Campbell Highway

by Bruce Campbell

The rain won again! After 2 weeks of rain, rain, and more rain M and I decided to head for a more sunny clime. We scanned weather forecasts for possible areas to visit that were at least partially dry. (That’s the weather, not the liquor laws.)

We decided to explore the Campbell Highway which runs from Carmacks to Watson Lake in the Yukon.

We planned to take our 1957 Ford and leave on 9/6 but when we crawled out of bed to begin our sun trip the rain was coming down like a cow going on a flat rock. As most old car nuts realize windshield wipers were not something Henry deemed important so his fabulous Fords of the Fifties were not even close to being adequate when it came to clear vision in a rain storm. This coupled with our failing eyesight led to the last minute switch to a later model Ford.

Off we went to Glennallen and Tok. Half way up the Tok Cutoff we finally exited the rain, but the sun refused to be seen. Young’s Motel and Fast Eddies were as usual–good food but no Kleenex in the rooms. M always fusses about the latter.

I tell her to use TP. (M - that’s just like a man -- doesn’t know the difference between his nose and his a–!)  

On day two we headed for Dawson City over the “Top Of The World” Highway. Early on there was fog hanging over all the streams and rivers with high overcast and a wee bit of sun but on top it was sunny and the view was fantastic and the tundra reds, birch yellows and oranges mixed with the various shades of greens added to the 200 mile vistas and a great drive!

Our stay in Dawson City was on the last night the Westmark Hotel was open in 2013. I was anxious to visit Klondike Kate’s and watch those four young long legged can-can dancers kick over their heads but M had a different plan and you can imagine who won. (M– “It’s his health that worries me. Eight young, long legs are just too much for his old heart to handle!”)

Our third day saw us on the Klondike Highway headed for Carmacks. We started out in Dawson to the sound of pitter patter on our rooftop but it only lasted only a few miles and guess what -- Sunshine! This nifty drive was punctuated with a flat tire. Apparently we ran over a nail in Dawson which allowed the tire to slowly exhale. We needed to have a spare and looked for a place to have it repaired. Times have changed in the Yukon. There are practically no services of any type between Dawson, Whitehorse, and Watson Lake. Certainly no place to get a tire fixed. Found a gas station in Carmacks that had a “punch type tire repairs kit” for $20. Luckily the nail was visible and after much effort and several carefully selected words of encouragement uttered by your cat herder and directed to the punching tool we succeeded in plugging the nail hole.

After this exhilarating experience M and I took a left turn onto the Campbell Highway, which was named after Robert Campbell, the first white man to live in the area. (No relation to your cat herder.) The portion between Carmacks and Faro is paved and in good traveling condition. Our transit was in sunny weather and again we enjoyed a scenic drive in vivid fall colors. There are no facilities of any description on the Campbell Highway.

(To be continued in the November issue)

Believe It Or Not!

We resist regurgitated material, either from other magazines or the internet, but this one made it through the filter. –Tom

Hours after Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the Secret Service found themselves in a bind. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was to give his infamy speech to Congress the next day, and although the trip from the White House to Capitol Hill was short, agents weren’t sure how to transport him safely.

Cost prohibited purchasing a car, and besides, they needed one soon that was secure for the president on his trip the next day. They remembered that the US Treasury had a Cadillac, confiscated from Al Capone, upon his incarceration.

The car was perfect. It had been painted black and green to look like Chicago’s police cars at the time. It also had a specially installed siren and flashing lights hidden behind the grille, along with a police scanner radio.

To top it off, the gangster’s 1928 Cadillac 341A Town Sedan had 3,000 pounds of armor and inch-thick bulletproof windows. It was practically made to order.

In 2012, The car sold at an auction price of $341,000.
How About Some Trivia?

What automobile started the fin fad of the 1950's?

The 1948 Cadillac. Harley Earl got the ball rolling when he became fascinated with the design of the vertical stabilizers on the Lockheed XP-38 airplane during a trip to California in 1940. The '48 fins were a modest beginning to the excesses of a decade later. Yet, they ushered auto design into the jet-age.

Source: Automotive Milestones, Trivia of a Most Unique Machine, Edited by Clark Cassell and Charles Merritt, Braddock Publications.

Average Temperatures: September, 1998-2013

These are the average temperatures for the month of September from 1998-2013. Again, these were taken on my thermometer at home and are not to be taken as a scientific study. They do, however, represent conditions at my house in Eagle River—a very small corner of south-central Alaska—and are a reminder of trends in conditions that effect us in our hobby.
Look out— the Cops are here! Three APD security officers check out Bruce Campbell's 1957 Ford Skyliner at the August 4, 2013 Jay Ofsthun Show and Shine. Where was Bruce while all this was going on? Why, of course, he was checking out the officers.