



Christmas Party Plans are Ready

This year's party is at the Ishams' home in Peters Creek on December 18, starting at 4PM.

As usual, this is a potluck affair. The ham and two turkeys will be provided. One more volunteer is needed to bring a turkey. Also, everyone one seems to love dressing so we need at least 3 dishes of it. Please call or let Tam Isham know if you are so inclined. (688-3671)

As usual, please don't forget to bring canned foods for charity. We will have the Auction and participate in some Christmas cheer with music, etc.

See map in the upcoming December issue.



Pkphoto.M.Cresap

On a recent trip to the Chicago area, Tinkering Times Editor, Tom Cresap stopped by the Volo museum to drool over his all-time favorite car, a 1954 Corvette. The Volo Auto Museum is in the Chicago suburb of Volo, Illinois. The museum contains an exhibit of collectors' autos from vintage to modern classics, with a main focus on American cars of 1950-1960. Many of the over 200 vehicles on display (in four large buildings) are for sale, and Tom wants this one for Christmas.

Memories: Driving for Seventy-One Years

The following was submitted several months ago by Ben Robar. It contains a charming recounting of some unusual automobile experiences. A big thanks goes to the author, Phil Uhlinger, who took time to tell about his life.—Tom by Phil Uhlinger

There it was on my latest bill from the insurance company, "As of April 12, 2011, our records show that the rated driver of this vehicle will have 71 years driving experience." How could that be true?

It all started in the Congo, where I spent my childhood with my parents and three siblings. My mother taught us for the first few grades, but eventually it came time to go away to boarding school at Rethi in the eastern high-

lands. This was about 150 miles from where we lived. The trip started out with a six-mile hike to the village of Mutwanga where our 1929 Model A Ford touring car was parked. A "touring car" meant that the vehicle had a

fabric top and removable side curtains. It was parked so far away be-

(Please see p. 3, "Driving in. . .")

2012 Long Distance: Prudhoe Bay Update

The dates for this tour are August 7 (leaving Anchorage) through August 12 (returning to Fairbanks.) Reservation information has been sent to all interested parties. If you would like to participate, call Tam Isham at 688-3671 or email isham@gci.net ASAP.

November Meeting

Our regular business meeting for November will begin at Robbie and Marianne Robinson's clubhouse at 7:30 p.m. November 9. The agenda will include voting for next year's officers.

Refreshments will be provided by Marcy and Tom Cresap and Scott Hulse. Special thanks to Kurt Rein and Robbie Robinson for the refreshments after our October meeting.

Running Board Reflections



This photo, taken at our June 8th rolling meeting at Alaska Berry Products, is a look back at the warmer days of summer, President Donn Reese conducts the meeting from a picnic table in front of the Ice Cream shop.

At election time, a number of questions arise. Like, what does the executive team for AAMA do? What are the responsibilities and duties of a board member? Does it take a lot of extra time to be on the AAMA board? And what goes on at those monthly board meetings held over dinner at The Double Musky? Oh wait, that last part isn't true—honestly—I mean it.

A full explanation of the functioning of our executive team is located on our website. However, briefly we have the traditional President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary; additionally we have a Sergeant-at-Arms and three Members at Large. The President presides at all meetings, appoints committee chairmen, and other duties in a corporation as needed. The VP as currently defined, waits in the wings for his big chance at the main prize, but generally assists the President when requested. The Treasurer handles our money, in-

cluding those Doubly Musky checks—er...no wait, strike that—while the Secretary handles all our correspondence and meeting notes. This includes updating our information with AACA. The Sergeant-at-Arms is not a voting member of the executive board but stands ready to take disciplinary action as required by the chair of a meeting. The Members-at-Large vote on any board actions.

The executive board of AAMA meets roughly quarterly or as needed to discuss the club's direction, overall mission and activities, and trends in the old car hobby. There are no special qualities needed by a board member other than a desire to help lead the club in the coming year.

Other than the responsibilities laid out in our Bylaws, a board member is not "on the hook" for an arduous tour of duty. And what about the time involved? That varies—summer is obviously busier—but in general even the presidency only seems to require a few hours a week on average. Sometimes it's not so "average" but if one is the president, one can delegate...if he has learned that trick, and I don't claim to as yet.

One final thought, we need a little more competition for some of these posts. Surely there must be a few more folks eager to get in on the fun: at least enough to add a little spice to our voting? Call up our nominating committee chair (Robbie) and make a nomination. Remember, nominations may also be made from the floor at the November meeting.

Above all else, come to the November meeting and vote your choice of those you want to see leading the Antique Auto Musers of Alaska during its 50th year.

—Donn Reese



www.antiqueautomusersak.org

2011 Officers

President: Donn Reese 245-7203
 Vice President: Scott Hulse 349-8106
 Secretary: Laura Reese 563-2914
 Treasurer: Howard Hansen 345-1268
 Sergeant at Arms: Fred Scharper

Members at Large

Diane Allen 345-6355
 Tom Cresap 694-7510
 Tam Isham 688-3671

Past Presidents (10 years)

Donn Reese (2009, 2010)
 Jeff Hassler/Donn Reese (2008)
 Jim Fredenhagen (2006-2007)
 Fred Schurman (2005)
 Diane Allen (2004)
 Fred Schurman (2001-2003)
 Peg Stout (2000)

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One Man's Treasures



For Sale: 1950 Ford 1/2 T pickup, Model F-1, project, \$3200 OBO; has Merc flathead V-8, plus 3 spd floor shift; disassembled but all there. Front end done. Sell for \$1700 w/o engine. Call Jim, 907-351-3115.



For Sale: 1978 Cadillac Coupe DeVille, triple black, 25+K miles, 425 c.i. automatic, 8-track radio, headliner has dropped 2"; all literature, sales receipt; \$8,000 OBO, Tim, 338-8885.



For Sale: 1956 Pontiac Star Chief Custom hardtop; 62+K mileage; 316 V8 with hydromatic, leather seats; lots of literature; \$29,500 OBO; Tim, 338-8885

Schedule of Events

- **November 9**—7:30 p.m. Regular Meeting; election of officers for 2012 (refreshments: Tom and Marcy Cresap)
- **December 18**—4:00-8:00 p.m. Christmas Party Ishams' place (Tamea and Art, 688-3671)
- **January 11**—7:30 p.m. Regular Meeting; installation of officers for 2012 (refreshments: Howard and Barb Hansen and Laura Reese)
- **February 8**—7:30 p.m. Regular Meeting (refreshments: Gwyn and Mike Wiedmer and Sara Stoops)
- **March 7**—7:30 p.m. Regular Meeting (refreshments. . .)

Driving in Congo a Test for Model A

Continued from p. 1

cause that was as far as the motor road went. We didn't mind the walk, even though there were six mountain streams we had to ford. The water came from glaciers high up on mount Ruwenzori and was ice cold.

The three of us children loaded our suitcases into the car and climbed in. Our youngest sister Betty stayed home with our mother. She was not old enough for boarding school. We

For Sale: Model T chassis and extra parts; everything is there; crank turns engine; \$1,000. Kurt, 344-5554

For Sale: 1975 U-Haul Van; big box, good for storage or transportation; has car ramps, tie down "D" rings, man door and window. Runs good. \$5,000. Kurt, 344-5554

For Sale: Two 16" tires and rims, 6-hole with center hubcap clips, tires not good. Appear to be 40's/50's GM. \$20 ea. Call Jim, 351-3115.

For Sale: Four Model T's; 1926 4-dr, \$16,000; 1924 Coupe Pickup, \$9,500; 1919 Touring, \$11,000; 1915 Depot Hack, \$11,000. Bert LaValley, Wasilla, 907-357-5561 or 907-980-7311.

For Sale: Set of four tires; Goodrich Silvertown, 4-ply rayon (6-ply rated) 32x4-1/2. Paid around \$150, would sell for half that. Dolly Sershen, 907-854-4183.

soon were on our way with our Dad at the wheel. Soon, we came to the Semiliki River, which flows out of Lake Albert and into Lake Edward. During the rainy season, the river was often in flood. This made it necessary to drive through about 100 feet of water up to three feet deep. My father would remove the fan belt from the Model A so that water would not be splashed into the spark plugs and short them out. He explained that driving without the fan for a short time would not harm the engine. Another river was crossed on a ferry made of several dugout canoes with a wooden platform

(Please see p. 4, "Congo to. . .")



For Sale: Dark Blue 1948 Ford with a real 1948 license plate #5863. A steal for \$14,750. Rebuilt flathead V-8 engine with less than 5,000 miles. No rust or bondo; even the floor pans and the rockers are original. Nicely restored with LaBaron-Boney interior. Many spare parts. Drives and shows nice. Bruce Campbell, 345-3129 or mcmarl@alaska.net

Extremes: Congo and Haiti to California

Continued from p. 3

on top. Once on board, the ferry, which was attached to a pulley running on a steel cable, was angled into the current and moved across the river by the current's force.

Since I was not old enough for a driver's license, I was only able to drive the few times that my Dad took me out for a driving lesson. I recall that it required constant adjustment of the steering wheel to keep the vehicle on the narrow dirt roads, which often became only two tracks in the grass. However, the simple mechanical ideas I learned from my father have served me well. When the Model A would stall, he would immediately determine if the problem was from lack of fuel or due to the ignition. Fuel problems were rather rare, as the Model A gas tank was above the engine so that fuel could flow by gravity. To check the ignition, a spark plug was removed and the engine was turned over either by the starter or by the crank to determine if there was a spark. If there was no spark, the distributor was checked and the contacts cleaned with sandpaper or a knife.

On our way to Rethi, the road went through part of the equatorial forest that stretched for hundreds of miles across central Congo. The trees were six to eight feet thick with flanges near the roots providing stability. They reached into the sky for up to 150 feet, the top branches forming a canopy, which shut out the bright sunlight. Only a narrow road had been carved through this jungle, and after a storm it was common to find a huge tree across the road. Often, it took several days for the road workers to cut through the hardwood log using only hand axes. Emerging from the forest, we would come out on rolling hills covered with grass 10-12 feet tall. The road wound through these hills, gain-

ing altitude until we arrived a Rethi, which was located over six thousand feet above sea level. We were glad that after three months at boarding school, our dad would come take us home for a month's vacation in the faithful Model A.

When it came time for a furlough, my parents came to the States, picked three of us children up in South Carolina, where we had been going to school and the family drove to Southern California. My Father and my older brother, Paul, did all the driving.

I was in College and World War Two was on when I bought my first car, a 1934 Ford convertible complete with a rumble seat. Gasoline was rationed, and while all cars were given an "A" sticker, which provided the minimum amount of gasoline, I was qualified for the more generous "B" sticker, because I was driving to school every day. When I bought the car, it needed new tires, which were

also rationed. Since the tires were an unusual size, I was able to purchase four new ones without a special permit. The status of those who were relegated to the rumble seat of the car was indicated by the words of a popular song of the era: "I get the neck of the chicken, I get the rumble seat ride."

This car served me well through college and seminary, and after a summer pastorate in Magna, Utah I was able to sell it. Due to the vehicle shortage after the war, I got more than double what I had originally paid for it.

Returning to the Congo with my wife Rose and our eleven-month-old daughter, I found that driving was an essential part of my work. Whether it was hauling building materials or visiting outlying church centers. The pick-up truck provided by the Mission

(Please see p. 5, "Driver. . .")



Photo:P. Wetzstein

This photo is not related to the accompanying story, but it serves to illustrate the state of the art in architecture and roads in the late 1920's in the midwest United States. Tom Cresap recently received the photo (and the one on page 5) from a cousin, and he believes that it was taken by his uncle, Paul Wetzstein around the time of his ordination as a Catholic Priest. The young novitiate in the photo was a good friend whose name is lost.

Driver With 71-Years Experience Concludes Story

Continued from p. 4

was kept pretty busy. Always there would be Africans who wanted a ride, and we would try to accommodate them as much as possible. Once, a young man asked for a ride for himself and the calabash of palm wine, which he was carrying. Since the church frowned on the drinking of palm wine, he was told that he would not be allowed to take the calabash with him. He immediately stepped to the back of the crowd and drank all the palm wine, and, returning, informed the driver: "Now I don't have any malafu (palm wine.)"

After the Congo became independent, it was common for the army or the local police to set up roadblocks at any hint of political turmoil. Usually, these were routine, but at times there would be delays of an hour or more as identity papers of drivers and passengers were checked. I found it helpful to shake hands with the soldier or policeman and, if possible, converse with him in the language of his area. Once on furlough in Southern California, my family set out in our newly purchased used car only to be stopped at a police safety check roadblock, manned entirely by African American policemen. Our youngest daughter, who was about five at the time, was upset and turning to her mother said: "I thought you said that in America there would not be any roadblocks."

During the years following independence in the Congo, government offices often did not function very well. This was understandable, since there had been no preparation for governing by the former colonial rulers, the Belgians. Once, needing new drivers licenses, a colleague and I decided to go to the nearby town of Kasangulu to get new licenses, where there would



Two brothers married two sisters. That's Lucile Wetzstein at the wheel of Bob Cresap's Dodge. Marie Wetzstein and Joe Cresap are in the back seat. Joe and Marie married in 1930, and Bob and Lucile married in 1931. At this point, they were still courting and were taking a country ride.

be a shorter wait. After a drive of about 20 miles, we walked into the office marked, "PERMIS DE CONDUIRE."

"Bonjour, monsieur." "Bonjour."

"We need to renew driver's licenses for each of us."

"That will be no problem if you have your old licenses, but you will have to take a driving test."

"We can do that, as our vehicle is parked nearby."

So the three of us walked to our car. When we arrived there, the agent said, "Do you mind if I drive?"

"No, that will be all right," we replied.

So we were driven all around the small town, and when we returned we were issued new licenses. My friend and I were happy to get the licenses so easily and the government agent was happy for a chance to practice his driving.

On moving to Haiti after 26 years in the Congo, we found the road conditions to be much the same. However, in Haiti, upon leaving the paved road between Port-au-Prince and Cape Haitian, bridges were scarce and most streams had to be forded. If I came to a crossing where the water was high, I would place a marker at the edge of

the stream and wait a few minutes to determine if the water was rising—requiring an immediate crossing—or going down—meaning I could wait for lower water. Sometimes, I would pay a teen-age boy to wade out to show how deep the water was. As a general rule, one could drive through water that was only up to the headlights.

In both countries, all vehicles had to have a sticker issued annually—which supposedly indicated that it had been inspected. The day arrived in Haiti when vehicles had to be inspected, and I said to the driver, who worked for the Mission, "Here is the amount you will need to get the two vehicles inspected. You will need to make two trips to the police station."

"Two trips will not be necessary," he replied. "It only costs a little more if the car is not there for inspection."

Seventy-one years of driving have been interesting and challenging. In the United States, one expects to be held up by traffic especially at certain times of the day. In the Congo and Haiti, there might have been other problems, but never that of heavy traffic.

Phil Uhlinger

**November:
Time for Elections
Come to the Meeting**

Robbie Robinson, chairman of the nominating committee has announced the following slate for our 2012 officers:

President: Howard Hansen
Vice President: Scott Hulse
Secretary: Laura Reese
Treasurer: Donn Reese

Come to the November meeting and cast your vote!

November

Birthdays

Allen Combs—4th
Jack Rathert—4th
Bill Brown—5th
Jim Jacobson—11th
Rich Golding—12th
Scott Hulse—12th
Jerry Roach—12th
Matt Dennis—16th
Mike Dennis—17th

Ethan Stoops—17th
Carl Godsoe—19th
Lawrence Taylor—19th
Tamea Isham—28th

Anniversary

Scott and Sheryl
Hulse—13th

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