



Tinkering Times



Valley Trash: Remembering a History of Coal

by Tom Cresap

The beautiful and friendly town of Sutton, Alaska—on the shores of the Matanuska River—was the site of the annual Valley Trash car show on July 23rd. The beautiful, sunny day was truly a bit of a rest from the over 5” of welcome rain we had in the last 9 days.

The Valley Trash Show gets its name from an insensitive comment made by a newscaster years ago. It always takes place on the beautiful, rustic grounds of Sutton’s Alpine Historic Park, which celebrates the area’s coal mining era, especially the long-closed Jonesville Mine.

Museum volunteers always provide food for the participants and trophies for peoples’ choice of the best vehicles. As a finale, they auction off locally-crafted desserts. This is always fun, and it provides delicious treats for the winning bidders. The proceeds go to the museum.

The Antique Auto Musers and the Alaskan A’s fielded about eight of the approximately 30 cars on



Three 1931 Model A's, Carl Godsoe's pickup, Tom Cresap's slant window and John Tichener's pickup, sit at the Valley Trash show at Alpine Museum in Sutton.

display, and AAMA member, Louie Finch, won a third-place trophy for his beautiful 1956 Mercury Montclair 2-door hardtop. (More pictures on p. 4)

‘Drive Your Old Truck Day

On beautiful, June 26 evening, AAMA members drove five vintage trucks to the Lake Hood Seaplane Base to celebrate "Drive Your Old Truck Day" sponsored by *Vintage Truck Magazine*. From left to right: 1939 International D2, Scott Hulse; 1964 Willys Jeep FC-170, Brian

Anderson; 1952 Chevrolet 6400 and 1931 Reo 1D, Mike and Gwyn Wiedmer; 1969 Chevrolet K10, Ken Evans.

Also pictured are Mike's friend Roy (next to Brian), and Gwyn's mom Shirley (next to Gwyn.)

(See photo, p. 4.)

August Meeting

Our August 10th meeting happens at Hope Community Resources Learning Center at 6:30 pm.

This is a busy month, and we will undoubtedly talk about what happened at the Jay Ofsthun Show and what is going to happen at our Diamond Gala.

Again, it is suggested that you bring a mask. A new, more virulent, COVID bug is roaming around, and we have experienced infections among our membership.

Come join us, even with a careful after-meeting driveabout.

Running Board Reflections



The Mattes clan, Linda and her five brothers and sisters, sit on the hood of the family car on the Fourth of July in Chicago, circa mid-1960's. Linda is the tall one with the glasses (second from the left).

I have always loved the Fourth of July. When we were growing up, there certainly had to be a picnic with relatives. Since our family tree was so large, we could count on visiting a branch with a swimming hole or an above-ground pool. If not, we would unroll the "Slip'N Slide" or at the very least, run through the sprinkler to cool off in the unbearable Chicago summer heat.

And of course, there was lots of food! Which meant the usual burgers and hot dogs, and inevitably two types of potato salad; Gramma insisted that the German potato salad she made was the best. Dipping the potato chips into Dad's onion dip was sure to bring tears to your eyes. Jell-O desserts were ubiquitous; the red and blue colors were most popular for that celebration. (Personally, my favorites are green and orange.) And who can forget the watermelons! When we were young, watermelons still had seeds, and we had seed-spitting contests. It was messy and fun, and I'm sure that I never won.

The best part of the day, however, was the evening. Dad LOVED fireworks, and some of my most vivid memories of him involve us watching, sparklers in hand, while he

and the adults (and later my brothers) lit off the displays he would buy. He would pass out the noisemakers, like Cherry Bombs and Black Cats, but he also shot off aerial displays. I suspect he spent a small, nay, a large fortune, on fireworks over the years. It is truly a miracle that everyone still had his fingers at the end of the day. I'm sure that our hearing was damaged beyond repair.

I wish we could now celebrate with fireworks, but here in Alaska, summer fireworks are a non-starter. Our July sky never has the inky blackness necessary to show off the chrysanthemums and rings, the peonies and comets, or the spirals and waterfalls we all love to see.

Instead, as I drink my morning coffee, and read the Declaration of Independence (yes, I am THAT nerd), I prepare to celebrate in a less flamboyant way, with the friends who have become our Alaskan family. We may not light fireworks, but we bring enjoyment to lots of people who love our cars. And we still have a wonderful picnic! For next year, I think I may have to unearth the recipe for Gramma's German potato salad.

LMG



2022 Officers

President: Linda Mattes
Golding
351-3251

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868-1680

Secretary: Greg Carpenter
Treasurer: Scott Hulse
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Sergeant-at-Arms: Dutch
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Tamea Isham-688-3671
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Brian Anderson (2015-16)
Mike Wiedmer (2013-14)
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Opinions expressed by authors of Tinkering Times—including references about how wonderful we are—are their own and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Antique Auto Musers of Alaska or any facsimile of reality, for that matter.

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.

Secured, Enclosed Storage In West Downtown Anchorage

9'x18'x 7-1/2' high space
\$150/month for single
2 spaces-\$125/each
Dave Syren



For Sale: 1957 Thunderbird D-Class 312 Y-Block. Well-maintained and ready for the road; soft-top and Porthole Hardtop. Email or call David Jensen for more info. She's in her best shape since being introduced to Alaska 12 years ago. \$37,500. David Jensen, (907) 868-1680, david@alaskaportraits.com

For Sale: 1962 Renault Caravelle convertible with removable hard top; 95% restored; Ward W. Wells, 1655 Bodenbug Lp., Palmer AK 99645. Phone: 907-232-5221.

For Sale: Grandma's 1968 Dodge Dart 4-door with a strong running slant six engine. 70,000 original miles! Body straight, complete & accident free. Stored several years outside under a tarp. Trans working when stored, but has leaked fluid. Owner is asking \$500. Call Scott Grundy for more photos at 907-322-9283.

Schedule of Events

Summer Wednesday drive-abouts began on May 11 and continue throughout the summer as weather permits.

- * August 6—Pre-Show n Shine Dimond and Jewel Lake, 4-9 pm
- * August 7—Jay Ofsthun Show n Shine, Anchorage Park Strip 8-4
- * August 10—6:30 Meeting
- * August 13—Diamond Jubilee
- * August 13—Hot Summer Nights show Palmer, 4-9 pm
- * August 20—Alaska State Fair Parade and Car Show (Mark Graber, 907-563-0056)
- * August 20—Kenai/Soldotna day trip, join Kaknu Kruzers, Leave 8 am from Carr's Huffman
- * September 3—9 am, Adopt-A-Road
- * September 14—6:30 Meeting
- * September 17—Dimond Center Show 10-4, east side parking lot
- * September 24—Fall Colors Tour, leave Carr's Huffman 9 am



For Sale: 1955 Ford Fairlane 500 Town Sedan; 272 V8, Cruise O Matic, radio, heater; not running, has been sitting outside. Asking \$5,500. Sandra Manfred 907-333-1926.



For Sale: 1957 Thunderbird; health issues and lack of space; Torch Red; hard and soft top; 312 ci V8; 4 bbl carburetor; automatic transmission; new updated brake system; new radial white wall tires (less than 500 miles); recently tuned; rebuilt radiator; no rust or dents; new fuel tank; shop, repair and restoration manuals from the National Thunderbird club. Runs great. Over \$50,000 invested, and I'm asking \$35,000 obo. Contact Ron Martindale at (907)748-4385

Kenai Day Trip

by Jim Fredenhagen

On Sat, Aug 20th, the Antique Auto Musers and Alaskan A's are having the annual Soldotna/Kenai Day trip.

We'll leave Carrs Huffman at 8 am and take the leisurely drive south to have lunch and carshow at the Kenai Mall with the Kaknu Kruzers.

Afterward we'll tour to the local senior center and head home via the Kenai River Bridge and K Beach road.

Join us at the Alaska State Fair.

Meet in downtown Palmer on August 20th at 10:30 am. The parade begins at 11:00am and includes admission to the fair for participants.
(Mark Graber, 907-563-0056)

Drive Your Old Truck Day



Old truck aficionados meeting at Lake Hood sea plane base are (from left to right) 1939 International D2, Scott Hulse; 1964 Willys Jeep FC-170, Brian Anderson; 1952 Chevrolet 6400 and 1931 Reo 1D, Mike and Gwyn Wiedmer; 1969 Chevrolet K10, Ken Evans. Also pictured are Mike's friend Roy (next to Brian), and Gwyn's mom Shirley (next to Gwyn.)

Jay Ofsthun Show This Weekend

On Saturday, August 6th, MSSRA will host the Pre-Show and Shine at the Anchorage Police Training Center from 5-9 pm. The address is 3740 W. Dimond Blvd. Owners will register their cars for people's choice award.

Next day, Sunday, the main show at the Park Strip starts at 9am. AAMA would like to have volunteers at 7:30 am to help both to set up the show and our tent. Then we should also stay to break down our shelters and to clean up afterwards.

Coffee and donuts will be provided for our early bird working members.

MSSRA will charge \$10 entry fee this year. Bring cash, because they are not set up to take credit cards. The fee will help defray the expenses of site rental and porta potties. Any remaining money will go to a charity.

Please remember to bring your own chair and dress for the weather, which may be cool and rainy!

AAMA will have a tent for socializing. Mike Wiedmer Will be boiling hot dogs. Club is providing Dogs, buns and chips. Bring Salad and sweets to share. Water is provided. Bring your own soda. MSSRA has also planned several food vendors.

Contact President Linda Mattes-Golding if you have any questions: 907-351-3251 or 1954img@gmail.com

Valley Trash Photos



Otto Binder and his wife, Lihua, stand by Otto's unique creation he made from parts scavenged from several Cadillacs over 20 years ago.



Nat Gardner presented a trophy to Louie Finch for his beautiful 1956 Mercury Montclair 2-door hardtop at the Sutton Valley Trash Show on July 23rd.

AAMA Business Meeting
July 13, 2022
 at Hope Community
 Resources Learning Center
 570 W. 53rd Ave.
 Anchorage, Alaska

Meeting called to order at 6:32 pm by President Linda Mattes Golding

There were 24 members present.

Guests were Ken and Season Baker along with Kevin Redman

Treasurer's Report

Scott Hulse provided the financial report. Income has been from ticket sales for the 60th anniversary celebration.

July Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved from the June business meeting as published in the Tinkering Times.

Old Business

***The AAMA website calendar of events* should be up to date. Linda Mattes Golding thanked everyone for their participation in all the events that have been held this summer.

***The Bear Paw car show* is Friday July 15 from 5:00 to 9:00 pm. Jim Fredenhagen said for those participating everyone can meet at the Northway Mall parking lot at 4:30 pm then drive out together.

***The Show and Shine pre-show* will take place on Saturday August 6th from 5:00 to 9:00 pm at the APD Training Facility parking lot next to the McDonalds at Jewel Lake and Dimond.

***The Show and Shine happens* on Sunday August 7th from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. This year, to cover some of the costs to put on the event, MSSRA will charge \$10 per vehicle. Only cash will be accepted. Remaining funds raised during the event will be given to the Project Healing Waters Charity. Project Healing Waters is dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and

disabled veterans through fly fishing and related activities. Setup for the event will begin at 7:00 am.

***Jim Fredenhagen talked about the Valley Trash Car Show* in Sutton on Saturday July 23rd. For those participating, Jim will lead a caravan from the Northway Mall at 9:00 am.

***Tam Isham reported that 65 people* so far have purchased tickets for the 60th anniversary celebration to be held at the Alaska Aviation Museum on Saturday August 13.

New Business

***Mark Graber gave an update* on the Palmer State Fair parade Saturday August 20th. Meet in downtown Palmer at 10:30 am. The parade begins at 11:00 am and includes admission to the fair for participants.

***The Kenai Cruise also happens* on Saturday August 20th. Meet at the Carr's store on Huffman at 8:00 am.

The club would like to reschedule the driveabout to several senior living facilities that was originally planned for Father's Day but was cancelled.

Once a date is determined the event will be added to the AAMA calendar.

***The Hope weekend has been cancelled* and the deposit returned. If anyone is interested in organizing this event for next year Dennis Allen can provide all the details.

***Tom Cresap would like* any Tinkering Times newsletter items before July 23 since he will have a short turn around time to put together the next issue.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

President Linda Mattes Golding announced birthdays and anniversaries for the month.

Next Month's Driveabout

Greg Carpenter will lead the dinner driveabout following the August business meeting after being coerced by President Linda.

Meeting Adjourned

Meeting adjourned at 7:11 pm, followed by a drive to Fire Tap restaurant for dinner.

Respectfully submitted.

Greg Carpenter, Secretary



Paul Harvey would love this. In our last issue, we included a photo, above, of Walt Sonen's 1934 Ford dressed as a mermaid in the Seldovia Fourth of July Parade. At the left is "the rest of the story." The MC commented that it looked like Walt had run over the poor creature. (Thanks to Ken Morton and Walt for the photos.)

Requiem for a Parts Man

by Rich Golding

Wayne's wooden desk was always covered in various automotive parts, alongside diverse collections of random springs and wires and nuts and bolts and paperwork and post-it notes and automotive ephemera. Many of those nuts, memorandums and what-have-yous had been occupying the same space and cluttering the same real estate on that desk for as long as I had known and done business with the man. To the best of my recollection, an affiliation and friendship that approached some forty years.

The aforementioned desk was surrounded by cartons of parts that had arrived via delivery truck, presumably sometime in the recent past. These boxes were usually stacked on top of each other, from floor to ceiling, alongside parts catalogs and repair manuals. On the walls hung posters received from various automotive suppliers, as well as framed photos and drawings depicting all things Volkswagen. Wayne was not what most folks would refer to as a 'tidy housekeeper.' In fact, there was seldom a square foot of uncluttered air space within the small office that fronted his garage. But Wayne Johnson, a tall lanky country boy with large hands and slightly clumsy appearance, always seemed to know, at any given moment, exactly where every part in his place was located. Forever tromping around in his leather tooled, wooden heeled cowboy boots, the octogenarian parts man would gingerly ascend rickety ladders and step stools, brushing parts and boxes of parts aside and reaching deep behind them, invariably pulled out just the piece you needed to keep your precious air-cooled VW up and running.



Wayne Johnson

Next to the office, and through a doorway that itself was usually blocked by parts and more parts, was the garage.

"Watch your step, there's a lot to trip over," he would forewarn you, as he skillfully escorted you across the greasy floor and through the dimly lit labyrinth that was this man's kingdom. You could look around and marvel at all the specialty tools and equipment lying about. There were always several half-completed engines, some on stands, others on the floor, within easy view as you cautiously circumnavigated the cleared trails around them and the ever present shallow pans of drained oil, and the kitty litter that Wayne had spread out over the grease-smear concrete floor. To the untrained or unappreciative eye, that garage appeared to be a treacherous, oily, cluttered chamber of horrors. But to the few Alaskan Wolfsburg gearheads that still existed, a palace of delight.

"Say, isn't that an old 1200 engine case?" one might exclaim, pointing at some half assembled air-cooled treasure you may have spotted back in some corner, encircled by an indiscriminate stockpile of 1/2 inch drive sockets and shop rags.

Intrepidly leading the way through the maze of engines and transmissions and whatnot ahead of you, Wayne might suddenly stop short, turn around, and with a smile, tell you the story of the guy who "dropped that one off" to have it rebuilt that morning, or last week, or possibly even months earlier. A twinkle in his eye would occasionally light up the old man's rubbery face, crowned with a generous shock of grey, well combed wavy hair; and another story would succeed the first. Almost surely several more would follow. One engine's tale might even relate to the story of another, situated on the other side of the garage, and possibly to a brake cylinder or six volt generator or windshield wiper transmission occupying one of the shelves that lined the walls. I recall many an exhilarating expedition through Wayne's dominion, where after several such stories, you might even forget what it was, indeed, that you had journeyed to the garage for, having to return again later to pick up that particular part you came for in the first place.

Many times a visit to "Johnson's" (See p. 7, "Requiem for a Parts Man")

Requiem for a Parts Man

(Continued from p. 6)

Repair” consisted of nothing more than talking over Volkswagens and old times. Often Wayne might spin around in his old swivel chair behind the business end of that office desk and grab a small part, perhaps an old rusty valve spring or some obscure dash switch, and queried “have you ever seen one of these?” Oftentimes proceeding to challenge you by asking: “Can you tell me what this is?”

The seasoned visitor to Wayne’s knew that their dropping by to pick up a simple part, could easily expand into an hour or two of conversation and joking. But I never knew any customer of Johnson’s Repair that ever complained about it.

For several months before he passed, I began visiting more frequently. These trips weren’t necessarily for any parts or mechanical advice. My old friend had undergone a particularly difficult surgery. The doctors had to cut away most of the lower portion of his face to radically remove a cancer beneath it. Afterwards, they stitched what they could back onto him. His countenance was left askew, his lips being uneven where they met. Black and blue, his mouth hung open to one side.

I must admit to being a bit apprehensive on my first visit back to his garage after the operation. I pulled my 1971 Volkswagen Squareback into the driveway of his small, nondescript Turnagain home, identifiable to any new or potential customers searching up and down residential 31st Avenue by the small round “VW Circle” street sign mounted to his mailbox.

I knocked on and entered the office through its door, and sure

enough, there was Wayne back at work, sitting behind his desk almost as soon as he had been released from the hospital. Answering customer calls on the phone and sounding and responding just like the Wayne I’d always known. Never complaining about, nor hardly ever even discussing his condition, you could sit, joke and talk Volkswagens with him across his desk all day.

But with each succeeding visit, something felt different. Something was different. And after about a half hour of conversation one afternoon, Wayne stopped talking. Then he looked directly at me. It became apparent that we were destined that afternoon to address the elephant in the room. But I don’t think either of us were sure how to. I believe he didn’t want to drag a friend into something he probably considered to be ‘his problem.’

We stared at one another, over that desk, for what seemed like

minutes, with neither of us uttering a word. Two old friends, with a subject never before discussed, perched between them.

By now I had a pretty good idea what it was that he wanted to talk about. And I think he knew that I knew what he wanted to talk about. But still, neither of us spoke a word.

Several more minutes of anticipatory silence lapsed, and I was about to take the initiative, when Wayne looked me in the eye and chanted in an uncharacteristically quiet and metered tone, “Do you mind if I ask you something?”

I shook my head slowly in affirmation.

“I want to ask you . . . a personal question. I mean, as a friend. You know, one friend to another. Know what I mean?”

“Sure,” I responded in almost a whisper. The venue that through decades past customarily hosted (See p. 8, “Requiem for a Parts Man”)



On July 13, AAMA member, Josh Kimzey, married Jen Leopold at Eklutna Lake. Josh is the grandson of Colleen Kimzey-Hansen. Pictured at lakeside are Howard and Colleen Hansen with the bride and groom.

Requiem for a Parts Man

(Continued from p.7)

noisy, even rowdy conversations, was suddenly hushed and still. One could hear a pin drop.

Without looking at me, his glance turned down at his desk, at the paperwork and small parts and VW paraphernalia strewn about it. Without looking up at me he sighed slowly and then courageously asked,

“Tell me something, will you?” Hesitating, he took in a breath and continued. “I’ve noticed how most people won’t look at me anymore when I talk to them. They seem afraid of me. I don’t know, maybe they feel sorry for me.” His glance dropped back down again at the desk. “There are only a few who don’t . . . mostly my family . . . and a few old friends. You’re one of those friends, Rich. So I’m asking you. Would you please tell me . . . tell me the truth?”

Pausing again, he lifting his head up and gazed straight into my eyes.

“Tell me, please! How do I look? I get the feeling that people are scared of me.” Raising a hand, he pointed directly at his face. “Are people scared of the way I look? Tell me the truth. Do I look scary to you?”

I gazed back, directly into my old friend’s face. Finding it difficult to hold back emotion, I tried hard to remain deliberately impassive. Unlike the years and decades of small talk and jokes and automotive banter

(See p. 9, “Requiem for a Parts Man”)

Will the Hope Event Be Revived?



Colleen and Howard show off the ribbons they won in the 2022 Hope Wagon Trail Days race.

2022 the third year in a row, AAMA cancelled the traditional Hope Weekend, which had been popular for a good number of our members.

Wagon Trail Days Festival and 5k Run, a benefit event supporting the local Emergency Medical Services was usually led by the capable efforts of Dennis and Diane Allen, but during the first two years of the COVID 19 pandemic, Hope residents understandably didn’t want to jeopardize themselves by having visitors.

This year, the town decided to cautiously reopen and renew the popular 5k run. Dennis and Diane, however, opted out as a precaution due to Diane’s compromised immune system, and lacking anyone to carry on in their place, the club decided not to go.

Then Howard Hansen (our inveterate 90-year-old athlete) and his wife, Colleen, decided to go and take part in the footrace. Not surprisingly, Howard took the blue ribbon for his age group and Colleen came in second in hers, due—as she pointed out—to her choice to walk around the course with Howard.

Congratulations to them both for the accomplishment.

This is not the end of the story.

(See p. 9, “Hope Event”)



Model A's enjoy Alpine Museum in Sutton, Alaska



The folks at the Alpine Museum invited us to park our cars on the upper lawn, providing for a nice highlighting of our vehicles. At left, Rob Katsur gets a lesson on crank starting his 1928 Ford AR under the careful tutelage of Jim Fredenhagen. Above four Model A's: Cresap's, Tichener's, Fredenhagen's and Katsur's sit in the sunlight.



Hansens' collection of ribbons

Hope Event

(Continued from p. 8)

Upon returning, Howard said Hope was so much fun that he wants to sponsor next year's event. He will need help, and hopes other members will volunteer. Tom and Marcy Cresap have already chimed in and offered. Let's see if we can get more interest in this fun event.

The Hope runners undoubtedly miss our capable cheering squad. 🐰

Requiem for a Parts Man

(Continued from p. 8)

that transpired back and forth over that desk between us two, this was a discussion I would never have expected to have with Wayne. I looked my old friend in the eye, quietly gulped down a dry swallow, and answered.

"Gee Wayne . . . I don't know . . . I think it may actually be an improvement!"

Two old men stared silently across the desk at each other for a few seconds, then burst into mutual laughter. Wayne reached over and rabbit punched me in the shoulder. I raised my fist as if to respond with a throw of my own. He crossed his arms in front of him, as if to block the punch, all the while laughing. The both of us laughed so hard that we

each began coughing, and had to sit down. Then two old friends discussed Volkswagens for what seemed like a couple of hours straight. After which I got up, shook his hand and saying "goodbye," turned for the door.

"I'll see you soon," said Wayne, smiling.

"Yeah, take care," I responded with a wave and a smile of my own.

I never saw my old friend Wayne, the VW parts man, alive again. He passed about a week later.

After having spent over two hours at VW Circle that afternoon, whilst driving home from that meeting I stopped at a red light and suddenly remembered how I had forgotten to pick up the part I had originally come in for that day. 🐰



David Jensen's 1957 Thunderbird sits at a pull-out along Turnagain during an afternoon rain south of Anchorage.

August

Birthdays

Marianne Robinson—6th

David Tullis—8th

Barbara Russell—11th

Lester (Blacky) Black—15th

Philip Morrow—19th

Karen AvilaLederhos—23rd

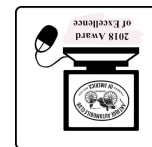
Scott Grundy—25th

Ellie Carty—28th

Bill Chace—31st

Anniversaries

Marcy & Tom Cresap—31st



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