



The Autograf.

A Publication of the Mississippi Valley Region of the AACA



www.mvr.aaca.com

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President's Message

Happy New Year!

At least that's what I hope it will be. After last year, it won't take much to make it a better year. It was a hard year, especially on our membership. We have lost many members and others have suffered the wrath of Covid 19. For those that we have lost our sympathy goes out to them. For those who have been ill, I hope that there is a speedy recovery so we can get back to the enjoyment of our vehicles. Membership is an important part of our region and although we mourn our loss, we must recruit new members or our hobby will be only a fond memory also. Let's all do our part and find those who believe that our vehicles are special and provide a part of the past that needs to be preserved and honored. It is up to those who have survived to promote our passion.

Covid has put a halt to our annual participation in the Rod'N'Custom Auto Show. There is a display going on, but with all that is going on your Board of Directors decided that it was in our best interest to pass this year. We will also pass on any meeting etc. for the month of January. Outlooks are starting to look brighter but we need to be prudent until we can get outside in the open air or the situation lets up. The Annual Meeting in Philadelphia was postponed until April so I don't have to worry about airplanes or hazardous roads till then.

I was able to tour the new Bend Expo. If all the pieces fall in place, it will be a great spot for our 2022 National Show. It could be inside with air conditioning and no worry about rain.

Perhaps even space for a flea market. Hopefully in March the whole club can tour and awe at its amenities.

Stay positive and well so that we can hit the road as soon as possible.

– Mary B



A.A.C.A. – CENTRAL DIVISION NATIONAL MEET hosted by MVR Region: August 11-13, 2022.

OTHER EVENTS



Website Changes!

Our Webmaster, Dwayne Cederblom is doing some behind the scenes changes to our club website. One big project is a page showing every member's car. ***He needs your photographs.***

Dwayne asks that you email him a picture of your car that is 1 mb or less. This is optimal for our website system.

Send your car photo along with the car's description (year, make & model) to dwaynec48@gmail.com

Summer's End

A spot dedicated to members that have recently passed.

Bill Lindle

Carl "Sam" Nyman

Lee Smith

Gary Heitman

Former member Lee Smith died at age 83. For those who have not been members for a length of time, Lee was a Nationally Known Drag Racer. Sponsored by Chrysler and Learner Sales and Service, he raced in Funny and Pro Stock categories and was very successful. He was inducted into the MoPar Hall of Fame in 2015, and was the most winning driver of his time at the "World Series of Drag Racing" in Cordova, as well as on tracks in Texas and the West Coast. Famous rides include the Crazee Cuda and Whackee Wagon, and Haulin Hemi II. Along with his driving, he was the inventor of a special 5 speed transmission that allowed the driver a faster shift. In his later years, he opened "The Car Shop" in Moline that specialized in speed equipment. He was a collector of Petroliana and welcomed us and those attending our National Meets many times to his museum in Moline.

In his collection during his membership he had a 57 Dodge D501 formerly owned by Arnie Beswick, an 80's Corvette, and a Model T Ford. His former rides have brought high dollars at auction.

-Mary



The Last Fiero

On August 16th of 1988 at 10:30 am, the last Pontiac Fiero, VIN 1G2PG1195JP226402 Bright Red with a Gray Metrix Cloth interior and powered by a 135 hp 2.8L V-6 came off the GM Fiero Plant assembly line in Pontiac, Michigan.

Five model years prior, the Fiero was introduced with the first production unit being red while hosting a gray interior and 4-cylinder power. More than just a new model, the Fiero was a new innovative manufacturing process that was completely different from anything GM had previously done, incorporating a drivable spaceframe chassis that was machined to fit the independent exterior body panels. The car's production was an experiment in management-team employee relations. The emphasis was on quality and to that end there were no ranks, just a team working together. The concept produced the desired results, with the car taking the highest rating for quality corporate -wide in three of its five model years of production according to the General Motors Corporate Quality Audit.

On the last production day in August 1988 there was a celebration going on at the plant. Not a party to signify the end of the car but rather to celebrate the success of the program, the car and the teamwork that made it all happen. Months before this day the plant manager, Tim Lee had petitioned GM's hierarchy to let him give away two cars in a raffle to his team members. His passionate arguments found favor from PMD Corporate Management. On the final run of production there were 68 Fieros that came down the line with the last three designated to be special. Serial Number 226400, the last Fiero built for public consumption, a red car with a 4-cylinder was built to pay homage to the first production Fiero. Serial number 226401 and 226402 were specially built to be given away to lucky members of the Fiero plant through a raffle.





As number 226402 came down the line the team was invited to sign the car on the space frame, inside of panels, under the dash and anywhere below the visible body. The last two Fieros were personal to the teams at the Fiero Assembly Plant. Each plant employee on the assembly line inspected their parts bins and provided only the best quality parts to be installed on the last two cars. Not only were these the last Pontiac Fieros built, they were the end of a manufacturing era in Pontiac Michigan, being the last Pontiac automobiles to ever be built in the vast manufacturing complex.

When the raffle name for 226402 was drawn it was that of fork truck driver, Mike Kelley, from operations supply. Mike drove his prize out of the back of the plant and onto a trailer. After a brief stop at Packer Pontiac for a required dealer inspection he brought it to his home where it would sit unwrapped and covered in a garage. (The protective plastic was never removed from the carpet, door panels, steering wheel etc.) For the next thirty-one years Mike rarely drove the car taking it out only to the occasional local show and twice to the Anniversary Fiero National meets. He accumulated just 583 miles on the little red Fiero with 200 of the miles driven specifically for the Fiero enthusiasts to see the car at their events.

On one of those special occasions that Mike chose to take the car out he met a dealer of collector cars at a local cruise-in. As one could only imagine the subject of selling the car came up. This time Mike was ready but only on the condition that the car go far away from the area. After all those years of love and caring Mike knew he could not stand to see the car out and around with someone else behind the wheel. So, a deal was made between Mike and the collector dealer who then worked with a partner in North Carolina to set up an auction for the sale of the Last Fiero.

At first the news of the Last Fiero's auction was not widely broadcast. It was quietly promoted through the car club community, but as will happen the story eventually made it into several automotive related publications and to the internet whereby knowledge of the sale grew. As the auction day drew nearer there were stories of worldwide bidders looking to make the car their own. Such rumors greatly concerned membership of the Midwest Fiero Club. This club with their dedicated membership saw this sale and the potential loss of the car from American soil as a real concern. After all, this was the Last Fiero and as Midwest Fiero Club President Fred Bartemeyer said, "It is not an automobile anymore, It's a piece of American Automotive history." .

There were three special Fieros produced that last day. Number 226400, the likeness of the first Fiero resides in discrete private ownership showing a total accumulation of just 61 miles. Car 226401 had gone to another plant employee through the raffle. That winner chose to use the car as a driver eventually selling it in 1993 to someone out East where the trail ends. Serial Number 226402, the Last Fiero, ended up being the only obtainable car of the last three, so members of the Midwest Fiero Clubs hatched a plan. They would band together and buy number 226402. This car, this piece of history, would be protected and pre-

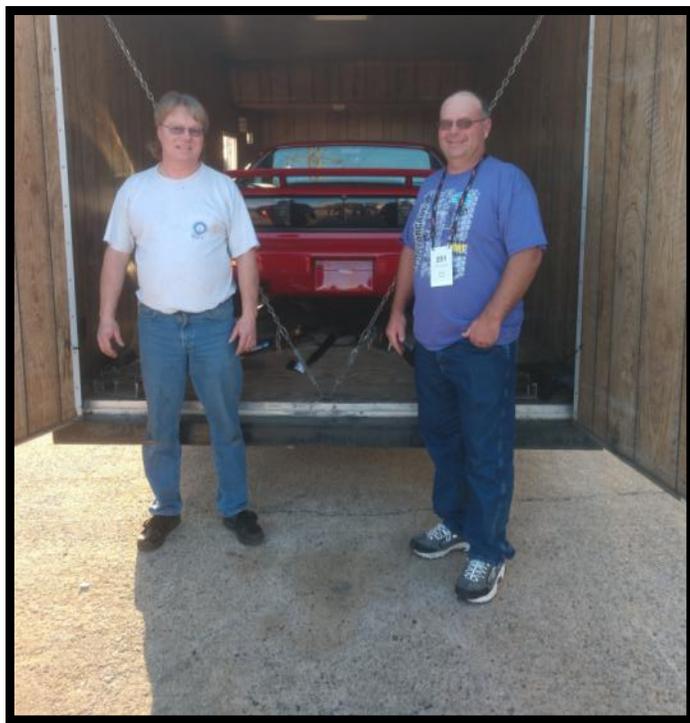
preserved for the future generations of Fiero and Pontiac enthusiasts.

On the morning of November 7th Dan Theurauf, a farmer from Solon, Iowa and a member of the Midwest Fiero Club Region and the AACA, stood with Fred Bartemeyer of Davenport, Iowa. Fred, a union electrician by trade is the president of the Midwest Fiero Clubs and an AACA member. The two men have been friends for more than 25 years, their love of the Fiero sparking



their relationship. In fact the two men were charter members of Heartland Fieros of Iowa. Between the two of them they have over 50 Fieros, many of which are very unique low mileage models including factory experimental prototypes. These men along with their wives had come to the auction with a singular goal, to bring the Last Fiero home.

At 12:41, Lot #76.4 rolled up on the block and immediately fierce bidding began. Fred Bartemeyer would later reflect, "It was the fastest 3 minutes of my life". The car quickly cleared the \$65,000 reserve and just when the Iowa men and their wives thought bidding activity may slow down, an internet bid of \$80,000.00 was posted. A man from Florida in the crowd was not going to be intimidated and countered. The car price continued to climb but now it was just between the Iowa team and the Fiero collector from Florida. When the gavel fell at \$90,000.00 it was a price that would send shock waves through the collector car world. "A clear indication that the generations of car enthusiasts are focusing on their era of automobile" as quoted from several internet blogs. The Last Pontiac Fiero produced is headed to Iowa where its future will be one of preservation and as a benchmark reference for restorations.



Please send the stories of your first car and your first restoration in for publication. Mark

My First Antique Vehicle. -A Monthly Feature

*Editor's Note. **Larry Tschappat** grew up working in his father's business, E&J Salvage in Rock Island, Illinois. I am sure many of us can remember hunting car parts in that yard.*

People would bring their cars down to junk them at the yard. Some of them were running so we would put them off to the side. On Saturday mornings we would race them through the rows of the yard often "bumping" each other. Sometimes the races ended up out on the road down to Dingle-dine's truck farm.

My father had a 1927 Chevrolet sedan with the disk wheels. The engine was bad so it sat at the yard until a 28 Chevrolet with a good engine came into the yard and it was swapped. (1928 was the last year for the Chevrolet 4 cylinder.) This was my high school driver and it even went to my first year at Augustana College with me in 1959.

I then graduated up to a 1956 MGA. This was my next car and I fixed it up while in college. I drove this one to grad school in Iowa City as well. This was my favorite car and the first of my sports cars.

At graduation my dad gave me 56 Ford 2-door with a six cylinder and a three on the tree.

In 1966 I was drafted into the Army. Before being sent to Vietnam I decided I wanted one new car so I ordered out a 1966 Pontiac Tempest with a bench seat, 4 on the floor, a 4 barrel carb and a posi rear end.

Returning from the Army I sold the Tempest and drove a hand-me-down 1969 Eldorado. Following a short marriage, money was tight and I ended up driving cars from the yard. One was a Plymouth that had been rear-ended and the trunk lid was just folded. The back bumper was pushed up, taking with it the fill neck to the fuel tank which was located behind the rear license plate. This limited my ability to put fuel into the car so I kept a 5 gallon can with me, the kind that had a flexible pour spout so I could get gas in the tank. Needless to say, more than once I ran out of gas.

Another yard car I drove was an old, well worn police car. While on a date with my now wife we were going around the bend by Seaford Clothing on 5th Avenue in Rock Island when one of the rear axles came out of the housing. I had to walk into a bar across the street asking for guys to help push the car.

After Vietnam I was bartending at Town & Country when a friend called up and asked me to run a salvage yard in Santa Barbara, California. I spent three years there running that yard. It was there in California that I found my 64 Shelby Cobra. When I decided to return to Illinois I fashioned brackets for the frame and pulled the Cobra back on a tow bar the whole way, at one point being chased by a tornado through Kansas.



20 Years Ago in the Mississippi Valley Region.

By Gary Gleason

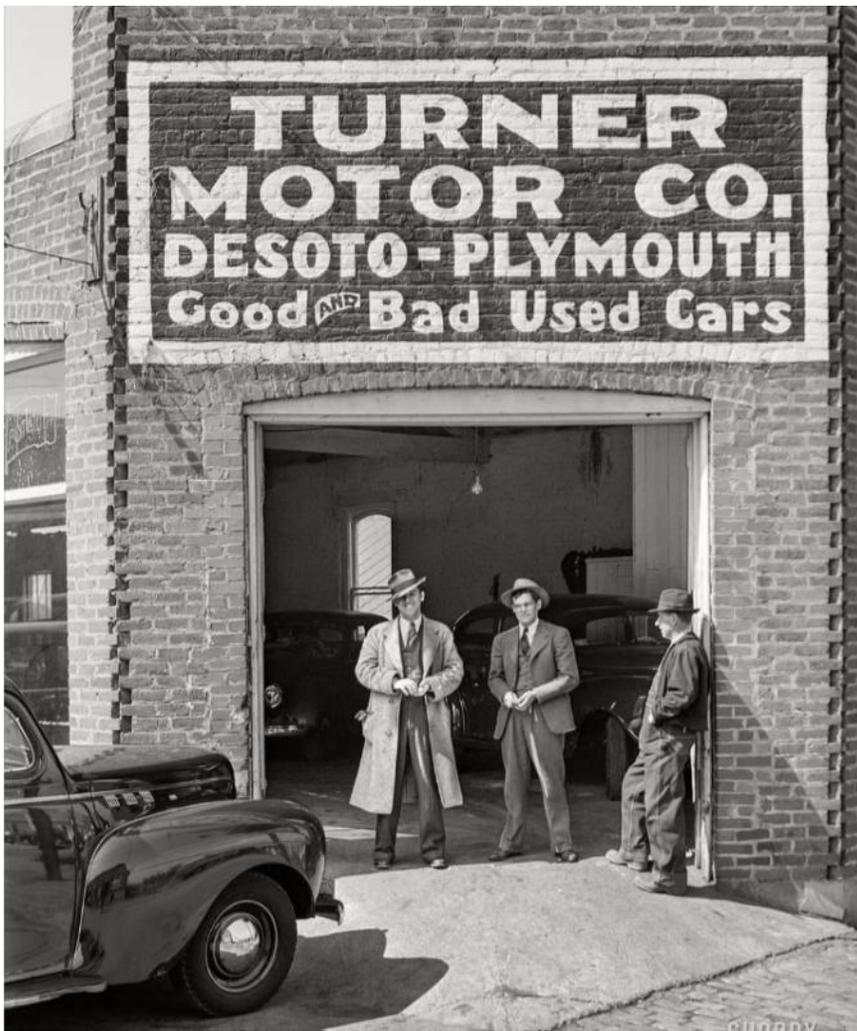
MVR AACA January 2001

Sixty-six MVR members attended the Annual banquet at the Abbey Depot in Rock Island. New officers for 2001 were introduced. They are:

Buck Wendt-President
Craig Beek-Vice President
Scott Lohman-Past President
Cy Galley-Treasurer
Dick Perry-Secretary
Dick and Sandy Perry-Editors
Mike Radford-Board member
Mike Fielder-Board member
Alan Lee-Board member
Calvin Frels-Board member
Jim Scott-Board member
Larry Tschappat-Board member
Chuck Hoaglund-Membership
Bernice Amundsen-Sunshine
Gary Gleason-Historian

January 10th will be the board and membership meeting at Craig Beek's Showroom to discuss the upcoming AACA Grand National in August.

E.J. and Linda Veit took their 1935 Packard 12 Roadster to the Southeastern Division Fall Meet at Cape Canaveral, Florida and won their Senior Award.



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Saturday by appointment only

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