



NEWS

Volume 28 Issue 10

A Car Club for the Chrysler Corporation and American Motors Enthusiast (est 1992)

October 2020

Upcoming Events

• CCM General Meeting

Tuesday October 6

canceled

• Bunch Brunch?

TBA

• CCM Board Meeting

Tuesday October 20

TBA

• The Lunch Bunch

TBA

Cap City Mopars has cancelled all our events including the June Car Show and into October, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Future events are uncertain, so please be sure to "check in" with every event prior to coming out. Some health organizations are projecting we should continue to practice 'safe space' into next year. Other sources warn this may be the norm for as long as 18 months.

Please follow recommendations and stay safe.

Please watch the CCM Newsletter and website for future announcements.

Even if we can't meet, it's important to stay in touch with your fellow CCM members by phone, e-mail, text.

Don't be a stranger.



Driving Dangerously in Motown 1900-1930

courtesy SRT Tom June, 2020

The very first gasoline-powered vehicle driven on the streets of Detroit was built by engineer Charles Brady King in 1896. It went as fast as 20 mph, which was described in the newspaper as "tearing along the street at a lively rate, dodging people and teams."

The transition from the horse age to the motorized age would prove to be very dangerous. At first speeding vehicles were not a big problem, with only a few of them on Detroit streets, but the situation grew serious quickly.

As early as 1908, auto accidents in Detroit were recognized as a menacing problem: In two months that summer, 31 people were killed in car crashes and so many were injured it went unrecorded.

Soon thousands of cars jammed Detroit streets, driven by inexperienced drivers. Dealerships were instructed to provide five driving lessons to each new car owner. The city would take the lead to transform the streets and the minds of people from the age of horses to the new, fast-paced age of motor vehicles, but it was a battle that took decades to win.

No Rules- A Free-for-All

In the first decade of the 20th century there were no

stop signs, warning signs, traffic lights, traffic cops, driver's education, lane lines, street lighting, brake lights, driver's licenses or posted speed limits. Our current method of making a left turn was not known, and drinking-and-driving was not considered a serious crime.

There was little understanding of speed. Also, early vehicles were terrifyingly loud for horses and their owners, compounding the problem as their numbers grew quickly. Statistics kept by the Automobile Club of America recorded that in 1909 there were 200,000 motorized vehicles in the U.S. Just seven years later, in 1916, there were 2.25 million.

Autos Everywhere

In 1917, Detroit and its suburbs had 65,000 cars on the road, resulting in 7,171 accidents and 168 fatalities. Three-fourths of the victims were pedestrians.

Detroit differed from New York City and the east coast, where most automobiles were driven by uniformed chauffeurs hired by the wealthy. In Detroit everyone was driving.

One family was driven around

Detroit by their 11-year-old son. It was common for light truck delivery wagons to be driven by 14-year-old boys.

Streetcars, which ran up the center of the streets, were becoming the most dangerous place in the city for pedestrians. Disembarking streetcar riders had to run a gauntlet of racing cars, trucks, motorcycles and horse-drawn buggies to cross the street safely.

The most appalling tragedies were the number of children struck and killed by autos as they played in the street. In the 1920s, 60% of automobile fatalities nationwide were children under age 9.

Speeding

The main cause of motor vehicle accidents was seen as excessive speeding. Until 1909 there was no regulation of street traffic in Detroit. The courts and police decided to address the problem with a simple approach: Set the speed limit to match the pace of horse-drawn wagons, such as 5 mph. Make the streets as slow and safe as they were before cars.

After all, the automobile in the



continued on page 3



Member: Association of California Car Clubs & California Automobile Museum

GENERAL MEETING

October 6, 2020

Board of Directors

Officers

President - Bob Berry
Vice President - Mike Allen
Secretary - Cindy Lenz
Treasurer - Norm Benedict

Directors

Car Show Coordinator - vacant
Editor - Mark Perry
Membership Director - Richard Teerlink
Activities Coordinator - John Riordan
Web Master - Anthony Garcia

Staff Members

Sales – John Riordan
Competition - Michael Moore
Legislative Coordinator - Horace Tutt
Sunshine Coordinator - Cindy Lenz

Property Manager - Norman Benedict -
Publicity - Norman Benedict
Historian - Norman Benedict
Member(s) at Large - John Gerson
Steve Archer

Call Meeting to Order: 7 PM

Roll Call

Introductions: New Members and Guests

Guest Speaker:

Minutes: Secretary

Reports:

1. Treasurer
2. Newsletter Editor
3. Membership
4. Web Master
5. Legislative
6. Competition
7. Activities
8. Car Show - vacant

Club Business:

OLD:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

NEW:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

TABLED:

1. Car show coordinator position - vacant
- 2.

Announcements:

1. Mopar Day in the Park 27 - Sat. June 26, 2021
- 2.
- 3.
4. Shriners toy run - collecting all year

Open Forum / Bench Racing

Raffle

Adjourn

*This months
meeting is
cancelled due
to Museum
closure and
COVID 19*

2020 Calendar (tentative)

Jan. - Happy New Year
- Brunch Sun 26

Feb. - Brunch Sun 23

March - Brunch Sun 15

April - Brunch Sun 19

- ACCC Conference,
Wed-Thur, 22-23

- CCM host lunch Wed 22

- Lunch Bunch Wed 29

- Nevada City / Empire Mine
cruise Sun 26

May - Maxwell car show, Sat 16

- Brunch Sun 17

June - Mopar Day in the Park 27,
Sat 27, 2020

July - ?

Aug - ?

Sept - Mopar Shootout, Sat 26
Carmichael park picnic, Sun 13
ACCC conference, Wed-Thur

Oct - Poker Run

Nov - CAM potluck, Sun 29

Dec - CCM Holiday Party, Sat 5
- Shriners Toy Run, Sun 6

Lunch Bunch - TBA
Brunch Bunch - TBA

1910s was not yet considered an essential mode of transportation, and it was their speeding that confused pedestrians, frightened horses and tore up the roadways. But the "normal" speed from the horse age was so slow that automobile owners had difficulty keeping their cars from stalling out.

If drivers broke the law, the punishment was severe, with heavy fines, jail sentences, and charges of manslaughter and murder when pedestrians were hit and killed. In one afternoon in 1911 police hauled in 450 people on speeding charges.

However, the weakness of this strategy became clear as traffic got "thicker and thicker" as it was described. The initial police effort was called the Broadway Squad, copying a program started in New York City. Nine older policemen were assigned to help people, typically elderly, cross the now-treacherous downtown intersections. This was abolished and replaced with the Traffic Squad- one sergeant and 12 officers who rotated in four-man shifts. They devised a signaling method to unravel traffic "tangles" and "blockades," both terms from the horse and buggy days- the upraised hand was the signal to stop, and the swinging hand across the body the signal to start.

By 1916, one-fourth of the entire Detroit police force- 250 officers- was now used for managing traffic. On May 25, 1920, Detroit was second in the nation after New York to start a traffic court. It was announced the same day that the 17th person had been killed in the first 24 days of May. Soon the police admitted publicly they could not keep up with traffic and could not afford to add more men to street safety. The city was losing the war against reckless driving.

Accidents and Safety Parades

After World War I, as accidents continued to soar, drivers were being labeled in newspapers as "remorseless murderers," their danger to public safety likened to an epidemic disease. In Detroit and other cities angry mobs were dragging reckless drivers out of cars.

The Detroit Safety Council in 1919 had bells on fire stations, churches, schools and City Hall ring twice a day in memory of the street auto fatalities.

Safety parades, started in the 1920s, became an emotional relief valve for public loss. The busiest downtown Detroit intersections were labeled with giant "A," "B" or "C" cards to remind people to "Always Be Careful." Thousands watched as hulking wrecks of cars were towed down Woodward with placards that read "He tried to make 90!" or "Follow this one to

the cemetery."

Detroit's Better Ideas

In addition to the dangers drivers were creating, nuisance issues of parking and blocked streets were also a concern in Detroit. Multi-storied commercial buildings had no parking spaces and there were no laws for parking- people simply stopped their cars in front of a building and left them for hours.

By 1915, the automobile had become an essential method of transportation in Detroit, so it was now impractical to tell people to drive at 5 mph. The city also was staking a claim as the center of the motor vehicle industry; therefore, something had to be done about the gruesome daily publicity and the public's fear and anger at the automobile.

In some cities the courts had begun to consider implementing engine-mounted governors to limit a vehicle's speed. And as long as pedestrian deaths were attributed solely to drivers, the automobile industry had a huge public relations problem. In Detroit, one of their own stepped up to find solutions- former Ford Motor Co. executive, James Couzens.

First, he insisted that adult pedestrians were just as guilty as drivers of causing accidents through careless street crossing and jaywalking. He insisted that pedestrians cross at designated corners. The second approach was to try new ideas and technologies, such as stop signs, lane markings, one-way streets and traffic signals.

Very basics of driving were not taught nor understood, such as the left turn. Many accidents and pedestrian casualties were caused by "corner cutters" - drivers who did not make a left turn by driving through an intersection and then turning left into the far, perpendicular lane as we do today. Corner cutters made quick left turns the same way

we make right turns, hitting unsuspecting pedestrians and other cars. Detroit police implemented "silent policemen"- pylons emblazoned with a sign that read "Stay Right" to force drivers into a proper left turn.

More Detroit "Firsts"

Most irritating were drivers who parked wherever expedient, which frequently meant in intersections or in front of fire hydrants. Detroit police drew national attention for using tennis court line marking equipment

to establish "crossing zones," "safety zones" and "no parking" areas. The first center line on a U.S. highway appeared in Michigan in 1911.

The first traffic lights, at the time called Street Semaphores, were invented and developed in Detroit. At first they had to be manually switched, but in the 1920s the city gradually installed automatic electric lights.

Also in 1911, Detroit claimed to be the first city to successfully experiment with one-way streets. Less successful was the idea of dedicating certain streets to one type of vehicle, mostly delivery trucks or taxi cabs.

The first U.S. stop sign was used in Detroit in 1915, and the first traffic lights, at the time called Street Semaphores, were invented and developed in Detroit. Their success would be known nationally as "the Detroit Plan." The original design was a green metal circle with green light and a red metal star with red light. A policeman stood on a crow's nest platform above the street and blasted a whistle for ten seconds before manually changing the signal from red to green.

The first electronic automated traffic light, was developed in Detroit and set up at John R. and East Grand Boulevard in 1922. For the first time an amber light was added to show a signal was about to change, accompanied by a clanging bell. It cost one-tenth of the price of the old manned crow's nest system.

Illegal parking continued to be a persistent problem. Couzens ordered illegally parked cars towed for the first time. Within six months the new Detroit Towing Squad hauled 10,737 cars to a vacant lot.

By the mid-1920s a national, uniform approach to street and highway safety was formed under the direction of U.S. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover. Automobile manufacturers began to improve reliability and adopt safety features such as turn signals, brake lights, safety glass and standard head lamps. States required drivers to take tests and to be licensed. In the 1930s driver's education began to be required.

The days of free-for-all driving were over.



Quiz. What would you say?

Wife:

Did you buy more tools?

Husband:

A: No, had these for years

B: It was an accident

C: They were on Sale!

D: You look very pretty today!

Gary Romberg, the Rocket Scientist behind NASCAR's 1970 Plymouth Superbird

courtesy Al Pearce and Autoweek.com

It's likely that not even longtime, die-hard, trivia-obsessed NASCAR fans would immediately recognize the name Gary Romberg.



Indeed, the "Old Man" (a second-generation nickname of which he was enormously proud) was among those wondrously creative souls who have always toiled quietly behind the scenes developing every major motorsports innovation in our lifetime.

In this case, it was the famous Plymouth Superbird that NASCAR legend Richard Petty and a handful of other Mopar loyalists raced with some notable distinction in the 1970 Grand National stock car season.

Romberg died earlier this year at age 85 in his adopted hometown of Mooresville, North Carolina. He is survived by Bonny, his wife of 62 years; sons Kurt, Val and Leif; daughter Heidi; 12 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. A native of Buckley, Washington, and 1957 graduate of Cal State Poly-San Luis Obispo, the Old Man didn't miss much during his time on this good earth. We should all live as large and accomplish as much.

He spent his first three years after Cal Poly-SLO as an aerodynamic engineer and flight test engineer at Boeing aviation near Seattle. He worked at NASA throughout the 1960s, helping build America's space program from postings in Huntsville, Alabama, and New Orleans.

Romberg was instrumental in developing the Saturn B-1 booster that sent astronauts into outer space, including the first visit to the moon. Of all his professional accomplishments, he considered his role in that historic project his finest moment.

Gary Romberg played a key role at NASA in the Saturn rocket program in the 1960s.

In early 1969, several months before the July moon landing, Romberg moved from NASA to the motorsports division of Chrysler Corp. He had thrived and enjoyed his years as a Chrysler employee farmed out to NASA, but the Apollo project was winding down

just as aerodynamics were becoming the next big thing in stock car racing. He worked in Detroit for 36 years, lured by the challenge of making race cars as aerodynamic as the rockets he'd helped develop at NASA.

Those who know Chrysler's NASCAR history will recall it was Romberg and his teammates who designed, built and delivered the 1970 Superbird that lured Richard Petty back into the company's arms after his 1969 dalliance with Ford Torinos.

Richard Petty left Chrysler for a one-year fling with a Ford Factory program and the Ford Torino Cobra in 1969.

The backstory with Petty goes something like this:

Except for several Oldsmobile starts early on, the seven-time champion, 200-time winner and Hall of Fame driver raced street-based Plymouths almost exclusively from 1958 through 1968. Midway through that season, Chrysler unveiled plans for a radically different version of its popular Dodge Charger for the 1969 NASCAR season. (Being a Plymouth man, Romberg wasn't part of that project).

The new creation had a low, snout-like pointed nosepiece and a huge spoiler sticking almost 40 inches above the rear decklid. With its emphasis on aerodynamics, the Dodge Daytona was unlike anything ever seen on any of America's stock car circuits.

At the time, Chrysler's racing programs weren't united. Each brand went its own way, doing its own thing, competing not only with GM and Ford on the racetracks, but also with themselves.

So, while Dodge was presenting something new and forward-looking to its drivers and fans, Plymouth was staying with the same tried-and-true Belvedere model that had taken Petty to 43 (!) combined victories in 1967 and 1968. Angry that Plymouth wasn't keeping up—he'd repeatedly asked for a winged car—the sport's biggest name announced late in the 1968 season that he would race Fords in 1969. (His one-year deal with Ford was clear evidence he didn't expect to stay with them for long.)

Not surprisingly, that got Chrysler's attention. A company executive high-tailed it to North Carolina in mid-1969 to ask one question.

"It was just him alone, and he said to me, 'What will it take to get you back in a Plymouth next year?'" Petty recently recalled. (For the life of him, the 82-year-old Petty can't remember the man's name; after all, it was 51 years ago). "So, I told him to build me a Plymouth



like the Dodge teams had. That was it . . . just give me something new for next year.

"I think they'd already decided to do that because it wasn't long before they had one for me to look at. They couldn't have done it that quick unless they were already planning to do it, anyway."

Indeed, Romberg and his colleagues were already all-hands-on-deck designing, testing and building a winged Plymouth for 1970. They spent two months in a scaled-down wind tunnel at Wichita State University, struggling with the hood and front fender aerodynamics, and then with the size, shape and placement of the rear wing and struts.

After realizing the nose and wing wouldn't work with the Belvedere, they switched to the popular Road Runner body. Once satisfied they had it right, Chrysler named the car the Superbird in recognition of the popular Road Runner cartoon character.

The company quickly manufactured the 1,923 "showroom units" required for NASCAR competition. (That unusual number was based on one showroom-available car for every two dealerships within Chrysler's marketing network.)

Petty remembers Romberg as "the major guy" while Petty Enterprises was building Superbirds during the fall and winter before the 1970 season. "We worked close with him, and he knew what he was doing," the racing icon said. "He was very involved with everything: chassis, roll cage, aerodynamics, body shape, wing, struts, everything. He made sure everything was right. He was right there, all the time, making it go forward.

"He made sure everything was right. He was right there, all the time, making it go forward."

"He was really good with the aero end of the deal. I think they believed it might be easy because they already had the Dodge Daytona to go off . . . but it wasn't that easy at all. The cars were pretty different."

Plymouth teams quickly found success with their new toy, especially on the long, high-banked, high-speed superspeedways. (Most Plymouth teams used conventional, nonwinged cars on tracks shorter than a mile.) Pete Hamilton, part of the Petty stable, won the 1970 Daytona 500 and both 500-milers at Talladega in his No. 40 Superbird. Petty drove his No. 43 to victories at Rockingham, Trenton, Atlanta and Dover. In the meantime, Bobby Allison, Bobby Isaac, Charlie Glotzbach and Buddy Baker were winning in their winged Dodge Daytonas.

After watching Ford take seven consecutive NASCAR manufacturers' championships between 1963 and





1969, Dodge won not only the 1970 manufacturers' title but Isaac and crew chief Harry Hyde won the drivers' championship, as well.

But that success ruffled some feathers in Daytona Beach.

Going forward, NASCAR banned the 426-cid Hemi V8 engines from the winged Superbirds and Daytonas, and instead limited them to a 305-cid engine. Officially, the cars remained legal, but were effectively made obsolete by NASCAR's engine rule.

Publicly, the organization expressed concerns about

dangerously high speeds at the long, high-banked tracks where horsepower trumped handling. And from a marketing standpoint, Superbirds and Daytonas never thrilled the consumers, thus putting a dent in NASCAR's "win on Sunday, sell on Monday" mantra. Additionally,

insurance rates were higher and fuel economy was lower for the "muscle car" market. The engine ban came just as Detroit's Big Three was reducing its financial and technical support of NASCAR.

"We were ready to go (with updated winged cars for 1971 and beyond) if they'd let us," Romberg told Hot Rod magazine in 2005. "But NASCAR didn't want any more 'funny cars' in competition. We (the design team) were kind of cynical about NASCAR and knew they wanted to control their shows. We were disappointed

because we had put together, in the 1969 Dodge Daytona and the 1970 Plymouth Superbird, cars that were more than a little bit competitive.

"When the factory-backed racing program went away in 1971, we (the aerodynamics team) reinvented ourselves and became the production car aerodynamics group. We lobbied and got two wind tunnels: a 3/8 scale in 1992 and a huge full-sized in the Auburn Hills complex in 2002."

Romberg retired from Chrysler Corp. the day the



CHECK FIRST

Many CCM and other events have been cancelled or postponed due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing orders in place. Please do not assume any event appearing in this month's newsletter is happening as scheduled or announced. In ALL cases, check with organizing or sponsoring personnel before you come out to any event. Stay Safe.



Here's our updated event schedule, for what it's worth. Almost all car show/events have been cancelled for the foreseeable future, due to the COVID-19 shelter in place rules.

We've also heard that many car clubs have cancelled club meetings and gatherings due to concern surrounding this modern plague.

Cap City Mopars has cancelled most meetings through July. As future events are uncertain, the rest of the schedule remains. However please be sure to "check in" with every event prior to coming out. Some health organizations are projecting we should continue to practice 'safe space' pretty much indefinitely.

Stay safe and happy motoring.

date	event	location	more info / contact
Oct...	Poker Run, Sun	TBA	Norm <i>cancelled</i>
10/6/20	CCM General Meeting	CA Auto Museum	Bob or Norm <i>cancelled</i>
10/10/20	Rods-n-Relics	Lincoln	www.rodsnrelics.net <i>new date</i>
10/20/20	CCM Board Meeting	CA Auto Museum	Bob or Norm <i>tentative</i>
11/3/20	CCM General Meeting	CA Auto Museum	Bob or Norm <i>tentative</i>
11/17/20	CCM Board Meeting	CA Auto Museum	Bob or Norm <i>tentative</i>
11/29/20	CAM potluck	CA Auto Museum	Bob or Norm <i>tentative</i>
12/5/20	CCM Holiday Party	Carmichael Elks Lodge	Bob or Norm <i>tentative</i>
12/6/20	Shriners Toy Run	Shriner's Children's Hospital	Bob or Norm <i>tentative</i>

full-scale tunnel went into production operation in 2002. He had spent the previous 35 years improving aerodynamics on race cars and production cars, and in working to get the wind tunnels.

Regrets? If any, they were too few to mention.

"Before 1969, Chrysler was getting beat all the time in racing," he once pointed out. "The battle cry was 'beat Ford' because they had David Pearson and even Petty there for a while . . . until we got him back with the Superbird. We loved Ford. They were great enemies, great competitors. We worked our hearts out to beat them. They were great motivators for us. We were disappointed it couldn't go on."

In the case of the Romberg clan, the apple didn't roll far from the tree. Kurt Romberg, now 61, drafted his father into aerodynamics, too, getting his bachelor's and master's degrees in engineering in the late 1980s at Wichita State University. He spent countless hours in the school's Beech Wind Tunnel, where his father had helped develop the Superbird that Petty raced in 1970. Romberg was hard at work there when a colleague called from Detroit late that season with news that NASCAR had effectively killed the next edition of the winged cars.

"We loved Ford. They were great enemies, great competitors. We worked our hearts out to beat them."

Kurt briefly—and with some success—raced hydroplanes before studying engineering at WSU. He worked briefly for the March F1 team in England, came home to work with GM's Production Car Division, spent five years tweaking aerodynamics at Petty

Enterprises and 15 more doing the same at Hendrick Motorsports. He went to current employer Roush-Fenway Racing late in 2015 as its technical director of aerodynamics.

He has some memories of his own.

"It was late in '69 when Dad came home from work driving a Plymouth Superbird prototype," he said. "I was—what? 10 years old at the time. He and my mom and my (two) brothers and (one) sister went riding around Garden City in that car. I mean, nobody had ever seen anything like it on the street. It drew so much attention it almost stopped traffic. It was like, 'Wow! I have a picture of our whole family standing beside a winged Dodge Daytona on a dealer's lot in Detroit."

"Dad was proud of the Superbird, but after family and faith he was prouder of the Moon Shot than anything else. He felt that was a very big deal, and he had been part of it. And he was awfully proud of getting the wind tunnels at Chrysler. The Superbird? Not so much because the Dodge Daytona was already out there (when work began on the Superbird).

"Race cars were changing so frequently that it wasn't a big deal when they had to quit working on another version. He was a little upset, but it was like water off his back; he didn't dwell on it. You know, it was

just another NASCAR rule change."

At the time of his death, Romberg was generally acknowledged as one of the world's leading authorities on the black art of wind tunnels and vehicular aerodynamics. He had used his post-Chrysler retirement years to travel the world, examining and learning about wind tunnels of every size, shape and capacity. "Worldwide," he said, "my dad was in the top three of all wind tunnel experts."

"When he retired and moved to Mooresville (in 2006), he was too busy to just sit around. He worked at the Aerodyn Wind Tunnel (where many NASCAR teams take their cars) because he wanted to, and he worked there when he wanted to. If he wanted to take off somewhere to see another tunnel, he did. If he wanted to go to work every day, he did. If he wanted to stay home, he did. You know how it is: Why quit if you enjoy it?"

The Old Man was wise, indeed.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

message regarding all events

Many CCM and other events have been cancelled or postponed due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing orders in place. Please do not assume any event appearing in this month's newsletter is happening as scheduled or announced.

In ALL cases, check with organizing or sponsoring personnel before you come out to any event.

Stay Safe !

DMV Help Line (916) 657-6560

**Next CCM
Meeting**

to be announced

Here's a few interesting websites to check out:

<https://www.yellowbullet.com/forums/>

[https://www.autocare.org/government-affairs/
issues/massachusetts-right-to-repair/](https://www.autocare.org/government-affairs/issues/massachusetts-right-to-repair/)

<https://oppositelock.kinja.com/1693318798>

