

Classy Chassis

Volume 54

Westerly-Pawcatuck Region AACA

Issue 4

Drive-By Memorial and Birthday

Ken Carr

May 19, 2020 - It has been a long stretch with no significant club events. This is the result of the confluence of winter and the Coronavirus pandemic. Last week we broke the necessary but unloved quarantine. About a dozen of our members drove their antique cars by the home of our much loved member, Jim Varas, who passed away a short while ago. His wonderful wife Peggy was on the front lawn greeting us as we filed by to show our respect and love for Jim. It was obvious that Peggy was very happy to see us as we were to see her. Our love goes out to her at this difficult time.



Cars from our club passing by Peggy's home in Pawcatuck (K. Carr)

We then left Pawcatuck, CT and headed for Groton Long Point, passing through Varas Square on the way. We regrouped at a local park and waited for another group of friends and relatives of club member John Curtiss who was turning 80 that day. A couple of trucks sported Happy Birthday signs and one man passed out golf balls to be tossed on John's Lawn. The procession finally took off and wound its way past John's home to wish him a happy 80th. John was all smiles! I believe this is one birthday he will cherish.



Cars lined up at park staging area near John's home in Groton Long Point (C. Nash)

The club received the following email responses and a thank you card from Peggy Varas:

From Bart Bart Bartholomew (now residing in Florida): “Hey Ken, You did a wonderful job on the WPRAACA article in the AACA magazine. Also this Memorial & Birthday event looks great! A nice thing for Peggy especially. We are pretty much the same here in Fla. as far as car events. We have a weekly get together at one of the Club member's house on Wed. mornings with 25 or so cars, social distancing and most of us wear a mask... Crazy times now Ken... Thanks for keeping me in the loop... I miss WPRAACA! Bart”

From Harold and Annette Miner, also in Florida: “Ken, Thanks for the updates. It makes my heart feel good to see that the club showed such support for our dear friends Jim and Peggy Varas. Thank everyone for us.”

From John Curtiss, the birthday man himself: "Please thank all the members of WPRAACA who drove across the border to surprise me as I became 80 years young! You were the talk of the parade! So many of my friends have asked me questions about the cars. THANKS AGAIN!
John Curtiss"

From Peggy Varas we received the following Thank You card:

*Westerly - Pawt. Region
Members*



*Your kindness is greatly appreciated
Thank you for the lovely
basket of flowers. & the
drive thru "Marlin Drive"
with the cars was very
emotional.*

*We have had many, many
wonderful trips & made
lots & lots of friends
forever
Love,
Peggy*

The Story of a Very Old Car

George King III

It appears that the activities of the AACA have slowed up for a while. Ken has asked for some material to add to the newsletter. I will send him information on my current project for his publication and your entertainment.



Photo 1 1914 Orient Runabout

I bought a car in August, 2019. It is a 1901 Orient Runabout, not an Orient Buckboard (*see photo 1*). I was especially interested in this car as it was built by the Waltham (Massachusetts) Manufacturing Company. At the time this car was built my Grandfather worked for the Orient company (*see photo 2*)

The car was discovered by my friend Craig Raynor of Long Island (*photo 3*). Some of you have seen one of his antique vehicles. He brought a 1910 American La France ladder truck to our Concourse de Barnyard in 2013.

Craig was buying some Model T parts from a gentleman who lived near him. On one visit there, he looked into a steel shed like the ones we use for lawn mower storage. He took a photo of a car in there that he thought I might be interested in (*photo 4*). I was able to determine that the car was a 1901 Orient Runabout that was built in the next town in Massachusetts to where I was born.



Photo 2 George King Sr.



Photo 3 Craig Raynor of Long Island, NY

I first saw it in June but I was not able to negotiate the purchase until August. I drove to Craig's and we went to the location of the Orient, made the deal, and loaded it into the truck. The 119-year-old car fit easily in the back of my six-foot truck. The body is only 27 inches wide and the total weight is less than 500 pounds when the car is fully assembled. (photo 5)

The seller of the car was Lance, who lives in the same town as Craig. The three of us emptied all of the items in the shed and then moved out the

Orient. We had to carry it out in pieces because the doors were so small. By supper time we had it done and the next morning I headed home with my treasure.



Photo 4 The Orient as found in a storage shed

The photo to the left, taken by Craig, shows the Orient as it appeared in the storage shed!



(Photo 5) This photo shows the Orient assembled and ready for its trip home in the back of George's 6-foot bed pickup.

Note: George will continue the story in the next several issues of this newsletter.

Gerry's Cruise Report

Gerry Lynn

First, cancellations as found on Hemmings: [What remains of 2020 car events?](#)

Second, the most reliable sites for car show announcements:

Dream machine classic car club. A long running club in E. CT Theirs is the best and most extensive of the lists I'm passing along <http://www.dreammachineclassics.org/calendar.html>
The only gripe I have with it is that it lists all events by their date on the calendar. So you may get a cruise night listed 10 times during the year.

Tri-state cruisers car club: A club made up of members from CT, MA & RI. They run the weekly Sat. cruise nights at the Loos Co field in Pomfret, CT
The only problem with their event listings is they mainly list only weekly cruise nights and not too many shows. <https://www.tri-statecruisers.com/events.php>

[The Connecticut Council of Car Clubs](#) – This site has good regional information

Crusin Bruce who is also a full time DJ out of Worcester MA. Both he and DJ car guy list the events where they're being paid to announce first (of course) but Bruce has a more extensive list of other events in the area at the end of his listing in the "general car events" section. DJ car guy out of Warwick only lists the events he is announcing. <https://www.cruisinbruce.com/carshowcalendar>

<https://djcarguy.com/calendar> for shows

<https://djcarguy.com/cruise-nights> for cruise nights he runs. He runs the Mon. Oak Harbor cruise in Exeter,

Last one I use is Rhode Island Street Rod Association. They also list only the events they run.

<https://www.ristreetrodding.org/events-listing>

Right now it's pretty sparse.

Now you can also try the Audrain car museum in Newport. They normally do "cars & coffee" cruises on w/e days on the lawn in front of various Newport mansions in the summer.

<https://www.audrainautomuseum.org/2020-cars-coffee-1>

Then there's the Newport Car Museum (actually in Portsmouth RI). Believe they are planning to have their first show this year. Right now their web page says they're closed. They have an event pull down from the opening page but I'm having trouble copying it. <http://www.newportcarmuseum.org>

And while you are at it check this out: [The World's Great Car Museums Are Just a Click Away - Your AAA Network](#)

In case you don't already have it: Barrett-Jackson auction scheduled for Mohegan Sun 6/24-27 has been cancelled. B-J is considering an online only auction for July but no definite plans yet.

The local cruise nights MAY start in June but you will have to check their web sites in June to confirm.

Misquamicut beach was SUPPOSED to start Tues. 5/22 but no decision has been made as of 5/28. Note that their cruise night has changed from Fri. to Tues. and the location has changed from the Paddy's east lot (across from the drive in movies lot) to Sandy's Lighthouse a few doors west of the old spot. Time is 5:30 to dusk.

There is a good chance for the monthly cruise at Nature's art on Rt. 85 in the Chesterfield section of Montville. It is held on the first Tuesday of the month with a rain date of the following Thursday. (June 2nd) from 5 P to dusk. Check the Nature's art web page for further words.

And my favorite cruise night of all time, Mark's Auto Parts of E. Granby CT close to Hartford's Bradley airport. That's normally held every Monday from 4P to dusk. Their personnel say it will probably be starting in June. Again, you have to check their web site www.markscruisenight.com

Like this parrot keeps repeating: This is the BEST cruise night I have ever been to in 25 years that draws about 400 cars a week. Yes, Gillette Stadium, Bass Pro Shops Foxborough MA that is held every other Thursday does draw up to 1,000 cars but it does draw predominantly 60's muscle cars, you park on pavement, there's no band and no central area to see all the cars drive in. That's why Mark's is better.

For anybody that's interested, I'm going to try and lead a club group there on a Monday in late June or July. It will be about a six hour event total and we should return before dark. The preferred route is all highway from Westerly to Mark's but you can do it back roads if you prefer.

Guys: If you don't trust your own car, ride with a friend or in a modern car. If this doesn't turn out to be the best cruise night you've ever been to I'll pay your local AACA dues for you next year.

Return of the Missing Miata

Bob DeGoursey

(Wherein Bob tells us how he ended up with another car)

The Miata was a bit of an impulse buy. One of our vintage camper buddies mentioned he was selling it. He sold his house in Maine to downsize and moved to CT. He was the original owner of the car and was fanatical about caring for it. No rain, no snow, heated garage.

The car is very clean. Since I previously had one, a '90, I know the model pretty well and regretted letting the first one go. This one is stock except for alloy wheels and a [Borla](#) exhaust. Scooting through twisty, winding country roads is what the car excels at. I'll use it instead of my truck to run errands and to save some gas. My kids can use it to stay proficient driving a 5-speed and to go out on date nights while we watch their kids. I might even take it to a cruise night or two.





Historical Perspective

Malcolm Stinson

Back in 1965, I had restored a 1928 Wolverine Coupe by REO. After going to several shows with my family, I became friends with a lot of antique car people. I found them to be the best people in the world. So I started talking about starting our own Chapter. All were interested that I talked to. So in the family room of my home on South Anguilla Rd, in Wequetequock I called a meeting only to find out that a lot of antique car people were very interested. Got the ball rolling and contacted the AACA about starting a new chapter. They were most helpful and we received our Chapter in 1966. The large plaque that you have now is because talking with the charter members, they all agreed to pay, (I think at the time it was only \$3.00 per member) the cost of the plaque and were pleased to pay it.

As time went on and me working for Davis Standard as a field service engineer, I asked them if it would be possible to use their parking lot for a car show. They were more than willing to let me use the parking lot. In fact they opened their doors so we had the use of the bathrooms and they even let us use their electricity for the speaker system and the hot dog & hamburger concession. George Champlin brought his big flat bed trailer so we had a stage for Richard Whittier (our MC) and me. We did this for several years until I had to move to Arizona as I accepted a position as plant engineer for a plastic pipe manufacturer.

However all the shows and tours we went on back there were so enjoyable that I still have fond memories. My wife and 4 children all had a great time with so many wonderful people there. I have been so lucky to have been able to join all of you in the past few years at your shows. All this has brought back so many found memories. And I have to say you all have treated me as one of you every time.

Keep up the good work and hope to be back again to join you some time in the future.

I have a couple of signs that I made and we would put them out at each show. Phil Panciera should be able to tell you where one of the old signs is as he gave me one that is displayed in my shop here in Arizona. I will send photos if I ever figure out how to enter them in my computer.

Be safe, be healthy and hope to see you all one day, Malcolm.

Correspondence from Florida

Bart Bartholomew

May 21 .. Hey Ken, You did a wonderful job on the WPRAACA article in the AACA magazine. Also this Memorial & Birthday event looks great! A nice thing for Peggy especially. We are pretty much the same here in Fla. as far as car events. We have a weekly get together at one of the Club member's house on Wed. mornings with 25 or so cars, social distancing and most of us wear a mask... Crazy times now Ken... Thanks for keeping me in the loop... I miss WPRAACA! Bart

May 22... I just read the long version of the article. You folks sure put a lot of effort into the project.... Really enjoyed it... Stay healthy Ken.... Bart

That's enough stuff for this issue. To quote a club sage, "Too many words."

Brought to you by:

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