

Indy Mopar Club News



December 2008 www.indymoparclub.com Jan Peel and Dave Watt, editors Meetings are the last Thursday of every month except November & December

2008 schedule of events. More events and details on the way.

Next regular meeting: Thursday January 29, 2009 will be held at *MCL Cafeteria*, *3630 South East street* Indianapolis (US 31- N of Southern Plaza between Sumner & National). Meet for dinner at 6pm, meeting at 7pm. A Map Quest link is available on the IMC website.







DESOTO AIRFLOW

Having grown up in the '60s & 70s "musclecar" era, I tried to recall what sparked my interest in the '30s era Chrysler & DeSoto Airflows since I had never seen one. I remember being fascinated by them by the time I got out of the Army in 1974 and even came close to picking up a body shell from an older friend. It was a very rough piece that he needed to get moved before the city did it for him. I passed but did pick up a '40 Plymouth at the time because the streamlined body looked a bit similar.

Well a few months ago I think I found what sparked my early fascination. While looking through a box of old magazines, I found a special edition soft cover bound book that I picked up at the PX in Germany in 1973. It was Peterson's Complete Book of Plymouth-Dodge-Chrysler and covered reprint articles on vehicles from Walter's first vehicle in '24 to the latest Mopar musclecars of the day.

In it was an article titled "The Magnificent Turkey". The Airflow and its prototype were covered in great detail and the article explained how advanced & radically different the vehicle was at the time. The Airflow became Walter P. Chrysler's darling from its inception. The car was the brainchild of one of his top three engineers, Carl Breer, who became fascinated with aerodynamic design in the late '20s. The Airflow was originally to be introduced as a 1934 DeSoto product only. Walter loved the prototype and concept so much that he ordered there would be a 1934 Chrysler model as well.

In retrospect, the Airflow was much too radical for many of the buying public. You need only compare it to a '34 Ford at the time to see the cars appear to be from different decades. More underlying reasons for the Airflow being shunned by the public however have been discussed in numerous articles written since its introduction. These sources have pointed out that some of the vehicle's production delays (a new unitized body/structural frame design caused this), combined with smear campaigns by Chrysler's competitors (General Motors is often named) made the public shy away. This came only months after the press and public were exuberant at the Airflow's introduction at the New York Auto Show just months earlier.

The vehicle's slow sales then triggered another interesting development in the Airflow's short lifespan. The front grille design and key trim features, both inside and out, were changed each year of its existence. The designers tried to make its appearance more aligned with other vehicles of the era to boost sales. Though its

headlights stayed blended into the fenders as opposed to the fender mounted bullets of the day, the grille moved from the aero "waterfall" in 1934 to a more contemporary "vee'd" appearance of the other mid-30s vehicles of the day. As a side note, this annual change makes restoring one of these vehicles a bit challenging due to their low initial build quantities, and lack of interchangeability between years. To make matters even more difficult, the DeSoto and Chrysler models of the same year did not share common trim.

Due to sinking sales, the DeSoto Airflow model ended in 1936 while the Chrysler Airflow hung on for one more model year to 1937. A quick look at every other marquee of the day, however shows that by about 1939-1940 the Airflow had indeed influenced the future of automotive design. Most had now picked up a more aero front end as the Airflow had introduced five years prior. Of interest to the muscle car era fans, Chrysler first used a wind tunnel to design the Airflow in the early '30s. Chrysler's subsequent years of aero development resulted in the wind cheating Plymouth Superbird and Dodge Daytona.

Moving to the present, my current Airflow inventory is now three, one '34 DeSoto SE and two '36 DeSoto model S2s. I met a gentleman at the Formula 1 Race weekend Concours Car Show on the Circle in Indianapolis a few years back. I was hanging with my friend Kent Wallace at the time with his '66 Hemi Coronet and saw a gorgeous silver Airflow Coupe. I never saw a more elegant car so I struck up a conversation with the owner Chuck Cochran. Chuck put up with my 'puppy dog' exuberance and by the end of the event we started a friendship that continues today. I bought my '34 DeSoto project car from him a week later. Chuck is an encyclopedia on these vehicles and continues to help in my education on these wonderful cars. My second, a very rough '36 followed a few months later when an old friend I had not spoken to in many years heard I was interested in Airflows. He had one that he had to get rid of and made me an offer I couldn't refuse.

A few years passed and Teresa and I attended the 2007 National Meet for the Airflow Club of America in St. Joseph, Michigan. Chuck and wife Char had two pristine cars there and asked if I'd be interest in driving his '35 Airflow Coupe in a parade down main street. With Teresa riding shotgun, the fire was fanned.

My latest acquisition, the second '36 DeSoto, was found in Hemmings Motor News in December 2007. I tear into Hemmings like I did with the old Sears catalog's toy section when I was a kid. The car looked great in the picture, the price looked better than usual and after a call to owner, I was ready to go. OK, I first whined how I couldn't pass it up to my lovely spouse.

The car was in Idaho and I had made up my mind to get it. Sure I studied geography in school, even went to Europe in the Army but had not driven further west in the States than Oklahoma. So I thought to myself, "let's see, Idaho-Potatoes, Iowa-Corn...oh well it must be just the other side of Iowa.... Well, a quick look at the road atlas told me that I was an idiot, and since this was mid December, I was likely a fool as well. I was scheduled to start a new job after an early retirement from Chrysler, so it was then or never.

If you're going on a foolhardy car trip, who better to share it with than another car-crazy brother. I called my brother Dan about the road trip and he didn't hesitate. Thank goodness because his ability to drive for hours on end and his 4 wheel drive Dodge V-10 truck would prove to be invaluable. Thus began our "trip through hell" adventure.

Hours after leaving at 5:30am on a Thursday morning, we encountered a good old Midwest ice and snow storm as we entered Iowa. We soldiered on, trading off driving straight through to Idaho for about 31 hours, only stopping for fuel & a one hour rest stop nap. We arrived in Idaho City Friday afternoon and drove straight to the owner's mechanic's garage where we first saw the car.

It's a 1936 DeSoto, Model S2, Black 4 door Sedan. Though thread-bare, the interior was largely original. Fortunately, 99% of the hard to find trim was in-place. The wood-grained dash looked good, it had new tires and supposedly ran until a few weeks earlier. When the owner decided to sell it, he had his mechanic pull the original aluminum head because of a crack. The head had been sent out for repair and was overdue. I

had known that before the trip though the owner had hoped to have it back by the time I got there. All in all, it had been fairly well represented so I gave him 'Teresa's money' and we loaded it up.

The owner offered us lodging for the evening but did caution that a larger storm was headed in which could snow us in for a day or so. Based on my new job starting on Monday (this being Friday late afternoon) we decided to get back on the road. Back into the fray we went. I won't bore you with all the details of the return but let's say more jack-knifed semis and multi-car wrecks than I've ever seen in my life. We got to the mountains of Wyoming Friday night when the State Police waved us off I-80 and announced it was closed over the mountains due to the ice storm. I-80 did not open again until 7:00 am the next morning (Saturday). The police only let you enter the ramp if you had 4 wheel drive or chains if you were a semi. After inching our way across the mountains, we were on our way again. A word of advice... don't look for gas stations at most of Wyoming's exits because they are not to be found. At one point, we were very concerned about a fuel gauge "way past empty" & were discussing draining the tank on the DeSoto to feed the thirsty V-10 if we had to.

We finally found a station in a town about 4 miles off the ramp. While freezing and filling the tank in the blizzard, I heard that wonderful sound of air hissing in icy water. I did have a good trailer spare so 30 minutes later, away we went again. In spite of what we went through, it was still pretty cool looking back at a '36 DeSoto following on the trailer as we crossed the Mississippi River.

Finally after another 30+ hour drive, Sunday afternoon we're back in Danville Indiana and the DeSoto is warm in it's new home. The aluminum head arrived a month and a half later and it was too bad to repair. I suspected that based on conversation with my buddy Chuck so thank goodness my other '36 project car had a good original aluminum head. The second head has now been machined I've started putting it back together. Next summer at one of our shows it should come rolling in... at least that's what I'm telling myself. But as I've told many, even if my Airflows never run, I will have enjoyed every moment I had to look at them! Author ~~~Tom and Teresa Kelly Dec 2008

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Christmas Party – December 14, 2008 - Carefree North Clubhouse

We had a lively group attending the Christmas Party with the children being surprised by Santa's visit. The club supplied the ham and there was a scrumptious variety of food provided by our members. Those with satisfied faces (and full tummies) at the end of the evening were James & Laura Bratby, Bill & Constance Bratton, Ronda & Dennis Cherry, Estell & Pat Claycomb, Dick & Dorinda Crawmer, Ronnie & Linda Downing, Rick & Susan Eilert, Dave & Terry Fishburn, Frank & Jo Goodrum, Jim & Sue Kelly, Tom & Teresa Kelly, Larry & Susan Mayes, Gary & Jessica McCormick, Bud & Debbie Mounce, David Opel, Stan & Jan Peel, Bob & Karen Rosenberger, David & Cindy Sanders, Stan & Kerry Sanders, Bob & Julia Schonegg, Dave & Kelley Stephenson, Dave Watt, Tom Williams, Steve & Cheryl Wisdom, Rick & Ginger Zimmerman, and guests Ryan Johnson (home from Iraq), Danielle Johnson, Mike Landrum, and Jordin (daughter of Teresa & Tom Kelly), and various children & grandchildren.

Dave Stephenson was then presented with the INDY MOPAR CLUB Award of Appreciation for his outstanding service and dedication to the Membership of the Indy Mopar Club, our Associates and Club Charity – 2008. Dave contributes most of the pictures on our web-site. His award was well deserved.

Santa then visited the children and what a delight it was to see the children get their presents from him. (Wouldn't it be wonderful if they could keep that innocent wonder the rest of their life?)

The final event for the evening was Ginger Zimmerman as "activity chairman" for the gift exchange disbursement. She does an excellent job of keeping things lively and moving along.

Thus ended a very active and productive year for the 90 members of the Indy Mopar Club. Our thanks to the 2008 Officers and best wishes for the 2009 Officers. We hope to see more of all of you in 2009.

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Indy Mopar Members' News

From Ken Scobel - Effective December 18th, after 29 years, I have retired from Cummins Inc. Similar to Chrysler, I was offered a retirement buy-out package, which I accepted. I intend to take it easy for awhile, at least through the holidays, and will start looking for another job sometime early next year.

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INDY MOPAR CLUB Monthly Meeting Secretary Report November 20, 2008 7:00 PM Welcome and sign in – Steve Wisdom, President:

Steve brought the meeting to order at 7:00 PM by asking all members and guests to introduce themselves and tell about their car(s).

Attendees were: John & Carol Ann Bauer, James & Laura Bratby, Bill Bratton, Ronda & Dennis Cherry, Ronnie Downing, Rick & Susan Eilert, Dave & Terry Fishburn, Jim Kelly, Ed Leyes, Mike Leyes, Larry & Susan Mayes, Gary & Jessica McCormick, Pat & Pat McKarski, Bud & Debbie Mounce, Jim Parker & Chris Usher, Stan & Jan Peel, Terry & Rose Richard, Bob & Karen Rosenberger, David Sanders, Bob Schonegg, Ken Scobel, Gary & Kathy Stafford, Bob Thomas, Bob Vorpe, Mike Wallace, Dave Watt & step-son Rick, Steve Wisdom, and Rick & Ginger Zimmerman.

Secretary's Report – Ronda Cherry:

Ronda read the highlights of the October 2008 meeting.

Treasurer's Report/Membership Update – Mike Leyes:

Mike gave the treasurers report as of November 20, 2008. October 30, 2008 Balance was \$4,835.38. Income for October was:

Member Dues 30.00 **Sold Old Shirts** 38.00 Flower Fund 45.00 Extra 2008 Member Shirt 10.00 Champion Cruise-In JDRF Donation 320.00

Total Income \$443.00

Expense for October was:

Paid to Utters for additional shirts 40.88 JDRF-Fletcher, Danville, Champion 2,581.73

Total Expenses \$2.581.73

Balance November 20, 2008 is \$2,655.77. We currently have 90 members in the club.

Event Calendar – John Bauer:

The Club will furnish the meat for the Christmas Party December 14, 3008 World of Wheels in February, 2009 Swap Meet in March, 2009

Event Advertising – Pat & Pat McKarski

Indy Auto & R.V. Old Cars Only Mopar Collector's Guide Oldies 101.9 Radio Station

Communications Director Report – Dave Watt:

Dave reported that if you want anything added to the web site let him know. If you have anything For Sale or would like to have advertised, send it to Dave Watt. Also, if you have a change of e-mail address, be sure to let him know so that you don't miss any information or newsletters.

Old Business – Steve Wisdom:

- A. Club Member Profile for Newsletter & Website
 - 1. December Tom Kelly
 - 2. January Michael & Shannon Chabes
 - 3. February Bob Vorpe
 - 4. March Bud & Debbie Mounce
- B. Vote for 2009 Indy Mopar Club Officers
 - 1. Votes were counted:

President – Steve Wisdom

Vice President – Bob Rosenberger

Secretary – Karen Rosenberger

Treasurer – Mike Leyes

Communications Director – Dave Watt

- C. World of Wheels Feb 13-15, 2009
- D. Swap Meet March 7-8, 2009
- E. 2009 Car Shows Tally from October Voting
 - 1. Palmer Open 36
 - 2. Palmer Mopar 3
 - 3. Edinburgh Open 4
 - 4. Fletcher Open 25
 - 5. Fletcher Mopar 6
 - 6. Danville Open 28
 - 7. Danville Mopar 6
- F. December Christmas party December 14th, 5 PM. Club will furnish the meat, with everyone bringing a covered dish (preferably with something in it). If you wish to join in a gift exchange bring a wrapped regular or gag gift (value up to \$15.00) and mark it for man or woman. Santa Claus will again be present at the party. If you are bringing a child please bring a gift for them with their name on it for Santa to give out.
- G. Graphics for 2009 Car Show T-shirts
 - 1. Rose Richard brought a T-shirt to be shown around with photo graphics on it.
- H. 2009 Club Shirts
 - 1. Steve Wisdom passed around a catalog with T-shirts in it.
- I. 50/50 Tickets were sold by John Bauer. Susan Eilert won it.

New Business – Steve Wisdom:

- A. Larry Mayes talked about membership cards.
- B. Bob Vorpe talked about a jacket with Mopar emblem on it. If anyone is interested, please contact him.

Laura Bratby made a motion to adjourn the meeting, this was seconded by Bob Schonegg. Motion carried.

Steve Wisdom then adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted – Ronda Cherry, Secretary



<u>January Birthdays:</u> Ric LaFollette, 1-4; Renee Neukam, 1-5; Larry Dilk, 1-11; Sheila Collins, 1-11; Bob Vorpe, 1-17; Butch Gillock, 1-19; Bob Gallup, 1-20; Stephen Graham, 1-21; Patrick McKarski, 1-22; Curt Huff, 1-24; Thomas Wallace, 1-24; Bill Edgerton, 1-26;

January Anniversaries: Butch & Diane Gillock, 1-24. Congratulations to all!



Information

Wednesday night cruise—in is located at Dooley O'Tooles which is on Carmel Drive between Rangeline Road and Keystone Ave. When you drive your classic car there you receive 25% off your dinner, food only. They are extremely nice people and they normally have some pretty nice cars. (Reported by John Bauer)

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Upcoming Events – **Indy Mopar Club and others

- **January 29th, Indy Mopar Club meeting at MCL Cafeteria, 3630 South East Street, Indianapolis
- **February 13-15, 2009 World of Wheels
- **March 7-8, 2009 Swap Meet



Tattlers Corner

Who had the most fun with the gift exchange? Well, it looked to me like Ginger (emcee of the event) had the most fun, reminding others that they could "grab someone else's gift". A lot of that went on.



A Little Bit of Humor More from the "Little Ones"

At Sunday School they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny seemed especially intent when they told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs. Later in the week his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill, and she said, 'Johnny, what is the matter?' Little Johnny responded, 'I have a pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife.'

Two boys were walking home from Sunday school after hearing a strong preaching on the devil. One said to the other, 'What do you think about all this Satan stuff? 'The other boy replied, 'Well, you know how Santa Claus turned out. It's probably just your Dad.'

A Sunday School teacher asked her class why Joseph and Mary took Jesus with them to Jerusalem. A small child replied, 'They couldn't get a baby-sitter.'



Reminder from your Co-Editor Jan Peel

I would appreciate any news about our members that have attended other events and/or have had their cars or stories in other publications. This is your newsletter, help me make it an even better one by sharing this kind of information so it can be published. You can contact me by E-mail Jpeel83719@aol.com or call me at 317-357-5760 or send it to me by mail: Jan Peel, 5128 E Rowney St, Indianapolis IN 46203-3741. (Complaints may also be handled this way.)

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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year







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