



# The Sparkplug

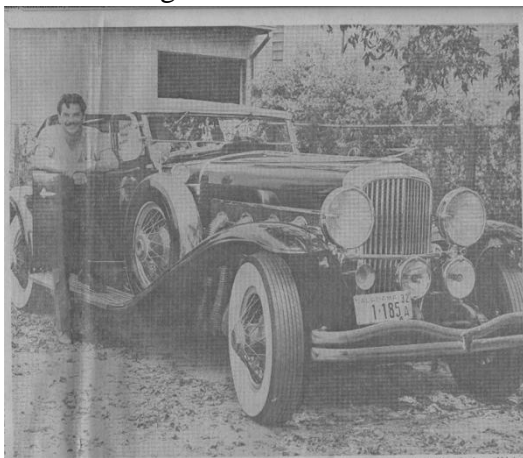


Deep South Region A.A.C.A. Newsletter, Vol. 45 No. 8, August 2012

## The First Conversation with Pierre Fontana

A couple of weeks ago, the Old South Antique Auto Club held a car show. Pierre Fontana called our club president, Zeno Chaudron, to encourage him to attend. During the discussion, Pierre confirmed that he was the first president of the DSR when it was formed in 1967. This past weekend, Zeno, Tracy Metclaf and I met with Pierre at Zeno's shop. Pierre brought along some information mostly pertaining to the Old South Club. But he did provide some interesting tidbits about the early years of our car club.

Pierre was born in Paris, France and immigrated to the United States in 1950. Funded by his uncle who was a conductor for the New Orleans symphony, he came on a Liberty ship headed to New Orleans. However a hurricane caused the ship to be diverted to Texas and he arrived via bus in New Orleans. His uncle sponsored him for citizenship in 1951 and as part of the citizenship process he agreed to serve in the US Air Force for four years. Pierre was trained as a lab technician/medic while in the service. Of note, he trained for eight weeks in nuclear warfare training and was given all of his gear, including a Geiger counter, when he left the service. His home base was Brookley Field which is why he remained in Mobile after discharge.



Pierre in 1972 with the 1932 Duesenberg

After leaving the service, he worked for the Mobile General Hospital for 14 years. He worked nights at the hospital and they provided him with a five car garage at the back of the hospital, fully equipped, where he worked on cars. In 1982 he opened his own shop behind the Malbis Bakery which was on Broad Street. His shop was on Pillans Street. The shop was in a crime area and as a result he closed it and 'retired'. However, the cars managed to follow him to his home in Tillman's corner. He currently has an extended five-car garage at his home where he continues to work on cars, some of them his, some belonging to others.

The Deep South Region Car Club was an outgrowth of the Old South Antique Auto Club which was founded in 1962. Interest in the club was strong with outings to picnics and tours being offered. The club grew quickly and began to meet twice weekly at the First Federal Saving Building in Crichton (Springhill Avenue). Interestingly, the club met twice monthly from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. They were granted a charter of incorporation in August, 1963.

In 1967, a group formed within the Old South wanted to sponsor a Glidden tour. Glidden tours were, and are, sponsored, in part, by the Antique Automobile Club of America (AACA). A division within the club developed between those who wanted the tour and those who did not. In 1967, those who wished to hold a tour split off from the Old South to form the Deep South Region as an Alabama Chapter of the AACA. The Glidden tour was held in Mobile in 1968.

Continued on Page 3

## Message from the DSR President

As Zeno stated, the month of August is generally a slow one. In lieu of a monthly message, Zeno has provided the initial installment of an article about a project he and Freddie Pendarvis are developing at his shop.

*Zeno*



### REMINDER!!!!!!!!!!!!

**Next DSR Meeting is August 23<sup>rd</sup> at  
7:00 p.m.**

### DSR Officers for 2012

President Zeno Chaudron 251-423-0946  
Vice President Walt Fuller 215-602-1931  
Secretary Patt Paquet ..... 251-661-4009  
Treasurer Bobby Peterson 251-342-8960  
Editor Paul Dagenais ..... 251-610-4533  
Activities Tim and Stacy Lawrence  
..... 251-401-3019  
Member-at-Large Peter Pearce  
..... 251-422-7318

### Appointees and/or Volunteers

Chaplain Kevin Crowell ... 251-802-4640  
Historian Patt Paquet ..... 251-661-4009  
Program Chairman Ernie Rogers .....  
..... 251-604-5368  
Refreshments Martha Fuller .....  
..... 251-602-1931  
Webmaster Herb Thoms .. 251-654-2933

The Sparkplug is published by the Deep South Region (DSR) chapter of the Antique Automobiles of America organization. The Sparkplug is non-profit and published for the

information of club members and friends. DSR meetings are held every fourth Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the clubhouse located at 951 Forest Hill Drive in Mobile, Alabama. Membership in the Antique Automobile Club of America is required to be a member of this Region. Annual local dues are \$15.00; AACA national dues are \$35.00. Ownership of an antique vehicle is not a requirement for membership.

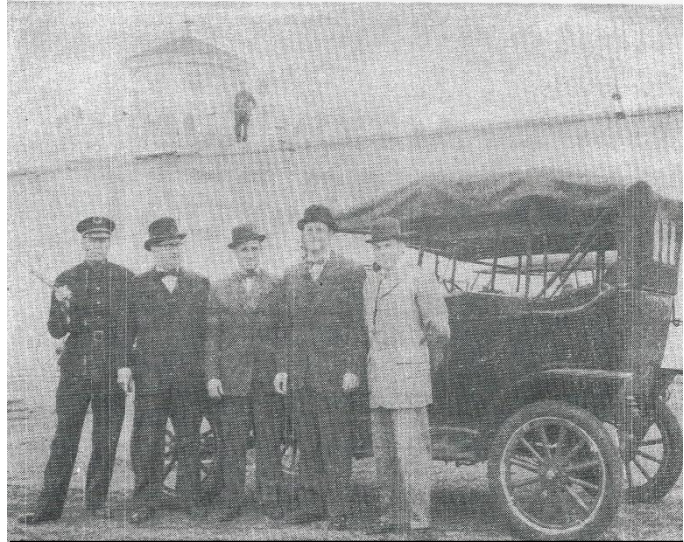
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**Check out the Deep South Region Website  
at:  
<http://local.aaca.org/deepsouth/>**



## **An Interview with Pierre Fontana (continued)**

While Pierre has agreed to meet with us again to discuss the formation of the DSR, he did regale us with two interesting events. In the late 1960's the club was contacted about providing era-appropriate cars for a movie being shot in Montgomery. The movie, entitled the Travelling Executioner, was set in 1918. It starred Stacey Keach and was based on the life of a Mississippi man who travelled with an electric chair to provide executions. According to Pierre, all the DSR members who travelled with their cars to Montgomery were given the full luxury treatment by the film company. He said the best part, not to give anything away, was the explosion that occurred as part of the story. The film was made at the closed Kilby Prison in Montgomery, and as part of the deal, the film company was to blow up the old prison to clear the area. For those interested, there is a DVD available for the film which was, basically, a flop.



In costume for the Travelling Executioner. Pierre is the last on the right.

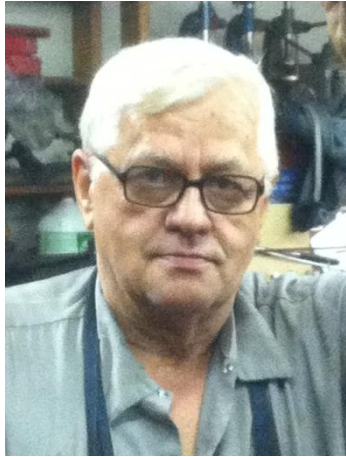
Around 1972, Dr. William Wetta bought a 1932 Duesenberg from someone in Mexico. He, Pierre and others travelled to Mexico to pick up the car. They carried American dollars and were somewhat anxious about being robbed. However, they arrived safely with the money only to find the seller would only accept Mexican pesos. Pierre stated they ended up exchanging the dollars for an immense pile of pesos and the deal was complete. On the return trip to the US, they were stopped by four Mexican policemen. Dr. Wetta apparently knew how to deal with the situation and handed each man a 20 dollar bill. The policemen indicated there were two more officers at the station, and after collecting 40 more dollars, the Deussenberg and its crew were on their way back safely to the US and Mobile.

Pierre said he has quite a bit of information about the early years of the DSR and we will meet with him again soon. As he prepared to leave, the sky opened up and we were all delayed. While it rained, Pierre informed us that cars are still finding their way to him. He currently is working on a 1970 MG GT that is one of his own current cars. He further gave us a lecture about using eBay to buy or sell cars. He has done both, for himself and for others. With some cautionary information about using PayPal, he picked up his briefcase and headed to his car. This man is obviously still very much in the game.

**Submitted by Paul Dagenais**

## The Machine Shop Corner

As most that know me, I do Automotive Machine work. From time to time we have different people stopping in wanting to know what projects Freddie Pendarvis & I are working on. Not the everyday stuff, but old & strange engines. I told Paul (Mr Editor) I would like to share some of what we have going on at the shop. We have a real unique engine project that Freddie's been working on for the last 100 yrs or so. (Just kidding) We are going to start with this article and be giving some updates in later newsletters to keep you informed.



I wanted to tell you a little about Freddie Pendarvis who is my partner in crime. I've been knowing Freddie for about 40 yrs. He was born in Pascagoula in 1942 and came to Mobile County at 3 days of age to the big town of Bayou La Batre. He has a wonderful wife Ms. Jackie and they have 3 children Jack, Will & Cindi & 4 Grandchildren. Do I need to say Ms. Jackie keeps all of them in line?

At an early age Freddie was learning why the wheel rolled as it did. He was always in the middle of an engine, either overhauling it or modifying parts to help the performance of whatever he was working on. His first car at 15 yrs old was a 37 Chevrolet & at 16 he put a 283 Chevy engine into it. At 17 he installed a

3736097 Duntov Camshaft with 3 two barrel Carburetors (Strombergs) into the car. He later pulled the motor & installed it in a 1953 Studebaker Coupe.

Freddie started his Machinist career At Cagle Auto Parts in Theodore, Alabama at the age of 20. He was turning brake drums & they had a Hydraulic Press. He was off and running at this point when they added Cylinder Head & Block work. As time would have it, he was in business for himself in various locations beginning in Bayou La Batre and later in Theodore.



Freddie's 1937 Chevy

Talking about some of the more innovative engines, there was a 1962

Falcon running H Gas with a 240 6 Cylinder Ford engine and a 300 6 Ford that they ran in I Gas at the old Dauphin Island Drag strip. Then the fun started when Freddie took 2 brand new 351C Ford Motorsports Aluminum Heads & cut a cylinder off of each head to make a cross-flow setup for the 300 Ford engine. A lot of work but he did it with the help of fuel Injection. The result was impressive to say the least.

Without saying too much more, the project we are working on now is naturally a GM Super Duty Pontiac 200 Cu Inch 4 Cylinder Engine that will have alcohol Fuel Injection, Turbocharged. For you that are interested we will keep you posted as we progress forward.

**Submitted by Zeno Chaudron & Freddie Pendarvis**



Check out the Deep South Region Website at:  
<http://local.aaca.org/deepsouth/>



## Deep South Region AACA General Membership Meeting July 26, 2012

President Zeno Chaudron called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.. There were 27 members, five of which are officers, and three guests in attendance. Chaplain Kevin Crowell gave the invocation which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The President asked we continue to remember Nancy Thoms who is still having medical problems.

He then introduced our guest speaker for the even, Mike Dow, the former Mayor of Mobile. Mr. Dow gave a broad overview of what is happening with the city at this time, covering political, industrial, and financial aspects. He also gave an update on what is happening with the property north of Mobile that was to be used for an automobile racing venue. He is a very interesting and knowledgeable speaker

**OLD BUSINESS:** The President noted that due to his recent work load and the extremely hot weather, he had not had an opportunity to investigate thoroughly what repairing the porch steps would entail. He asked if it could be postponed for the time being. A motion to table this item to a later date was made, seconded and passed. The Secretary asked for a motion to approve the June minutes as published in the July newsletter, A motion to accept was made, seconded and passed. The VP, Treasurer and Editor had no old business.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Prez Chaudron noted that it was a good turnout (20 members and four guests), especially considering the bad weather, for the outing on July 21<sup>st</sup> to Charlie Lyons Restoration Shop and lunch at the Lighthouse Restaurant. The VP Fuller noted that the vinyl siding on the southeast corner of the building is in need of small repair and he will contact Y-Paint company to see what needs to be done. Secretary P. Paquet has renewed the General Liability Insurance as required by the City of Mobile. It is done through AACA headquarters and is covered by J. C. Taylor Agency, Inc. B. Peterson, Treasurer, presented the July Financial Statement for review. With no questions, a motion to accept was made, seconded and passed. The Editor had no new Business. The President stood in for the Activities Chairs announcing the third DSR Second Saturday Breakfast would be on August 11 at Morrison's Cafeteria starting at 8:30 am. He also reviewed an invitation from the Bobos for DSR members to come to their river house in Mississippi on Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>. There will be more discussion on this at the August Meeting. John Pendergrass told the membership that we have been invited back again with our antique autos to Somerby Place in October. He will get a confirmed date ASAP. The 50/50/ Pot held a total of \$39 of which \$20 went to the lucky winner, Kevin Crowell. A motion to adjourn was made at 8:20 p.m., seconded and passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Patt Paquet



## DSR Executive Committee Meeting – Thursday – July 26, 2012

President Zeno Chaudron called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m. with four other officers in attendance. He nor the Vice President or the Secretary had any old business. Treasurer B. Peterson noted the AACA Officers Insurance administered through headquarters had been paid. He asked if this should have been voted on by the membership prior to payment. Secretary P. Paquet stated that to the best of her recollection that when the insurance became available some years back, a motion was made, seconded and passed that it would be paid for as long as it is available just as any other recurring bills are paid. The Activities Chairs and the Member-at-Large were absent, thus no old business.

New business had only one item – repair of a small area of the vinyl siding on the southeast corner of the clubhouse. VP/B & G Chairman Fuller will contact Y-Paint Company to see what it will take to get it repaired. Standing in for the Activities Chairs, the President noted that the third DSR Second Saturday Breakfast for the coming month will be on Aug. 8<sup>th</sup> at Morrison's Cafeteria on the BelAir Mall Shopping Center pad, It will begin at 8:30 a.m. and everyone is invited. The past two have been well attended and the members seem to enjoy the informal get-togethers. Also an invitation from Foy & Judy Bobo to come to their river home in Mississippi on October 13<sup>th</sup> had been received. There will be more discussion on this at the regular meeting that will follow. B. Peterson mentioned that there is a local 9 year old boy with one of the more aggressive types of leukemia whose insurance will fall far short of covering medical expense. He asked if DSR might consider hosting some type of fund raiser to help the family when the hot weather subsides. Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Patt Paquet



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<b>Cruise-Ins</b>			
<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>For More Info Contact</b>
1st Thursday	What-A-Burger	Airport & Snow Road	Bubba Blanton 251-610-4032
1st Saturday	Edgewater Mall	Hwy 90, Biloxi MS	Jimbo 228-596-0664
2nd Friday	Down Town Cruise	Ocean Springs, MS	N/A
Every Saturday	Burger King	Pensacola Nine Mile Rd at Chemstrand	N/A
1st Monday	Lighthouse Resturant	Bayou La Batre	<a href="mailto:info@mobilebaymustangclub.org">info@mobilebaymustangclub.org</a>
2nd Thursday	Five Guys Burgers	University at Airport	<a href="mailto:info@mobilebaymustangclub.org">info@mobilebaymustangclub.org</a>
1st Saturday	Krystals: Po-Boy	Hwy 90 beside Skyline Bowling	Jo Jo Johnson 251-367-6643
1st Saturday	5 Guys Hamburgers	Airport At University	Brenda Drinkard 675-9226
4th Saturday	Mings Cafe	Highway 43 in Saraland	North Side Cruisers
2nd Saturday	Sam's Super Burger	Grand Bay	Southern Bay Cruisers 251-442-6877
2nd Saturday	Dillards	Eastern Shore Mall	Eastern Shore Cruisers Fred Minke 709-5900
3rd Thursday	Beef O'Bradys	Spanish Fort, Hwy 90	
3rd Saturday	Steak and Shake	Schillinger Road	Past Time Cruisers Tom Ebel 379-0211
4th Saturday	Northrop Complex	Pascagoula, MS	Magnolia Classic Cruisers
Last Saturday	Sonic - Hwy 59 South	Robertsdale, AL	251-747-2022

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