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A tale of two first automobiles: A '39 Chevy & a '92 Festiva

By Gene Owens

She wanted a car. Every 16-year-old wants a car. But Jessica really need one because she had a part-time job after school that required me to run her all the way from Murphy High School to Dauphin Street and I-65. She needed a car.

I remembered my first car. I was a college freshman, working part-time to supplement my mill-company scholarship. The University of Georgia campus was along way across, and it was a long walk to my part-time newspaper job. For economic and social purposes, I needed a car.

I found two prospects on a used-car lot. One was an immaculate 1939 Buick four-door sedan, a shiny pearl gray. The dealer want \$175 for it.

The other was a black, two-door 1939 Chevrolet permeated by the red clay of northeast Georgia. He wanted \$125 for it. I had the cash for the Chevy. I tried to get him down on the Buick, but he wouldn't budge. I bought the Chevy.

It was a good choice. It would do no more than 55 mph flat-out, but on the back roads of Georgia, you didn't want to go any faster. I had to replace a radiator hose shortly after I bought it, and then replace all four tires with recaps. But tires could be had for \$10 apiece, and gasoline went for less than 30 cents a gallon. Liability insurance was unheard of.

The little Chevy enabled me to handle my part-time reporter's job and to escort a high-school girl named Peggy to movies on Friday nights. The rest of the time, I spent with the boys, joyriding over the back roads. Once I let a teen-age friend named Richard drive it through the Oconee County woods on a two-rut road far from a paved highway. A sheriff's deputy, his car parked crossways on the

wooden bridge of a sluggish creek, nailed us. Richard did not have a driver's license. I paid the fine, because Richard was broke and his daddy would have gone hard on him if he'd known he'd been busted for driving without a license.

Richard later married Peggy and it took me 30 years to get her back. Jessica is the granddaughter of that marriage, and last week I had the privilege of helping her into her first car. She had been drooling over a Kia Sportage (they're so *cute*) and a Lexus (dream on, Honey). I told her that my friend, Otis Cunningham, had a '92 Ford Festiva he was willing to sell her. She turned up her nose.

"They're ugly," she said.

Later, a tour of the used-car ads caused her to warm to the idea of a plain set of wheels. Otis' little jewel turned out to be a turquoise number with some fancy feminine-style striping on the side. It had an automatic transmission – a prerequisite for Jessica. It had been driven less than 80K miles. Otis wanted \$2,200 for it, which was about what I paid for my first brand-new car – a 1960 Ford Falcon.

"It's *cute*!" Jessica exclaimed. I told her to save up a couple of months' payments and we'd see about getting her a loan. In no time, she had more than enough. The bank lent her the money in her own name, with my signature, and she was on her way.

The car was checked out by my friend, Dave, who noticed after a couple of days, some oil leaks. It went to a garage where the mechanics replaced the gasket, a couple of belts and installed a new PVC valve. Jessica picked up the car and started home.

The phone rang and this nice lady asked, "Do you have a *See Tale on Page 6*

Keeping the pedal to the metal...

The Steering Column

By Leah Musgrove



Hopefully, everyone had a great time at last month's meeting. I know I sure did. Charlie Froehlich gave an interesting and witty presentation and slide show of some of the tours and outings that he and Ardie have been on over the years. It was quite a treat to see some of our present members in the show and to hear the funny stories that went along with each trip. I hope other members are encouraged to do similar things for our enjoyment. Thanks, Charlie!

The chili cook-off was a tremendous hit and those who couldn't attend really missed out. All the food was superb, as usual. First, second and third place ribbons were presented to the winners. Congratulations to them and thanks to everyone who contributed to the event.

May is just around the corner. That means DSR's car show will be here in no time. If you have contacted Eddie Anderson and signed up to help out, we really appreciate it. Those who have yet to volunteer, please call him to find out what you help with. There are plenty of things that need attention before, during and after. It will take the efforts of each member to make it a success.

There was a brief discussion of the Hooters show at the last meeting. Due to the fact we are hosting a National tour at the time the show is normally held, we need to decide whether to do the Hooters show this year and, if so, what date. Please have your input ready for the March 22nd meeting.

In conclusion, I'd like to say what a pleasure it is to see a "sister" club be honored. Let's all applaud the Mississippi Coast Mustang Club on receiving the Golden Rule Award. Eagle One, a marketer of automotive appearance care products, presents it annually. The award is given to a car or truck club in the west, Midwest east and south for conducting an outstanding program in support of community and charitable causes within its region during the year. The MCMC was chosen as the winner in the southern region for their fund raising efforts for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The club will receive a plaque and a large supply of Eagle One products for fund-raising purposes. Congratulations to all the hard-working members of the MCMC for a job well done!

Deep South Region Officers 2001



President.....	Leah Musgrove	633-9305
Vice President....	Eddie Anderson	649-3231
Secretary.....	Reecie Mims	479-2523
Treasurer.....	Carl Bailey	947-5262
Activities.....	Joyce Francis	342-3398
	Theresa Vaughan	639-0803
Editor.....	Patt Paquet	661-4009
Mem. at Large.....	Cecil Pugh	342-3404

Appointees, Volunteers & Support Personnel

Chaplain	Lambert Mims	479-2523
SE Divisional Tour	Oct. 31- Nov. 3, 2001	
Chairman	Charlie Froehlich	(601) 749-9935
Proofreader.....	Tracy Henderson	661-2818
Layout	Buddy Paquet	

The Sparkplug is non-profit and published for the information of our members and friends. DEEP SOUTH REGION meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM in the clubhouse located at 951 Forest Hill Dr. Membership in the Antique Automobile Club of America is required to be a member of this region. Annual local dues are \$15; AACA National dues are \$26. Views expressed in the Sparkplug are not necessarily those of the Region officers or AACA. Permission to copy is hereby granted provided source is disclosed and credit given to author. Some material maybe copyrighted and permission to use granted to this publication only. Contributions to the Sparkplug are welcome but the Editor reserves the right to edit material that may not be suitable for publication

When you finish reading this newsletter, please share it with a friend who might enjoy knowing more about our hobby.

A matter of record

Minutes

Deep South Region, A.A.C.A. Meeting Feb. 22, 2000

After a good meal of chili, salad and dessert, Leah Musgrove, the meeting was called to order by Leah Musgrove, President, with 42 members and two visitors present. She reported on the ill members, three of which were with us - Melvin and Betty Neese and Theresa Vaughan. She also offered condolences to Lambert Mims in the loss of his brother, Jeff. Before the meal, Chaplain Lambert Mims led us in prayer and thanked the members for their support during the loss of his brother.

OLD BUSINESS: Leah thanked Charlie Froehlich for sharing his slides of various interesting tours that he and Ardie have taken with us. Eddie Anderson gave us an update on the May car show; and encouraged us to make the show a team effort - not a one-person event. He asked the members whether they wanted trophies or plaques to be given out at the show. It was decided to use plaques so that the sponsor's logo could be used. Charlie Froehlich addressed the SE Divisional Tour scheduled for Oct. 31 - Nov. 3 and invited the members to attend the Central Division Tour that will take place June 13-16, 2001 in and around Baton Rouge, LA.

SECRETARY: The minutes of the last meeting were approved as printed on a motion by Ross Sloan and a second by Anna White. **TREASURER:** Carl Bailey announced that the bank account transfer has begun and will be completed soon. **EDITOR:** Patt Paquet announced that the 2001 membership cards are on the table.

ACTIVITIES COORDINATORS: Joyce Francis and Theresa Vaughan reminded us of the Catahoula Junk Collector's Outing on March 9 - 11 at Lillian, AL and the Claude Kelly Park Outing on April 7th also, the Lucedale Display to be held on April 21st and that those wishing to participate in the parade should be in line before 10 AM.

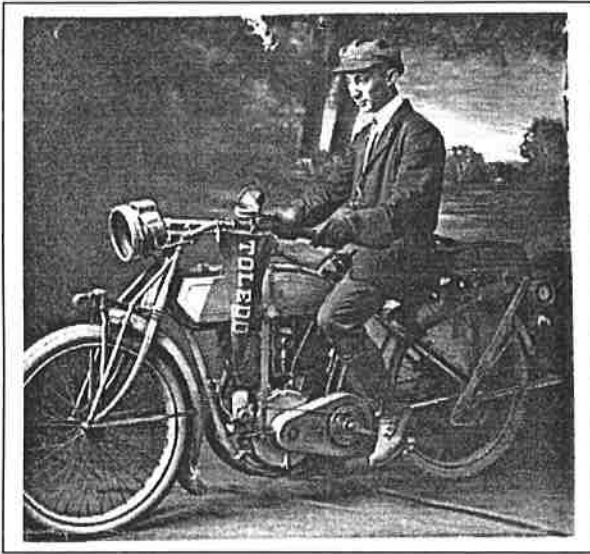
NEW BUSINESS: Leah showed us her white shirt with the red monograms which she purchased at Leo's and suggested that they might be cooler than the red ones. She congratulated Lambert Mims on his election as president of the Waterfront Rescue Mission Advisory Board and asked for donations in his honor. A total of \$65.00 was collected. She then threw out for discussion the possibility of having a regular meeting on Saturday, April 28th, with hopes that those who are unable to drive at night might be able to attend. However, there were so many conflicts for that date that it was decided to try it on a later Saturday. She announced that the Calling Committee would handle the refreshment schedule. Leah then noted that she had been contacted by someone in Point Clear who wanted to obtain one car for a wedding. Anyone desiring to do that wedding should contact her for the particulars, since the club no longer does weddings. The President would like for members to think about the Hooter's Car Show during the next month and decide whether or not we are going to do it. **TREASURER:** The report was approved as printed on a motion by Dayton Whites and a second by Hershel Whigham. **EDITOR:** Patt Paquet announced that the 2001 Rosters are available at the club house only and will not be mailed. **ACTIVITIES DIRECTORS:** Joyce Francis and Theresa Vaughan made the following announcements: March 17th ~ Outing to Lambert's Cafe with a possible side trip. On a motion by Eddie Anderson and a second by Bill Musgrove it was decided to make this a Club Activity. May 5th ~ May Day in Tanner Williams; they need six cars. Owners will get a free chicken dinner. The event is from 9:15 until 12 Noon. It was decided to make this a club activity on a motion by Lycyle Crowdus and a second by Eddie Anderson. On the 2nd Saturday of each month the Masonic Lodge at Grand Bay serves breakfast from 7:00 AM until 10:00 AM. Cost is \$3.00. On a motion by Susie Anderson and a second by Melvin Neese it was decided to make this a club activity with a visit to a nearby antique shop afterwards. The 50/50 pot (28.00) was won by B. L. Cammon. Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Reecie Mims

Inexpensive Memories by Paul Dagenais

The postcard you see has a picture of James J. McDole, Sr.'s father on it. "Jim" and his wife, Janet, are former DSR members whom some of you may remember. They owned a 1950 Chevrolet coupe that they used to show.



The original is a sepia tone, not black and white as shown

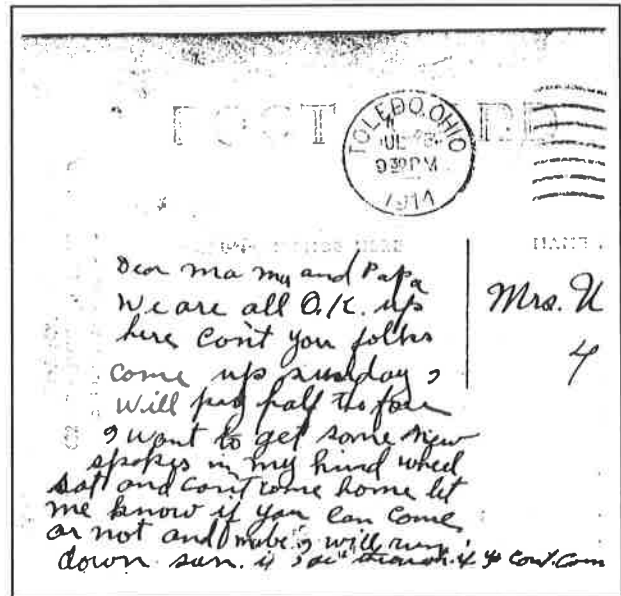
Dale McDole sent the card to his mother (Jim's grandmother) in July of 1914. He sent it from Toledo to Fostoria, Ohio. Unfortunately, a portion of the card was cut off years ago. Jim McDole says he got an early appreciation of motorcycles. His parents took him camping using a motorcycle with a sidecar when he was only three weeks old! The family moved to Mobile in the early 1920s but without the motorcycle shown on the postcard. The trip took a little over two weeks in a Model T. Jim remembers they sometimes backed up hills to conserve gas. His parents, a younger brother and sister along with an aunt all camped in a tent from Fostoria to Mobile.

Jim's postcard is quite an heirloom and probably a collector's item. Postcard collecting is referred to as *deltiology*. It is currently the third largest collectable hobby in the world, surpassed only by coin and stamp collecting. Their popularity is due to the broad range of subjects they describe. They are the most popular form of souvenir and remain an economical way for individuals and business to communicate.

The first true postal cards were printed privately in 1861 and were replaced in 1873 by U.S.

Government postal cards. Exposition cards appeared in 1873 and showed the main building of the Inter-State Industrial Exposition in Chicago. They were intended for advertising, not as souvenirs. The first souvenir cards appeared in 1893 and in 1898 a standard fee of one cent was set for sending a postcard. This was perhaps the most significant event to enhance the use of private postal cards.

The era from 1901 to 1907 was called the Undivided Back Era. The back of the card was restricted to the address. Messages could be written on the front only. The front might also have had a design. With the advent of the Divided Back Era (1907 - 1915), the front of the card could be used exclusively for designs. The message was on one side of the back while the address was on the other. This is the type of card that Dale McDole sent to his mother in 1914. The period from 1916 - 1930 is known as the White Border era. The cards were usually pictures with a surrounding white border. By the end of this postcard era, the McDoles had been in Mobile and in the grocery business for several years.



Note the July 8, 1914 9:30 PM postmark

Their first store was on Augusta Street. Later, they bought one at Augusta and Conception Streets. Jim recalls as a youngster the family living in a back room of the store. Please see *Postcards* on Page 5

This and that...

Postcards continued from Page 4

His father still had a penchant for motorcycles. At sometime during 1927, he was riding on what was called Red Clay Hill off Old Pascagoula Road in the south part of Mobile County. It had rained a few days before and the hill was wet and slick. Unfortunately for him, he and his motorcycle went down the hill. It took some time and a good bit of help to get it back on the road. His love for riding never faded and he passed it on to his oldest son. Jim's most cherished possession as a child was a toy two-wheel motorcycle that had to be pushed by using your feet. He got his first real "bike" when he was 15 or 16 years old. Today, he and Janet have a Honda Scooter that they both use when they are "motorhoming".

The next postcard era was the Linen Era (1930 – 1945). These cards were made of linen paper stock and that allowed for the use of bright, vivid colors. Tastes were for views and comic cards. Among the best cards of this type are the political humor cards of World War II. The modern Photochrome Era is from 1939 to the present. These are commonly called Modern Chromes and are still the most popular today. They offer the best reproductions and are big favorites with collectors.

There are several types of postcards. **View cards** are the mainstay of the collecting field. They offer historic reference to buildings, streets and even towns that may no longer exist. **Photographic cards** are real photos of beautiful women, children, lovers, etc. They are often hand tinted in great detail and color. The **greeting card** was at one time more popular than it is today. Early greeting cards were the most beautiful cards ever printed. Publishers used intricate embossing techniques, high caliber art work, superior inks, expensive lithographic processes and novelties such as glitter, ribbons, silk and feathers. **Historical cards** commemorated events such as war, social problems, parades, coronations and politics. Often this type of card was made of a real photograph with few copies being offered for sale and the historical significance comes from the message written by the sender. **Art cards** were special interest cards. Because of their rarity and the skill of the artists, these cards are very popular today. They are thought of as original high quality prints instead of postcards. Nowhere in the world of art,

does such quality material exist at such low prices. So, maybe the next time you are looking for something to send back home while you are touring, you might think about the history and significance of those "four for a dollar" cards we all take for granted at the tourist trap we're trapped in!



DSR members would like to offer our sincere condolences to Leah Musgrove as well as Harold and Ann Rowell. Harold's mother died on March 3, 2001. Leah's uncle passed away in Brewton on that same date.

Meet the Smiths (really!)

Clyde and Janet Smith are DSR's newest members. They are natives of Massachusetts but from different cities. Janet is from Melrose and Clyde's hometown is Malden (Remember Karl?) They have been married 33 years and have two sons, both of whom live in this area.

Clyde has been the owner/operator of Clyde Smith and Sons since 1978. They have about 20 18-wheelers on the road most of the time.

Janet enjoys gardening and does it extensively. She also like to travel and occasionally rides along with Clyde when he is on the road to a place she wants to go.

Hobby-wise, Clyde enjoys the vintage cars, "legends" race cars and is a NASCAR fan. Another enjoyment is their three horses, two Tennessee Walkers and an American saddle horse.

Janet said she likes the horses but she actually prefers the cars. She said she has yet to have to muck out the garage, even after their '72 Mustang has been in it without having been taken out for quite a while!

A tale of two automobiles

Continued from Page 1

a granddaughter named Jessica?" My heart hit my throat. "She has car trouble and wants you to come and get her," the lady told me.

The car had died in the middle of an intersection during a drenching rain. She managed to get it into a parking lot. There she stopped and burst into tears. A kindly couple stopped and offered to help. She gave them my telephone number, then rolled up her window, locked the doors and refused any other offers of help. Dave and I tried to start the car. The starter spun its little heart out, but the engine just wouldn't fire. The next morning, the mechanics went straight to the problem: moisture condensation in the distributor cap. I drove the car to Gulf Shores and back to make sure it was back in condition. Got her up to 65-70 mph on the interstate; it purred like a kitten.

A 16-year-old girl in a car is vulnerable in more ways than one. So Dave and I will keep an eye on Jessica as she spreads her wings. Years from now, I hope the little Festiva is held as fondly in her memory as my '39 Chevy is in mine. Forty-six years and 29 vehicles later, I'd love to have it back. **Editor's Note:** The preceding article by Gene Owens appeared in the Jan. 19, 2001 Mobile Register. My thanks to Mr. Owens and the Register for allowing it to be reprinted.

TV/Movie Auto Trivia

- (1) What year, make and model sports car did Martin Milner and George Maharis drive in the first episode of the "Route 66" series?
- (2) What make co-sponsored the "Ed Sullivan" TV show?
- (3) What type car did Ian Fleming's JamesBond drive?
- (4) In the movie "Oh God", what was actor George Burns driving when it rained inside the car?
- (5) What make automobile did Dinah Shore sing about in "See the USA in your ____"?

(1) Chevrolet Corvette (2) Lincoln-Mercury
(3) Bentley (4) AMC Pacer (5) Chevrolet

Lost in the fifties...

By The Roving Reporter

There are some DSR members who would rather it not be known they are from another time zone. They live with us on a daily basis by using a time transporter whereby they can come and go at will. They were seen recently and their escapade is about to be exposed. In order to protect their true identities, names will not be revealed but if you read carefully, you may discover who they are.

On Feb. 14th, they provided three vehicles for the North Bay Christian Center. The Youth Group, ages 12-18, were being treated to a 1950's Valentine Sock Hop complete with root beer floats, music straight out of American Bandstand, saddle oxfords and ducktail hair styles. According to Debra Padot, one of the organizers, there were approximately 60-70 young people in attendance. She said it was a toss up whether the red and white 1957 Ford Retractable, the white 1957 T-Bird or the maroon 1950 Studebaker Starlight Coupe was the favorite car.

Chili contest was hot stuff

Once again it was demonstrated that Betty Crocker and Pillsbury haven't a thing on DSR cooks. Those cook-offs may offer fame and fortune but only at a DSR meeting can one gain true appreciation for culinary delights.

This year the male chefs took two out of the three places. Tucking the first prize ribbon in his crockpot was **Jim Martin**. **Ann Rowell** was right on his back bumper in second place and **Don Dillehay** carried third place home. It was a close call any way you went.



Early arrivals and latecomers alike had an array of chili, soups, salads and desserts to choose from.

March meeting refreshments

Tracy Henderson's call list will provide the above. Plan ahead if your name is Crowdus, Finley, J & N Henderson, E. Lunsford, D & B McLaney, C. Pugh, C. Townsend, C & J Smith or B & S Whiting. You can expect a call from her.

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Who needs a map? Use the stars!

You are driving your antique car on a tour and make a wrong turn. It's getting late and you are on a lonely, country back road. You forgot to bring your cell phone, which means no help from there. You are in a totally unfamiliar area, and after another few miles of driving, it is completely dark. You are still lost. You know what direction you took at the last stop sign but how do you find that direction in the middle nowhere?

Perhaps you were catching so many fish you just couldn't quit. You are on a huge lake and suddenly, you realize the sun is gone and you don't remember west from east, north our south. Uh oh! How are you going to find your way to the place you launched from?

Look up! Well, of course there is always help from *above*, but look at the stars. They can be your way out of this dilemma. The location you are in has no

Member news

Congratulations to Charlie and Robbie Lyles on the birth of their newest grandchild. The stork brought Anna Marie to Springhill Memorial Hospital on March 3rd. She weighed in at five pounds, seven ounces. Mom, Dad and baby are all doing fine.

Paul Dagenais has recently received a promotion. He now is the Acting Chair in addition to being an Associate Professor for the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology at USA.

ESP member Bud Moseley joins the

MAR. 2001

Deep South Region
Antique Automobile Club of America
4963 Freeway Lane
Mobile, AL 36619-1716

Important Dates 2001

- Mar. 22** DSR Meeting in clubhouse 7:30 P.M.
- Mar. 24** 39th Annual Old South Car Show under the I-10 Overpass near Fort Conde
Info: 457-2339 or 661-5017
- Mar. 23-25** MCA National Show ~ University Mall ~ Pensacola, FL (334)961-1411
- Apr. 7** Multi-club picnic hosted by South Alabama Region AACA
Claude B. Kelly State Park near Atmore ~ More details to follow
All car clubs are invited to attend ~ For more info call (334)867-3372
- Apr. 7** Camellia Classic Car Show ~ Bellingrath Gardens, Mobile, AL (334)666-3761

If swimming is good for one's figure/physique, who do you explain whales?

was scheduled for a triple bypass that turned into five on March 8. As of press time (Mar. 14th) he was on the road to recovery and anticipating being released from the hospital that day.

will be on your way back to civilization in no time at all. Where and how can you get a quick and free course in *celestial navigation*? Come to the March 22nd meeting. **Richard and Sylvia White**, two of our new members, will be our instructors for getting ourselves out of situations like that describe above as well as some others. They will be showing a few slides to make the lesson easier to understand plus giving some handouts to take home.