This is a Newsletter just for the fun of it. If you would like to subscribe or unsubscribe, just let us know. Have pictures or a story to share? Send it along.

CK Properties, LTD.
9241 Ravenna Rd.
Bldg C-12
Twinsburg, OH 44087
Www.ckautollc.com

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"I am" is reportedly the shortest sentence in the English language. Could it be that "I do" is the longest sentence?

- George Carlin

Inside this issue:

CK AUTO, LLC
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The Solid Lifter

Volume 10, Issue 1 February 2010

From the Editor

Karen Walder

Hello once again. Its been awhile since I sent out a Newsletter, but hey, we've been busy here! You have received this Issue because you either were on our previous list, or we thought you might enjoy hearing from us once in awhile.

If you want to continue to receive our Newsletter (about every other month) you do not need to do anything. If you would like to opt out, simply send me an email to that effect. It won't hurt my feelings.

Truth be known, I like writing and missed doing the Newsletter. But the Newsletter restart also fits into something bigger: my New Year's Resolution is to become more "Frankie Inspired". What does that mean you might ask? Well, here's how I think of it.

Most of you knew or know of Frankie, my Dad, who died in 2000—10 years ago already. Although missing him has not diminished as time passed, my feelings of how my life reflects his influence has. So, seeking to correct this trend, I look to him for inspiration. Something that should not be very hard to do given his creative talents.

Frankie was a renaissance man: poet, engineer, artist, teacher, physicist, pilot, singer, inventor, naturalist, sci-fi devotee and all around out-of-the-box thinker.

I remember his wholehearted embrace and enjoyment of all these interests and how he enjoyed sharing them. Writing interests me, so I seek to be "Frankie Inspired" and share it with you!

Karen Walder, Editor

Brrrr! Corvette on ice ...

Al & Danny's 1958 Corvette restoration begins its final phase.
Above: Interior cut in.
Right: Engine, wearing "Chevy Orange" is mated to the Fuel Injection unit and mounted in the chassis.

Signet Red 1958 Corvette soon to be heard again

The 1958 restoration project for customers Al & Danny is nearing the end. After a little over a year of body work, chassis restoration, seemingly endless sanding, component restoration and sourcing, tranny rebuild and an engine rebuild (by others), the chassis, engine, and body will soon be joined back together after more than a quarter century apart.

Final painting commenced this month with Engine blackout, followed by cut in of the interior, trunk, deck lid door jambs in Signet Red and then painting the motor in "Chevy Orange".

Once the motor is installed in the chassis, the fuel-injected engine will be fired up and checked out prior to final painting of the car and installing the interior. This will be the first time the motor has been heard since it was stored after Al used it as a daily driver for many years.

Al & Danny have owned the car since 1959 and have shared wonderful stories and even old photos of their cross-country adventures with the Corvette.

CK's "First" Restoration Gets New "Shoes" and "Hat"

Pictures of all of CK's current restoration projects can be found at: http://ckautollc.phanfare.com.

Our very first restoration project was a 1963 Convertible (a transaction which introduced us to Pancho & Pops, who remain our good friends). Like many "first restorations", it started out as a repair & repaint. It grew into a full frame-off restoration. We learned a lot (and not all in a good way if you know what I mean). We equipped the car with reproduction knock-offs and whitewall tires. That was in 1994.

BEFORE—CK's 1963 Corvette wearing knock offs, whitewalls and a white top.

Then in 2008, we completed a frame-on resto of a '63 SWC for our friends Rick & Debbie. Rick wanted blackwalls and hubcaps—which calls for body-colored wheels—instead of white-walls, which always called for wheels painted black.

Just last Fall. Chuck and Pancho went to the McDorman auction and picked up original '63 wheels. (Pancho and wheels … that's another story for another day.) These events got us moving on a plan to change the look of our '63 and last month, we did it.

A set of original Kelsey-Hayes wheels (this style offered only in '63-64, making them very hard to find) was restored and painted in Saddle Tan to match the body color, and a new set of BF Goodrich Silvertown blackwalls from Coker Tire were mounted.

To complete the look, we changed out the convertible top from white to black. Take a look at the before and after and see how you like it.

AFTER—CK's 1963 Corvette with new wheels w/ blackwalls and a black top.

Tidbits

… Congratulations to our nephew, Kurt, who along with his team was awarded an Honorable Mention in the St. Joan of Arc Science Fair. Their project—Building a Trebuchet—had the able assistance of Uncle Chuckie.

… Want to check out some "vintage" street scenes? Go to http://www.flickr.com/photos/24796741@N05/sets/72157604247242338/show/with/2346008881/. Hint: Be sure to check out the pictures of the artist and his "set".

… LA calling: Approached by an LA film production company for help procuring 20's era automobiles for a documentary being shot in Cleveland IN FEBRUARY, we had to ask "Don't you know its winter here!".

… During a recent visit to the Cleveland Art Museum, we found that car art was already flourishing at the dawn of the automobile in the early teens, as this piece *The Windshield, On the Road to Villacoublay* by Henri Matisse shows. Is it the earliest published art from the *inside* of an automobile?

Henri Matisse was a car-guy! Here he paints from the inside of his Renault automobile in a 1917 piece. *(Image from clemusart.com)*

This Month In History

FEB 2, 1926
The Marmon Car Company is established as a separate corporation from the parent, Nordyke & Marmon (w well-*known grain milling equipment manufacturer*)

FEB 2, 1955
The Chrysler Corporation legally makes the Imperial a separate Marque

FEB 2, 1956
Marcy delivers baby number 5 and names him Charles

FEB 2, 1974
The Bricklin is introduced at the National Association of Automobile Dealers convention in Las Vegas, NV.

FEB 10, 1941
The first experimental Highway Post Office begins service between Washington, DC and Harrisonburg, VA using a specially-built White Model 788 transit bus.

FEB 10, 1956
Margie delivers baby number 2 and names him Christopher

FEB 11, 1847
Thomas Alva Edison is born in Milan, OH

FEB 11, 1936
Encouraged by its success a the 1933-34 Chicago Century of Progress, General Motors opens its "Parade of Progress" in Lakeland, FL as eight streamlined vans plus support vehicles embark on a four-year odyssey throughout North America. *(The vans will be known as Futurliners.)*

FEB 29, 1908
The Standardization Test of three random Cadillacs begins at the new Brooklands track in England under the supervision of the Royal Automobile Club. *(These three cars, after being disassembled and the parts jumbled were then reassembled and driven 500 miles, demonstrating Cadillac's interchangeability of parts—the first in the Industry—and winning for Cadillac its first Dewar Trophy and catchphrase "Standard of the World". At least one of the cars still exists today.)*

From "Automobile History Day by Day" by Douglas A Wick, and supplemental comments from the Editor.

February is also:

- Chocolate Lovers Month
- National Grapefruit Month
- Return Shopping Carts to the Supermarket Month
- National Sweet Potato Month
- National Children's Dental Health Month

Karen sizes up the monster truck parked at Old Towne in Kissimmee, FL.

Ever wonder how G.A.R. Highway got its name?

When U.S. 6 achieved transcontinental status in 1937, it was the longest U.S. route at 3,652 miles.

You may have driven on Rt. 6 (GAR Highway) many times, but do you know how it got its name?

U.S. 6 - The Grand Army of the Republic Highway

by Richard F. Weingroff

In October 1925, the Joint Board on Interstate Highways recommended a 75,884-mile U.S. numbered system. One of the routes in the proposal was U.S. 6:

From Provincetown, Massachusetts, to New Bedford, Fall River, Providence, Rhode Island, Hartford, Connecticut, Danbury, Brewster, New York.

This routing was consistent with the Joint Board's concept of the numbering system. The Joint Board assigned even numbers to routes of prevailing east-west traffic and odd numbers to routes that were predominantly north-south. The principal east-west routes were numbered with a multiple of 10 and ended in zero, up to U.S. 90 in the south. Other routes were numbered within the grid created by the principal routes.

Because the highways in the system were owned by the States, the Secretary of Agriculture submitted the Joint Board's proposal to the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) for approval. During late 1925 and throughout 1926, AASHO considered requests for changes in the Joint Board's proposal. By the time AASHO approved the proposal on November 11, 1926, U.S. 6 was one of the routes that had changed.

The route was changed again on June 8, 1931, when AASHO's Executive Committee approved State highway agency requests to modify the route in Pennsylvania and extend U.S. 6 to Greeley, Colorado.

On June 21, 1937, U.S. 6 became a transcontinental highway. Officials of AASHO extended U.S. 6 to Long Beach, California, 3,652 miles from Provincetown on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. The eastern terminus was at New Beach Circle; the western terminus at the intersection of the Long Beach Freeway and Pacific Coast Highway (U.S. 101).

When U.S. 6 achieved transcontinental status in 1937, it was the longest U.S. route at 3,652 miles. It was not, however, paved the entire distance. When paving was completed in 1952, the news received national attention. On September 21, 1952, *The New York Times* noted that paving had been completed a week earlier in 100-degree heat in Utah. A planned 2-day celebration would "mark completion of thirty-three and one-half miles of arrow-straight asphalt pavement running from a point just beyond Hinckley, about six miles west of here, to Skull Rock Pass in the Little Drum Mountains."

The ceremony was appropriately joyous:. They staged parades, ate barbecued beef, listened to speeches on how the area was scheduled for vast economic growth. In a final burst of enthusiasm, they closed off four blocks of U.S. 6 and ran a 1,500-man square dance.

Culmination of the two-day shindig came when Sen. Arthur V. Watkins (R., Utah) and Sen. Pat McCarran (D., Nev.) rode down U.S. 6 in, respectively, an 1898 Columbus-Firestone and a 1902 Oldsmobile. Driving for Watkins was Gov. J. Bracken Lee of Utah; driving for McCarran was Gov. Charles Russell of Nevada. The dignitaries chugged into Delta, disembarked, and cut a foot-wide ribbon stretched across the road. This symbolized the opening of U.S. 6.

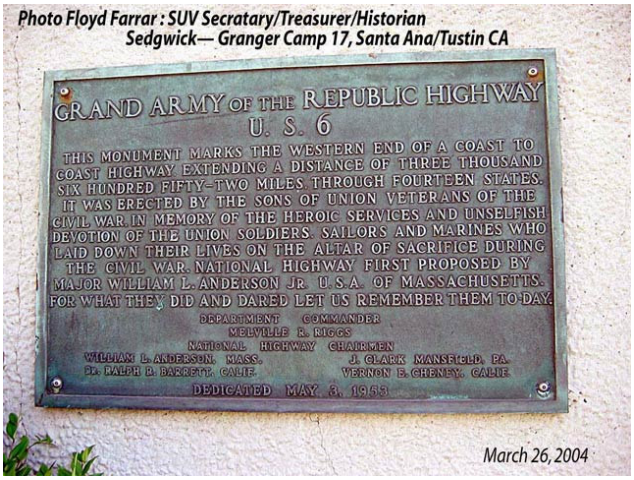
Grand Army of the Republic Highway

Major William L. Anderson, Jr., of the U.S. Army conceived the idea of designating U.S. 6 the Grand Army of the Republic Highway to honor the Union forces during the Civil War. Based on his recommendation, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War began promoting the idea in April 1934. Because the highway was owned by the States, the organization asked each State to act on the proposal. The first to do so was Massachusetts when Governor Charles F. Hurley signed a bill on February 12, 1937, naming the route. Over the years, the States gradually adopted the name. For example, California did so in 1943 and Indiana in 1946, while Governor James Duff of Pennsylvania named the State's segment of U.S. 6 in 1948.

A formal dedication of the Grand Army of the Republic Highway took place on May 3, 1953, in Long Beach. The occasion was a gathering of the five related service organizations, including the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. The five organizations held their own meetings, but came together for the dedication on that Sunday afternoon to place a monument in front of the Municipal Auditorium:

GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HIGHWAY
U.S. 6

This monument marks the western end of a coast to coast highway extending a distance of three thousand six hundred fifty-two miles through fourteen states. It was erected by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War in memory of the heroic services and unselfish devotion of the Union soldiers, sailors and marines who laid down their lives on the altar of sacrifice during the Civil War. National Highway first proposed by Major William L. Anderson, Jr., U.S.A. of Massachusetts. For what they did and dared, let us remember them today.



Karen's Recent History Reads

Empire Express
by David Haward Bain
Story of the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. If you worry about "insider" trading and huge government subsidies today, you ain't seen nothin compared to this post-Civil War period. ***** G

Invisible Giants
by Herbert Harwood
Story of the Van Sweringen brothers, who built Shaker Heights and the Terminal Tower. A comprehensive view of this very important part of Cleveland history. ****

Wheels for the World
By Douglas Brinkley
Comprehensive account of Henry Ford and the Ford Motor Company after Henry Ford. Well balanced and well written.
****

Karen's Ratings:
G = General Interest
= Local Interest
= Automotive Interest

NCRS Meet—Kissimmee, FL

January marks our annual "get out of the cold" trip to Kissimmee, FL for the NCRS Regional Meet, held at Old Towne. We were joined again by Chuck's Mom and sister Helen. We all enjoyed the warm weather and even Mom amazed us all, walking upwards of 2 miles each day.

Chuck and I made the rounds and caught up with old friends and met some new ones. We checked out the cars for judging, snapped some pictures of obscure details of components and trim and talked to other owners and restorers about their techniques.

One of the cars we admired was a 1960 Corvette painted Sateen Silver, like the one in our shop is soon to be.

We also enjoyed meeting the original owner of a '63 Corvette, which is fuel injected and sports a one-off prototype "bubble" top. Very cool car.

In between shopping at the swap meet, strolling thru Old Towne (there is a car cruise there every Fri & Sat nite) and enjoying the many fine restaurants in the area, quite a few card games were played, and Mom even wrestled an alligator!

Above: Helen, Mom & Chuck at the airport ready to fly South. Below: Chuck checks out a '53 "project".

Mom & Karen with a very lively 'gator.

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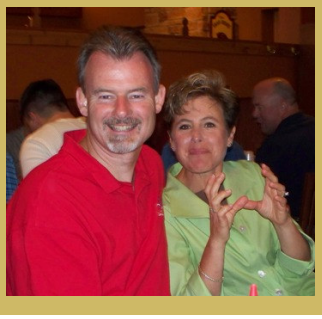
CK Auto/CK Properties
9241 Ravenna Rd.
Suite C-12
Twinsburg, OH 44087

Phone: 330.963.0990
Fax: 330.963.0992
E-mail:
kwalder@ckautollc.com

Visit us on the web

www.ckautollc.com



The Solid Lifter

In My Opinion ...

The problems at Toyota are repeatedly called "Quality" issues. One recent article even berated Toyota assembly line workers for not "pulling the cord" to stop the line. Did they mean this literally? How exactly would an assembly line worker look at a gas pedal, or an ABS module and "see" the quality issues now apparent?

To me, assembly line quality issues are parts that do not meet specifications but are still put on the car. It seems Toyota's recent recalls have less to do with off-spec parts and much more to do with off-spec engineering. Its a troubling trend. As design processes and vehicle systems become more automated and computer-controlled and modular, users of these systems "think less" about failure modes. Indeed many engineers don't seem to know how to think about failure modes or boundary layer interfaces or the handing-off of one system to another. They assemble these modules together and perhaps figure that the guy before did all the requisite testing and failure mode analysis.

In Control Theory we refer to something called "bumpless transfer" - the process of moving from one mode to another without detection (ie. without a bump). It takes some careful engineering to achieve, and appears to me to be the root cause at least of the Prius brake problems: the ABS and the regenerative brake systems don't "hand off" cleanly, leaving a short "gap" where no one is doing the braking. (And BTW, I believe the Honda hybrids will be shown to have the same problem - I experienced similar braking issues in my 2004 Honda Civic hybrid.)

Learning ways to "break stuff" is often a poorly appreciated skill set. So many engineers today "assume" that their intended user will always use the system in a manner consistent with its design, so they don't engineer-around or program-out "ill-advised" actions. Chuck often tells the story of how he came to appreciate this. Upon installing one of his first press-welder control panels he designed while at Chevy Parma, one of the Electricians walked up to the control panel (with all its pushbuttons to start/stop, raise/lower, weld on/off, etc) spread his hand as wide as it would go, and pressed all the buttons at once! When Chuck asked why he did that, the guy answered "because I could". The machine went haywire. Chuck learned a simple but valuable lesson and went back to the drawing board and programmed checks and fail-safes to insure the machine could only operate within the allowed constraints. It is a lesson he never forgot and has served him well time after time. He has become an excellent "breaker" and thinking about how things could break. Whether its a piece of equipment, a piece of software, or even a plan or program, he has learned to look for where it could "break" and find ways to engineer out or around these potential failures. In fact, he recently reviewed some web-site software, and managed to "break it" within about 3 mouse clicks. People sometimes remark on how Chuck's projects seem to work out so well. Its because he engineers out a lot of problems and potential problems at the outset.

It's a skill not always appreciated, but it is an important skill and one that needs to make a dramatic resurgence if we are to continue to operate without collapsing under the weight of un-discovered consequences. Think about it, both Toyota's recall problems and our banking collapse of the last 2 yrs have the same common root cause - no one was looking ahead to see where the system could "break" and engineer ways to prevent it. Mr. Toyoda, Mr. Geitner, you need a Chuckie in your corner!