

March
2013



*Traveling in
the Past
and Present*

Next Meeting

March 12, 2013
Old Auto Museum
Dinner 6:00 pm
General Meeting 6:45 pm

Tallahassee Region Antique Automobile Club of America

The '57 Rambler Rebel Story

Ed Shuler

By the most common definition, most automotive enthusiasts credit the 1964 Pontiac Tempest GTO (GTO being an option package that could be ordered with a Tempest) as having been the first mass-produced muscle car. But in reality, using this same definition as the primary criteria, one can argue that the first true muscle car was not a Pontiac Tempest GTO, but was instead, the 1957 Rambler Rebel.

The Rambler Rebel, you say? You must be joking! The story behind the anomaly that is the Rambler Rebel goes back to 1954 when Hudson and Nash merged, forming American Motors. This was prompted by the turn from a seller's to a buyer's market as the industry caught up with pent-up demand following the end of World War II. Nash, the stronger of the two partners, had established a niche with the compact Rambler starting in 1950.

Built on a 100 in. wheelbase, it had no competition from Detroit's Big Three, Chrysler, Ford and GM. In 1954 the line was expanded with four-door models built on a 108 in. wheelbase, which was still small by US standards of the era, nevertheless, sales continued to expand steadily, if not slowly. The president of American Motors at the time was George Romney and he staked his company's future on the compact Rambler. He realized, correctly, that the larger Nash and Hudson models (which were re-skinned versions of their Nash counterparts) would require massive investments to

remain competitive with the Big Three.

While AMC planned to extensively restyle the Rambler line for 1957, just after the merger, he initiated a crash program to accelerate the next generation Rambler, bringing out an all-new line of 108 in. wheelbase, four-door Ramblers for the 1956 model year. At the same time, realizing that the public was demanding powerful V-8 engines, he instituted a second crash program, to develop an in-house V-8 engine.

Previously, AMC purchased a 320 cid engine from Packard, which was fitted to the senior Nash and Hudson models in an effort to make them more competitive in the marketplace. It was not successful. Also contributing to Romney's desire to develop an AMC V-8, was that Packard had reneged on an agreement to purchase components from AMC.

The result of the V-8 program was a modern 250 cid 190 bhp V-8 that was first installed in the engine bay of the larger 1956 Nash and Hudson models. For 1957, its displacement was enlarged to 327 cid (not to be confused with an engine of similar displacement, but with different bore and stroke from Chevrolet) rated at 255 bhp. With a four-barrel carburetor, it was originally destined for the Nash Ambassador, but someone at AMC had the idea of installing it in the engine bay of the much lighter Rambler.

The result was the 1957 Rambler Rebel, a limited production run of 1500 units. Based on the stylish four-door hardtop (pillarless) version of the 108 in. wheelbase Rambler, all the Rebel models were distinguished by their silver paint accented with gold-anodized sweeppear
(continued on page 5)

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**TALLAHASSEE REGION, AACA
MEETING MINUTES
February 12, 2013
Tallahassee Antique Car Museum (Old Location)**

There were approximately 36 members, 5 guests and one new member. The guests were Jim & Jean Healy, Jack Herzog's son Steven and Rick Clevenger and John Petriello from Vietnam Veterans of America. Rick and John were her to tell us about their Antique Auto-Motorcycle Swap meet coming up. The new member was Steven Litherland.

Opening prayer: John Schanbacher

Welcome: Bob Love

Bob greeted everyone and thanked them for their attendance. He especially greeted the newlyweds, Wease Kaylor and Sue Aigotti (she didn't change her name!).

50/50 Drawing:

Lori Forster was the winner.

Announcements & Reports:

Rick Clevenger and John Petriello told of their Swap Meet sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans of America. It will be held on February 15-17, 2013 in St. Marks.

Jack Herzog told of the 14th annual "Florida Azalea Festival" open car show to be held on March 02, 2013 in Palatka at the Palatka Riverfront Park. Registration will be 8-11 AM and trophies awarded at 4 PM.

Neal Davis told of the Soap Box Derby Qualifying race to be held on March 9-10, 2013 at the Summit East complex.

Reuben Plachy told of a "Chicken Pilau & Family Celebration" to be held on March 2, 2013. It will be at the Shiloh Farm at 1500 Benjamin Chaires Road. It is a fund raiser for the Springtime Tallahassee Charitable Foundation.

Norm Madsen told of a Florida Horseless Carriage tour he and Kathy are hosting on February 28th to March 3rd. He will be sending an E-Mail about it soon.

The AACA Southeast Winter National Meet will be held in Lakeland, Florida on February 21-23, 2013. Several members of our club will be participating.

Ray Bartell, our "Chassee" newsletter editor, always needs articles from the Club members and asked that they be sent to him at his E-Mail - raymondbartell@yahoo.com.

Committee Reports:

Sunshine: Glenda Schanbacher

Glenda reminded us of Cheryl Bartells health considerations and our need to keep in touch with Cheryl and Ray with cards, calls and prayers. We need to keep Wease and Sue in our prayers due to Wease's ongoing health issues. In addition, Barbara Herzog, Bill O'Rourke and Tommy Sykes are also having health considerations. If you know of member's needs, please contact Glenda Schanbacher or Lois Duley.

Treasurer's Report: Norm Madsen

Report was given by Norm Madsen, details are available from him.

Tour Committee: Bill O'Rourke

Bill is planning a tour on March 9, 2013 to Blountstown, Florida. More information will be forthcoming soon.

Show Committee: Norm Madsen

Planning has begun on both the Monticello show and our desire to host a National Division Tour in 2015. Several plans have to be in place in order to send in an application to host a National Tour.

Coming Events:

Third Saturday in March will be our next "Garage Saturday at the O'Rourke's. More info will be coming.

Several coming events are listed above in the "Announcements and Reports" above.

See our website <http://traaca.org> for more events. Click on "Club News and Calendar" Also, visit the National website for National AACA activities www.aaca.org.

Breakfast at the Cracker Barrel – Friday, February 15, 2013 at 8:30 AM.

Quincy Gulf Station – Friday, February 12, 2013 at Noon; No hot dogs today, bring your own lunch.

New Business: Bob Love

A roster is being prepared for all members and will be E-Mailed soon.

Old Business: Carol Love

Carol will be ordering club logo shirts, jackets and ball caps in blue very soon. Red will be available but needs to be special ordered via a call to Carol.

Program: Jack Hanbury

Jack gave detailed program on "Buying a Car". He covered the many aspects of such a transaction including what not to do. He distributed a handout, "Used – Car Check List" which covered everything you would need to buy a car, antique or modern.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 12, 2013 at the **OLD** Antique Car Museum beginning at 6:00 PM with dinner.

Respectfully submitted by: John Schanbacher, Secretary.

The Sunshine Committee

If you, or another club member you know of, are having any health problems or other issues, please let us know.

Sunshine Committee Contacts:

Mrs. Glenda Schanbacher Mrs. Lois Duley
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March Birthdays

- 6 - Lori Forster
- 15 - Neal Davis
- 18 - Ken Hart
- 19 - Ron Levy
- 25 - Nancy Haines
- 27 - Diane Slaughter
- 27 - Devoe Moore





Behind the Wheel

TRAACA President—Bob Love

Our regular Newsletter Editor Ray Bartell is stepping away from publishing the newsletter for a while to care for his wife who is going through some difficult times. Please keep them both in your thoughts and prayers.

Until further notice, please submit any articles or photos to me for the newsletter. Please remember to get them to me in time for editing and layout by the 25th of each month.

Anyone who wishes to step up and try their hand at newsletter publishing, please let me know and I will do all I can to get you started.

The local weather in this area can be fickle, but really, spring is just around the corner and it's time to get the old buggies out and start touring again. The next tour for our club is set for March 9 with a cruise to Blountstown. Details will be forthcoming. If you know of anyone with an old car from other clubs or even not affiliated with a club that would like to join us on tour, extend an invitation!

Garage Saturdays will also be continuing with the next event to be held at the O'Rourke garage on March 16.

Help support your club by participating in these events and most of all, be an "active" member.

Bob

The Next TRAACA Club Meeting is Tuesday, March 12, 2013

Always on the 2nd Tuesday of each month
at the Old Auto Museum location

Dinner at 6:00 pm

General Meeting to start at 6:45 pm

Menu

Sonny's BBQ

Program

TBA

*And the subsequent TRAACA Club Meeting
will be on Tuesday, April 9, 2013*

Monthly Get Together Event on the Fridays Following the General TRAACA Club Meetings

[The next one is March 15, 2013 at 8:AM]

Meet at old Gulf Station in Quincy every Friday

The men meet for lunch* and talk at 12 Noon.

The station is off Hwy 90,
on the south side of highway 90.

Monthly Tallahassee Cruise-Ins

Sonic/Hardees on North Monroe
1st Saturday each Month (just north of Capital Circle)

Whataburger Drive-In on Thomasville Road
2nd Saturday of each month — Ford & Chevy Clubs
Last Saturday of each Month — Street Rod Club

Crawfordville Hardees
2nd Saturday of each month — 6pm to 9pm

Whataburger on Apalachee Parkway
3rd Saturday of each month

National and Regional Events

Check the AACA website at <http://www.aaca.org>, for all events and for full details of these and other national events.

Tallahassee Region, Antique Automobile Club of America (TRAACA) Members can also read details and lists of Antique Automobile Club of America (AACA) events in the AACA "Antique Automobile" magazine.



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From your Reporters in the field: Ramblings and Roving's of Junkyard Dog & Fluffy

Here we are again. Junk Yard Dog, Fluffy, Ole Stray and Puppy.

Left Florida and made all the way into Georgia in just little while. Ending up in Dan And Ann's home. Being member's of the TRAACA we needed to see how the 1957 Thunderbird was coming along.

So, we find Dan in the garage. The car is coming together nicely and all it needs is finishing up and that is what we all say. We went there to offer a little help and that is what we did. Very little. The T-Bird is looking good and Fluffy liked the engine a lot. It looks real nice. Next will be the dash and instrument hookup.

Maybe you will get a picture of Fluffy and you can see how hard he is working.

Should we do more of this kind of thing?

As Ever, Sniffing in all corner's

Fluffy, Junk Yard Dog and Ole Stray. We will name the puppy later.

Junkyard Dog & Fluffy



We were called to assist putting on the trim work and some questions to be cleared up. What a mistake Dan made asking us. We made a day of it.



Junkyard Dog & Fluffy with stray dogs (John friend of Bills and John S. my son both out of town visiting)





side trim combined with unique badging (the silver paint has a propensity to fade and many of the cars were repainted).

All Rebels were equipped with adjustable Gabriel shock absorbers on all four corners matched to heavy duty springs. The result was reduced body roll, something that stood in stark contrast to American cars of that era. While not as stiff as European cars, it was definitely a step in the right direction. The powerful V-8 was mated to either a standard three-speed manual transmission with overdrive, or an optional dual-range, four-speed Hydro-Matic automatic transmission sourced from General Motors as AMC could not afford to tool-up a suitable unit on their own.

Originally AMC planned to offer a fuel-injected, 288 bhp version of the 327 cid V-8, but the advanced, electronically-controlled Bendix Electrojector fuel injection system proved unreliable (cold-weather starting problems), and it was not offered to the general public. There are reports that some cars were delivered with the system, but that it was removed by dealers before the cars were sold. Other reports indicate three or four cars were delivered with the Electrojector system intact, but to this day, no-one has been able to verify this, and no documented fuel-injector equipped cars have ever turned up.

Fuel-injection notwithstanding, the 1957 Rebel was one hot performer. Independent road tests in 1957 quoted 0-60mph times from 7.2 to 7.8 seconds, remarkable for the era and quite respectable even today. With the exception of the mechanically-fuel-injected, 283 cid Corvette, the Rebel was the fastest American built car of 1957; certainly it was the fastest four-door, six passenger car available from any manufacturer, anywhere in the world in 1957.

You would think that the 1957 Rambler Rebel would be better known than it is and given the respect that it's due, but the sad truth is that outside of AMC enthusiasts, it is virtually unknown. Even many AMC fans are unaware of its existence. Had it been built by one of the Big Three, this would certainly not be the case. As a result, its place in automotive history is both obscure and murky. In reality, using the definition most commonly applied to Pontiac's 1964 GTO, it is America's first true muscle car.

The Rebel's compact dimensions combined with its powerful V-8 engine, give a real feel for just how advanced this car really was in its day. While stock Tri-Five Chevys set a benchmark for Fifties cruisers, they pale in comparison when driven side-by-side with the more powerful, lightweight unibody Rebel. While a stock Tri-Five Chevy feels like a 40-year-old car, the Rebel feels far more contemporary.

One of the great automotive 'what if?' questions remains: what would a fuel-injected, 288 horsepower Rebel drive like? It may well have been the first American four-door capable of a sub-seven-second 0-

60 sprint. You can certainly make a strong case for any one of a number of American performance cars, such as the Chrysler 300, to wrest the title of first muscle car away from Pontiac's seminal 1964 GTO. But if you accept the standard definition of intermediate or smaller sedan stuffed with the biggest V-8 that would fit between the wheel wells, then the 1957 Rambler Rebel must be given its due. While it wasn't able to offer advanced electronic fuel injection as hoped, it did establish the blueprint which almost a decade later, spawned a group of cars that will be revered as long as there are drivers who relish power and performance in the extreme.

This article is a edited compilation of information found on the Internet - Ed Shuler



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The Moultrie Experience

By Craig Brown

Just as the tide feels the pull of the moon, the car faithful feel the pull of Moultrie, Georgia twice a year. This year the event fell on February first through the third. Some load their trucks and trailers with wares to sell, while others carefully craft their "parts needed" lists. A few will pull an old car out of storage and drive to the event with the hopes of finding a new home for an old family friend. These are cars with a history and a story to tell if you are able to listen.

I heard rumors of this phenomenon about fifteen years ago, but was discouraged from attending by a Corvette aficionado who dismissed its significance because of its lack of Corvette-centric activities. Of course I ignored his wise counsel and went anyway! It is hard to describe acres of antique, classic, collectible and muscle cars combined with all the parts, supplies and accessories required to maintain them in good working order to someone who has never experienced such a gathering. There is too much to see in one day, but I usually load my camera with electrons to try and capture some of the more interesting items for later reflection.

I am always amazed at the quantity and range of vehicles displayed in the car corral. As long as you are not searching for something rare, like a 1923 Kissel Gold Bug Speedster, there are usually examples of what you crave available for viewing or purchasing. If you need a pristinely restored Model A, the only difficult decision will be "which one?" Or would you prefer a fifty-five Chevy project for \$3,000 dollars that will only require \$30,000 in parts to complete? If you need the trailer to haul it home on, that can be had for only \$1,000 more.

While it is only natural to admire the craftsmanship and time required to resurrect an old heap, I am always drawn to the unrestored original. There is no way to hide the blemishes, collision damage, rust, etc. on these cars. This 1939 Chevrolet Master 85 still had

the original interior and was proudly wearing what was left of the original paint. The factory straight-six engine is partially visible peeking out from under the hood.

Growing up in Daytona Beach and listening to my grandfather and uncles talk about the "Fabulous Hudson Hornet" that dominated racing in the early 1950's always keeps me on the lookout for one. This was back when the beach sand made up half the course and the other half was asphalt (Bill France had not built the first super-speedway yet). It's hard to see a Hornet without imagining it power sliding around the sand turns in Daytona. This Hudson Hornet Hollywood was born in 1957 several years after Hudson's dominance in NASCAR and movement away from the sleek, low-slung models. This model is stronger on luxury and sported a fancy continental kit.



Various car manufacturers over time have made bold styling decisions in an attempt to gain market share, but Studebakers always seemed to be slightly ahead. This 1955 Studebaker Commander came from a time when styling meant more than shaping the insignia glued to the new 2014 jelly-bean-shaped car. The car just screams, "fast with great handling!" while remaining completely still. I'm going to follow up with Don and some of the other Studebaker owners in the club to see if the car really handles.





A Ford Starliner from 1960 was looking good wearing basic black with all the correct chrome trim. The Starliners don't seem to be as common as the Galaxie models, but the lines are graceful and a pleasure to gaze upon. This beauty sported modern wheels, tires and some performance improvements under the hood to enhance the driving experience, but the exterior and interior were vintage perfection.



But Moultrie is more than just cars. There are acres of parts, accessories, tools and all manner of paraphernalia. While touring through the swap meet area in search of tools, it was good to see TRAACA members doing a brisk business from their stalls.

Tommy's collection of antique bicycles, pedal cars and other curiosities was getting some attention. The Monarch bicycle with the springer front-end reminded me of the suspension on early Harley-Davidson and Indian motorcycles. It even sported a greyhound fender ornament, which may have been a custom addition! And who among us doesn't have fond memories of their first tricycle or pedal car? I was tempted to try out one of the cars, but realized even though I still sometimes think like a five-year-old (ask my wife), I am no longer sized like one.



A quick cross to the next aisle brought us to Buddy's stall full of a myriad of interesting artifacts. My inner ten-year-old boy wanted desperately to play

with the scythe leaning up against the table, but the crowds of shopper made that plan impractical. Besides, I had left my black robe and skeleton mask at home and was not dressed appropriately. I found myself drawn to two machines that I could not identify. Buddy supplied the missing information and explained they were old Dictaphone machines (or what people used before there were Dictaphones). The recording media is a cylinder that is contacted by a stylus. Just as I was getting ready to disassemble one to see if it had vacuum tubes, a magnetron or something else entirely, I was swept up into the crowd and moving down the aisle.



I'm just getting ready to pick a Rochester carburetor off a table when I am drawn to a horrendous, clanging racket. Jack is doing his world renowned hub cap demonstration in front of his stall while Bill O. is egging him on. Paul, calm as usual, is apparently immune to the show because this has been going on all day. There are variations on the sales pitch depending on the product, but it always involves throwing hub caps on the concrete to achieve maximum 'clang' to focus the attention of everyone within a quarter mile. Once he has the prospective customer focused, it is only a matter of providing the appropriate sales patter to reel him or her in.

Jack had quite a selection of hub caps ready to be crafted "while you wait" into custom clocks. Bill's car

dolly was getting the covetous eye from several shoppers. Kids of all ages were interested in the miniature cars and World War II module aircraft on display. We swapped some fresh kettle corn for some sound classic car buying advice.



The sun was sinking low and there were still tools that needed to be found, purchased and given a good home. We bought a few things on the list and headed out just before closing time. We didn't see it all, but certainly did enjoy trying. One thing is certain, the 49ers fans would have had a better time if they had spent the weekend in Moultrie.



News from National

Mileage Award Program (MAP)

Get your car on the MAP!



Members who enjoy driving their vintage vehicles should start their engines and sign up for the Mileage Award Program (MAP)! This program is ideal for members who would like to be recognized for driving

their AACA-approved vehicle throughout the calendar year. Participation is voluntary and tracking mileage is the owner's responsibility. MAP members will receive a badge upon signing up and awards at 2,000, 5,000, and each 5,000 mile increment thereafter. The cost to become a MAP member is a one-time fee of \$25.

http://aaca.org/images/pdf/AACA_Mileage_Award_Program_Application.pdf

The Irresistible Isetta



If you've read the latest issue of *Antique Automobile*, you're probably already well-aware that a sizable portion of Bruce Weiner's microcar collection was sold through RM Auctions this month. While Model A's and Corvettes often prove crowd favorites, other folks prefer a more

Lilliputian set of wheels. To them, a microcar's character exceeds its size tenfold. Out of the legions of pint-sized autos the BMW Isetta, Manufactured between 1955 and 1962, is perhaps one of the most revered of these whimsical wonders.

Despite bearing the BMW name, the Isetta was first manufactured in 1953 by the Italian company of Iso SpA, founded by Renzo Rivolta. Before entering the auto market, Rivolta focused on making motorcycles and scooters. While sales in Italy were strong at first, demand eventually waned. Because of this, Rivolta eventually offered other companies the opportunity to produce Isettias under license.

While French VELAM and Brazilian Romi built and sold Isettias, the most prolific manufacturer was that of BMW. When released for the German market in 1955 BMW was in the midst of financial troubles because, in part, motorcycle sales were falling. With sales of small cars like the Volkswagen Beetle on the rise, BMW jumped at the chance to market Rivolta's car.



Far from the economic salvation they sought, the car had proven successful enough to offset a significant portion of losses. Eventually, the car was exported, with 1958 models being the first to make it to the U.S. Although demand for small vehicles in America proved considerably smaller than Europe, Germany's "rolling egg" still managed to build a cult following.



Because of its diminutive size, BMW's sales literature capitalized on the Isetta's ability to park in tight spots and maneuver around slow traffic. "No other car so completely answers the need for relief from chaotic traffic tie-ups," an



American ad claimed. After shape and stature, the most iconic feature was its front opening door and accompanying articulated steering wheel. Regarding this unusual function, Road and Track claimed it made entry a breeze, even if it was "...a grotesque attention getter."

Even though the major automotive publications praised the Isetta's fuel economy, its rear mounted, single cylinder engine was criticized for lacking power. According to the November 1954 issue of Motor Trend, "acceleration [was] hardly noteworthy" with a top speed of 53 mph. Demands for greater performance prompted BMW to release the two cylinder 600 series in 1958. Along with a stronger engine came an additional side door and extended body, providing enough room for four passengers. Unfortunately, the 600 was short lived, discontinued in 1959 after less than ideal sales.



In 1962, seven years and more than 90,000 manufactured units later, BMW finally pulled the plug on the Isetta. In its place was the more conventional looking but less memorable 700 series, first introduced in 1959. Though no longer among us, the Isetta has solidified its place in automotive history and

continues to occupy a special place in the hearts and minds of those with a fascination in small cars.

Discover More: For those interested in learning more about the history of the Isetta and other microcars, be sure to pay the AACA Library a visit or give us a call. In addition to catalogs and brochures found in our extensive collection of sales literature, the Dunwoodie Archives can be used to locate period magazine articles on just about any car you're interested in. From the British-built Bond three wheeler to the German Goggomobil, we might just have what you're looking for!

Discover even more: RM Auctions just completed an amazing auction of micro cars including several BMW's and many cars we will bet you have never heard of! Go to

www.rmauctions.com and click on the results page. You will be fascinated what these cars brought and how many unusual cars were offered.



My GTO Story by John Pallay

This is a story of a 1965 GTO that sat covered up in a barn for 32 years. I had ordered it brand new from Ardes Pontiac in Phoenixville Pa. It was a burgundy 2 door hard top, the interior had black bucket seats with a console, rally gauges, sport steering wheel, 389 - 360 HP tri power engine with 4 speed transmission and posi rear.



I enjoyed this car until 1967, when Uncle Sam sent me to Vietnam where I spent a year in the infantry doing helicopter assaults. Miraculously, I lived through that and came home in one

piece but with a bad change in attitude. Went back to my old job but missed many days of work and started drinking and racing cars. I pulled the motor out of my GTO, balanced and blueprinted it and in 1970 began racing at Maple Grove raceway in Reading, Pa. The car ran in the thirteen's in street form. After a slight fender bender in 1975 the car was repainted blue. I drove the car another 2 years then in 1977 with 125,000 miles on the odometer I parked it in my barn. There it sat for 32 years.

I always dreamed of restoring the car to what it was in 1965 but never really had the time or the money. Then after my retirement from trucking (owner operator) in 2009 the



car was pulled out of the barn still running but only on one carburetor and taken to Wheels in Motion in Pottstown PA for a total body off nut and bolt restoration. The engine went to Jim Taylor in Phillipsburg, NJ where internally it was set up to ram air III specs. Two weeks after restoration was complete we took the car to AACA judging in Hershey PA. The car got its first junior plus was also nominated for a national award. This year (2012) we reentered the car for judging and got its senior award.

I've had this car now for 47 years and would never sell it for any amount of money. Cars like this GTO are our American history, American art, and part of our culture. Like I've heard people say they just don't make them like they used too.

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