



THE GAS GAUGE



PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY

THE OLDE CAR CLUB OF THE TRI-CITIES, WASHINGTON
P.O. BOX 462, RICHLAND, WASHINGTON 99352

PRESIDENT: Audrey Simmelink
V. PRES.: Ken Lechelt
SECRETARY: Peggy Yale

TOUR CHAIRMAN: Helen Lechelt
EDITORS : Dave & Pat Ashby

POTLUCK DINNER ** Sunday, Feb. 24** 2:00 p.m.

HOSTS: Wendle & Dottie Rose
WHERE: The Second Hand Rose Store - Benton City, Wash.
BRING: Yourself, a potluck dinner, drink & table service
ENTERTAINMENT: THE OLD TIME FIDDLERS

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COLUMBIA CENTER CAR SHOW DATE SET FOR MAY 13 THROUGH 19. More on this later.

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ACTIVITY HOSTS:

MARCH - - - - - Ivan & Olive Jacques
APRIL - - - - - Jim & Ginger Vetrano
MAY - - - - - Jack & Peggy Yale with Paul & Carol Duchene
JUNE - - - - - Kenny & Helen Lechelt
JULY - - - - - Cork & Audrey Simmelink
Aug. - Dec. - - - NEED VOLUMTEERS

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To date we have twenty-one paid up members with approximately \$387.00 in our treasury. Next month a new roster will be printed so be sure to get your dues in to Peggy Yale

Last month's potluck was a smashing affair at the home of the Nesbitts, which sports a beautiful large family room. Kenny, of course, has a pool table and you should have seen the pool sharks edge their way out of the crowd with remarks like, "How do you play this?" or "Gee, I haven't shot pool for years." Along with the pool everybody did a lot of visiting and had an excellent dinner. After dinner we had a business meeting which ended with everyone having to tell about their progress (or un-progress) on their old car projects this winter. The evening ended with slides Kenny and Myrtle have of their recent trip to New Orleans. Our thanks to them for the use of their home and a great time.

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The CBC Autobody Course is finally off the ground and is looking to be both educational & fun for those attending. The Idea right now is to cut a piece of metal in half, then weld it back together, or with a sledge hammer put a 30 mph dent in a fender then proceed to take the dent out. Sounds like fun, huh? We have around 20 in the class, including people from our Club, The Model A Club, The Sports Car Club and others not club affiliated making for an excellent class of noise-making fender bangers....

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Thanks to Craig Kelsey for the following article on the LEXINGTON.
'Tis much appreciated.

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" A WHATSINGTON "

During our progress report at the January meeting, I mentioned that I was looking for parts for my 1921 Lexington sport touring. Since the general reply was "Lexington, I never heard of it," I thought the following bit of history had remained a secret long enough.

The Lexington Motor Company began producing cars in a barn in Lexington, Kentucky during 1909. Within a few months, they had outgrown their facilities and were looking for a new place. Promotion people from Connersville, Indiana convinced Lexington to move to the Industrial Park in Connersville in 1910. Being promotion minded, Lexington entered a stripped-down touring in the 1912 Indianapolis "500". The car made a poor showing, dropping out after six laps with engine trouble. About that time, Lexington's management was also making a poor showing and financial troubles would have ended Lex then had the Ansted family of Connersville not come to the rescue. In 1913, contracts were signed with the Howard Distributing Company and the new Howard automobile was introduced in 1914. The name was changed back to Lexington in 1915 and remained so until the end when the last few cars were shipped to Los Angeles as the 1927 Ansted.

During Lexington's production, their engineering department was very active. New improvements kept Lex ahead of its time in design until its declining years. Such things as bridge box section frames, dual exhausts and zero-lash high lift valve systems earned Lex the reputation of being a solid, up to date car - a good dollar-per-pound investment..

In 1920, Lexington entered two cars in the Labor Day Pikes Peak race. These cars had the all new Ansted engine and they set a climb record by coming in first and second place. A week later, the race team returned home with the Spencer Penrose trophy to a wild celebration

in Connersville. The Pikes Peak win had proven the Ansted engine and in 1921 Lex received an order for 30,000 engines from William Durant for his new Durant automobile. In 1922 Durant came personally to the Lexington offices and signed contracts for engines, springs, bodies and lighting equipment. At that time, Durant announced plans to build 300,000 cars in 1923. With this bright picture, Lex should have become famous. However, the post WWI recession was reaching its peak early in 1923 and bankers were saying "NO" to many manufacturing firms. Consequently, Lexington went into receivership in 1923. In the next few years, Lexington cars became very plain looking, not at all the same stuff they had been. The only bright spot was their second win at Pikes Peak in 1924. Again the race team returned home to a wild celebration even though Lex was in serious financial trouble.

During the summer of 1926, the Lexington plant and equipment were sold and by fall the buyer, E.L. Cord (of Auburn, Cord & Duesenberg fame) began moving in with expansion of Auburn in mind. In fact, some love affair between Cord and Lexington prior to 1926 is suspected as the 1925 Auburn and 1925 Lexington looked strangely alike. At any rate, Lexington ~~ceased~~ ceased to exist and Auburn went on for another decade, producing some really nice cars in the late 20's and early 30's.

In 1972 Mr. H.B. Dahl of Enumclaw, Wash. attempted to locate all existing Lexingtons. Mr. Henry Blommel of Connersville, Indiana had attempted the same in 1960 and the combined lists of these two fellows produced a known thirty three Lexingtons still around in various stages of despair (or non-despair in a few cases). However, there have been rumors among Lexington fanciers that a 1927 Ansted changed hands in California a couple of years ago. What a prize that would be!!

Craig Kelsey

