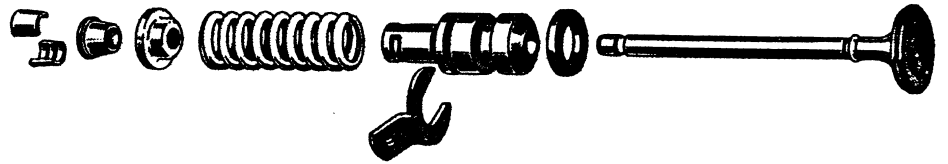




Valve Clatter



THE EARLY FORD V-8 CLUB OF AMERICA Regional Group 96

www.nvrg.org

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December 2008

Jim LaBaugh Editor

Holiday Gala 2008

An Alberta clipper that brought a dusting of snow the evening of December 6 was not enough to deter the Northern Virginia Flathead Ford Faithful from gathering at the Fairfax Country Club for the annual Holiday Gala. This event, arranged by **Sandra and Cliff Green**, is a highlight of the year on the club calendar. Holiday greenery around the room set the festive tone for the proceedings, which was matched by the holiday attire of one and all.

Cocktail hour brought attendees together for good conversation, reminiscences of the year past, and thoughts about members unable to attend. The gala continued when everyone was seated and **David Westrate** delivered a wonderful, thoughtful invocation. At that time, as is customary, the President's gavel was passed from outgoing President **Dave Gunnarson** to incoming President **Eric Sumner** and Dave Gunnarson received a plaque recognizing him for his leadership of the club.

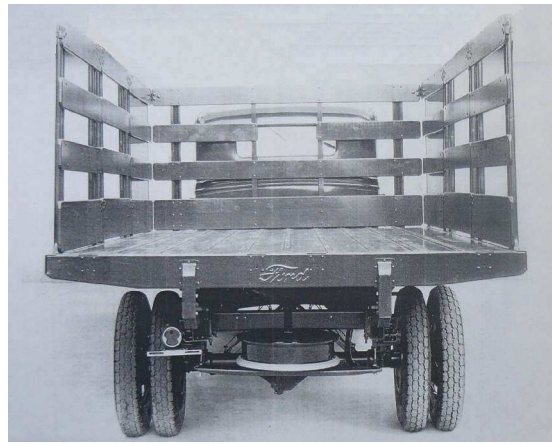


The feast commenced and five tables full of club members, spouses, and friends were treated to a superb dinner and good company. At the center of each table were delightful V-8 centerpieces made by **Sarah and Dave Gunnarson**.

As the deserts and coffee arrived, attention wandered to the table at the front of the room laden with gifts participants brought as entries to the holiday gift exchange. At this point, Master of Ceremonies, **Steve Pieper** took center stage to explain the ground rules of the exchange and put on the appropriate hat to begin this part of the gathering. The hat provided the right flair for the start of the proceedings, as well as a few surprises as the drawing unfolded.

The gifts included many items near and dear to attendees who are most content when working on their beloved vintage iron, as well a remarkable assortment of things their better halves could appreciate - and use. Many of the gifts were not held long in one person's possession, a clear indication of the overall quality and the balance between car-related gifts and those that had a holiday or seasonal theme. *(continued on page 3)*





December 2008

The temperature outside is 21 degrees this morning and the frost's white sheen is everywhere; I guess it's a sign that winter has arrived a bit early this year. Today, however, Sarah and I are anticipating lots of warm cheer as we get ready for the NVRG Holiday Gala to celebrate the season with other V-8ers. It's a highlight of the year and special thanks go to **Cliff and Sandra Green** for hosting this wonderful event.

The Board of Directors has elected **Eric Sumner** to be our new President for 2009. Congratulations to Eric and first lady, Nancy! We wish them all the best and pledge our support as they guide us down the V-8 road next year. I'd also like to recognize **Jim McDaniel**, who is stepping down from the Board, for his service as Membership Chair for the past three years. As many of you know, Jim keeps very busy with many interests, but he promises that he will continue to assist and support the Club.

This is my last column as President and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped continue to make our club a success. I've been blessed with a wonderful and hardworking board of directors that makes everything run so smoothly and great members who contribute their time and expertise to make all our club functions first class events. I've had several people tell me, unsolicited, that our Regional Group is one of the best organizations they belong to because of the generosity and friendly manner of our members and the great events we organize like the Fairfax Car show, Lebkicker Tour, Poker Run, Picnic, Drive-In Movie, special tours, and publications like the *Valve Clatter*, our Web site, calendar and so much more. Thanks to everyone for a great two years with the highlight being the 2007 Eastern National Meet and presentation of \$4,800 to the Early Ford V8 Foundation.

Don't forget it's time to pay your 2009 dues. Ken Burns has produced yet another great NVRG calendar, so get one before they are gone. The next membership meeting is January 13, 2009.

Best wishes for a Great Holiday Season and a Happy New Year.

Yours in V8ing,

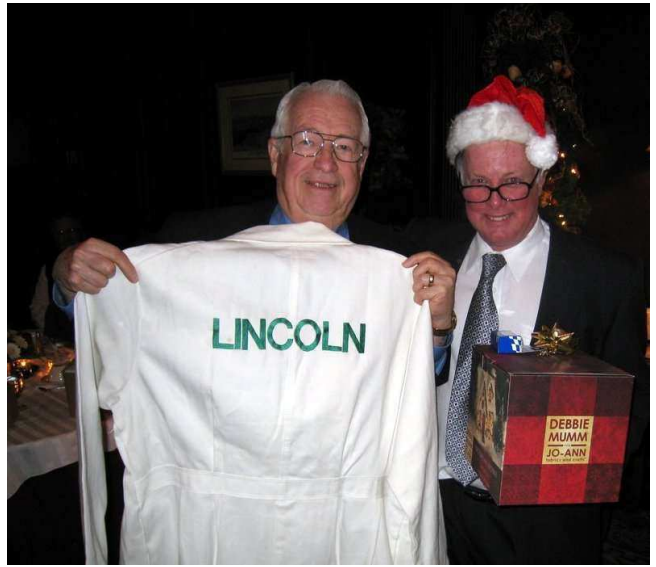
Dave



Numbers drawn from the hat included tickets matching those held by club members participating in the exchange, as well as "inspected by number 10." As the evening wore on, more and more "inspected by" with different numbers appeared, much to the amusement of everyone. It was an interesting testimony to the number of people involved in quality-control for the production of the hat.



At the conclusion of the gift exchange, the centerpieces were awarded by lottery at each table, adding to the treasures in hand and the memories of another excellent Holiday Gala. Finally, thoughts and best wishes were expressed for Tom Lumpkin and his family as illness prevented Tom from attending this year. As the assembly dispersed thanks were offered again to Sandra and Cliff Green for all they did to make this a event a rousing success.



Wishing you all the best this Holiday Season.

Al Mason's Elite Garage Tour or "We Need to Work on Our Garages!!"

by Jim Nice

Saturday, November 8th saw the faithful group of garage tour enthusiasts gather at Fair Oaks Mall for a great drive through the Virginia countryside and a tour of Al Mason's garage museum. Fortunately, the weather cleared as we departed, and made way for a cloudy start and later a great day for touring. Our group started out with 17 people and 5 vintage Fords: John Girman in his '53 Victoria, Ken & Helen Burns in their '41 Woodie, Alan & Carol McNiff, Hank Dubois, our lead driver and tour organizer Leo Cummings in his '50 Mercury Monterey, Dave & Barbara Westrate, Cliff & Sandra Green in their '40 Woodie, Bill Selley, and Jim, Kathy, and Jason Nice in their '51 Victoria. At Gilbert's Corner we met up with Ben McDonald, Bob Wild, and Chris in Ben's '53 Victoria. En route to Al Mason's we picked up Hank Amster and Don Pauly.

Our route through the Virginia countryside seemed very familiar to me and I was not sure why. I then remembered that it was the same route we took when we went on a tour of Ken Gross' garage and went to Ken's book signing a few years back. Must be a popular route! When our caravan arrived at our destination, we lined up our Fords in front of Al's garage for group pictures.



At Al's garage, we were joined by numerous other club members and friends including Jim and Edna Cross in their '36 3-window coupe, Tom Shaw, Greg Mensinger and Elaine Boomer, Warren Barbee, Norm Hess, and Dave Gunnarson.

Al Mason's Garage is quite a sight to behold! It is a complete functioning garage with its own fully vented paint booth, welding booth, at least 3 lifts (that I counted), many highly-polished work benches (made from bowling alley lanes) each with their own direct lighting, and numerous storage areas with meticulously organized and cataloged parts bins. There was a lot of discussion during our lunch afterwards about the "centralized" compressed air system

with its two large compressors. There were many old car parts displayed on the walls including '30s Ford radiator



grills, vintage steering wheels (I saw at least one banjo style), posters, and pictures. A section of the garage was sectioned off as an office, and itself was larger than my entire garage! In it was an antique gas pump, and around it hung a sign that said "If it has testicles or tires, expect trouble!" At the entrance to the garage, Al had a collection of Ford pedal cars and even a silver pedal airplane. There were other toys throughout including some windup cars and a polar bear soda fountain shop serving Cokes.

Al's vehicle collection was equally impressive. I spent a lot of time looking (staring really) at a beautiful red and white '59 Corvette convertible that looked better than showroom new. Al had it up on one of his lifts so one could study its pristine undercarriage. He also had a beautiful red '65 Corvette, a mid-'80s Corvette, a '64 Pontiac GTO, a '41 Willy's Jeep MTS, and a Porsche. A large Army Half Track Vehicle sat in one corner of the garage. (continued on page 5)



Al Mason's Garage Tour *(continued)*

On another of Al's lifts was an Auburn Boattail Speedster (with a straight 8 motor) in the beginning stages of restoration. The Auburn Boattail Speedster was built by the Auburn Automotive Company (1900 – 1937). This is the same company which also built the Cord automobile after Errett Lobban Cord bought the company in 1924 and partnered with the Duesenberg Corporation in 1926. Apparently, replicas of this car have been made since the 1970's. Judging by the condition of the car, my guess is that Al's is an original. *(Yes it is an original ed.)*



Another feature of Al's garage was the striping on the floor, which was applied entirely by hand. Stripes were painted to identify and highlight workstation areas and lifts. Al did all the striping himself and said that his knees still hurt just thinking about it!

After taking it all in, Cliff said what we were all thinking, "We need to work on our garages!!"

At the center of the garage was Al's '34 roadster in the process of restoration. Al used this car in the 1995 Great

Race. Its flathead engine sat on the floor next to it, and the chassis and drive train were at one of the work areas in the garage.



The Great American Race

The Great Race is considered a time-speed-endurance road rally (also referred to as "regularity rallying" according to Wikipedia). The objective is to maintain precise time and speeds between destinations, arriving at a destination at a predetermined time. Stops en route must be kept to an absolute minimum, so cars and drivers must be able to endure varying road conditions, weather, and temperatures. *(continued on page 6)*

[below - Al Mason talking about the Great Race]



Al Mason's Garage Tour *(continued)*

Driving his '34 roadster, Al participated in the 1995 Great Race. It was a 14 day event which began July 1 in Ottawa, Ontario on Canada Day with 300,000 people in attendance. The route covered about 1,400 miles and went through Washington, D.C. and ended in Mexico City, reaching the capitals of all three North American countries – Canada, the United States and Mexico.

The idea of participating came to Al when he was in Hershey. He tried to purchase a '32 Roadster, but ended up with the '34 which became car #50 and named the 'Patriot'. Al completely restored the car so that it could survive the rigors of the race. Al recommended getting all components

calibrated and graduated to a top speed of 60 miles/hour to allow for accurate measurement of low speeds. The clock was the size of a wall clock and was calibrated with the race start clock at the beginning of each race day. Al passed around a copy of the race driving directions. They were very basic, only showing distance measured by elapsed time, directions for turning, and landmarks and signs to look for when turning. The signs could be anything from tiny street markers to huge billboards, so the driver and navigator both had to keep a sharp watch for them. Because of this, Al and Pappy could not take in much of the scenery and often did not know what town they were in; many of the towns and cities just ran together. Al also had two mechanics following them in a trailer containing enough car parts to practically rebuild their car



in top shape, and installed a new radiator and cap, a new gas tank, and fuel lines to reduce chances of breakdowns. Other items Al installed included '39 hydraulic brakes, a '39 transmission, a '38 engine (21 bolt head), a '34 rear, and an electric fan on the radiator. He upgraded the electrical system to 12 volts, installed directional signals, and fitted the distributor with a modern coil. The race rules dictate that the car must be visibly authentic to enter the race. Al recommends using a Ford!!

Al's navigator for the great race was "Pappy" Thompson, a retired Air Force pilot. For practice, Al and Pappy participated in the Texas Old Car Race with a '71 Cadillac. Pat drove, and Al navigated, and that's when Al learned that he definitely prefers driving!

During the race, only two people could be in Al's car: the driver and the navigator. The only items they could have with them were a calibrated clock, a Jones speedometer, a pad and paper, race provided itinerary and driving directions, and nothing else. They could not have cell phones, a GPS, maps, or anything else that could assist with navigation. Cameras, video, and sound recorders were also not allowed. The Jones speedometer was specially

if necessary. The trailer showed up each day at the race destination point so that his mechanics could work on the car while Al and Pappy slept.

Scoring for the race was a little like golf; the lowest score wins. Each car began the day with a zero point balance, and points were added when the car did not reach its destination at the exact time predicted at the end of the day. 120 cars participated in the race, and most were 50 or more years old. For many, the goal was just to finish. Awards for low score were also given by car class.

Each race day would begin at about 4:30 am. There would be a morning ceremony with breakfast, music, and a parade which sometimes included the cars. Drivers would calibrate their clocks to the race clock, and then each driver would be released exactly 1 minute apart from the other. The Navy Band was a race sponsor and participated at many of the morning ceremonies, playing the National Anthem and the Navy Hymn. Lunch time and the end of each racing day would contain similar ceremonies. Many of the drivers would speak to the press and sign autographs during these times. *(continued on page 7)*

Al Mason's Garage Tour *(continued)*

Al related many stories about the number of fans that would come out to watch and support the race. During the first leg from Ottawa to Toronto, many people lined the streets to cheer the racers on. After entering New York State and driving by Niagara Falls, the route went through the ground level of a shopping mall in Binghamton so people could turn out to watch and show their support. In Ashland Kentucky, many people came to the destination points bringing car parts and assisting with repairs. Flat bed trucks would follow the route and if you broke down, would tow you to the next destination point ahead of schedule so you could work on your car. Families of the participants traveled from destination to destination to meet drivers which made the race a family affair for many.



Al related one particularly interesting story which highlighted the rigors of this event. Al needed to use the restroom, and Pappy said they absolutely could not stop. Al gave him a choice: if they could not stop then Pappy could either hold the wheel, hold the bottle that they found in the car, or hold 'George'. Pappy wisely chose the wheel. Al suggests drilling a hole in the floor and installing a radiator hose for just such an emergency.

In Marshall VA, Al caught up to the car that was supposed to be a minute ahead of him. As they approached some railroad tracks, the gates started coming down.

Both cars ran the gates just before the train came. Arriving at Skyline Drive, the weather turned on them and it began to rain heavily. Al and Pappy drove the entire length of Skyline Drive in 2nd gear and got soaking wet.

In Texas, it was so hot that Al put ice on the floorboards to keep his feet cool. The resulting humidity from the melting ice changed the accuracy of the Jones speedometer – an unintentional violation of the race rules (Al was not penalized because of it). Al mentioned that only 40 of the 120 cars crossed in to Mexico on the way to Mexico City. Apparently those that went experienced problems.



Al showed us two video tapes as part of his presentation. The first was a news report from a local TV station discussing Al's participation in the race. The 2nd consisted of segments taken by Al's family at each day's destination and starting point.

After the presentation, many of us lingered to tour the garage in more detail and ask Al questions. Al was most gracious in answering them and providing many interesting details. The group then went outside for pictures with our cars and a group photo before heading to lunch.

We arrived at Magnolia's Restaurant in Purcellville for lunch. The food was excellent (the 'lacquered salmon' was quite delicious and very spicy!) and there was much conversation on what we saw and heard. After lunch, some in the group departed while others went to Warren Barbee's body-shop garage to see the work in progress on Hank Dubois' '35 roadster.

This was truly a great tour and all had a wonderful time. Many thanks to Leo Cummings for organizing the tour, and special thanks to Al and Barbara Mason for opening and sharing their garage museum with us. Thanks also to Warren Barbee for allowing us to see his progress on Hank's roadster.



V8 Email

from Ken Burns:

"I was scanning some old family pictures the other day and came across this one."

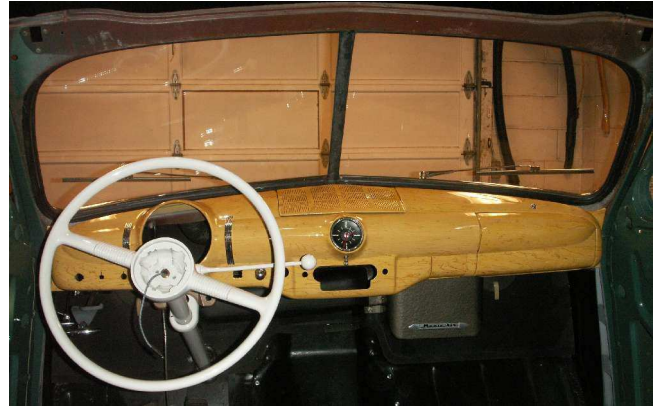


"It was taken in Honesdale, PA in the alleyway next to the apartment that Helen's maternal Grandparents lived in. She doesn't remember anything about the truck or why it was in the alley way. Our best guess is that picture was taken around 1948-9." Dave Gunnarson indicates the truck likely is a 1937 1-1/2 ton, model 78.

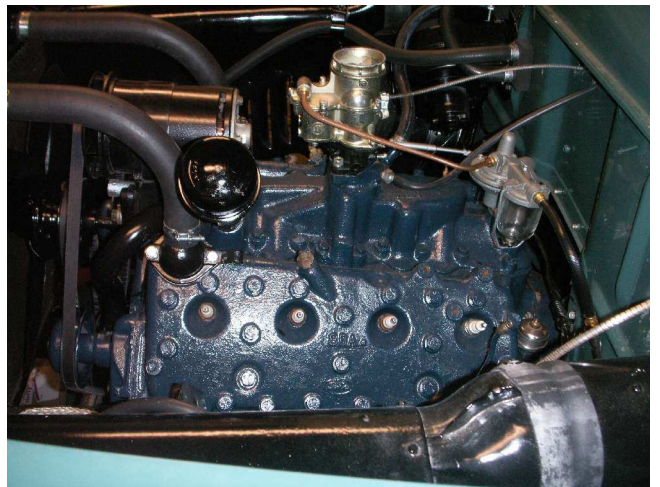
From Vern Parker:

Dave Westrate has received a note from Vern Parker thanking the club for the plaque we gave him in recognition of the 20th year of his Out Of The Past car show on Labor Day weekend. Vern is the editor of the Out Of The Past antique automobile column which is carried in the Washington Times paper and many others throughout the United States. Vern said in part, receiving the plaque from the Early Ford V8 Club was "the icing on the cake" for a wonderful weekend.

from Bill Simons:



Here is my restoration report. I am currently adding the dash board controls and am ready to attach the lower wood panels. The upper wood pieces will have to wait until I can install the rear quarter glass.



I recently had my stainless repaired by Doug Bruce and he did a beautiful job. I had some chrome work done by New England Chrome Plating and I am very pleased. They were the price of the usual Hershey suspects and I had it back in 5 weeks.



So many parts, so little time!!



NVRG Calendar



December No Membership or Board meeting this month

Valve Clatter deadline is December 30th send items to Jim LaBaugh (jlabaugh@verizon.net)

January

- 13 **Membership Meeting** - 7:00 pm - Nottaway Park - **Program:** Shock absorbers by Cliff Green
Refreshments: Don Pauly
- 24 AACA Winter Automotive Parts meet, Sailwinds Park, Cambridge, MD 7 am to 1 pm
- 27 NVRG Board of Directors meeting - 7:30 pm @ Oakton Library
- 31 **Valve Clatter deadline** - send items to Jim LaBaugh (jlabaugh@verizon.net)

February

- 10 **Membership Meeting** - 7:00 pm - Nottaway Park - **Program:** Wavecrest by Ken Burns
Refreshments: David Westrate
- 22 Clem Clement's annual car and train extravaganza 12-5 pm
- 24 NVRG Board of Directors meeting - 7:30 pm @ Oakton Library
- 28 **Valve Clatter deadline** - send items to Jim LaBaugh (jlabaugh@verizon.net)

Down the Road

Garage tours in January, February, and March - details to follow.
2009 Eastern National Meet, Hartford, CT June 24 to 27, 2009

It is dues time once again

PLEASE SUBMIT \$15.00 MADE OUT TO:

Northern Virginia Regional Group and mail to:

Dave Gunnarson, 10707 Ellies' Court, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-1876

You must belong to the National to be a member of any Regional Group.

NAMES (Including Spouse) _____

Fill in any information that has changed

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ EMAIL ADDRESS: _____



Board of directors
Northern Virginia Regional Group



President: **Dave Gunnarson** 703-425-7708

Vice President: Eric Sumner	703-860-1916	Programs: John Sweet	703-430-5770
Secretary: Cliff Green	703-426-2662	Property: Frankie Martin	703-973-1376
Treasurer: Greg Mensinger	703-893-5644	Activities: Dave Westrate	703-620-9597
Membership: Jim McDaniel	703-569-6699	Historian: Don Lombard	703-690-7971
Tours: Leo Cummings, Hank Dubois	703-866-9707	Newsletter: Jim La Baugh	703-573-9285
Past President: John Girman	703-242-1459	Web master: helenandken@verizon.net	

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER

The January Meeting is on
Tuesday January 13
 at **7:00 pm** in the historic Hunter
 House, located adjacent to the tennis
 courts, Nottoway Park, Court House
 Road, Vienna, VA



FIRST CLASS MAIL

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Early Ford V8 Club
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Vienna, Virginia, 22183