



a publication from
National Headquarters of
the Four Cylinder Club
of America

VOL. I, NO. 10, FEBRUARY 1958



national officers elected

At its regular January meeting held at Blarney Castle, the National Board elected the following officers for 1958:

Chairman of the BoardDon Long
President.....John Foster
1st Vice President.....Roy Brimhall
2nd Vice President.....Paul Maragis
Secretary.....Betty Warren
Treasurer.....Ruth Piercy
Membership Chairman.....Ron Eakins
Publicity Director.....Dick Kermode
SCCSCC RepresentativeBob Piercy

The dramatic moment of this meeting occurred when dark horse candidate, John Foster, was elected National President. It is rumored that he was elected principally because no one on the Board knew who he was, and, therefore, he was accepted as a suitable compromise by the warring Board factions.

This election has aroused great excitement and speculation. All one hears about town is the question, "Who is John Foster?" Most informed opinion leans to the belief that he is an elderly, guitar playing, crack-barrel philosopher from the Ozarks who is now employed as an Edsel salesman in Pacoima. This is not true! Dash Plaque, in the scoop of the century, has acquired the complete, authentic, authorized biography of this man of mystery. For the Truth About John Foster, read the Dash Plaque.

whittier plans grand canyon run

Ralph Taylor and Bob Seibert have taken the club event for May-June. They have come up with a dilly, we think. Three days to the Grand Canyon—May 31, June 1 and 2. This is the Decoration Day Weekend. A Monte Carlo type rally to Williams the first day, into the canyon and over to Flagstaff on Saturday, with beautiful trip through Oak Canyon to Prescott and home on Sunday. For those who think the drive is too much, a charter bus will be on hand.

Anyway, the busses hold twenty couples, and the same trip would be made. Sound good? We would make all room reservations, and otherwise the people would be on their own. We intend to invite all the FCCA clubs—maybe some clubs would like to have their own bus, etc. You will hear plenty more about this, but we are past the talking stage now. Our trip over next month will let us know our limit. So for now, this is it.

f.c.c.a. riverside raceway date postponed

After several meetings the committee presented facts and figures to the National Board of Directors regarding the coming National F.C.C.A. 1st Riverside Field Day. After much discussion it was decided by the board to cancel the May 4th date due to the shortage of time necessary to successfully stage an event of this immensity. The present committees will be maintained for the further planning of this event to be put on at a date later in the year.



1st national mexican rally part 1

(DICK KERMODE)

(Dash Plaque has again been extremely fortunate in obtaining a firsthand account of the Mexican National Rally by one of the competitors, Dick Kermode of Compton FCCA and National Board member, who was a navigator for the three-car Simca Team.—Ed.)

The 1st National Mexican Rally on November 30 and December 1 was known as the "dice for the pesos" because no less than \$24,000 were to be awarded to the top 40 finishers. Our three-car Simca team was sponsored in this event by Mr. Witkin of Simca Sales in Los Angeles. The three Simcas were piloted by Ken Miles, top under 1500 road racer; Marvin Patchen, Advertising Manager of Motor Life and Simca driver in local road races; and Burt Johnson. The navigators were Nick Marchal, Dick Kermode, and Dick Flude, all three of whom are in the top ten in championship rallies in Southern California.

The three cars which were named Pinta, Nina, and Santa Maria were expected to finish the rally in much better time than Columbus did in his voyage across the Atlantic.

The early part of the trip was the 2000 mile dice from Los Angeles to the start at Guadalajara. This was the breaking in period for the cars. The jumping off point from the United States was at Nogales. Leaving the beautiful Arizona sunset behind, we made our way past the Mexican customs. There were four customs checking stations. At each one you were charged for having your suitcases stamped while your car was being dusted off by somebody else who was also demanding pesos. We soon got used to this share the

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president's cornering

THOUGHTS AT THE WHEEL

A couple of very important National Board meetings have been held since our last issue, and the proposed FCCA day at the Riverside Raceway has become a reality.

At a recent special meeting, attended by all chapter reps, several chapter presidents, board members and members, some very interesting discussions took place regarding just what the majority of FCCA members would prefer to do during a day at the raceway.

Consideration was given to the staging of a number of "open" events to which we guessed hundreds would flock, the FCCA members would do a lot of hard work, possibly make some money for charity, or the club, but end up very much on the short end of the fun ration.

Your representatives chose rather to keep the events OPEN to FCCA MEMBERS ONLY, in order that the entire club could have its own private ball for one glorious day on the raceway.

The raceway management very graciously agreed to this, provided the whole club does participate in this terrific day of events, and turns out in sufficient numbers to warrant the opening of the Riverside Raceway on that day, plus the laying on of concessions, insurance, etc.

Your reps were unanimous in their belief that every FCCA member who is fit, and in town that day, will turn out to participate in one or more of the events lined up for this historic occasion . . . which has been set for a date late in the year.

Racing was voted down by the majority. It was believed that in order to stage a race SAFELY and successfully, the experience of a racing club was necessary. As a club we have absolutely no experience in this field, although many individual members have, and so the wishes of the few had to bow to those which were felt were in the best interests of the whole club.

A committee has been set up under the Chairmanship of Howard Kunow, President of Whittier Chapter, and the suggested events for the day will include a Rally to Riverside, staged by Glendale Chapter and probably of the type that enables all participants to leave directly from home; a Time Trials over a portion of the exciting course will be staged by Santa Monica and Long Beach

march hare rallye

SANTA MONICA FCCA

DATE: March 2, 1958.

PLACE: Sears Parking Lot, Santa Monica.

DRIVERS' MEETING: 8:00:00 A.M.

FIRST CAR OUT: 8:31:00 A.M.

TYPE OF EVENT: Straight navigational.

FEE: \$2.00.

POST ENTRIES ACCEPTED—NO EXTRA CHARGE.

THERE WILL BE A SPECIAL NOVICE TROPHY!

FOR INFORMATION, CALL BUZZ DE BARDAS at

BR 2-3327 days; CR 6-4026 evenings.

Or, call SPORTS CAR INFORMATION CENTER
Empire 2-4157

Chapters; a Gymkhana is planned by Whittier Chapter, while a Slalom, for those who prefer this kind of fun, will be run by Santa Anita Chapter. San Gabriel Valley Chapter has undertaken to really thrill us with its version of an English Trials over the still undeveloped portion of the raceway! Compton and South Bay Chapters have decided to join forces to provide us with an "Acceleration Event" and this leaves us with San Fernando Valley uncommitted at the moment but with the tremendous jobs of scoring, crowd control, entry blanks, parking, money, reservations, etc., it may be as well to leave one Chapter open for that day. We have not forgotten our friends at Santa Barbara and Phoenix, but feel that if they can make it all the way to Riverside and compete in a few of the events, they'll be having a pretty busy day. It is doubtful that anyone would be able to take in all of the events, and a system is to be worked out whereby a member may choose any three of the six events. Following the day's events there is to be a gynormous gaggle back to Blarney Castle for a big buffet dinner and trophy awards.

You have probably guessed by now that the person responsible for this whole idea and who has made it all possible, is our old friend and benefactor, Rudy Cleye. Rudy is internationally famous for his race driving, his excellent cuisine at the Blarney Castle, and his connections with Riverside Raceway, the finest road racing course in this country. We are most grateful for this opportunity to once again make sports car history and know that each one of you will pitch in to make this another red letter day, and a day of real motoring pleasure for every member.

John E. Foster

three thousand mile tour planned

Bruce Landers, of the SFV FCCA, is looking into the feasibility of a 3000-mile sports car tour of the Pacific Northwest in the fall of 1959. The following paragraphs, taken from the November issue of VALVE CHATTER, are reproduced here for the information of those SM FCCA members who might be interested.

"This would not be a competitive rally, but a fun (as well as educational) tour enjoyed by the family. It would be guided, convoy-style, and would take in the states of California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia, Canada.

"Stops would be arranged at state capitols and large industrial firms such as the Weyerhaeuser Timber Mills at Longview, Washington, the Olympic Brewery at Olympia, Washington, the Navy Yard at Bremerton, Washington, and at Seattle the famous Floating Bridge as well as the Boeing Aircraft Co. We will visit the Rose Gardens at Portland, Oregon, as well as Grand Coolee Dam, and the ice caves and salmon runs at Klamath, Oregon. For sheer beauty of scenery, the 3½ hour ferry ride through Puget Sound from Anacortes, Washington, to Sidney, British Columbia, is beyond comparison, and the old world atmosphere of Victoria, B.C., is a must. After visiting the English woolen mills in Victoria, we take the streamlined ferry, Kakala, across the Straits of San Juan de Fuca to Port Angeles on the Olympic Peninsula, where the rain forests and the HOH glacier are on the list of 'must see' items.

"All this and more, much more, for twelve days and about \$200 per couple, which includes everything but car expenses. This is being planned for 1959 due to the tremendous amount of correspondence, a field trip in 1958, and in order to give the participants the chance to set up their vacation schedules for the fall of 1959."

Interested readers are invited to drop Bruce a card at 6717 Sedan Ave., Canoga Park. No obligation.

DASH PLAQUE

Published on the 10th of each month for the Four Cylinder Club of America.

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Deadline for copy will be the 25th of the month preceding date of publication.

biography

... Dropped in on our recently re-elected National President over the weekend, in order to gather some material for a "biography in brief" on the fellow who was responsible for the creation of the FCCA, and who has been elected National President for the past eight years.—Ed.

—o—

I told John of the purpose of my visit and asked him to pardon the number of questions I would ask, and if he would mind answering them at some length, rather than with a "yes," "no," or a date. He smiled, and said he appreciated my problem because for many years he has written biographies of members in the various National and local club publications. Now the shoe was on the other foot, and so we got down to business.

"When did you come to this country, John?"

"1947, from Canada. I had often visited this country, and always loved it. Bunny and I spent our postwar honeymoon touring the whole U.S., then we went back to Canada to save up so we could come here to live."

"Are you from Canada?" I asked.

"No, though I have lived several years in, and all over Canada. I'm from Southport, a small seaside resort on the west coast of England. I left England in December 1940 and have only been back twice for short visits. The war years took me just about around the world, to Europe, Canada, U.S.A., India, China, Assam, Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, Sumatra, Java, Australia, Borneo, and I ended up on a tiny coral atoll in the South Indian Ocean, called Cocos Island."

"Apart from seeing the world, what was your job during the war?"

"I was a pilot in the Royal Air Force, night fighters and daylight sweep stuff mostly in the early days during the Battle of Britain, then over to Canada as part of the British Empire Air Training Program. Spent a couple of years as an instructor, very dicy, then an interesting session on Mosquitos, then the west coast of Canada for a thrilling six months on B-25's and B-24's on coastal work and training, then off to the Orient for a bash on heavy bombers. Routine stuff mostly."

"You must have had many interesting experiences during all those years. Care to tell of any?"

John's face broke into a grin and he studied the glass in his hand for a few minutes before replying.

"There are many indeed. I learned at an early age that I was a guy that things happened to, and I honestly think that most everything in the book crossed my path. But by the grace of God, a fine crew, excellent training and enough luck to last a fellow three lifetimes, I survived. Almost any incident I choose to relate would take up the space of short story and would only illustrate these facts, so let's skip them for some other time, if you don't mind?"

"O.K.," I replied. "Maybe we'll cover them some other time. Let's have a little on your boyhood, training, and your job now."

"My boyhood conjures up pictures of camping in the highlands and on the moors of England, Scotland and Wales; of motorcycles and broken bones; of swimming everywhere and anywhere; of sports car races every weekend in the summer on the 10-mile stretch of beach at home. Of getting in everybody's way in the pits, just to be near Malcolm Campbell, Freddy Dixon, Prince Bira, Dick Seaman, Conan Doyle, Tim Birkin and Sir Henry Seagrave. Trips to the Continent, building a boat and sailing it wherever it was considered impossible or dangerous. My youth was wrapped up in the innards of a 1932 Morris Minor, later a lovely little PB MG, and finally a TA in 1939 which I lost in a raid on Bristol. All this time I was an apprentice engineer. From when I was 14 I went to college and worked in a factory. Wound up as a graduate engineer from the Merchant Venturers College at the Bristol University. The outbreak of war nipped a promising career at Bristol Aeroplane Company in the bud, and a few hours flying before that decided for me which service to enter. After the war I was a liaison engineer at Fairchild in Montreal. I came down here to fly but found the field crowded and no openings for aliens. I was a designer for Westcraft trailers for about a year until they folded. That's when I decided to become a U.S. citizen, but I had a five year wait and had to eat, so I went into the then practically unknown business of selling sports cars."

"Who was that with, John?" I asked.

"There were only two places in town where you could find an imported car. One was Bob Roberts on Ivar in Hollywood who handled Duesenberg, Cord, and such classic domestic jobs, and who could get, on special order from New York, a funny little hard riding, wire wheel job with right hand drive called the

suggestions to rally chairmen:

It was brought to the attention of the Board of Directors that recently several of our chapters have run into difficulty with the Highway Patrol by running rallies through certain areas. As we know, running competitive events on public highways is illegal, although the Highway Patrol in the past have been very cooperative in looking the other way when a group of our cars go buzzing by, we still want to keep their good will so several suggestions were made to pass on to Rally Chairmen:

- #1—Try to keep out of residential areas as much as possible.
- #2—Set up check points so as not to create a traffic hazard.
- #3—Check with Highway Patrol or local Police on your proposed route so they may know your rally is coming through a certain area—they may have some good suggestions to make.

It was felt by the Board that cooperation on our part with the Highway Patrol or local Police would eliminate trouble in running successful rallies in the future.

r.o.c.a. club officers guests of national board

The National Board of Directors was honored by a visit of the officers of the newly formed and highly successful Renault Owners Club of America. Those attending were, President Jim and Ruth Adams, Bob and Joan Pierce, Editors of R.O.C.A. Sidelights, Norma Valentine, Treasurer, Irv. Also, Activities Chairman, Jean Suddeth, Membership Chairman.

President Jim Adams gave a short resume of their club and showed their car badge and exclusive Dauphine trophy ornament.

MG. The other place was Light Car Motors on Hollywood Blvd., where Trend Publications are now. They handled the Austin (U.S. and British), the Willys and a lush job called Triumph, the 1800 roadster. Bob didn't need a salesman, so I went to work for Light Car Motors. Made a lot of friends through the fabulous Austin A40, one of the best cars ever made, and made a lot of money, too. In fact I opened up the first imported car agency outside of Hollywood when I joined forces with our service manager Glenn Fancher and had our own agency in Glendale.

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Robert Piercy
5610 Edgemar Ave.
Los Angeles 43, Calif.

FIRST CLASS

biography

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That's when we formed the Four Cylinder Club, and little did I guess how popular it would become."

"Now that we have reached the club John, tell us a little about its formation and your long association with it."

"Well, it was rough going at first in those days. People who drove the little 'furrin' cars were considered nuts and we sure had a rough time putting them over. It was our enthusiasm that won out in the end, not salesmanship! Dealerships sprang up everywhere and reaped the benefit of our pioneering. Light Car Motors had argued against my suggestion to bring in the MG. 'That darn little thing will never sell over here,' I was told. So Rodger Barlow appeared on the scene with his fabulous International Motors and stole the thunder from everyone for several years with the MG, later the Jag, Rolls, Bentley, Talbot, Simca. A sports car club had been formed by Rodger with its natural aim racing, and after a couple of rather abortive efforts the first Palm Springs Road Race was successfully staged in 1950. It was a wizard race, only a very few people were there and we raced everything in sight, including Austin sedans and a Cadillac sedan. Sterling Edwards from S. San Francisco won the main event as I recall, in his 'special'! John Von Neuman was there and Rodger Barlow, Bill Friedauer and Bill Corey and several others who are still active today in what has become the California Sports Car Club. Looking around at the number of small car owners who were enjoying the activities from a spectator's view it occurred to me that here were all the people we

needed for a club dedicated to all the other motoring sports, like so many of the clubs in Europe. I recalled the fun I had had in England with the Bristol Sports Car Club and immediately got cracking on organizing one over here. We just put ads in the papers and let it be known through the dealerships that such a club was being formed and in no time we had hundreds of members. Like Topsy, it grew, and it was a barrel of fun. Just like today, there always seemed to be the help we needed when we asked, and such wonderful people as Lew Himmelrich, The Gregson Family, Curt Parker, Harwood Jones, Perry Peron, Glenn Fancher, Gloria Dearbron, Jean Burkhard and so many more contributed endless hours to its success. It became so big we had to split it up into chapters, and to look after all the mail and business involved we had to form a National Office and Board, separate to any chapter, and each succeeding year I have been assigned the job of President of this National Office."

"Before you continue with your part in the club today, John, I know you are no longer in the sports car business. When did you leave it, and what are you doing now?"

"Just a few days after I got my U.S. citizenship I nipped up to Lockheed and told them I knew of a good engineer going to seed. That was Christmas of 1954. I'm still there, though things are pretty precarious in the aircraft industry these days. I write the maintenance manual on the engine of the F104 fighter, the most interesting job I've had to date; it's very challenging and very different to playing around with four cylinders!"

"Are you running for office again this year, John?"

"I never run for office, old boy! Each year I resign. The new board takes over and when the question arises, who is going to take over? everyone looks around the room, sees I am the oldest member there and 'volunteer' me for the job."

We had covered most of the points I had intended to cover except the important one of Bunny, John's wife. What does she think of all these goings on in the Foster family? When she brought us our third round of beer and I was just about ready to dive in the pool, I asked her.

"I used to work very close to Jack in the early days of the club; our house was the headquarters with never a dull moment," she laughed. "But there were other things to be done and a family to look after, so I left the club activities to Jack and anything he does is fine by us, so long as we see something of him each week," she replied, then added, "Jack has many ambitions in many other directions that at the moment he just doesn't have time to pursue; that is the only reason I would like to see him step down for awhile. It's the old itchy feet he was born with. This is the longest time I have known him to be in one spot in his life!"

"And that's what I call an understanding wife; see what I mean about being born lucky," John (Bunny calls him Jack) said as he gave her a hug, and we prepared to leave.

"Heavens! Look at the time," John exclaimed, looking at his watch. "I've promised to show some movies over at the Vets Hospital this afternoon. I'll try to be home for dinner, honey."

And with a quick "Cheerio" and "Thanks" he was gone.

mexican rally

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wealth plan—you could do nothing in Mexico without the peso.

Beyond Nogales and customs there were long stretches of highway through cactus and arid desert. The hazards of Mexican roads soon became evident. Cattle and people wandered aimlessly across the road in front of the car, and then there was the everpresent donkey. It seems they fence their farms in order to keep the livestock on the highway. The donkeys and

cows were road hazards during the rally because the cars were penalized for dented fenders. However, hitting a cow, donkey, or buzzard at sixty miles per hour could mean totalling the car—not just a fender.

The quiet little seaport town of Guaymas was our first stop—at the Guaymas Inn. Our routine was established here. A dip in the pool; a cool one; dinner and bench rallying; a pill to keep us regular; and finally a good night's sleep. This formula was enjoyable.

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