

Vol. 27, No. 7

# Ragtops & Rumbleseats



Jul 2020



**• SIRAACA Will Cancel 2020 Fall Show**



# Introducing the Rebel "Machine."

Standing before you is the car you've always wanted. And, if you like everything about it, except for the paint job, which admittedly looks startling, you can order the car painted in the color of your choice. You may be wondering why a company like American Motors would paint a car red, white and blue. And that's what we keep asking ourselves. Why would a company like American Motors paint a car red, white and blue? But we have nothing to be embarrassed about under the hood, which is all you should be concerned about. The Machine has a 390 CID engine as standard equipment and develops a horsepower the equivalent of 390 horses all pulling in unison, which is no mean feat. Next, and this will be particularly impressive to those people who have buried their heads in hot rod magazines since they were old enough to say "zoom . . . zoom . . . lookie it's a car," the Machine has a 4-speed

all-synchromesh close-ratio transmission with special Hurst shift linkage and a 3.54:1 standard rear axle ratio (or an optional 3.91:1). To feed air to your engine, and it will be your engine once you buy the car, we have bolted on a ram-air hood scoop. And in the hood scoop, we mounted a tach that's lighted and registers 9000 rpm's. Heavy-duty shocks and springs raise the rear end a bit and give the Machine, a raked, just mowed the lawn look. And our dual exhaust system uses special low back pressure mufflers and larger exhaust pipes. We will make the description of the rest of the Machine's features mercifully short. Front and rear sway bars, high-back bucket seats, 15 inch tires with raked white letters, mag styled steel wheels, power

disc brakes, and racing stripes that glow in the dark. Incidentally, if you have delusions of entering the Daytona 500 with the Machine, or challenging people at random, the Machine is not that fast. You should know that. For instance, it is not as fast on the getaway as a 427 Corvette, or a Hemi, but it is faster on the getaway than a Volkswagen, a slow freight train, and your old man's Cadillac. In short, in order to fully make up your mind about

the Machine, you will have to see it in person at your American Motors dealer. And when you're introduced to it, a simple "How do you do?" "Nice meeting you," or something friendly like "How are your pipes?" will suffice.

## Up with The Rebel Machine

For a set of four "Up with the Rebel Machine" details send 25¢ and your name and address to: Machine Deal Offer, American Motors Sales Corporation, 14250 Plymouth Road, Detroit, Michigan 48222.



## Vintage Advertising

Here are two ads that AMC ran in 1970, both with obvious nods to the 'American' in American Motors. At top is a red, white and blue Rebel Machine. The ad reads that the paint job "admittedly looks startling" and you can order one "in the color of your choice". The best part of the copy admits that "it's not as fast on the getaway as a 427 Corvette, or a Hemi" but is faster than "a Volkswagen... and your old man's Cadillac".

At the bottom is AMC's Gremlin. AMC also compares to VW here, noting the Gremlin is longer, wider and heavier, with more power, yet still has the best gas mileage among American cars.

AMC built 1,936 Rebel Machines that year, along with 28,560 Gremlins. Of that, only 872 were two-seaters.

# The New American Car.

This is the American Motors Gremlin. It is the kind of car this country has needed for a long, long time. It is designed to give the American motorist a car that is easy to buy, easy to handle, easy to take care of, and, at the same time, fun to drive. The Gremlin is the smallest production car made in America. It is 151 inches long, just 2 1/2 inches longer than the Volkswagen. Yet its turning circle, at 32 feet, 8 inches, is about 3 feet less than VW's. Which makes the Gremlin about the

easiest car in the world to park and handle. The Gremlin gets the best gas mileage of any car made in America. It goes about 300 miles without stopping for gas. This is great gas mileage, when you consider that the Gremlin has a bigger standard engine than any car near its size and price. 125 hp to VW's 57. This engine gets from 0 to 60 in 15.3 seconds, the pickup you need on expressways. And nobody's going to push you around in a Gremlin. It is 19 inches wider, 7 inches lower and 765 pounds heavier than a VW. Which gives you about the unthoughtful,

most stable ride possible in a car this size. The Gremlin is remarkably easy to service and maintain. Its normal oil change interval is 6 months or 6,000 miles; lubrication is normally needed only every 24,000 miles. There are two basic Gremlin models. A two-passenger, with storage area in the rear. A four-passenger with fold-down rear seats for extra storage and flip-up rear window for easy access. Both models cost about what you'd pay for an imported economy car.

The four-passenger lists for \$1,959. The lowest list price of any car made in America. Except for the two-passenger Gremlin. It lists for \$1,879. Which is quite a bargain, when you consider what you get for your money. The new American car.

**American Motors**  
**Gremlin**  
\$1,879 2 Passenger    \$1,959 4 Passenger



## In This Issue

- 44rd Annual Fall Show is canceled.
- What about the raffle car?
- Ed Vomero donates a 1923 Star.
- '65 Thunderbird joins the SIR-AACA Garage.

*Trivia Question: The 1973 Gremlin offered an optional Levi's interior package that featured spun nylon upholstery made to look like denim. Why didn't they use real denim?*

*Answer: Real denim is spun from cotton, and fire safety regulations prohibited its use in interiors.*

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# Minutes of the 541st Meeting

June 2, 2020

1. The 541st meeting of the Staten Island Region AACA called to order on the lawn behind Richmond Town's Courthouse around 6:30 PM.
2. The minutes of 540th meeting were recapped by President Paul Jr.
3. Club members participated in a birthday drive-by celebration for Michael Capolongo, for whom Michael's Cause is named.
4. The Sunday morning cruises at Gateway Park in Great Kills are rapidly filling up against what public officials are calling acceptable gathering limits. If you choose to go, the earlier the better. Park Police are controlling the amount of cars allowed in.
5. Paul Jr. met with several folks from Historic Richmond Town to discuss several topics. First off, all cruise nights are suspended this year due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Secondly, we have been asked to collaborate with them on the preservation of their Model T Ford in advance of its permanent display in one of the new carriage houses on Arthur Kill Road. Details will be worked out once we're cleared to gather again. They offered a checklist of things to be done, issued by the National Park Service, which appear to be the same guidelines issued by The Henry Ford in Dearborn.
6. Discussion turned to our fall show. There are still many issues to sort out before we decide on whether or not to hold it in September. Insurance is a concern, as is unknown public gathering guidelines. We still do not know what the Commons Cafe will allow, nor do we have the means to get trophy donors. What about the health of our members? Would we consider no spectators? No food? No judging? More research and more waiting are required here, with the goal to know what we are doing by July.
7. Local and regional shows that have canceled include the Brooklyn show, Macungie in August, and the fall swap meet and car corral at Hershey in October. As of now, the AACA Grand Nationals remain on, with new limitations imposed on attendees.
8. There was no 50/50 held after the meeting was adjourned at night-fall.

Respectfully submitted  
by Paul Jr. for  
Tony DiAngelo, Secretary

## SIRAACA Opts to Cancel 2020 Fall Show

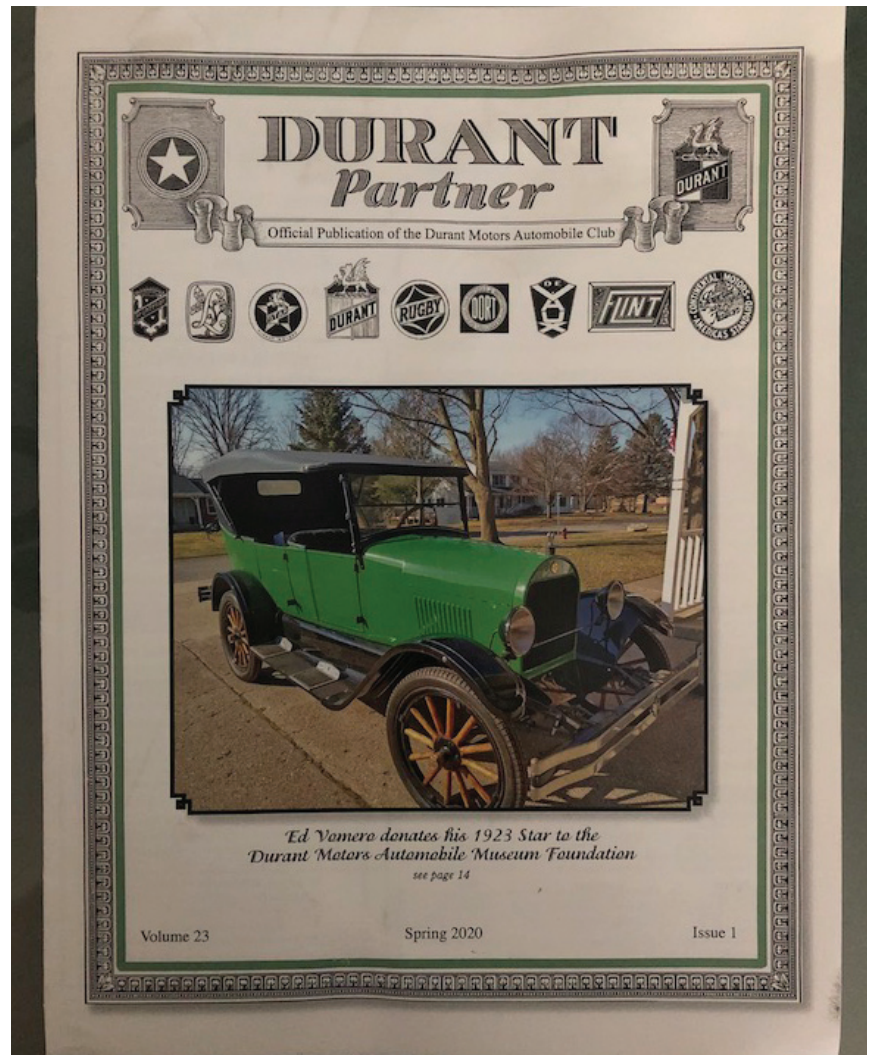
After much deliberation and a careful weighing of the factors for and against, we have decided to cancel the fall show scheduled for September 13. In the end, the risks outweighed the potential rewards, and with safety and security at the top of our minds, we came to that decision. There are other factors that also contributed. One is the possibility that the state will yet to permit large gatherings, which is also freezing the folks at The Commons Cafe. Another factor is liability. We confirmed with AACA Director Steve Moskowitz that our insurance does not cover illness. While a lawsuit would be frivolous and nearly impossible to prove, litigation still costs money. Other factors are the inability to expect sponsors and donors to contribute, and logistics for having a socially distant show while still making economic sense. Official word will drop directly after our July meeting. While this erases our formally planned events for the year, we are looking to plan something informal to keep us active.

## What About the Raffle Car?

With the cancellation of our fall show, we are also canceling this years drawing for our 1992 Camaro raffle car. We are drafting communication that you may use as we return all monies collected thus far through the sale of tickets. Our understanding is that we are not too deep in sales thus far, and that any members who sold tickets still have the stubs and money collected. We will hold the car and start over for a drawing next year. Details will be shared at the next meeting.

## A Star is Gone

One of Ed Vomero's three 1923 Star touring cars is "gone", but not forgotten. On the contrary, it's very well known now that it has been donated to the Durant Motors Automobile Museum Foundation. The Foundation has made arrangements for the car to be displayed at the Gilmore Museum in Hickory Corners, Michigan. Initially, it will be featured as a contemporary alternative to Ford's Model T. Eventually, the creation of the Durant Motors Museum on the Gilmore Campus will provide this Star its own home. The folks at the Gilmore used the downtime associated with the coronavirus lockdown to spruce up the car ahead of its public debut. Ed donated the car in memory of his son Edward Jr., who tragically passed over 35 years ago at the age of 15. Congratulations to the Foundation for securing a foundation upon which to build their museum, and many thanks to Ed for his generous donation. Not only will it preserve the memory of one of Durant's most popular offerings, but also that of his family legacy. The car is featured (right) on the cover of DMAC's Spring 2020 newsletter.



## From the President

My sense is that a good number of us are somewhat relieved about the risks we may have faced individually and as a club if we went ahead with our show in September. It was no easy decision to cancel, but I feel comfortable in the one we made. Let's live to fight another day. In the meantime, what can we do as a club to ensure the social aspect of membership is met, even at a distance? Many of us have been going "down the beach" on Sunday mornings, and we are hearing of informal cruise nites sprouting up in spots like Home Goods on Hylan Boulevard. Is there an "event:" we could collaborate on that keeps us in our cars, be it a road trip, or a drive-in movie, or a drive-in concert? I look forward to discussing this at our next gathering on July 7. Until then, have a very happy, healthy and safe Fourth of July. - Paul Jr.

## From the Editor

Thanks to Andy Barcellona for submitting details on his latest car, which is featured in this month's SIRAACA Garage. With very few if any events happening this far, I'm relying even more on our members to contribute content for upcoming newsletters. Keep in mind that the SIRAACA Garage can showcase any of your cars, past or present. That means something you owned new 40 years ago as well. Beyond that, if you were out for a drive as suggested by the challenge at right, send me the picture too. Thanks in advance! - Paul Jr.

## - NEXT MEETING - July 7

Our July meeting will be an outdoor gathering at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, July 7. Bring a chair with you to the parking lot of Historic Richmond Town, where we can safely maintain our social distancing.

## Just Drive Your Car Challenge

Stacy Zimmerman is the editor of the AACA's *Speedster*, a monthly e-mail newsletter that many of you receive. In response to many submissions she's received during the shutdown that show how national members are using their old cars, she's issued a challenge to us all. It's quite simple - drive your car. Down the street, up the block, across town, or cross country. While you are on this drive, find an interesting or fun spot to pause and take a picture of your car there. When you return home, email her the picture along with your name, the year, make and model of your car, and the location of the photo. All entrants will be placed in a drawing to win some AACA merchandise, and she will share all of the photos in the next edition of *Speedster*. The deadline for submissions is July 27. Let's make sure she gets plenty of our rides in there. Happy driving!

## Altered Format for New Hope

The organizers of the New Hope Auto Show have released their plan for a smaller event this August in response to coronavirus limits to large gatherings. Firstly, they are capping the number of cars to 150. To ensure it's an event that still draws spectators, they are aiming to display only AACA and CCA Senior Award winners. In addition, there will be no judging, with only one People's Choice Award. In addition, a random drawing of one car will win \$500. Spectators will require tickets to enter, and will be limited to one of three two-hour viewing windows to limit the number of people on the field at any given time. All spectators must wear a mask. Social distancing will be enforced on the field, and visitor routes will be clearly marked with colors and maps. Visitors will be asked to follow these routes to make their way through the show. The organizers had to pledge to county health officials that they will aggressively enforce these regulations in return for approval to put on the event. As such, they had to secure many more volunteers to serve as social distancing "ambassadors". In the end, state, county or local agencies can still apply additional limits or withdraw approval at any time.. If any members with Senior cars wish to register, the cost is \$25.

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## Inside the SIRAACA Garage

There's a new antique car calling the SIRAACA Garage home these days, courtesy of member Andy Barcellona. This is his recently acquired 1965 Ford Thunderbird, which up until now, was a one-family owned car.

Howard Chandler bought this car for his wife Olive on February 10, 1965, from Rudy Valentino Ford in Upper Darby, PA. She didn't drive, so it was reserved for special trips to Florida.

It has 68,477 miles and is completely unrestored. It has the standard 390/300hp engine, with P/S, P/B, power driver's seat, air conditioning and an AM/FM radio.

A total of 74,972 Thunderbirds were made that year, and Andy's is one of 20,974 Landau coupes built. The more popular model was the generic hardtop.

Andy is currently getting the car ready for the AACA Fall Meet at Hershey. He and Andrew Napoli are detailing the engine compartment, with the undercarriage to follow. A body shop will address a few issues with the Wimbledon White paint.

The SIRAACA Garage is home to all of our members' cars, past and present. Has your car been featured yet? Make sure you get the details to Paul Jr. if you want to share your car with us all.



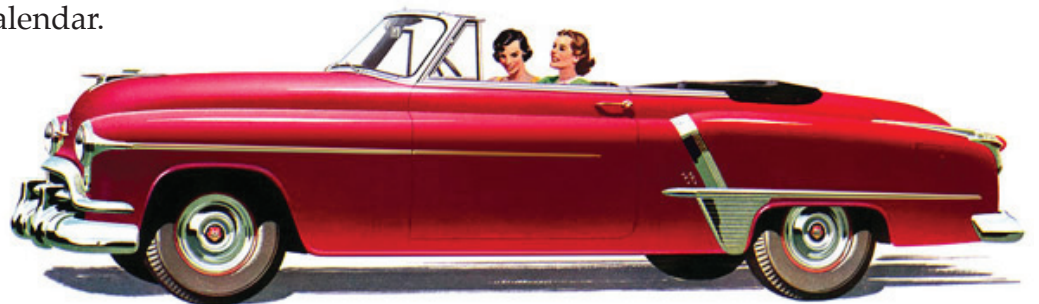
*(photos courtesy of Andy Barcellona)*



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## Upcoming Events?

Load up your car and head out to one of the few remaining shows on the calendar.



- New Hope Auto Show, - New Hope, PA (limited access) - August 8
- AACA Grand National Meet - Allentown, PA - August 21-22
- AACA Eastern Fall Meet - Hershey (car show only) - October 9-10





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## From the SIRAACA Archive

Here is a pair of photos taken at one of our fall shows held at the old College of Staten Island, now known as the Petrides School. They feature a couple of trophy winners driving along the lower road to pick up their trophy. There are a lot of people to be identified here. In the photo with the Camaro, we spot Doc Corpus standing in the bed of Victor Coiro's Corvair pick-up truck with a camcorder (*can we get that video? - Ed.*). Victor is leaning on the bed, with Lenny DeLuca sitting just behind the cab. Nick Mazzarella is in the white cap in front of the truck, and Victor Losquadro (white cap in front of the trophy table) watches Tony DiAngelo get ready to greet the driver. In the photo with the Porsche, we get a view of Kevin Keenan at the doorway to our "mission control" van. It looks like Sal DeFrancesco sitting in the van. Behind the van, we spot Frank Juliano talking to perhaps Patty Lomano. Next to the left-side door is Jerry Revello. Bob Kramek is the man with his arms crossed near the speaker, and the far right of the photo shows Lenny DeLuca talking to Charlie Sachs. Can anyone date these?



(photos by a younger Paul Jr.)



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