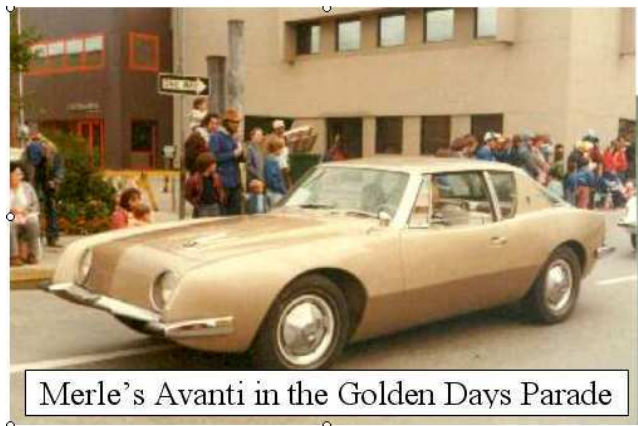




## MERLE'S PASSION By Ron Allen

What do Danica Patrick of the Indy 500 fame and Merle Page of VLNAACF have in common? They are both female race car drivers. Those who do not know about Merle's past would not have made that connection from observing her proper and conservative nature. Merle was kind enough to share her passion for racing with me and to provide some interesting stories about her past and present automobiles. In the process she also provided some interesting historical tidbits about the former Fairbanks Sports Car Club, former Horseless Carriage Club and the evolution of today's Vernon Nash Car Club.

Merle moved to Alaska in 1961 leaving behind a Citroen somewhere in the lower 48 and purchasing a VW Beetle that she drove around Fairbanks for the next two and a half years. She was employed at Gene's Auto as an accountant. In 1963 Gene's Auto received a new golden Studebaker Avanti that sat in the show room for many months. Merle



Merle's Avanti in the Golden Days Parade



Merle's Avanti in a Rally leaving the Fairbanks Sports Car Club House located behind present day Carlson Center. Note club sign top right.

loved this car and looked at it every day since the only barrier separating her office from the showroom was a counter. Finally in January 1964 she threw caution to the wind and purchased it for \$5,300, a large sum of money for a car at that time.

Merle joined the Fairbanks Sports Car Club, a club that was very active in Rallies and Autocross late 60's and early 70's. She and her Avanti joined in the competitions. She also fixed up her old VW Beetle for more serious rally racing. She modified the VW by adding a second carburetor and some stabilizing parts. This made a huge difference in its performance and handling. The thrill of successes at these

competitions prompted more changes to the VW and primed her racing aspirations. The Beetle body was removed and replaced with a fiberglass body. The VW engine was replaced by a Porsche engine. Merle became even more enthusiastic about racing. She moved to Spokane in 1967 to pursue racing further taking her race car with her. She won some trophies in "D Sports Racing" and had a great time. However, she found that work in Spokane didn't fully support her racing costs. She moved back to Fairbanks a year and a half later in 1969.



Porsch powered VW "D" Race Car

About the time of her return to Fairbanks Merle purchased an Austin America that was great fun to ice race in. The Fairbanks Sports Car Club held ice racing events at that time in addition to their other racing and rally events. These events continued up until when the club could no longer obtain racing insurance. This unfortunate turn of events led to general loss of interest in club activities and the eventual demise of the club.



Ice Racing in an Austin America

Before the demise of the Fairbanks Sports Car Club, the club held a car show in 1970. This event prompted some old car owners participating in the event to organize the Horseless Carriage Club in Fairbanks. One of the requirements of the club's national affiliate was that each member had to have a very old car. That's when Merle purchased a yellow 1917 Buick, and she became one of the early members of the club. Many of you probably know that the Horseless Carriage Club in Fairbanks evolved into the Antique Car Club. This came about because of club members' desire for a change in club's national car club affiliation in order to provide a more liberal membership requirement regarding classes of cars. The Antique Car Club thrived. During a subsequent progressive dinner event some club members decided to change the club name to the Vernon L. Nash Antique Car Club in honor of a recently deceased club member, Vernon Nash. The club has been active ever since it's organization after the 1970 car show.



1917 Yellow Buick

Years later when Merle became involved in showing purebred dogs her priorities changed. Merle's cars disappeared one by one, except for the Studebaker Avanti. The golden car that stole Merle's heart in Gene's Auto showroom back in 1963 and helped to inspire her passion for racing remains in her garage today as a testament to her competitive spirit and fondness of a classic automobile.

# EVENTS

For more information regarding the events, contact Sherry Camarata at 488-4293 or [pscamarata@acsalaska.net](mailto:pscamarata@acsalaska.net).

Events/Meetings	Date/Time	Location	Contact
Easter Night at the Malemute Saloon	Thursday May 25 th 6:30 Meet at Pioneer Park	Malemute Saloon	Sherry Camarata 488-4293
Pioneer Park Opening Day & ShowNShine	Saturday, May 27th 10:30 AM	Pioneer Park	Sherry Camarata 488-4293
Wednesday Night Run around	Starts May 31st 6:30	Starts at Pioneer Park	Roy & Brenda Wilbur 456-4284
3rd Annual Car Show	June 3rd & 4th Friday evening June 2nd setup 6:00pm Saturday & Sunday	Carlson Cntr	Willy Vinton 456-2261 or 474-0939
June BOD Meeting	Tuesday June 6th	Vinton's House 124 Nilgrub Ave	Willy Vinton 456-2261 or 474-0939
June Members Meeting	Thursday June 8 th	tba	Sherry Camarata 488-4293
Poker Run	Saturday June 17th 9:00 @ Pioneer Park	Pioneer Park to Chena Hot Spring	Willy Vinton 456-2261 or 474-0939
Summer Solstice Car Show & Root beer Float Stand	Wednesday June 21st	Corner 1st /2nd & Noble	Julie McKowen 372-2239 (Car Show) Wilma Vinton 456-2261 (Root beer Stand)
Lathrop HS 1966 Class Reunion	Carlson Center 5:30-7:30PM	Carlson Center	Larry Meath 457-2306
Tanana Fair Car Show	June 24th & 25th	Tanana State Fairgrounds	Willy Vinton 456-2261 or 474-0939
Canada Day Parade, Dawson City	Lv Fai June 29th Parade July 1st	Dawson City Canada	Loren Benham 488-4966
4th of July Parade, Eagle	Tuesday July 4th	Eagle Alaska	Loren Benham 488-4966
4th of July Parade, North Pole	Tuesday July 4th Lineup 9:00 Parade at 10:00	North Pole	Sherry Camarata 488-4293
Truck Show	Saturday July 8th 10:00-4:00	American Tire	Craig Shelton 488-5785
July BOD Meeting	Tuesday July 10th	Vinton's House 124 Nilgrub Ave	Willy Vinton 456-2261 or 474-0939
July Members Meeting & Annual Picnic	Saturday July 15 th	Domke's 2391 Chena Ht	Rudy & ruth Ann 488-6970



### CAR SHOW REGISTRATION & LINEUP

The Carlson Center VLNAAC Car show is June 3 and 4. Applications for signing up are available from our President, Willy Vinton, 474-0939 or stop by Northern Truck Center. There is a signup fee of \$5.00 this year to help defray the cost of 24 hr security. Lineup will start at 5:00 PM, June 2<sup>nd</sup> in the back lot of the Carlson Center. As has done in the past, we will line up outside and go into the Carlson Center arena by year. **Please have gas tanks almost empty and have fire extinguishers for each vehicle.**



Photo is of the 2005 Car Show. Let's make the 2006 Car Show even greater. The fun includes the excitement of an antique truck raffle, camaraderie with friends, and showing off your antique and classic cars and trucks.



- **1982 two door hatchback Mustang**, 44,000 miles, automatic, and runs great Needs carpet. Call Ray Cain at 479-4798.
- **George Clayton's vehicles are for sale @ the house and on the Ranch:** It is Georges desire that the Nash Car Club members get first choice. There will be a Ford T & A & GM parts sale at a later date. Call Bill Chace 488-3805 if interested to make arrangements to see

the vehicle. Of course earnest money guarantees priority:

- 1916 Dodge touring (Gidson-Valdez stage lines) many duplicate Dodge parts
- 30 Ford AA truck
- 41 Buick & a parts car
- 1945 Buick sed
- 50-53 Buick seds
- 1951 Kaiser sed
- 50's Willys Sedans
- 1950's Willy's Jeep wagons (several with no engine & one w/engine)
- 1960 willys wagonno eng Exc body
- 1951-3 Chevys (one metal woody St Wag)
- Canadian Meteor (wheels and chassis only)
- 1960 Jaguar
- 1956 Chevy 3/4 Ton Pickup
- 1955 Chrysler parts car
- 1960,s Chrysler and parts car
- 1966 Ford wrecker (running & works good)
- early 1960's Ramblers
- Volvos Misc years (Parts)
- 1978 Cadillac Good and Running (Several Caddy parts cars 60-early 70's)
- 1979 Chry Cordoba 2 door, good & Running (Cordoba parts cars)
- Bus, Yellow
- Hillman Sunbeam (Parts)
- 1959 Jaguar parts car
- 1970 Toyota PU (parts)
- Many Model A and T parts, including fenders, engines, wheels, etc.
- early Chevy 4 cyl engines (exposed pushrods & rockers on skids)
- 1950-60 GM Parts
- Misc. Mod TT and AA truck Chassis and eng's (one with Warford trans)
- Ruxtell rear end parts
- Jaguar XKE 15 inch wire wheels
- Aviation items (WW-2 Vintage parts and -----Cessna, Taylorcraft, Stinson and Cub parts. fuselages, tail feathers.

Call and let Bill Chace know your needs. Parts will be available later in Mid June.

- **Model "A" Repairs.** Bill Wright, an active VLNAACF club member, does re-babbitt work on A's, B's, and T's. Call him at 479-8506.
- **1931 Model A Phaeton.** Here is a rare opportunity to own a piece of Dawson history. Bob Cartwright of Dawson City is selling this prize possession. The car has been in the Dawson area since new and was owned by some prominent miners in the area during its past life. Contact Loren Benham at 474-4966.
- **1953 Jeep CJ3** with insulated cab. Frame-off restoration. Call Alva Ditch at 457-4788.



## BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

### JUNE BIRTHDAYS

08 Willy Vinton  
 09 Julie McKowan  
 10 Kirk Larson  
 11 Tena Yurkovich  
 13 Virginia Clayton  
 17 Victoria "Vicki" Rotroff  
 18 Victoria Meyer  
 22 John Blankenship  
 25 Karl Carlson  
 27 Nila Lyle

### JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

02 Bernie & Judy Saupe  
 05 Ron & Shirley Franklin  
 07 Robbie & Doris Casey  
 08 Loren & Victoria Rotroff  
 09 John & Betty Borg  
 11 Scott & Linda Grundy  
 13 Ron & Karine Dane  
 15 Greg & Eloise Oslund  
 18 Bill & Joyce Chace  
 18 Dan & LaVonne Gullickson  
 28 James & Karen Eddy

### FAIRBANKS MIDNIGHT SUN FESTIVAL June 21, 2006 Noon to Midnight By Sherry Camarata

**Summer Solstice:** The seasons of the year are caused by a 23.5° tilt of the earth's axis. Because the earth is rotating like a top or gyroscope, the North Pole points in a fixed direction continuously towards a point in space near the North Star. But the earth is also revolving around the sun. During half of the year, the northern hemisphere is more exposed to the sun. The time of the year when the sun reaches its maximum elevation occurs on the summer solstice, the day with the greatest number of daylight hours. It typically occurs on June 21, the first day of summer. That day is also our day of SUNTIME & FUNTIME, and we get to show off our cars to the 30,000 or so people that mill around downtown Fairbanks for the event.

Our cars will be located in the same spot we had last year. Line up with your cars between 11:00 and 11:45 AM (don't be late) along Lacy Street between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> and on up to 3<sup>rd</sup> if we need the room. The root beer float stand will be set up on the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Lacy. Usually one can depart the event early around 9:30 to 10:00 PM if you can't stay until mid-night. It's fun, it's fabulous, it's fantastic!! In previous years we had judging, but this year it seems everyone just wants to show off their vehicles. Sit in your lawn chairs, chat with each other, talk to all the passersby and take turns walking around the street fair. Oh, the food, yum, yum! There's something for everyone and VLNAACF root beer floats to boot.

Wilma Vinton has a list of volunteers for the root beer stand, but she needs a couple more, especially to help set up. Sherry Camarata and Willy Vinton have arranged for all the supplies. If you are going to bring your car, please give one of us a call to let us know. We need to provide a bumper count. Julie McKowan will directing and lining up our cars and helping out. Thanks Julie!

If you want to dress in style, go to [www.downtownfairbanks.com](http://www.downtownfairbanks.com) and order Solstice T-shirts to wear on the 21<sup>st</sup>. (\$15 each)

**OFFICERS**

President	Willy Vinton	<a href="mailto:Willy@ntc.fairbanks.ak.us">Willy@ntc.fairbanks.ak.us</a>	907-474-0939 day 907-456-2261 evn
Vice President	Ray McLeod	<a href="mailto:rmcleod@alaska.net">rmcleod@alaska.net</a>	907-347-4070
Secretary	Laurel McLaughlin	<a href="mailto:mcbug@gci.net">mcbug@gci.net</a>	907-452-5234
Treasurer	Ruth Hill		907-452-4510
Director	Loren Benham	<a href="mailto:mvbenham1@yahoo.com">mvbenham1@yahoo.com</a>	
Director	Paul Camarata	<a href="mailto:pscamarata@acsalaska.net">pscamarata@acsalaska.net</a>	907-488-4293
Director	Bill Wright		907-479-8505
Newsletter	Ron Allen	<a href="mailto:ronandnancy@gci.net">ronandnancy@gci.net</a>	907-488-3965
Webmaster	Wilma Vinton	<a href="mailto:wvinton@acsalaska.net">wvinton@acsalaska.net</a>	907-456-2261
Events Coordinator	Sherry Camarata	<a href="mailto:pscamarata@acsalaska.net">pscamarata@acsalaska.net</a>	907-488-4293
Roster/Membership	Marion Benham	<a href="mailto:Mvbenham1@yahoo.com">Mvbenham1@yahoo.com</a>	907-474-4966

**NEXT MEETING**  
**6:00PM June 8**  
**China One**

**Newsletter Deadline**

All materials for the newsletter should be in by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month to be considered for the next newsletter. Email [ronandnancy@gci.net](mailto:ronandnancy@gci.net) or call 907-488-3965. Items can be mailed to Ron at his home address; 1288 Rangeview Dr, North Pole, AK 99705.

**Vernon L. Nash Antique Auto Club**  
P.O. Box 71253  
Fairbanks, AK 99707

