

FAIRBANKS

Vernon L. Nash

ALASKA



Antique Automobile Club of America

THE ROCKNEY FAMILY AND THEIR ROCKNE AUTOMOBILE

by Ron Allen

Dave Rockney was presented the “Most Improved Vehicle” award at the 2007 Christmas Party for the ten-year long restoration of his 1932 Model 75 Deluxe Rockne. The winner of this trophy is selected by a committee that reviews all club member restoration projects completed during the year. The recipient must have contributed a significant portion of his own hands-on effort toward the restoration. Selection criteria typically includes workmanship, amount of restoration done and any interesting human interest story associated with the car that creates an interest. Dave will

soon be giving up his trophy to another to-be-determined winner that will be announced at this year’s Christmas Party.



Norman Rockney poses with the 32 Rockne he has passed on to his son Dave



Dave Rockney poses with his 1932 Rockne

Dave’s father, Norman “Knut” Rockney purchased the car in Boston approximately 20 years ago because of his interest in old cars and their last name similarity to the car’s name. Norman shipped it up to Alaska where he lived so he could restore it in his spare time. Norman found that it was a bigger project than he expected, so he shipped it to Wyoming where his brother Harold (Dave’s uncle) could restore it. Harold did the major part of the restoration work. After a few years of restoration effort Harold shipped the mostly restored car back to his brother, Norman in Fairbanks.

Norman subsequently gave the mostly restored car to Dave with the condition that Dave finish

the car in time for the Golden Days Parade in 2007. The goal was to fill the Rockne automobile with all the family male Rockneys for the 2007 parade. What work remained to be done was the interior, which Dave did complete by the established deadline. Another condition of the gift was that the car stays in the Rockney family. Dave has children who he intends to pass it on to. Dave met his father's wishes as evidenced by the photo below of the Rockney family at the 2007 Fairbanks Golden Days Parade.

Dave added that there were actually two Rockne cars, a restorable one and a donor car for parts. The donor car is being considered with all its bad parts to be shipped to Tennessee so that another brother, Darby can restore it. That car may become a rat rod though because of the inability to get all the needed correct parts for a proper restoration.

According to an article written by LARRY THOLEN for the Antique Studebaker Club in



2007 Golden Days Parade

Rockney family men left to right: Norman Sr., father; and brothers Darby, Dave, and Norman Jr. with the 32 Rockne in the background. Dave said that it is fairly obvious in this photo that the Rockneys really did fill up the car.

Wichita, Kansas, "*ROCKNE Motors Corp. was a wholly-owned Studebaker subsidiary; it and the 1932 and 1933 ROCKNE automobiles and trucks it produced were named in honor and in memory of Notre Dame football coach Knute Rockne (Not to be confused with Dave's father, Norman "Knute" Rockney). Rockne had been employed part-time by Studebaker giving promotional and motivational talks to its dealers; he was killed in a commercial airplane crash in March 1931 just before he was to assume an expanded role in those endeavors.*

Data taken from original factory sources indicate that total production of ROCKNE vehicles for the 1932 and 1933 model years was 37,879, which consisted of 16,860 1932 "65" cars, 13,695 1933 "10" cars and trucks, and 7,324 1932 & 1933 "75" cars (which is Dave Rockney's car model).

The "new" six-cylinder engine developed specifically for the ROCKNE "65" and "10" remained in production long after ROCKNE production ended. It powered Studebaker Dictator and Commander cars during the pre-WWII years and Commander cars and most six-cylinder truck models through 1960. Its nearly 30-year production run might be an industry record."

Dave's father, Norman and his brothers weren't present for the award presentation last Christmas, but I'm sure Dave was thinking of them when he received it. Congratulations to the whole Rockney family for their combined effort in completing the restoration of a great classic car that shares their family name and for adopting it as a family heirloom to be passed on to future generations.

1931 CORD L-29 CABRIOLET: A CLASSIC CAR AHEAD OF ITS TIME

by Ron Allen

I had the opportunity to visit with Willy in the Fountainhead Storage Garage where he was servicing a 1931 Cord Cabriolet L-29 in an effort to ready it for driving. Cars that have



1931 Cord Cabriolet L-29: Note the long hood and elegant styling.

been stored for a long time have at a minimum seals gone bad and oil that has lost its lubricating ability. Some cars in the collection have been restored for showroom display only



The transmission and differential gears are in front of the engine, which fills the engine compartment.

and were not intended to ever be driven again. A unique policy of the Fountainhead Museum is that all cars will be exercised (driven). The typical exercise goal will be 50 miles per year for most vehicles. There may have all sorts of mechanical issues that need attention before any are driven though. One of Willy's responsibilities is to check out every car



mechanically and service it to assure it can be safely started and driven and at the same time avoid damaging its mechanical components.

At first glance of this Cord one will notice an extra long hood, which is one of the car's many appealing qualities. There is a reason for that. The car has a front wheel drive system, and with this design the transmission and differential sit in front of the long straight eight cylinder engine. This fills the engine compartment. Front wheel drive is one distinctive historical development by Cord engineers that many years later was adopted as a standard. Engineers of that era had great technological development ambitions.

Another thing I noticed is that the car included many elegant features such as the two very large outer chrome headlights, two large fog lights and a large center headlight that turns with the front wheels. Beautiful chrome trim and bumpers, large wire wheels with a spare mounted on each front fender also adorn the



Here is the Cord's CV joint. It is very similar to modern cars. Note that the brake drum is mounted next to the transmission and drive unit. This created a bit of extra maintenance effort to service the brakes.

vehicle. The single driver/passenger seat adds to the car's sporty looks. A rumble seat allows for extra passengers. Appearances left me in awe of this graceful and sporty automobile.

Most cars of this vintage have high mileage and have required extensive restoration effort. This car has only 13,890 miles on its speedometer, and according to Willy, the lack of wear in its mechanical components indicate this is likely an accurate recording. There is a probable reason for this low mileage too. As described above, early Cords were designed by innovative engineers who were developing new technologies. Consequently this early model with its new technologies did not have all the bugs worked out and was a maintenance nightmare. Factory recalls were practically invented by Cord. The service manual shows early recall memos starting in 1929.

This Cord has obviously been well-protected from the elements all of its life too. The seats and top are original from 1931, and they are in excellent condition. The car has been repainted

sometime during its life and has had a new exhaust system recently installed. The leather covered trunk mounted on the rear carrier is new. Otherwise the car is all original, yet it looks like it should be on the dealer's showroom floor.

According to conceptcarz.com, "*Manufactured by the Auburn Automobile Company, the L-29 was one of the first front-wheel drive cars and was considered the star of the 1929 model year. The car was also named in honor of the manufacturers Owner and President, E.L. Cord. Front-wheel drive made it possible for the car to have a low profile and caused quite a stir in the auto industry in 1929. The front-wheel drive innovation allowed the L-29 Cord to be the official pace car for the 1930 Indianapolis 500 race. The motor is a Lycoming straight eight with a 298 cubic-inch displacement that generates 125 horsepower.*"

Fountainhead Development is supporting Willy's offering to accept volunteers to work on these cars under his supervision. This is also extended to those who have no automotive expertise since there is plenty of non-technical maintenance and cleaning work required to keep these cars running and presentable. Volunteer efforts toward this museum directly contribute to our community and at the same time present us an opportunity not many people have, an opportunity for hands-on experience with some very exclusive automobiles.

SYMPATHY CARD RESPONSE

Tina Yurkovich sent a nice reply to the sympathy card the club sent her as follows: "Thank you for the lovely card. Gene always enjoyed the club and all of the old cars. Too bad he did not get his projects finished."

Editor comment: Gene, like most of us, loved his retirement projects whether it is old cars or community service. Projects are what keep

many of us interested in life. Tina, thank you for your lovely response.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

McLeod	Ray	6-Nov
Carpenter	Benjamin	10-Nov
Angulo	Saulo	12-Nov
Lyle	George	14-Nov
Reed	Eugene	19-Nov
Cook	Jeffry	25-Nov
Eddy	James	27-Nov
Blankenship	Mary	14-Nov
Monsma	Beccy	15-Nov
Domke	Ruth Ann	21-Nov
Ninmer	Kathryn	22-Nov
Larson	Rochelle	27-Nov
Hauck	Penny	29-Nov

Anniversaries

Blankenship	John and Mary	6-Nov
Domke	Rudy and Ruth Ann	20-Nov

CLASSIFIED ADS

Model "A" Repairs: Bill Wright, an active VLNAACF club member, does re-babbitt work on A's, B's, and T's, complete engine rebuilds, and carburetor, oil pump and water pump rebuilds. Call him at 479-8506 or his cell phone 388-2118.

Welding, Repair and Fabrication! Need it done? I can do it! Tom (Blue) Hinchsliff 479-0478.

Automotive and Diesel Machining: Serving Fairbanks since 1974. R&S Machine, Ric Smoyer, Proprietor, 515 Noyes Street in Fairbanks. 456-6496

Very nice 1962 Chev. Impala Two Door Hard Top Sport Coup: 283 V8, AT, no rust thru, one small dent, beautiful interior & 131,344 total miles. \$ 8,500 OBO. Wouldn't take much to render

her a beauty queen once again. Call Scott Grundy for photos or Mike Cotton at 456-2587 to see the car.

For the following vehicles call Erick Byrd after 6:00 PM @ 490-5983:

'69-'79 Ford trucks - parts

'66 Cad. Deville sedan - fair cond.

'67 Ford Fairlane - fair cond., no engine

'67 Cad. Eldorado - complete but rough

'64 Morris Austin Minis - one complete & one parts

'39 Pontiac 4 door Sedan - complete

For the following vehicles call Dick Austin in Delta Jct. @ 895-4449

'48? Ford coupe

'59 Buick 4 door sedan

Over 100 vehicles of all types dating from 1939 to the 1970's: Call Duke Marshall of Iron Age Reclamation in Tok @ 883-5311 (Scott Grundy @ 457-3526 has a partial list)

Looking for winter storage for my 1951 Pontiac. Prefer heated if possible so that I can do some work on it, but will accept cold storage. Contact Dusty Johnson at 750-3209.

NEXT MEETING REMINDER: OFFICER ELECTIONS

We will be electing officers for 2009 at the November general membership meeting. Come for dinner at 6:00 PM at the Mayflower Resturant on November 13 and vote for your favorite candidates. Consider going even one better and running for an office. There are no candidates yet for the club secretary.

VLNAAC Website: oldcarsfairbanks.org

OFFICERS:

President	Willy Vinton	wvinton@acsalaska.net	907-456-2261
Vice President	Bill Wright	tong@mosquitonet.com	907-479-8505
Acting Secretary	Nancy Allen	ronandnancy@gci.net	907-488-3965
Treasurer	Don Oines	doines1@gci.net	907-452-4601
Director	Gary Nash		907-456-2103
Director	Ray Mcleod	rmcleod@gci.net	907-456-7877
Director	Scott Grundy	grundy@mosquitonet.com	907-457-3526
Newsletter	Ron Allen	ronandnancy@gci.net	907-488-3965
Webmaster	Wilma Vinton	wvinton@acsalaska.net	907-456-2261
Events Coordinator	Rochelle Larson	Rochelle1987@hotmail.com	907-456-6736
Acting Membership Chair	Rick Larrick	crlarrick@alaska.net	907-457-4344

NEXT MEETINGS

The next general club meeting is **Thursday, November 13** at the **Mayflower**. Dinner starts at 6:00 PM and the meeting is at 7:00.

The Board Meeting is at 6:30 PM at the **Food Factory** on **Tuesday November 11**. Everyone is also welcome to attend Board Meetings.

Newsletter Deadline

All materials for the newsletter should be in by the 20th of the month to be considered for the next newsletter. Email 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. *Have a story about how you got your car? A favorite trip? A real repair hassle? Send it in!*



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