

FAIRBANKS

Vernon L. Nash

ALASKA



Antique Automobile Club of America



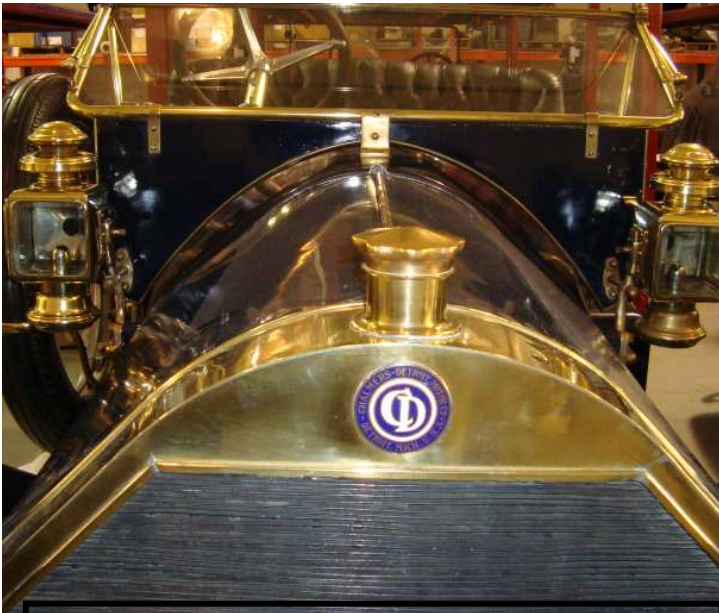
This photo is of Charlie Creamer with the 1910 Chalmers-Detroit. The tag on the plate says 54, so that's probably a good indication of when the photo was taken. The sign in the window says "See You at the Fair." Photo is courtesy of Roxie Creamer.

**THE HISTORICAL CREAMER FAMILY CAR**

by Ron Allen as told by Jeff Creamer

The former Creamer's Dairy, now a popular public wildlife sanctuary and walking park, is a

landmark familiar to all in the Fairbanks area. Some of the senior Fairbanks area residents remember Charles A. Creamer who operated the farm up until the mid 1960's. Some may also recall that Charlie regularly drove an



The Creamer Family 1910 Chalmers-Detroit Model K "30" Roadster as it is today

antique 1910 Chalmers Detroit Model K car in the Golden Days Parade in the 50's and 60's, often carrying Alaska's Governor. That car has been in the Creamer family since around 1940 and has been in Fairbanks since 1912. The car's history is intertwined with the Creamer family history, and both are an interesting story.

Here is some general information about the Chalmers-Detroit. The Chalmers-Detroit was a medium-priced car and one of the United States' most popular autos for more than a decade. By World War I, the Chalmers-Detroit Motor Car Company was producing 20,000 cars a year, barely faster than the public snapped them up. More than any of the other models, the Model 30 established the Chalmers name. It was a remarkable success in races and endurance tours, and became a huge advertising success for Hugh Chalmers. The car was especially notable for its excellent handling and performance at high speeds. Its most significant design characteristic was its unit engine/transmission design, a four-cylinder block casting with integral clutch and transmission case attached to the engine. The Model 30 was phased out in 1913 when it was

replaced by the Model 26-A Light Six. The radiator badge with the cloisonné "CD" was only used on the 1910 models. Late that year Chalmers-Detroit was reorganized into the Chalmers Motor Car Company, and thereafter all cars were known simply as Chalmers.

#### The Creamer Family Chalmers-Detroit:

Charles A. Creamer's father was Charles N. ("CN") Creamer who was an early settler in Alaska. CN Creamer originally trained horses and worked as a stage coach driver in California in the late 1800's. He then came to Skagway with the gold rush in 1898 with his son, leaving behind a wife and six daughters in the states. He became partners with Al Noyes, a relative of his, and ran a freighting business between Dyea and Skagway. After Al Noyes was accidentally killed in a ship wreck in the inside passage, his brother Fred Noyes became CN's partner. CN built a warehouse in Dyea where he also lived during the gold rush of 98. That warehouse can be seen in historical photos at the base of



Jeff Creamer with the Chalmers Detroit

Chilkoot Pass. CN later moved his family to Tacoma for a brief period after the gold rush ended.

Meanwhile, former partner Fred Noyes had started a sawmill operation in Fairbanks and invited CN Creamer to join him. CN moved his family to Fairbanks and became a partner in the

sawmill. They expanded their operations with a freighting business and warehouse located in the Graele Street area.

The 1910 Chalmers-Detroit was first brought to Alaska in 1912 by a dentist, Dr. Castle of Seattle, who had it shipped by boat to Skagway, by train to Whitehorse, and then by riverboat to Fairbanks on the Yukon and Tanana rivers. The dentist was a bit disappointed because he found that there were few roads to drive the car on.

Fred Noyes was a flashy sort of person and enjoyed showy items. He had a 70 foot riverboat that he ran in the Chena River. In 1916 Fred Noyes acquired the flashy looking car from the dentist by trading some lumber for it. After injuring his shoulder while crank starting it, Fred had an electric starter installed. We're sure that Fred enjoyed the car, but fortunately for all of us the car was never driven regularly. Fred left Fairbanks in the late teens and left the car in the warehouse, where it stayed for the next 30 years, pulled out by Creamer family members once in a while and "exercised." When CN died in 1947, ownership of the car was transferred to his son, Charles A. Creamer.

Charles A. Creamer purchased land that was staked out by the Hinkley family for a small dairy farm. Charles successfully built and greatly expanded the small dairy business into a large dairy selling milk to the local residents and military for many years. In 1957 the National Geographic did a 6-9 page article on American dairies and included a photo of the Creamer Dairy as the farthest north operating dairy in America. Sadly, the dairy business was closed down in 1965 due to subsidized air freight for importing milk. The market dried up overnight.

When Charles A. Creamer died in 1974 the car went to his son, Donald Creamer. Donald occasionally drove the car in the Golden Days Parade until the clutch went out. It sat neglected in a garage for over twenty years until

2001 when Carl Gaul asked Donald about restoring it so it could be driven in parades again. A partial restoration of the car was completed by Carl under the direction of Friends of Creamer's Field and the Interior Arctic Vintage Power Club. It was a true community effort to restore this historical jewel, with many volunteers and donors contributing to the project to get it drivable again. Don passed away shortly afterward in 2003.

When Don Creamer passed away the car went to four brothers, Charles A Creamer, Donald G. Creamer Jr., Gary Creamer, and Jeffery J. Creamer. Jeff lives in Fairbanks and is the unofficial guardian of the car for the brothers.

Chuck & Jeff heard about the Fountainhead Museum being organized in Fairbanks and have agreed to display the car at the museum for the public to see under a loan agreement. The car is currently located in a Fountainhead garage and is undergoing some maintenance and restoration attention by Jeff.

Another interesting tidbit about the car is that it was the first car to drive across both the Wendell Street Bridge in 1953 and the Cushman Street Bridge in 1960 at their grand openings. I wonder if it will be the first car to cross again when the new bridge is built downtown?

Thank you to Jeff and the rest of the Creamer family for sharing their family history and for sharing their family car with the community over so many years. We look forward to seeing it at the Fountainhead Museum and maybe again in future Golden Days Parades.

### **FOLLOW-UP ON THE FEBRUARY MYSTERY CAR** from Nancy DeWitt

The first guess I got was a Studebaker-Garford, but the editor of the Pierce-Arrow Society's magazine is fairly sure the February Mystery



Car is a 1906 Pierce Great Arrow. The driver of the car is probably Hosea H. Ross, who is known to have purchased the second car to hit the streets of Fairbanks--a 1907 Franklin Touring Car. He started a passenger stage to Fox with the Franklin and soon bought a Thomas Flyer to run a stage to Chatanika. In early 1911 he bought a "second-hand" Pierce-Arrow for his auto stage business, and I suspect that is the car in this photo. He later added Fords and a Dodge to his fleet. In addition to his auto stages Hosea Ross went on to become an undertaker, Divisional Road Commissioner and a Territorial Legislator from 1921-1931.

## AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM SEEKS DOCENTS

By Nancy DeWitt

The new Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum is seeking people to serve as educational ambassadors and help with a variety of museum activities. All applicants should have an interest in automotive and/or Alaska history and must be age 18 or older. Volunteers are need for the following positions:

- **Docents** lead tours, speak with visitors, and protect displays. No prior automobile knowledge is required, but applicants should enjoy teaching and speaking in front of groups. Applicants are required to complete our free

training course in April (dates and times TBA) and are asked to commit to at least two 4.5-hour shifts/month during the summer and two hours/week in the winter.

- **Youth Educators** are docents trained to lead tours and special activities for youth groups. No prior automobile knowledge is required but applicants should have some experience working with children. Youth educators are required to complete our free docent-training course in April or August (dates and times TBA) and are asked to commit to leading 12 tours during the school year.
- **Pit Crew** members are docents trained to clean and detail cars and help set up or move exhibits. No prior automobile knowledge is required but applicants must complete our free docent course in April or August (dates and times TBA).
- **Road Crew** members are docents trained to drive one of the museum cars on the hotels grounds and to special events in the summer (as weather allows). Road Crew members educate visitors about certain cars and their significance in American automotive history. Requirements: completion of free docent course and training on specific vehicle(s), Alaska driver's license, clean driving record and ability to interact with the public. Crew members must commit to one shift/week during the summer.
- **General Volunteers** help with a variety of tasks which may include: reception and gift shop assistance; setting and cleaning clothing displays; database entry; car research; photography; event

security; exhibit development; and organization of museum events (open house, etc.).

*Volunteer schedules are designed to accommodate personal vacations*

For a volunteer application, please visit [www.fountainheadhotels.com/auto](http://www.fountainheadhotels.com/auto) or call 907-458-6112.

## RAFFLE CAR UPDATE

by Ron Allen

The raffle tickets have been ordered and should be available from Rochelle Larson for distribution to club members desiring to sell them around March 1. You may contact Rochelle at Larson's Locksmith and Security located at 1249 Noble Street. Their company phone number is 452-5625.

The volunteer workers are making progress with getting the car ready for its new owner in spite of a seemingly chronic illness with the sewing machine that has delayed putting in the new carpet. We expect to have the car ready for a good photo shoot and printing of a poster soon in order to promote the raffle sales.

## BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

### Birthdays

|            |              |        |
|------------|--------------|--------|
| Benham     | Loran        | 28-Mar |
| Brabham    | Jan          | 30-Mar |
| Chace      | Joyce        | 28-Mar |
| Chase      | Will         | 18-Mar |
| Corkran    | L.D. "Corky" | 21-Mar |
| Culbertson | Donna        | 6-Mar  |
| Kirschner  | Chuck        | 25-Mar |
| Krier      | Donna        | 11-Mar |
| Larrick    | Rick         | 15-Mar |
| McHone     | Roby         | 21-Mar |
| Middleton  | John         | 30-Mar |
| Murphy     | JoAnn        | 11-Mar |

|           |         |        |
|-----------|---------|--------|
| Nash      | Gary    | 10-Mar |
| Ness      | Michael | 8-Mar  |
| Ness      | Linda   | 21-Mar |
| Page      | Merle   | 16-Mar |
| Shoemaker | Karmen  | 6-Mar  |
| Stevenson | Ron     | 9-Mar  |
| Yamamoto  | Leslie  | 19-Mar |

### Anniversaries

|         |                                 |        |
|---------|---------------------------------|--------|
| Jurgens | Charles and Carrie Marshall and | 14-Mar |
| Ninmer  | Kathryn                         | 22-Mar |
| Ness    | Michael and Linda               | 25-Mar |

## 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

**Black vinyl covered racing bucket seats for sale:** They are new and never installed in a car. They came with the donated raffle car, but were too large for the small car and appeared incorrect for the car's vintage as well. Make offer. Contact Willy or Ron.

**The following vehicles are for sale:**

**1926 Dodge 4-door**

**1939 Merc 4-door**

**1939 Ford 4-door**

**1930 Ford Riley Powered Phaeton**

**1930 Ford Riley Powered Roadster**

**1950 Chevy 1-ton pickup**

**1956 Ford F100 pickup**

**Six Harleys**

The asking price for these is between \$8,500 and \$18,000 with best offer. Many more vehicles are available. Call John McDonald at 488-1843.

VLNAAC Website: [oldcarsfairbanks.org](http://oldcarsfairbanks.org)**OFFICERS:**

|                    |                  |  |              |
|--------------------|------------------|--|--------------|
| President          | Willy Vinton     | <a href="mailto:wvinton@acsalaska.net">wvinton@acsalaska.net</a>       | 907-456-2261 |
| Vice President     | Scott Culbertson | <a href="mailto:sdculbertson@gci.net">sdculbertson@gci.net</a>         | 907-451-7911 |
| Secretary          | (Not filled)     |  |              |
| Treasurer          | Ron Allen        | <a href="mailto:ronandnancy@gci.net">ronandnancy@gci.net</a>           | 907-488-3965 |
| Director           | Gary Nash        |  | 907-456-2103 |
| Director           | Scott Grundy     | <a href="mailto:grundy@mosquitonet.com">grundy@mosquitonet.com</a>     | 907-457-3526 |
| Director           | Ray Mcleod       | <a href="mailto:rmcleod@gci.net">rmcleod@gci.net</a>                   | 907-456-7877 |
| 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 | Rochelle Larson  | <a href="mailto:Rochelle1987@hotmail.com">Rochelle1987@hotmail.com</a> | 907-456-6736 |
| Membership Chair   | Rick Larrick     | <a href="mailto:rlarrick@alaska.net">rlarrick@alaska.net</a>           | 907-457-4344 |

**NEXT MEETINGS**

The general membership meeting is **Thursday March 12 at the Mayflower Restaurant**. Dinner is at 6:00 PM and the meeting starts at 7:00 PM.

The Board Meeting is at 6:30 PM at the **Food Factory** on **Tuesday March 10**. Everyone is also welcome to attend Board Meetings.

**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. *Have a story about how you got your car? A favorite trip? A real repair hassle? Send it in!*



Vernon L Nash Antique Auto Club  
P.O. Box 71258  
Fairbanks, AK 99707