

# The Rotunda Times



Volume 7 No. 1 The Official Monthly Publication of the Ford & Mercury Restorer's Club of America January 2011

**Feature Vehicle:**  
**1955 Mercury Montclair Two-Door Hardtop**  
owned by  
**Pete Morris**



**I**n June of 2007, Pat Kaluzny, Hank Dawson and I went to Carlisle, PA for a swap meet and car sale. I had worked for Ford Motor Company for 40 years at that time, and was now retired and looking for another Ford product to buy. What I had in mind was a Mercury product, possibly a '68 Cougar XR7 convertible, because I already owned a '54 Ford two-door Victoria (customized), 1966 T-Bird convertible, and a 1986 Lincoln Town Car," remarked Pete Morris as we talked at the Washtenaw Community College "Cars on Campus" car



It's amazing how roomy and beautiful those interiors were!

*Continued on page 6.*

**A Night to Remember with the FMRCOA**  
by  
**Roxanne Fontana**



**FMRCOA members sure like to dance!**

**O**n Saturday January 15, 2011, St. Mary's Cultural Center in Livonia became a winter fantasy land as FMRCOA members and guests arrived in red carpet style. The Golden Globe Awards in Hollywood had nothing on the handsome men and beautiful women of FMRCOA. All dressed up and with somewhere to go, the members were ready for a fun-filled evening of food, music, dancing, and friends.

*Continued on page 9.*

**Roxanne Fontana Wins Generator Award**



Roxanne is presented with the Generator Award by last year's recipient, Bill Timoszyk.

*Story on page 10.*

# The Rotunda Times



## The Rotunda Times

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[www.fmrcoa.org](http://www.fmrcoa.org)

### Newsletter Staff

#### Editor

Steve Rohde 734.717.5444 rohdesteve@gmail.com  
2955 Bateson Ct., Ann Arbor, MI. 48105

#### Display Ad Editor

Bob Guetschow 248.328.9113 rguetschow@comcast.net  
16291 Worden Rd., Holly, MI. 48442

#### Staff Contributors

Bill Gipperich	586.826.8813	gipp@juno.com
Louis Ironside	810.798.8803	louisironside@aol.com
(The Roving Reporter)		
Brian Kuta	734.753.3788	mbhouse@charter.net
Phil Lyon	734.578.6223	pjlyon39@att.net
Bill Timoszyk	734.421.2076	williamtimos@att.net
Terry Worful	313.271.2017	kercrest@comcast.net
Roxanne Fontana	248.926.0160	rocksand712003@yahoo.com
Debra Levasseur	248.634.9806	twogalaxies@juno.com
Van Nazarian	248.426.0053	carshots@mac.com

#### Membership Roster Editor

Terry Worful 313.271.2017 kercrest@comcast.net

#### Club Historian

Bill Gipperich 586.826.8813 gipp@juno.com

#### WEBMASTER

Steve Rohde 734.717.5444 rohdesteve@gmail.com



### Editor's Message



This month we thank Pete Morris for the Feature Vehicle article about his gorgeous 1955 Mercury. We also thank Roxanne Fontana for her outstanding coverage of our dinner dance, and Bill Gipperich for the second installment of his articles on the Ford Proving Grounds.

We also thank our team of Staff Contributors for their materials and Denise Rohde for the President's Page banner. Art is in there with some fine presidents! Debra Levasseur kindly photographed our dinner dance and has made the photos available (see page 5).

This month Brian Kuta provided us with his racing report card for 2010. I hope he used his "tips" on that car!

We've added a column with the minutes of FMRCOA Board Meetings. If you have any questions, please contact a Board member.

#### Our Feature Vehicle queue is now empty. Please help here!

If you want to report on an event that you attended, please let me know. Just give me a call (734.717.5444), email me, or put something in the mailbox. Typically, it really doesn't take



## FMRCOA

FORD AND MERCURY RESTORERS  
CLUB of AMERICA

P.O. Box 2938 • Dearborn, MI 48123

### 2011 OFFICERS

<b>President</b>	<b>Art Cervi</b>	248.553.8897 ltc_acervi@yahoo.com
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Bob Guetschow</b>	248.328.9113 rguetschow@comcast.net
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Phil Lyon</b>	734.578.6223 pjlyon39@att.net
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Steve Rohde</b>	734.717.5444 rohdesteve@gmail.com
<b>Director</b>	<b>Brian Saylor</b>	248.486.8851 bsaylor22@charter.net
<b>Director</b>	<b>Hank Dawson</b>	810.231.3184
<b>Director</b>	<b>Tim Pusilo</b>	313.278.1325 dean35aw@gmail.com

*The Ford & Mercury Restorers Club is a hobby organization whose purpose is to foster and promote the acquisition, preservation and use of all Ford vehicles, 25 years of age and older.*

### In this Issue

President's Page	3
Treasurer's Report	5
New Members	3, 7
Club Calendar	4
Meeting Minutes	5
Board Minutes	6
Show & Tell	8
Brian's Report Card	8
Ford Proving Grounds: Part II	11
Postcards from the Past	12
The FMRCOA Roving Reporter	13
Classifieds	14, 15
Dinner Dance Photos	16

more than a 10-15 minute conversation to get great "stuff" for an article.

**Consider the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month as a deadline for getting announcements or other materials to me for that month's newsletter.**

Finally, don't forget to visit our website [www.fmrcoa.org](http://www.fmrcoa.org) where you can read these newsletters in color and see more event pictures, and videos. I've taken over as webmaster and would welcome feedback!

**Steve Rohde, Editor**

# The Rotunda Times



Happy New Year! As we kick off the New Year our thoughts turn to our swap meet. This may be January and our meet is not until July, but there is always so much to do beforehand.

Please ask yourself....how can I help? We are always looking for volunteers to chair or be on a committee. One of our goals this year is to put on a really nice car show. As most of you know, 2011 is the last year for Mercury, so we have decided to make it our feature car. Let's make it a great show!

Well, the 2011 Dinner Dance is a now a thing of the past, but a nice night it was. Everyone seemed to enjoy the entertainment for the evening....the Whatabouts....three local gals who do songs and skits of the 60's girl groups. Between their singing and getting some of the audience up and making performers out of them it was a blast. Thank you Dick Monroe and Ed Goff for recommending them. They were all you said they would be. My thanks again to Boogie Brian who acted as our MC and DJ for the evening. He kept the crowd going right up 'til the midnight hour.

Last, but not least, was the honoring of this year's Generator Award recipient. This award is given out each year to the person who displays the most unselfish promotion of the club throughout the year – over and above the swap meet (as we are all expected to contribute at least two hours of work at the meet). This year's winner helped organize our bus tour to Gilmore Museum, helped on our annual picnic, writes for our newsletter each month, and did so much more. Congratulations to Roxanne Fontana! I cannot think of a single person who deserved it more. Way to go Roxie!

**Art Cervi, President**

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Larry Pyzik (Melody)

[larrypyzik@yahoo.com](mailto:larrypyzik@yahoo.com)

*1936 Ford Roadster*

*1939 Mercury Coupe*

Niles Balch (Carol)

[lees61ford@tampbrr.com](mailto:lees61ford@tampbrr.com)

*1957 Ford Fairlane 500 Hardtop*

*1961 Ford Galaxie Starliner*

*1964 Mercury Comet Caliente Convertible*

Richard Holzhei

[rrholzhei@hotmail.com](mailto:rrholzhei@hotmail.com)

*1957 Ford Fairlane 500 Conv. D-Code*

*1957 Ford Fairlane 500 Conv. E-Code*

*1958 Mercury Parklane 2dr Hardtop*

*1959 Mercury Parklane 2dr Hardtop*



## Attention All Members

When you hear of a member/spouse's death, please get all the information such as the funeral home and address, viewing times and dates, and the service time and date.

Then contact one of the following people:

Jim Crawford at 313.724.9117 or [jcrawfol@myway.com](mailto:jcrawfol@myway.com)

Art Cervi at 248.553.8897 or [ltc\\_acervi@yahoo.com](mailto:ltc_acervi@yahoo.com)

Vic Hollingshead at 248.474.4356

These folks will ensure that the membership at large knows of the death.





## 2011 FMRCOA Meetings & Events Calendar

Below is the *tentative* table of meetings and events for 2011. New information will be posted each month as events and dates are “firmed” up. **Bold font represents club sponsored activities.** *Also, if you have an idea for a Club event, please let a Board Member know!*

February 2	Club Meeting
February	Garage Tour TBA
February 25-27	Autorama
March 2	Club Meeting
March	Garage Tour TBA
April 6	Club Meeting
April	Garage Tour TBA
May 4	Club Meeting
May	Garage Tour TBA
May 23	Memorial Day Parade
June 1	Club Meeting
June 12	Wilson Barn Show
June 18-19	Motor Muster
June 25	Downriver Cruise
July 6	Club Meeting
July 16-17	FMRCOA Swap Meet and Car Show
July	Club Picnic TBA
July	Telegraph Cruise TBA
August 3	Club Meeting
August	Dearborn Homecoming TBA
August 20	Woodward Dream Cruise
Sept.	Overnighter TBA
Sept. 7	Club Meeting
Sept. 9-12	Frankenmuth Auto Fest
Oct. 5	Club Meeting
Oct.	Color Tour - TBA
Nov. 2	Club Meeting
Dec. 7	Club Meeting
Dec. 10	Christmas Walk-Greenfield Village



## YOUR CAR!

The Rotunda Times would like to feature your old car or truck in an upcoming issue. We are interested in how you came about finding your vehicle of choice, and what you have done to enhance its beauty, and / or mechanical condition. Simply mail or e-mail us your article accompanied with a photo to:

**STEVE ROHDE**  
**rohdesteve@gmail.com**  
 ROTUNDA TIMES  
 2955 Bateson Ct.  
 Ann Arbor, MI. 48105  
 734.717.5444

## Monthly Club Meeting Location

Our monthly club meetings are at **St Mary's Cultural Center at 18100 Merriman Rd** in Livonia between 6 and 7 Mile Roads. This is the beautiful facility where we have held the last several dinner dances. Moreover, it has a extremely large parking lot enabling club cars to be easily parked together (and the food is -great!).

**Meetings are on the first Wednesday of each month and begin at 6:30 PM with a snack.** And do bring a friend!



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# The Rotunda Times



## January 2011 FMRCOA Meeting Minutes January 5, 2011

Art began the meeting promptly at 7:30, guests were introduced, and Bob handed out several new member badges. All was going well until we realized that we had not paid our respects to the flag. Due to technical difficulties we had to sing the anthem without the aid of music. Led by the previously undiscovered tenor voice of Dick Monroe, we sounded great!



The 2011 Board at its first membership meeting.

Patriotic duties taken care of, we introduced guests, and passed a motion to approve the minutes. Steve did his report and gave us the year in review as compared to last year. Several members have mentioned that they would like to examine the Treasurer's report more carefully. This was made possible by placing a copy on the table before, during and after the meeting. Vic Hollingshead passed around a list of people who will form a phone fan out for death notices. The list needed to be updated.

Our previous web master, Gil Bruckner, has passed the website baton to Steve, who will keep our site current and updated. There was quite a concern expressed by several members that information in the newsletter goes on the web and could compromise personal information. This concern will be discussed at the next board meeting, and possible solutions can be discussed and brought to a vote of the general membership.

The car show feature cars this year will be the MERCURY. We are going to try to locate and invite at least one of every MERCURY ever produced between 1939 and 2011. Our own club members own lots of examples, but we need input from all club members in the location of the more rare ones.

Cole Grandy used an opaque projector to show some of the printed material that came in for show and tell. It works very

well. Your OLD secretary remembers a black metal box with a four inch lens in front in his grandmother's attic. It was called a magic lantern, and it did the same thing. Am I the only one old enough to remember that? Oh well!

Phil Lyon, Secretary

## Meeting Photos



Our oldest member, Maurice Horger's 95<sup>th</sup> birthday was acknowledged at the meeting!

## Dinner Dance Photos Available

*The excellent dinner dance photos taken by Debra Lavasseur can be seen at:*

<http://bit.ly/9T1hT2>

*To place an order please email her the photo number, size and quantity at [twogalaxies@juno.com](mailto:twogalaxies@juno.com) or call her at 248-459-1225.*

## Interested in an Overnighter?

*Hank Dawson needs to know how many members would be interested in an overnight car cruise during Labor Day weekend. Please call him at 810.231.3184 if interested.*

## A Note from the Treasurer

This month we've had a strong influx of dues replenishing our treasury! Please keep them coming. We also had our annual dinner dance expenses.

Steve Rohde, Treasurer

## 1955 MERCURY, *cont. from page 1*

show last fall.

As Pete and Hank and Pat walked the aisles in the Carlisle swap area, they saw club members Charlie Rivers and Jerry Jablonski at their swap spot. "During our conversation I mentioned that I was looking for another car and it had to be a Mercury product. Jerry told me that one of our FMRCOA members, Bill MacNicol, had a 1955 Mercury for sale. Jerry got on his phone and called Bill, then handed the phone to me. After confirming his interest in selling the car, I said I would call him when I returned home," Pete continued.

"The date was June 9<sup>th</sup>. I'll never forget that date, because it is my wife Marion's birth date. Pat Kaluzny and I then drove to Bill's home to see the car," Pete explained. In Bill's garage sat the 1955 Mercury. After looking it over and going for a drive, Pete told him that he was interested and would give him a definite answer later that day.

"When I got home, my wife Marion was saddling her horse to go riding. I told her about the car and she said I should buy



**Pete detailed the underhood!**

it. And then she rode off." Pete immediately got on the phone and called Bill. "When she got back I said, 'happy birthday Marion, I just bought you a car!'" Pete enthusiastically remarked.

The Mercury is truly a FMRCOA car as Bill, the previous owner, had gotten the car from club member Bruce Buszard, who has since passed away.

Since the Merc was in excellent condition when Pete purchased it, he only did minor work on it such as replacing some of the weather stripping, detailing the engine, rebuilding the carburetor, and replacing the shock absorbers.

Pete drives his beautiful '55 Mercury to local shows, the *Rebel Run* in Lima, Ohio, and to the *International Mercury* shows.

Pete retired from Ford Motor in 1997 where he was a Product

Development Designer. He has been married to Marion for 37 years and has three children, six grandchildren, and several great grandchildren!

Pete has over 25 years in with the FMRCOA and has been a Director and the Treasurer of the club. He currently Chairs the Car Corral Committee at our annual swap meet. When I asked Pete about our club, he enthusiastically remarked, "It's a great club with many good people in it! I really enjoy volunteering and working with other club members..."

Pete finished our chat with: "Thank you Jerry, Bill and Bruce. I love my '55 Mercury Montclair. And now I'm thinking about vehicle #5!"

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## Minutes of FMRCOA Board Meeting January 17, 2011

The meeting began at 1:30pm. In attendance were: Art Cervi, Bob Guetschow, Phil Lyon, Steve Rohde, Brian Saylor, Tim Pusilo, and Hank Dawson.

The Board immediately **unanimously** approved:

- Reinstitution of recording of minutes at the board meetings.
- A proposal for a general fresh start and not to rehash passed disagreements.

The Board then had a general discussion the FMRCOA 2011 swap meet and car show) This included:

- The overall design and field layouts.
- **Swap Chairperson – Un-appointed at this time.**
- **Bob Guetschow will supply the complete 2010 vendor list to the Board on or before 2/7/2011.**
- Committee Chairs:

Gate – Tim Pusilo

**Parking - NEED A VOLUNTEER HERE**

Information – Tim Pusilo

Car Corral – Pete Morris

Car Show – Larry Wolohan

Clean up – Phil Lyon

Set up – Bob Haas

Sign up – Brian Saylor

- Feature Car/Theme: Mercury – 1939-2011/ "Mercury Remembered"
- T Shirt Design – Steve Rohde / Brian Saylor currently working on.
- Possible sponsors for the giveaway "goodie bags" were discussed.
- We need a new sign at a couple places for Exit to the Right . (Greg Petrovich will be contacted.)

### New Business

**Web Page** – At the last membership meeting some members were worried about their information being too public. Steve reviewed many other car clubs' web pages and prepared a chart to compare each site. The comparisons were for which had



# The Rotunda Times

general or limited access to newsletters, online registration/renewal, members lists, etc. It demonstrated that many had access to members' information in some form.

## **Based on our discussion the Board is proposing that:**

The newsletter would only contain new members' names, cars and email addresses. New members can opt out of being in the newsletter. (There will be a check box on an updated membership form that is being drafted.)

The complete online newsletters would be in a password protected area. This area would be the only place where information that is considered private by members would be accessible.

Additional online capabilities will be added to the website:

- Member registration/renewal.
- Vendor registration.
- Merchandise purchase.

**Overnighter** – Hank Dawson has done research on possible locations for an overnight car cruise Labor Day weekend. The Bavarian Inn in Frankenmuth and Bonnymill Inn are possibilities now. There have been about 20 responses so far for participants.

**Proposals for club tours** – Ford Piquette plant, Fort Wayne, for March.

**Business Cards** – Brian will order new ones immediately. Hank mentioned that several club members felt that they should receive a club t-shirt for working 2 hours at the swap meet. This was turned down by the Board. The meeting adjourned at 3:40pm.

Brian Saylor/Steve Rohde

## Meet the New Members by Terry Worful



**Russ Roberts**

Hi my name is Russ Roberts and my wife is Ronda. I was born on Jan 1, 1958 and am a sales engineer.

My first Car was a 1968 Ford Galaxie convertible and I started collecting cars in 1975 with a 1968 AMC AMX.

I do my own work on my cars and joined the FMRCOA to make friends who are also interested in cars.

I'm Niles Balch and my wife is Carol. I was born on August 5, 1941 in Rochester, NY and am a retired State trooper. My first car was a 1955 Ford Customline. I started collecting cars

in 1979 when my wife bought me a 1955 Ford Crown Victoria! Cars are my only hobby, and I would own no other car other than a Ford. I do my own work on my cars.

I joined the FMRCOA with my friend Larry Pyzik to network for parts and information.

Hi! I'm Larry Pyzik and my wife is Melody. I was born on Nov. 8, 1947 in Dearborn, MI and am a retired construction supervisor for the Detroit Water Department.

My first car was a VW bug. I started collecting cars in the mid 80's with a '41 Chevy that was quickly followed by a '48 Ford Coupe. It's been downhill from there!

My other hobbies are motorcycles and hunting.

If I could own any other car other than a Ford, it would be a 1948 Cadillac Sedanette because it was the first Cadillac with fins.

I do my own work on my cars and joined the FMRCOA because I have some friends in the club including Mike Fontana.

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## January Show & Tell: A New Year

This month Cole Grandy pinch hit for Bill Timoszyk who was under the weather. Cole thus had the first opportunity to try out the club's new opaque projector that allows small solid objects and documents to be projected onto a large screen. And it worked well!



**Cole Grandy uses the opaque projector.**

Larry Wolohon, our automotive literature expert, brought in the OCW book "Just Ford's," a 1941 radio owner's manual reprint, and a book about Mercury "From the Beginning."

Nick Zakarian came with a 63 ½ Marauder post card and an unknown wheel.

Jerry Worful brought an old issue of the Rouge News.



**Some of the items that were brought in by members.**

Cole Grandy brought the top sign from a 1940 Sun Machine, the first 5 years of Hot Rod Magazine, the January 1976 issue of Street Rodder with an article about Dave Lukkari in it, and a bogus "radio range booster." He also brought a Model T key that all members could see this month when projected onto the big screen!

## Brian's Report Card by Brian Kuta

The 2010 season was a very good one for this seasoned old racer! The 'Straw Boss,' my 1972 Ford Maverick, had yet another year of running flawlessly, and I can not begin to tell anyone how important that is when in competition. You have to focus on the race you are in, and not be concerned about whether your hot rod holds together.



**Brian's 1972 Ford Maverick is off to a fast start!**

For those that do not know the details of my hot rod, here are a few facts for you. All the metal and glass is intact, except for the fiberglass cowl hood that gives me the hood clearance needed to run an air cleaner atop the performance intake and spacer. The Ford engine is the 8.2" deck height 302 style block that comes out to 348 CID. The 850 CFM Holley, done by Kar-Go Carburetor, sits on top of the Edelbrock Victor Jr. intake that is affixed to the AFR 225 aluminum cylinder heads. Inside the block is the Scat steel lightweight crank, a Compcam steel roller solid lifter camshaft, Scat 'H' beam rods, and Diamond 13.6 to 1.0 pistons all internally balanced. The transmission is a C-4 that was stock in the car for those years, but was professionally built to withstand the

*Continued on page 10.*

### The FMRCOA Membership Advantage!!!!!!

Your Board officers and Editors take extra effort to bring you FREE Classifieds and Schedule of Events found within your monthly newsletter. Take advantage of these benefits your membership provides. Post your schedule where you can refer to it easily. Submit your ads at a meeting or mail to Phil Lyon, our ad editor. For more information on becoming a member go to <http://www.fmrcoa.org/> or write to:

**FMRCOA Membership Secretary**

**P.O. Box 2938**

**Dearborn MI 48123**

**Dues are \$25 before & \$30.00 after DEC 31**

**Please mail your dues in or pay at a meeting!**



## DINNER DANCE, *cont. from page 1.*

Always a memorable night, people began to arrive right on time. Mother Nature was as kind as she can be in Michigan in January -- baby it's cold outside, but it was heating up inside. As we filtered into the ball room, the night began with appetizers and the reason was clear why the beautifully displayed pastries and desserts that were waiting for us were roped off. It was hard to stay away!

Dinner was served and we were treated to a wonderful, family-style meal of tender roast beef, chicken, potatoes, and green beans almonidine – not quite the same fare we see at our meetings! Through dinner you could hear people talking, laughing and having a wonderful time. This was becoming a fantastic night! The plates were cleared and it was time for the evening's entertainment.

The crowd was transported back in time by *The Whatabouts*, a local, female singing group complete with '60's style dresses and choreography. They had us tapping our toes, swaying side to side, and singing along, but that wasn't enough for *The Whatabouts*. The girls were on the prowl looking for a boyfriend and had their eyes on quite a few of our members. Rob Montoya was singled out with their rendition of "Be My Baby," and I'm sure Lynn kept a tight hold on her man. Annette was singing along when the girls dedicated "Don't Mess With Bill" to her husband, Bill Gipperich, and a nattily dressed Tom Zielinski was followed as he delivered letters to the audience to the sound of "Hey, Mr. Postman." I'm not sure, but I believe Halina Zielinski was thinking about canceling his postage, but changed her mind and decided she'd keep him anyway.



***The Whatabouts and FMRCOA's own 5 Tops!***

*The Whatabouts* were encouraging dancers to join them, but since no one did, they tagged Karen Klocke, Joan Johnson, and myself to audition as back up dancers. I'm pretty sure we didn't get the gig-- but we did have fun. Not to be outdone, the guys got involved and Bill Gipperich, Art Cervi, Mark Koehler, Pat Beattie, and Jim Wandrie, became the "5 Tops" as the back up dancers for "Da-Do-Run-Run." I didn't know they had those moves!

As their performance came to a close, it was time for club business. Art Cervi introduced the 2010 Board of Directors, thanked the outgoing members, Mike Fontana and Art Cairo, and welcomed the new 2011 Board members, Hank Dawson and Tim Pusilo. Somehow we now have a Texaco gas station attendant on our Board – Brian Saylor showed off his brand new Texaco duds, complete with hat, patches, bow tie, tire gauge, whisk broom and rag hanging out of his pocket. As they used to say, "Trust your car to the man who wears the star!"

Certificates of Appreciation were presented, Anniversary Awards announced, and anticipation was building as the winner of the year's most prestigious award was to be announced. The Generator Award is given to the club member judged by the Board of Directors to have unselfishly contributed the most to the club during the previous year, excluding Board Members. I was shocked and honored to be chosen as this year's recipient. I think it may have something to do with the fact that I never stop talking!

With business finished, Fred "Boogie" Brian fired up his music machine, lit the disco ball, pumped up the volume, and the dance floor got hot. Feet were flying, hips were shaking and there was laughter and smiles everywhere. In the corner, Debbie Levasseur was available to take formal portraits. (See page 5 for more information on how to obtain these.) Brian Kuta with his matching shirt and tie, and Doug Osborne sporting his Mustang tie, were ready for their photo shoot for *Esquire* magazine. It was good to see Clara Mooradian well enough to join us. Everyone was having a good time.

If you've been a member for years or are a first timer, this was the place to be. First timers Al and Sharilyn Majewski, Gary and Stacey Majewski, and Frank and Laura Fenech were glad they came and enjoyed everything from the food to the music. Mike McLennan, a repeat attendee, commented he enjoyed it all – especially the way *The Whatabouts* interacted with the crowd. Bob Bruce summed it up best, "It was a high-quality evening -- just like everything the FMRCOA does."

Throughout the evening a video summarizing the FMRCOA's 2010 activities played on a big screen TV. Please contact Steve Rohde if you'd like a copy.

The antique camper centerpieces were passed out to the one who had the winning chair at the table, and the evening ended too soon. Another successful FMRCOA Dinner Dance was in the books. Thank you to Dick Monroe for suggesting *The Whatabouts*, and a big thank you to Art and Suzanne Cervi for arranging this year's dinner dance. Nice job!

**PHOTOS ON PAGE 16.**

## ROXANNE FONTANA WINS GENERATOR AWARD, *cont. from page 1.*

As a FMRCOA Board Member and Editor of the Rotunda Times, I am absolutely delighted that Roxanne Fontana received the 2010 Generator Award! Roxanne has been a prolific contributor of extremely well written articles to the newsletter. But her contributions to the club go way beyond that! She, in her own words, considers herself a FMRCOA Swap Meet and Car Show “worker-bee” helping wherever needed. In addition, Roxanne has helped in many other areas: selling club apparel and raffle tickets for club fund raisers, setting up garage crawls, organizing our picnics, and passing out club flyers at swap meets and shows!



**Roxanne works on her Metro!**

On a personal basis, Roxanne has been married to club member and former Director Mike Fontana for 40 years, and has 2 children and 3 grandchildren. She is a Retired Precious Metals Analyst-Virtual Plant at Ford Motor Company.

Roxanne has always been involved with Mike's car projects in one way or another, even if it was only to transfer titles. But now she has her own project: “After all these years, and all the cars, I'm now attempting to restore my own car: a 1960 Nash Metropolitan convertible. It's just the right size and I'm learning all the things he talks about doing on a car. The Met has given Mike and I lots to do and talk about. This week was Welding 101.”

When interviewed about winning the Generator Award, Roxanne was surprised and commented: “As a proud member of FMRCOA, I want our club to succeed. You get out of life what you put into it and FMRCOA is the same way. We have an incredible blend of characters and personalities in the club and that's what makes it work. .... Thank you for choosing me as this year's award winner. The only problem we've had is that Mike hasn't been getting much sleep since I won the award. He keeps waking up when he rolls over on it!”

Congratulations Roxanne!

## BRIAN'S REPORT CARD, *cont. from page 8.*

added horsepower by Accurate Transmission. The rear end is the trusty Ford nine inch, but has the Daytona pinion support with solid spacers for the 4:30 gears inside the Ford nodular case that keeps the Detroit Locker in place for the Moser axles.

Besides the race car, my motorhome tow vehicle and trailer play an important part in traveling trouble free, and Maddox RV provided me another year of no issues on the road. Cougar Construction Midwest Inc. gave me physical help when needed, along with some financial help to keep me going in between those money making rounds.

This season I raced at: Milan Dragway, Mid Michigan Motorplex, Ubyly Dragway, Indianapolis Raceway Park (O'Reilly's), Muncie Dragway, Norwalk Raceway Park (Summit), Pacemakers Dragway Park, and National Trail Raceway. I put a total of 196 passes on my car, racing in 36 races for the season. The car ran a best of 10:19 @ 131 in the quarter, and a best of 6:43 @ 105 in the eighth. For the end results of these races I ended up as follows: Wins = 4, R/U = 1, Semis = 1, Quarters = 1, Eighths = 5, and round money much of the time leaving me totally out of any \$\$\$'s in nine races.

I consider myself a very fortunate person to have the outstanding sponsor help that I receive from Kar-Go Carburetor (734-425-4590), Accurate Transmission (734-699-9042), Maddox RV (734-287-6067), and Cougar Construction Midwest (248-446-1099) — I highly recommend these folks!

More generally, all FMRCOA members are very lucky to have the advertisers found in the Rotunda Times. When I have needed anything provided by the advertisers in our newsletter, I make sure to let them know where I saw the ad, and have noticed that they are way more than willing to help out by going an extra mile! My latest needs were satisfied by Michigan Sandblasting where I found Scott to be extremely helpful in taking care of a most unusual request. I have also had very positive experiences with Polished Classics and Eaton Spring. Again, make sure to let our advertisers know where you saw the ad, and I am confident you will have good experiences to share too! (See photo on page 16.)



## Ford Motor Company and the Michigan Proving Grounds: *Part II*

by  
**Bill Gipperich, FMRCOA Historian**

I found a booklet at work (I work at the Ford Proving Grounds in Romeo) that was put together on the occasion of the track's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 1996. I thought you all would like to see how this facility came to be and how some of the roads were constructed and the kinds of different vehicles that have been tested. So here is the second excerpt from this booklet:

"Early in 1954 the Roy Annett Realty Company, out of Pontiac, started calling on residents of the Romeo area asking a strange question "Would you be interested in selling us an option to purchase your property?" It didn't take long for the area citizens to discover that something big was in the works. Among some of the more interesting rumored uses for the land were: a U.S. jet manufacturing and launching site, a ranch for a famous TV star, a worlds fair grounds, a U.S. Air Force Academy, and a subdivision for professionals.



The transition from farmland to proving grounds begins.

In July, all rumors were laid to rest. Ford Motor Company announced that they were going to build a test facility on the property. Ford acquired 4000 acres, most coming from the acquisition of Hi-Point Farm. The other 1500 acres were purchased from Walter Roscewski, Joseph Konarski, Stan Jijak, Lewis Engel, Pete Brewer (owner of Hidden Lake and surrounding property), and several other small farms.

Soon after the acquisition of the property, Ford rouge Engineering began a topographical survey of the area, hiring there former Fisher employees who were familiar with the lay of the land: Harold Klein, Leon Roundtree, and Charlie Tuggle. When the survey was complete, a study was made to determine where each of the test roads should be located so that the construction phase could be accomplished as easily as possible.

On April 1, 1955, S.J.Groves and Sons Construction Company from Minnesota moved in to start the transformation of farm land into one of the largest privately owned construction job ever in the state of Michigan. C.W. "Red" Kerns, project manager, had to bring in over 90 pieces of large earth-moving equipment

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from all over the state, which was no small job in itself.

The construction company set up shop in the dairy barn (across from the present salt bath). In future months this would become a popular spot for Ford employees during coffee breaks because the construction company arranged for a catering truck to come in and feed their workers during their breaks.



**Construction of the High Speed Track.**

The first sound of the actual construction was the felling of a tree on old Fisher road by Herb Wolfe and his brother-in-law, who were employed by the construction company and used a two-man chain saw with a four foot cutting bar. No sooner had the tree hit the ground when the earth moving equipment moved in to start construction of the High Speed Track.”

## Postcards from the Past by Lou Ironside

Henry Ford was at one time or another involved in virtually every form of transportation. He built cars, owned a railroad, owned ships, built busses, and in the late 1920's even built airplanes. This month's postcard is of one of those: the famed Ford Tri-Motor. This postcard is from Island Airlines which billed itself as the Shortest Airline in the World.



**Ford Tri-Motor Postcard.**

The planes flew from Port Clinton, OH to Put-In-Bay in Lake Erie. The flight was 3 miles in length, and took ten minutes.

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I can remember the pilot joking that: you take off at 60 mph, cruise at 60 mph, and land at 60 mph. I don't know how true it was, but it sure seemed that way. In the mid 1960's it was common for an old car club to tour to Port Clinton, OH, and take the flight over and back just to say you had ridden on a genuine 1928 Ford Tri-Motor airplane. It has been many years since I took the flight, and I don't believe they are flying the Ford Tri-Motor any longer. If you ever took the ride, you know what it was like. If you never did, you missed a real experience!

## The FMRCOA Roving Reporter: Start of a New Year

Well, the swap meet season for 2011 is under way, and lets hope that it is a great one with: clear skies, warm weather, no rain, and plenty of cash in your pocket to buy those parts we all desire.

The first swap meet of the year for most car club members was the meet in early January at the Gibraltar Trade Center. Basically the meet was a repeat of last year, lots of cheap chrome valve covers, trade show items, and virtually no old car parts. I would guess that no more than 10 to 15% of the parts were really what I would call "swap meet" items. At times the line to get in was 100 persons long as only one person was taking money. And, speaking of money...just say the admission is \$10 instead of that BS about a two-day pass. Try to buy a one-day pass....it won't happen! The security at the meet would make the TSA proud, as they stamped your hand when you came in, and stamped it again when you went out to your car...guess they thought you could somehow switch skin with another spectator. As always, I ask myself...why did I bother!

The second swap meet of the year in the SE Michigan area was the 45th annual swap meet in Jackson, MI. Although not a big meet by any means, it is always sold out of vendor tables, and there are many old car parts. I have attended virtually every one of the Jackson swap meets, and never fail to return home with a couple great finds for the restoration projects. In the past several years I have also been a vendor, and have done very well on selling. Although it is always bitter cold with lots of snow in middle January, there is always a steady crowd of spectators, and the vendors are not the same ones you see at most of the meets closer to Detroit. Personally I feel that this is one of those "can't miss" swap meets.

Next month we will visit the swap meets in Saginaw and Kalamazoo, and Springfield, Ohio all of which are traditionally excellent meets for finding old car parts.

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## Classified

January 2011

### For Sale

- 1966 Mercury shop manual \$40. 1973-74 manual set \$40. 1969 Cougar car manual \$15. 1954 car radio and speaker (plays) \$100. 1955 radio, needs TLC \$20. 1955 tail light housings and lens to be used as is or re-chrome (pair wires also) \$50. 1955 rear bumper to be re-chromed \$55. Hank Dawson. 810-231-3184.
- 1967 Corvette engines. 427-435hp. Mike Kanalos. 734-284-0003.
- 1967-1968 Mustang Cougar. 289 2v c4 Trans complete carb to pan \$500.00.
- C-6 trans 302351W 351c complete with convertor/flywheel \$125.00. 1970 Torino parts car. Call with wants. Nick Zakarian. 313-468-3687.
- 1979 Ford Thunderbird 2dr. 302 eng. 28,000 miles \$8,500 O.B.O. Ken Toth. 734-595-7390, cell: 734-516-5255.
- 1949 Ford V8 crank-fresh grind \$75.00. Gene Johnson 734-261-8334.
- 1963 Mercury 4dr. breezeway motor smokes. 1966 dodge dart no motor or trans. was V8 4s speed, dis. brake, 8 3/4 rear BND with parts for \$3,000. Tom VonMeyer. 810-765-4515 or 586-776-6116.
- 1972 Mustang convertible, 302 V-8, automatic, power steering, brakes, top. Illness. Herb Offord. 248-684-5560.

### Wanted


- Used oil (waste oil). Bring to the meetings. John Miller 586-756-4279 or 313-891-2640.
- 1966 Mercury Cylone drip pails (chrome). Michael Venuto. 586-693-5004.
- 8BA starter 6 or 12v. Mallory dural point dist for 8BA. John Stasiewicz 586-286-3265.
- 1965 thru 1968 Mustang fastback only. Bob Milligan. 734-674-8483.
- Corvette parts. 1963 thru 1967. World War II firearms, uniforms. Anything World War II. Mike Kanalos. 734-284-0003.
- Power steering parts for 1964 Galaxie. Cliff Picklesimer. 734-425-3029.
- Vintage 1960's and early 1970's sports car graphic, car & driver foreign car magazines. Greg Sanchez. 313-382-4420.
- Parking lights for 1952-1953 Mercury. Al Majewski. 313-618-7989 or email: docajmis@yahoo.com.
- 1965 Mustang 4 speed trans and shifter. Gene Johnson. 734-261-8334.
- 4-16" fusion wheels. Bob Singbiel. 734-421-3716.


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### For Sale

- 1969 Ford country squire wagon. Excellent shape asking \$5,900 or best offer. Greg Covey. 248-568-1190.
- Michigan 1913 license plate. \$50.00. Mercury 1947 club coupe. Like new with Columbia. Charles Rivers. 248-446-1534.
- 2004 Ford lightning pick-up. 400 hp, silver, 92,000 miles. 1964 Dodge Dart. 124,000 miles. \$4,200. Dennis Gibbish. 734-453-4422.
- 28BA crankshafts. Both standard. \$25 each. Bob Griffith. 248-349-1107.
- 1957 Mercury 2dr station wagon. H30 Lincoln engine. Art Cervi. 248-553-8897.
- Complete F-100 front axle assembly. Complete '34 Ford pick-up rear axle assembly with spring and mechanical brakes. Harry McAuliffe. 313-534-5974.
- '48-'51 Mercury front spindles. A arms and springs. Lynn Goodwin. 248-684-0984.
- Flat head parts, heads, water pump misc. John Stankewich. 248-661-4571.
- 1957/1958 NOS windshield wiper arms, mint, fit the 300 series, they are longer than the 500 series car. \$50.00. Paul Coleman. 313-820-6712.
- Large wood burning stove for pole barn. Joe Hutchison. 313-893-1880.
- 1951 Ford skirt G.C. 1951 trunk metal for lock. 1951 rear ashtray. Hank Dawson. 810-231-3184.
- 1977 Dodge Aspen S/E 2dr rare 360 Missouri car 2000 or trades. Jeff Martoia. 734-812-9255.
- One pair amber lens – 12 volt Fog Lights w/brkts. Very bright, good chrome. \$75.00 or best offer. Call Ambrose Biondo. 586-216-5234.

### Wanted

- Used oil (waste oil). Bring to the meetings. John Miller. 586-756-4279 or 313-891-2640.
- Looking for '65/'66 Mustang convertible rear/qtr. window glass. Carlite/clear for a nice car. Need nice glass. Grant Beard. 248-305-8031.
- 6X10 enclosed ramp door trailer. Gordon Leslie. 313-505-7551.
- Deck lid for 1947-48 Ford Coupe. Not business coupe. Ed Danes. 248-685-9788.
- Sun distributor machine. Vahan Nazarian. 734-426-0053.
- Rear quarter stainless 4dr – right & left, approx. 47" long. Front & rear armrests. '49-'51 Mercury. Lynn Goodwin. 248-684-0984.
- 1953-55 Ford truck doors. Need to replace rusty ones. Brian Saylor. 248-412-3285.



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