

THE SPARK PLUG

News to spark your interest

November/December 2020

Spirit of St. Louis Region Classic Car Club of America



Larry Hassel's newly acquired 1931 La Salle 345 Coupe.

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SPARK PLUG NEWSLETTER

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Director's Message

"The Board of Directors has voted to allow each region to make their own decision whether to hold an in-person Regional Annual meeting, or to hold a virtual one or, to skip their Annual meeting normally held by November 15, due to the uncertainty of Covid-19. Further, if a region wants to retain their current slate of officers rather than to hold an election, they may do so".

Vicki Zeiger

Vice-President, Regions

The statement above, issued to all CCCA Regional Directors in September, gave each Region wide latitude regarding their individual Annual Meetings and Elections in view of the continued uncertainty of the pandemic. In an earlier email communication to every member, and with full support from your Board of Managers, I regrettably cancelled our Annual Meeting. We felt this difficult decision was in the best interest of the safety and well-being of each member.

In better times, this final event of our calendar year of activities has been a fun occasion on which to spend a Sunday afternoon in November glancing in the rear-view mirror and reminiscing about the year past with a look toward the New Year. Even though events such as this one, and many others, have been cancelled and kept us apart this year, I would posit that we have certainly been together in spirit.

I wanted to mention too that we opted to retain the current slate of Officers and Board of Managers for at least the next calendar year rather than hold an election as permitted by the National CCCA. The men and women that serve in this capacity will continue to do their part to make our Region the best that it can be. I wish you all a wonderful Thanksgiving and Holiday Season! Despite all that's happened in 2020, we have much to be thankful for!

John



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Across the Editor's Desk

With really not much to talk about in this issue my attention was turned to a wonderful portrait that appeared on Facebook of our very active Spirit of St. Louis Region members John and Rose Gibson. This couple was celebrating their 40th Anniversary on the 13th of September. I hope they had a very happy anniversary and will celebrate many more to come . We all look forward to seeing them soon.



While doing research for last month's feature article I found an interesting letter in the December 1969 issue of Cars and Parts Magazine that had something to say about the general value of collector cars at the time. It shows how things have changed in the Collector and Classic Car world since then:

Question - Here in Western Pennsylvania many 1950 to 1959 cars are advertised for sale at prices from \$50.00 to \$200.00. Most are well worn, victims of rust, but they usually run well. Will these cars ever be worth anything? Would it pay to buy up some of these cars and store them?

Answer – “If you are thinking about it from a standpoint of an investment, to make a profit, we would say the answer would be definitely no. There is hardly ever a profit to be made from the antique car hobby. With few exceptions, the only profit is in the joy and satisfaction of becoming involved in an interesting hobby. If you have plenty of cheap storage space available and insist on trying it, we would advise limiting your collection to those models which have special features or were produced in the most limited numbers. This would require a study. And don't count on getting rich”.



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Membership Musings



Welcome to new member James Dougherty. I haven't had a chance to get all the low-down on James. I will say that he has listed a 1937 Packard V8 coupe with his membership information. So that's another score in the Packard column.

The national CCCA office sent a note a little while ago encouraging members to expand our horizons and look at joining regions beyond the ones we live in. About one-third of our membership live in a region other than Spirit of St. Louis. Tangent to the Spirit of St. Louis Region are some pretty big regions. The Greater Illinois Region cover an area about half-way up Illinois to the Wisconsin border, including Chicago. Maybe that's why they're called "Greater Illinois", because it includes the CCCA national office. I'm not sure I agree with the implication that name has for the Southern portion of Illinois in the SSR. Also bordering SSR going anti-clockwise: The Upper Midwest Region

to our northwest, the Oil Belt Region to our southwest, The Dixie Region to our southeast and the Indiana Region due east. Remember that the Spirit Region takes in about half of Missouri and all of Southern Illinois, so Indiana is just to our east.

I'll probably join the Greater Illinois Region and the Oil Belt Region. I'm a transplant. That's why I don't feel bashful poking the bear to our north. I was born on the south side of Chicago and spent most of my formative years in the southwest suburbs. My mother still lives up there and I know I-55 between here and there pretty well. My darling Amber hails from Tulsa and I've gotten to know and enjoy that portion of Oklahoma over the years. So if I look beyond my home, these are the natural regions to explore more. In addition, the cartographers have put Kansas City in the Oil Belt Region. Kansas City seems like a nearby city it would be nice to know better. I heard it was snowing there earlier this week, so I'll look forward to getting to know it better between April and September.

It's that time of the year again. Be sure to renew your membership in the CCCA and the Spirit Region ... and maybe others. The website, classiccarclub.org, has a button on the home page if you want to renew on-line. If you prefer the paper form it should be coming out shortly. If you don't see it drop me a note and I'll make sure you get one. Maybe if we've done all the things we are supposed to do to keep safe and kill the virus, we'll be able to get out and enjoy everyone's company again soon. **Todd**

Treasure Hunting...Finding Just the Right Elusive Classic Car...

By Larry Hassel



I have been thinking about getting another Classic Car for at least five years but kept getting derailed. In that time, I purchased a brass 1913 Model T Ford Touring car and a Ducati Multistrada motorcycle, further adding to the menagerie of “toys” in the garage consisting of cars, motorcycles, canoes, kayaks, bicycles, and tools. Where do you start the Classic search though? My challenges were many. I wanted a relatively “turn-key” vehicle that I knew would be reliable. I am a “working stiff” so I had to operate within tight budget constraints and that illusive Duesenberg J is still out of the question. I needed a car that was common where parts would not represent a nearly impossible conundrum to locate. I wanted a vehicle with a certain amount of “curb appeal” pizzazz that would turn heads and show some investment potential based upon its styling.

I also had been one of the previous owners of a fine 1931 Cadillac “Fisher” V-8 Seven- Passenger sedan. I loved that car and ultimately regretted parting with it. With every owner change on the car, it got better. Jim and Myrna Schild brought that car back from the grave. Even in a dilapidated state, the drivetrain was near perfect. When they sold the car to me on the purchase of a Rolls-Royce Limousine, I was able to do some hinge repairs on a rear door, reskinned the door with new sheet metal and then rebuilt the whole brake system with cast iron V-12 drums instead of the steel used on V-8 Cadillacs and LaSalle's. Jack Folluo restored the body, fixed any rust, and repainted it a beautiful high gloss jet black which made for a genuinely nice contrast to the gray wool broadcloth upholstery and elegant Wilton Wool Velvet carpeting. When Jack died, he had already sold the car to Todd Tobiasz, a worthy heir and great guy! Todd continues to do what is needed to preserve this fine automobile.

My search was narrowed to some specific marques...find another “Classic” Cadillac or LaSalle of a similar age between 1929 and 1941, change over to a Packard and there were many nice ones, consider a later 1940s Lincoln Continental, find a good Bentley or Rolls Royce (fairly complex beasts, but very fine vehicles) or maybe locate a refined Pierce-Arrow or Franklin. I was able to casually search and think about what decision I would ultimately make. Cognitive dissonance (buyer's remorse) weighed in heavily since the decision involved quite a bit of money. What changed things and accelerated the process? With

a small bit of arm twisting I was coaxed by Thomas Quick and John Lowell, among others, to run for a National Board Seat with the Classic Car Club of America. Bylaws require ownership of a Classic. This turned up the burner under me. I viewed this exercise as perhaps more symbolic since I didn't have the name recognition and I relaxed a bit knowing the odds were against me in this election. I had wonderful encouragement from Carrol Jensen, National President. However, I thought my opportunities were remote, at best. After the election, I learned I had not been elected. I was somewhat relieved and then the phone rang. It was Steve Babinsky, calling from New Jersey. Steve is current National President of CCCA. He offered me an appointment to the board since one of the other board members had resigned. How could I say no? This meant that the search was back on and I needed to accelerate my purchase consideration. I shared my situation with the board and they were most accommodating and relaxed the requirement a bit, knowing I was getting closer to a decision. However, it was still a bit like searching for treasure on Oak Island.

I was offered a nice 1938 Packard Super 8. Molly Butterworth and I even met with John and Rose Gibson and John let me drive the wonderful 1938 Gibson Packard Super 8. I was ready to pull the trigger and decided to consult with a few Packard experts in the country before doing so. I wanted to know what I could anticipate as far as future maintenance and potential headaches. I came away a bit discouraged. Super 8 Engines in 1938 didn't seem to enjoy the best reputation due to metallurgy issues and water jacket cracking. Most 1938 owners bought spare engines from 1937 or 1939 as backup. I decided to “camp-out” a bit and think about it. Engines are plentiful, but storage in the house isn't. Molly and I continued to search Hemmings and other resources. We found many promising vehicles in my price range only to be discouraged by “adulteration” and significant structural/mechanical issues. Having spent the last 44 years in the aerospace industry I can tell you about “aerospace opportunities” where things have gone wrong and redesign/repair is necessary. Messes are difficult to unravel and they take time to troubleshoot. We saw a nice 1940 Packard Sedan for sale at the Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg Museum. I was salivating, but Molly prevailed! Drive videos showed it running terrific. However, Molly's shrewd eyes, as a museum-geek, detected a lot of water damage and potential wood rot and mildew by staining in certain areas. We found a 1940 Packard Super 8 for sale in Michigan, but upon close inspection we determined the dash was a mangled mess of cracked “Bakelite surprise.” Then, upon further discovery, someone had redone the upholstery. All I'll say, there is no accounting for bad taste...it was hideous passion pink. I have one question...Why??? A nice Franklin on the East Coast appeared. I was about to call about it, but decided that it was not a very good CARavan vehicle because of an inability to attain a decent cruise speed. It was quite interesting in design and shape, but rather “antiquey” in mechanicals.

I was getting frustrated and starting to lose sleep. Prices were either too expensive or what I found in the marketplace needed sizeable work to make it right. I then saw this nice looking and rather striking 1931 LaSalle Coupe (Fisher) on display at Gateway Classic Cars. It was there on consignment. The more research I did, the more I learned about the car's history. It had been owned previously by Richard Muehlmann whom I had known for many years. I never knew exactly what cars Richard had but I knew he had a passion for Packards, Cadillacs and especially

LaSalle's. Before Richard, it is thought the car was owned and restored by a longtime member of HCCM, Carter Alsop. I had heard the gentleman's name, but never knew him. When Richard passed, the car was purchased at auction by a couple in South St. Louis County. I did a Google satellite search and saw their house in one of the satellite views. I decided they were car people by the big garage on the house and additional two car garage at the end of the driveway. However, what was most disconcerting, I didn't recognize their names from any of the car circles I participated in. Surely they would be members of CCCA or HCCM. I later learned they bought the car on a whim and it was possibly their intent to make it into a hot rod. Yes, they were hot rodders. I have no problem with hot rodders provided they are pulling stuff from a junkyard or using repro. bodies, etc. It would have been such a shame for this fine automobile to have been destroyed by such an endeavor. I learned that if it didn't sell, they were going to make it into a rod. I think I saved "Lucy." When I visited Gateway Classic Cars in Shiloh, IL it took me about 30 seconds to decide that I wanted this car very much. I was getting back "my" Cadillac-LaSalle that I had loved so much. It was a pretty good older restoration and the natural wool mohair upholstery showed some signs of bug damage...yep, get out the moth balls! The car ran and drove great with all instruments and lights functioning, save for the fuel gauge. I loved the rumble seat and had always wanted a car with a rumble seat. Plating is nice and the engine compartment is exceptionally clean. Subsequent to pickup I did a lot of scrubbing and waxing and the tires buffed up nicely with no cracking. The car sparkles now and looks fantastic. I owe Wendell Smith and Molly Butterworth a debt of gratitude for helping me deliver the car home in Wendell's enclosed trailer.

The day Lucy the LaSalle arrived home, Molly and I decided to take her for a drive and get some lunch at Big Chief, a Route 66 Landmark. We stopped to fill up with some fuel and that is



where we learned about what we were subconsciously dreading. We couldn't restart the car and the sediment bowl was quite full of something resembling Starbuck's coffee grounds (great for plants, bad for cars). As of this writing, I have dropped the fuel tank and it is being lined with the Renu process at Afton Radiator. I am going through the whole fuel system and Lucy will be right...vacuum tank, lines, etc. The sending unit is on the way to Michigan for restoration. It was corroded and frozen solid. These are normal expectations and when one has a car like this, it is something taken in stride. I'm documenting what I'm doing so others can avoid some of the learning curve if they need to do likewise. My goal is to have Lucy roadworthy by the end of November. Now...to figure out how that hot water heater works!

For Sale. Collection of various car books that I have collected over the years. Would like to sell all as a lot. Art of the auto, Adler, 232 pages; Encyclopedia of the American Automobile, Ludvisen, Wise, 224 pages; Great Cars from Ford, Langworth, 96 pages; American Motors Album, American Motors, 146 pages; Cars of the Stars, Clymer, 152 pages; Cabriolets, Thevenet, Vann, 208 pages; Early American Clymer, 213 pages;; Roadside Relics, Shiers 205 pages; Sports Cars of the World, Halmi, 120 pages; Sports Cars 1928 to 1939, Nicholson, 125 pages; Chevrolet Story, Published in 1963, General Motors, 80 pages. All books in excellent to very good condition with dust covers and no pages missing. Sell all! \$100 bucks! Call **Bob Radel: 314-991-3590.**

17th Annual Pierce Arrow Society Gathering at Gilmore By Duane Wesche

The 17th Annual Pierce Arrow Society Gathering at Gilmore was a very different event. The usual touring days of private collection visits, sightseeing, breakfasts and lunches along the way, the early bird get together and car show luncheon could not be done. This year's event was a "bare bones" event with a Saturday on your own 70 mile tour around the lakes north of Kalamazoo using low traffic country roads. The only stop on the tour was at the Gilmore car Museums

The weather was beautiful the whole time. There were 58 people attending from 14 states, including as far away as Texas and Louisiana. Twelve Pierce Arrow cars, a Travelodge and bicycle were displayed on the showgrounds at Gilmore on Sunday. Box lunches were provided for those in attendance and we ate socially distanced from each other on the show grounds.

Four trophies were awarded this year and winners were determined by popular vote of those who registered, exception being the Director's Choice Award.

This year's winners were:

1st Place (Harris Award): 1931 Model 43 Phaeton Ted Lee

2nd Place : 1913 Model 48-B 7 Pass Touring

Terry & Rita Ernest

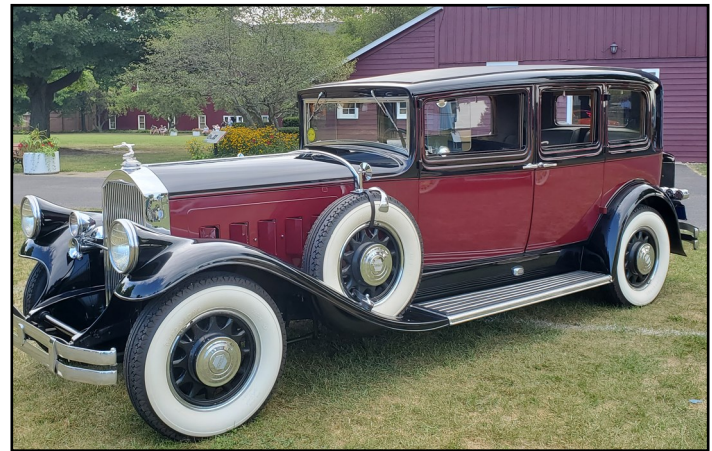
3rd Place : 1930 Model A Limousine Roy & Martha Foreman

Director's Choice:1937 Travelodge Model A Ken & Marianna Staples.

There were many interesting cars at the event that were not Pierce Arrows. The Travelodge was towed on the field behind a 1948 Lincoln Continental Coupe. Bill Parfet stopped by in his Auburn boat tail speedster. Of course all the museum buildings were open to limited numbers of people. George and Sally's Diner was open for outside seating. The Museums at Gilmore in Hickory Corner are still a wonderful place to visit even in the midst of this viral pandemic. The 18th Annual PAS Gathering is being planned for August 27-29, 2021. Mark your calendars!!



1926 Series 80 Opera Coupe



Third Place 1931 Model 48B 7-Passenger Touring



1926 Series 80 Town Car



1936 1601 5 Passenger Sedan



1936 1601 Sedan



1933 1247 EDL Sedan



1934 836A Sedan



First Place winner 1931 Model 43 Phaeton

Randy Gori Memorial Car Show and Cruise By Todd Tobiasz

Three members and two associate members of the SSR CCA attended the event on October 17, 2020 at the Sunset Hills Country Club in Edwardsville Illinois. Attending were Bob and Sonia Abbott, John and Rose Gibson, Todd Tobiasz and Tyler St. Peters (Bob and Sonia's grandson). The event was in honor of Randy Gori who passed away last year. Randy was a well-known attorney in Edwardsville and very active in support of the community and local car events. Bob and Tyler brought two vehicles -1928 Cunningham, 8, and 1936 Lincoln, 12 K, John brought his 1938 Packard Super 8 and Todd brought his 1936 Cadillac, 8. Interesting note the Cunningham (purchased in 1973), the Lincoln (purchased in 1958) and the Packard (purchased in 1999) were all owned by Bob's dad, Bill, and this was the first time since John purchased the Packard from Bill in 2001 that all three vehicles have been shown together since John's purchase.

The Sunset Hills Country Club was an exceptional setting for the show. All vehicles were placed for adequate social distancing along the cart paths on the on either side of two fairways near the clubhouse. Non-Classical vehicles displayed ranged from the new

Corvette, new GT40, Hot rods, Ferrari's, Aston Martin, and several other high quality exotic vehicles. There was also certainly a good showing of vehicles which we all grew up with during the 60's and 70's.

Since this was the first year for the show, they had some growing pains. But, we enjoyed getting out in an environment which provided acceptable social distancing and support an event in the memory of Randy Gori and benefit PGA & Main Street Community Center.

The intent is to make this an annual event and let us all look forward to next year.





Three former Bill Abbott Classics now owned by Bob Abbott and John Gibson staying firmly in the region.



Wendell Smith's 1925 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost Limousine at the MAC West Show.

MAC West Show 2020 By Wendell Smith

Four years ago a friend of mine that also served on the board of the National Museum of Transportation, Charles Baine, wanted to put together a small show at the Missouri Athletic Club West. I agreed to assist by inviting some friends from the Rolls Royce Owners Club, The Horseless Carriage Club, and the Classic Car Club. From its inception the show was limited to forty cars. With increased spacing between the cars and social distancing and safety measures for participants and attendees the show was held, as scheduled, in early September.

The MAC show has always included a very eclectic assortment of cars, and this year the thirty or so cars in the show were no exception. My vintage Rolls-Royce was the only Full Classic in attendance. Altogether, there were thirty-five cars in the show.

I found a 1903 Dyke runabout to be the most interesting car at the show. The car belonged to Guy Randall from Belleville, Illinois. He had purchased the car at the RM/Sotheby's auction in Hershey, Pennsylvania, last fall. He had done considerable research since acquiring the car. The engine in the vehicle is a St. Louis which was manufactured by George Dorris I. Guy had connected with George Dorris II and knew all about the close friendship and touring experiences Dorris and Dyke shared during their lifetimes.

The surprise guest at the show was a granddaughter of A. L. Dyke. She lives in the St. Louis community as does her sister. She is extremely personable and told some great stories about her grandfather who lived until the early 1960s. I think this was the first time the 1903 Dyke had been shown since its acquisition last year. I am confident you will enjoy seeing this car at local shows when things get back to normal.



The beautiful brass and copper engine fittings in Wendell's Rolls-Royce, the only Full Classic at the MAC West Show.



Kids enjoy sitting in a Classic and blowing the horn.

Mid-America Region RROC Warehouse Tour & Picnic By Jim Schild

The COVID19 Pandemic of 2020 has made it difficult, if not impossible for many members and regions to enjoy their normal activities and tours but the Mid America Region Rolls-Royce Owner's Club managed to create a way to do just that. Activities Committee Chair Wendell Smith and his friend Jan Yarbrough planned and organized an interesting event for October 1, 2020 at "The Place", a new and exciting concept in storage and workshop accommodation in Chesterfield, Missouri, a few miles west of St. Louis.

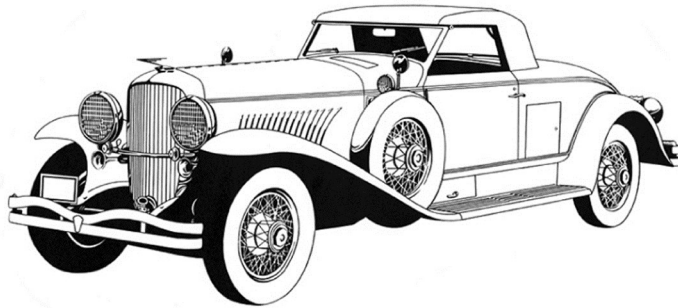
The Place is a new condominium like gated complex that contains over 37 warehouse units where car guys and girls can have their collections and workshops. MAR members Wendell Smith, and Steve and Marianne Spencer have units at the facility and opened them up for all participants to inspect. The facility also includes a clubhouse for owners with a snack bar and restrooms. Of course, there was plenty of room for participants to safely maintain social distancing according to the state and county regulations of the day. A picnic followed at Babler Park.

Spirit of St. Louis Region CCCA members were invited to this event and were represented by Todd and Amber Tobiasz with their 1936 Cadillac Convertible Sedan, Jim and Myrna Schild, Larry Hassel and Molly Butterworth, Tom Roberson, John Gibson and Bob and Sonia Abbott. Of course SSR member Wendell Smith's Full Classic Silver Ghost and Phantom I Rolls-Royce's were there plus a Full Classic 1937 Rolls-Royce Phantom III from the Rolls-Royce group. Jim & Myrna Schild and Bob & Sonia Abbott are also MAR RROC members. Holman Motorcars, St. Louis Rolls-Royce dealer, displayed a 2007 Phantom VII (NC) and a new 2020 Phantom VIII (NC) for the group.





Left: SSR Board Member Larry Hassel being served beverages from a handy miniature gasoline pump by RROC members at the Babler Park Old-Fashioned picnic.



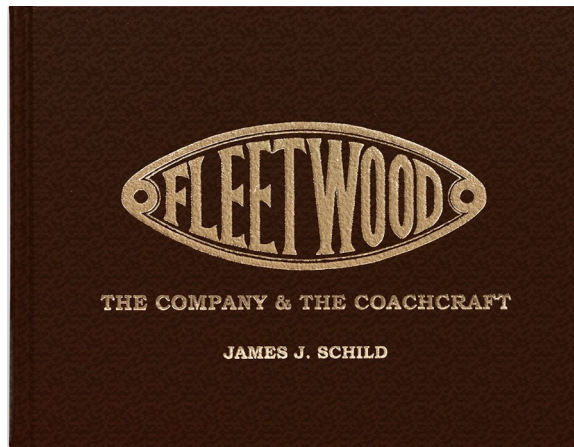
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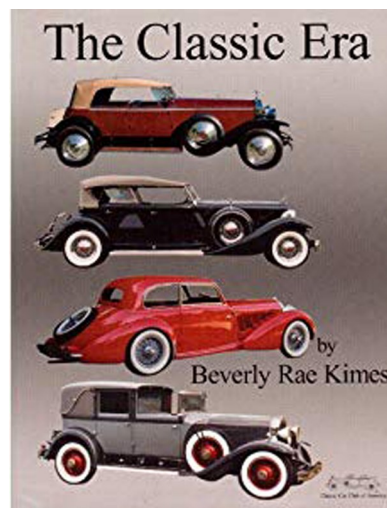
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The SSR Region proudly announces a re-issue of the book *Fleetwood, The Company and The Coachcraft*, by Region member James J. Schild. Long out of print, and a must for all Classic Car enthusiasts, the book is printed on high quality paper, and is the authoritative work on Fleetwood coachwork supplied to the finest American and European car manufacturers. Awarded the prestigious **Maurice Hendry Award** for excellence in journalistic contributions by the Cadillac & La Salle Club in 2012, and the **Thomas McKean Memorial Cup** by the Antique Automobile Club of America in 2013. Brown leatherette cover with gold foil stamping, 464 pages, 1100 b/w illustrations. \$99.50 postpaid. International buyers, please contact us for a shipping quote. Order your copy today from the SSR Region via email at ssr.ccca@yahoo.com, or via our webstore at www.spiritccca.com.



The SSR has a limited supply of the award winning book, *The Classic Era*, by the late Beverly Rae Kimes, available for sale. Hardcover, 8-1/2 x 11, 720 Pages. The top and bottom cover Classics are owned by SSR members. These books are brand new and a must for the Classic Car enthusiast. \$50.00. To reserve a copy, contact Bob Radel at 314-991-3590.

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cell: 314-330-0877

website: Robertpass.com

email: Robert@robertpass.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 2020

December 2020

>> **January February 2021 Spark Plug Submission Deadline** 20 December 2020

>>**2021 Spark Plug advertising Deadline** 20 December 2020

January 2021