



The Motor Mouth

Mini Concours? Of course!

Birders learn the fine points of CTCI judging



Phil McCurdy, right, explains what judges look for during a CTCI concour as Cheryl McCurdy's 1956 Gold Medallion Senior Car captures the attention of members, from left, Ed Johnson, Der Roupe and Duane Niemi.



After socializing a bit, all the men clustered outside around Cheryl McCurdy's gorgeous '56 Senior Car, winner of

It wasn't a "Daddy sang bass" and "Mama sang tenor" kind of thing, but if the March 9 mini concours and potluck barbecue had been a song, it would have been in two-part harmony -- the men and the women. Af-

multiple gold Medallion awards. We peeked into the engine compartment and the interior, firing questions at Phil McCurdy, our own nationally known judge and restorer extraordinaire, as he explained some of the finer points of concours judging.

Meanwhile, the women continued to socialize on their own, first in the garage, then inside the house.

The scene was the McCurdys' home and auto restoration garages in Poulsbo, and the event was designed to let the PSEB faithful get an inside preview of what to expect in concours and touring class judging during the

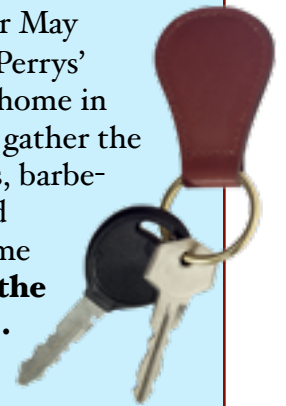
(continued on page 3)

Keep on truckin'

right to PACCAR's one-day-a-year open house and tour of its Mount Vernon testing facility. You'll see the best of the newest, biggest beauties on the road. Ten-Four, good buddies. **Saturday, April 12. See page 7 for details.**

Ready to shuck 'n' jive? Oysters, that is!

That's our May event at the Perrys' Hood Canal home in Belfair. We'll gather the tasty bivalves, barbecue them and even take some home! **Save the date: May 4.**





Cruising and Musing

Recent medical events have caused me to muse about the care and attention we lavish on our 51- to 53-year-old Birds, their engines and their bodies. But what about the engines and bodies of those of us who drive them? Most of us are older (sorry to say) than our cars, and in need of much more TLC.

Those who attended the recent mini concours noted that although their husbands were there, PSEB navigators Judy 2 (Howard) and Judy 4 (Thorne) were absent. Judy 4 was recovering from double knee replacement and Judy 2 was feeling poorly; subsequent tests are leading to open-heart surgery sometime this month. Learning of such life-changing events should put our values -- and what's really important -- in the proper order: driver/navigator in first place, then family and friends -- with cars and toys way down the list.

At the March mini concours, Phil McCurdy walked us through the finer points of CTCI concours judging. He demonstrated how judges look for good body fit, authentic parts, clear/unblemished paint, etc. He noted



that some people actually installed the side chevrons upside down -- a concours no-no!

Yr olde prez checked his Bird and the world as he knew it turned upside down -- matching his chevrons! To answer much snickering, he could only reply, "It's my #@%#&^# car, and I'll wear the chevrons any way I want!" A pitiful comeback to be sure, but the best he could do at the time.

In all, the concours was a terrific event, well-hosted by the McCurdys, who treated us to a fun, insightful day. They even had dash plaques made for participants and winners. Thank you, Phil and Cheryl.

Kudos to Bob Callard, who is whipping the new Web site into beautiful shape. He and Martha are hosting the April PACCAR tour -- we'll be there with our upside-down chevrons and hope you and your right side-up chevrons will be there too.

--Gordon Thorne, President.

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THE MOTOR MOUTH

Vol. 15, No. 4 -- April 2008

Official monthly publication of the Puget Sound Early Birds, chapter 81 of Classic Thunderbird Club International.

Members are encouraged to submit articles written by themselves or others. All submissions are subject to editing and space available.

Deadline: 20th of the preceding month

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Our Mission: To encourage and promote the preservation, admiration, ownership, enjoyment and restoration of the 1955, 1956 and 1957 Ford Thunderbirds.

Web site:

www.pugetsoundearlybirds.org



(continued from page 1)

July 28-Aug. 3 CTCI International Convention in Portland.

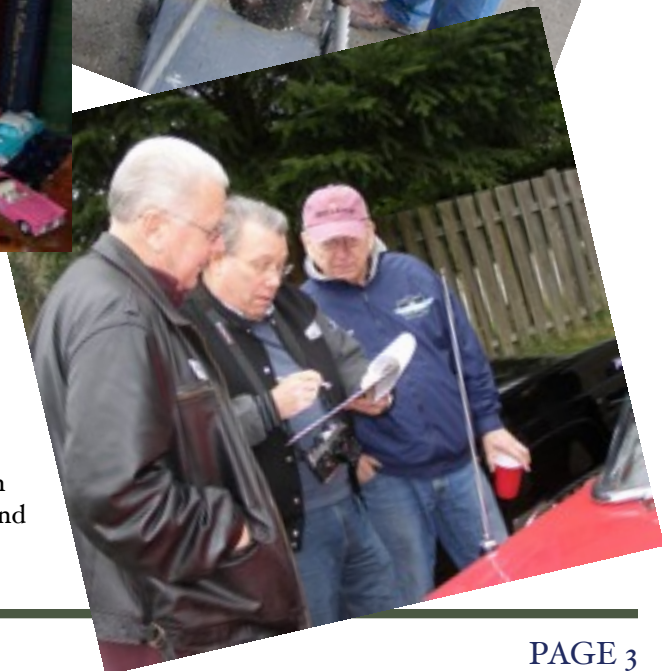
Phil walked the men (and the occasional lady) through the complexities of concours judging, with its five-man judging team and Authenticity Committee. He pointed out one tiny thing after another that must be correct and/or authentic on a 250- or 300-point basis in the Concours Division. He explained that judging is much more relaxed for Touring Division, with an emphasis on overall condition of paint, chrome, upholstery and cleanliness, rather than strict authenticity, such as whether the driver's side mirror says FoMoCo or not -- and maybe even allowing the side chevrons to be upside down? Well, maybe not.

Touring class allows for entries to be judged with hood up or hood down. Three of the six T-Birds brought by PSEB members had hoods raised, and three had hoods down, so Phil split the men into two team, each judging the other team's cars.

Ever the consummate hostess,

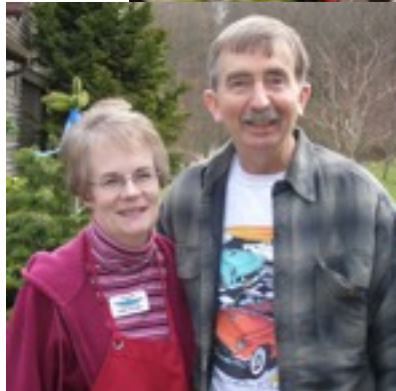
Cheryl got the potluck buffet ready while Phil tended two outdoor grills, one for foot-long doggies, the other for big, thick burgers, all the while assisting the two judging teams.

Tackling the barbecue buffet were Der and Judy Roupe, Duane and Nancy Niemi, Ray and Margaret Vingo, Ed and Tanya Johnson, Bob and Martha Callard, Bill Hummel with son John (they dared to show up in a Corvette!), and Pat Howard and Gordon Thorne without their respective Judys.



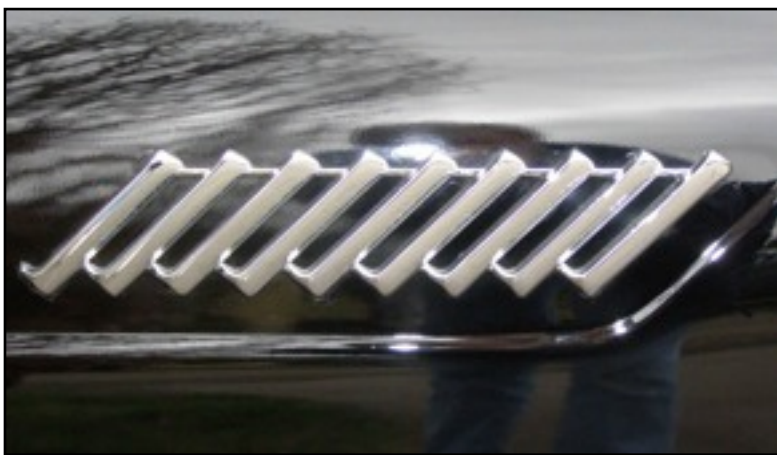


Afterward, Phil announced the first- and second-place winners in both hoods-up and hoods-down categories and handed out stylish dash plaques -- one for each participant and one for the winners. In hoods up, second place went to Duane and Nancy Niemi and first went to Ray and Margaret Vingo. Second in hoods down went to Gordon Thorne and first went to Der and Judy Roupe. Prez Thorne also conducted a four-minute meeting, thanking the McCurdys for a special day, and calling upon Bob Callard to give a preview of the April 12 PACCAR touring event. This marvelous meeting means many of us will likely maximize our points in our respective judging classes in Portland!



Thank you Cheryl and Phil for an informative event, with good food and good friends.

A CHEVRON CAPER



Alas! Ignorance is bliss! But when the truth comes to light, there's no hiding it, so here is a definitive look at proper chevron placement. On the left, right side up, on the right, upside down.



THE ROAD AHEAD 2008



Date	Event	Hosts
<i>April 12</i>	<i>PACCAR open house Mount Vernon</i>	<i>Bob and Martha Callard</i>
<i>May 4</i>	<i>Oyster Shuck 'n' Jive Harvest/oyster feed/take home</i>	<i>Michael and Christine Perry</i>
<i>June 21-22</i>	<i>Port Gamble Civil War Reenactment Potluck barbecue at Harrises'</i>	<i>Tom and Susan Harris</i>
<i>July 13</i>	<i>Vashon Island Strawberry Festival</i>	<i>Gordon and Judy Thorne</i>
<i>July 28-August 3</i>	<i>CTCI International Convention Portland</i>	<i>Rose City T-Bird Club</i>
<i>August 17</i>	<i>All T-Bird Picnic, Eatonville Joint event with Olympic Classic Club</i>	<i>Ted and Charline Austin</i>
<i>September 12-15</i>	<i>Three-night North Cascades Loop Tour</i>	<i>Gordon and Judy Thorne</i>
<i>October TBA</i>	<i>Gig Harbor to Indianola Auto Rallye</i>	<i>Niemis and Thornes</i>
<i>November 8</i>	<i>Great Chefs of the Northwest</i>	<i>Ed and Tanya Johnson</i>
<i>December 14</i>	<i>Christmas Party and Gift Exchange</i>	<i>Pat and Judy Howard</i>

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

<i>April 15-16</i>	<i>Tour to private Elma daffodil farm and optional Ocean Shores overnight</i>	<i>Olympic Vintage Auto Club (OVAC) Contact: Ted Austin, 360/394-2297</i>
<i>April 19</i>	<i>Annual Pizza Run to Pt. Hadlock</i>	<i>OVAC; details page 6</i>
<i>May 2</i>	<i>Car Show for automotive tech students</i>	<i>WST; details page 6</i>
<i>May 23-25</i>	<i>Kelowna, B.C., Show & Shine and optional three-day B.C. driving tour</i>	<i>Okanagan T-Bird Club Contact: Ken Carr, 250/766-1503</i>
<i>July 4-6</i>	<i>North Idaho Golden Anniversary Tour Day tours from Moscow, Idaho</i>	<i>Crankers Club Contact: Ted Austin, 360/394-2297</i>



**April
Celebrations
Best wishes to . . .**

Birthdays
 1 Pat Hasard
 1 Dennis Hasard
 7 Duane Niemi
 8 Michael Perry
 14 Leona Schlie
 18 Tom Harris
 20 Sandi Talbot
 24 Judy Lowe

Anniversaries
 3 Mike and Sandi Talbot
 6 Archie and Barbara Matthew

We're invited

April 19 -- OVAC's annual Pizza Run to Ferino's Pizza in Port Hadlock. Also attending: Pt. Townsend Rakers, Shelton Yesteryear Club, the Puyallup Golden Era Car Club and students from West Sound Technical Skills automotive technology program. **Details:** Depart Poulsbo Home Depot parking lot, 21750 Market Pl. N.W., at 11 a.m. to caravan to Port Hadlock. The pizza feed begins at noon and for just \$7 per person, you get all the pizza you can eat and an assortment of soft drinks. It's a fun event.

May 2 -- OVAC annual car show for students in the West Sound Technical Skills automotive technology program, which draws from more than 20 high schools in western Washington. The students have provided more than 350 repairs and services for customers at huge savings, and the program has an incredible 100 percent career placement for the completing seniors. Displays include a '65 Mercury Marauder featured in Hemmings Classic Car May 2007 issue. **Details:** 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., WSTS center, 101 National Ave. N. in Bremerton. Catered lunch offered at \$7-\$8 per person. **RSVP to the Thornes, 253/857-0066 or 0063 by April 25.**

IF MY BODY WERE A CAR - - -

If my body were a car, this is the time I would be thinking about trading it in for a newer model.

I've got bumps and dents and scratches in my finish and my paint job is getting a little dull . . . but that's not the worst of it.

My headlights are out of focus and it's especially hard to see things up close.

My traction is not as graceful as it once was. I slip and slide and skid and bump into things even in the best of weather.

My whitewalls are stained with varicose veins.

It takes me hours to reach my maximum speed.

My fuel rate burns inefficiently.

But here's the worst of it --
 Almost every time I sneeze, cough or sputter . . . either my radiator leaks or my exhaust backfires!

--submitted by PSEBer Dennis Hasard

Have something to share with your fellow PSEBers? The editor encourages all to submit information to be included in the Motor Mouth -- it's your publication, so be a part of it!



PACCAR Inc

Come see the most luxurious Big Rigs around -- sit in the cab and tour the on-the-road "digs" to see how a Hand Catches Some Zs* at the Chicken Coop* or Pickle Park.**

(*Trucker lingo translations on page 8.)

We'll meet 10:45-11 a.m. at the Smokey Point Pickle Park* at Milepost 207 on Big Slab* 5. (Good opportunity for a 10-100*.) For those coming from Kitsap Peninsula, plan on taking the 9:30 a.m. (spring schedule) ferry from Kingston. We'll depart Smokey Point at 11 in our Four-Wheelers* and proceed in the Granny Lane* to PACCAR.

We'll need to set a good pace, probably more than Double Nickel*, but not Hammer Down* because we don't want to be Bear Bait* or attract a Bear in the Air* that would land us in a Bear Cave.* We suggest leaving the Hammer Lane* to others, including Crotch Rockets,* while also avoiding Bumper Stickers.* No one wants to get Bit on the Seat of Their Britches.*

Our route: From Smokey Point, north on Big Slab* 5 to Exit 230 (Route 20) west to Anacortes on W. Rio Vista Ave. (becomes Avon Cutoff) for 5

Open House and Tour

April 12 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
PACCAR Technical Center
2479 Farm to Market Rd.
Mount Vernon

miles to Farm to Market Rd. (Route 237). Right turn and on to PACCAR. If traveling through Anacortes, go directly to PACCAR. At the gate give 'em the PSEB Handle*, and you will be directed to the 10-20* near the test track where clubs are showing their cars.

Highlights this year: Demonstrations of PACCAR's testing capabilities, advanced simulations using super computers and displays of new and vintage trucks.

Note: Hot dogs and small snacks will be available for purchase at a Chew and Choke* stand, or you can bring your own lunch.

Then it'll be time to Flip Flop* and Follow the Stripes Home*, all the while watching out for a County Mountie*, a Bird Dog* and a Brown Paper Bag.*



CTCI Region 3 Director Cathy Stubbs Shares National News

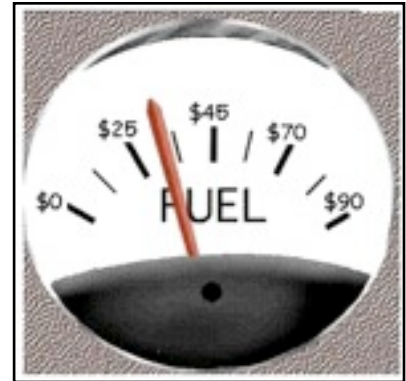
Cathy Stubbs, former CTCI president, now is the Region 3 director, representing us on the CTCI board. In a recent letter to chapter presidents and members, she brought us up to date on a variety of activities. Here are the highlights:

- **Membership enhancements** for the future include adding phone/e-mail information to the roster; more color/additions to The Early Bird; \$500 grants to host clubs to assist in sanctioned events; continuation of programs such as the newsletter and tech article contests and script program for new member referrals.
- **Exploration of options** for an enhanced CTCI Web site. Cathy is chairman of the Web Site Exploration Committee and welcomes comments about the existing site and suggestions for future features.
- **Call to attend** the Birds and Roses international convention July 28-Aug. 3 at the Red Lion Inn on the Columbia River in Portland, Ore. The Ford Johnson Memorial Award will go to the combined miles driven to the convention by a single club. Information: CTCI Web site, Early Bird, registration form on page 10 of this issue of the Motor Mouth.
- **Open invitation** to join the Bay Area Thunderbird Owners Club for their 50th anniversary celebration, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., June 22 at the Blackhawk Automotive Museum in Danville, Calif.

Contact Cathy with suggestions and questions: 425/228-7198 or cfstubbs@msn.com.

NEW T-BIRD GAS GAUGE AVAILABLE

Ford announces that the company is now offering an updated gas gauge that is more appropriate for driving in the 21st century. Web master Bob Callard is taking orders -- there is a discount for group purchasing -- and will be able to offer specific pricing information at the April 12 PACCAR event. Bob received firm prices from Ford on April 1. No foolin'.



Trucker Talk Made Clear

- Hand - truck driver
- Catch some Zs - sleep
- Chicken Coop - weigh station
- Pickle Park - rest area
- Big Slab - interstate
- 10-100 - bathroom break
- Four-Wheeler - car
- Granny Lane - slow lane
- Double Nickel - 55 mph
- Hammer Down - move faster
- Bear Bait - speeding car
- Bear in the Air - police helicopter
- Bear Cave - jail
- Hammer Lane - fast lane
- Crotch Rocket - motorcycle
- Bumper Stickers - following too close
- Bit on Seat of Their Britches - speeding ticket
- Handle - nickname
- 10-20 - location
- Chew and Choke - restaurant
- Flip Flop - return trip
- Follow the Stripes Home - have a safe trip
- County Mountie - sheriff
- Bird Dog - radar
- Brown Paper Bag - unmarked police car



Urban Legend? Not!

Women shown to cause freak fires at gas pumps

Pumping gas is more dangerous for women than men. Why? Because the two genders behave differently at the pump.

Men -- Get out of the car, choose their gas, put in the nozzle and stand there while the gas pumps. When the tank is full, they put the nozzle back in the pump and get into the car.

Women -- Get out of the car, choose their gas, put in the nozzle and set the automatic lever, get back into the car and wait for the pump to stop. Then they get out of the car and put the nozzle back in the pump.

And herein lies the problem: By getting in and out of the car, they may likely create static electricity, which can spark when they touch the metal handle of the pump. That spark can ignite fumes and cause a subsequent fire at the gas pump.



While this may sound like an urban legend, it's not.* The Petroleum Equipment Institute reports that of 150 cases of gas pump fires, most were caused by women who had returned to their cars and in sliding in and out of the driver's seat, generated static electricity. Most injuries have included singed hair and surface burns, however one death was reported.

The solution? If you need to return to your vehicle during the fueling process, be sure to touch metal on your car to discharge electricity before touching the pump handle.

***Verified by www.snopes.com, the foremost urban-legend debunker.**

Thanks to Bob Callard for bringing this to the editor's attention. Have something to share with the club? Contact judyb.thorne@gmail.com.

Thank you!



Dear PSEB friends -- Thank you so very much for the lovely flowers Carol Weiler sent on behalf of the club while I was recovering from double knee replacement at St. Joe's. The arrangement was o-so-fragrant, and with its shimmery pink bow, added a lot of beauty to my hospital room. Thank you, too, for your cards and well wishes. You all are the best!

-- Judy 4.

Kelowna Deadline May 10

There's still time to join the Thornes, Callards and others at the big Show & Shine May 22-23 in Kelowna, B.C., sponsored by the Okanagan T-Bird Club. **Information:** Ken Carr: 250-766-1503, e-mail: kencarr@shaw.ca. **Accommodations: Ramada Hotel**, 2170 Harvey Ave., Kelowna; 800-665-2518 or 250-860-9711, Fax: 250-860-3173. Room rates from \$123 plus taxes (mention "Thunderbird 2008" for special rates). Rooms held until April 28. Or the **Dilworth Inn** across the street: 250/762-9666.



Birds and Roses

CTCI International Convention / July 28 - August 3, 2008
Red Lion Hotel on the River - Jantzen Beach Portland, Oregon
Hosted by the Rose City Thunderbirds

Registration form with fields for Last Name, First, Spouse/Other, Address, City, State, Zip, Telephone, Email, CTCI No., and various fee tables for Registration, Concoeurs d'Elegance, and Vendors Room.

Please indicate number attending each event even if there is no charge so we can plan accordingly.

Thank You

Event schedule table with columns: Date, Time, Description, Cost/Prsn, Number, Total. Lists events from Monday July 28 to Sunday August 3, including walking tours, bus tours, dinners, and meetings.

Make checks payable to: Rose City Thunderbirds Convention Acct.
Mail to: RCT c/o Sharon Sharp, 23100 NE Old Yamhill Rd, Newberg, OR 97132

Call Hotel for Reservations: Red Lion Hotel on the River - Jantzen Beach, 909 N Hayden Island Dr, Portland, OR 97217.
Standard Rooms \$99.00 per night. Local Reservations (503) 283-4488. Central Reservations (800) 733-5466.

For information: Cliff Nixon, Co-Chairman (503) 657-4052; Roger Kelley, Co-Chairman (360) 896-5096; Sharon Sharp, Registration (503) 538-7579.



Troubleshoot T-Bird Handling Problems

Maybe you've noticed that your T-Bird doesn't handle the way it did once upon a time. There can be a lot of reasons and here are a few comments on why:

As a result of wear caused by use and neglect, your car may develop looseness in the steering assembly. Some of that "slack" may be found in the drag link and the tie-rod portion of this critical part of your car. If your Bird is equipped with power steering, you should expect 1/8-inch of slack in the control valve when the engine is not running. When the engine is running, this will not be evident because the energized control valve and steering ram cylinder adjust for this travel. A greater amount of slack can usually be attributed to worn tie-rod ends, steering boxes, idler arms and rarely, ball joints.

But don't replace the ball joints on your Bird just because they may be 50-plus years old. They almost never wear out and just may be the best ball joints ever used on any type of automobile. The very same parts were used on cars made by the Checker Motor Corp. from the mid-'50s through the end of production. Even the Yellow Cabs couldn't wear them out. I have only seen two bad examples in my long experience with the Birds. It is possible that these particular

joints were never greased, thus causing premature failure. If your car's ball joints have ever been serviced they are probably still fine. Look elsewhere for worn out parts.



Front-end alignment, or the lack of it, makes a huge difference in the handling and drivability of your car. Tire choice will determine how your T-Bird should be aligned. Toe-in should be set at zero inches for radial tires. Bias-ply tires should have toe-in set at about 1/8 to 3/16 of an inch. Radial tires are the single best improvement I ever made on my Thunderbirds. I have been using Michelin X tires since 1962. I recommend the 205 size on all three model years.

Now looking at the other end of the car for answers: A common handling problem is caused by loose U-bolts that fasten the axle housing to the leaf-spring stack.

You may notice telltale symptoms of this condition when the car darts in one direction upon acceleration and then heads in the opposite direction when braking hard. These U-bolts must be very tight. When you check them, or attempt to tighten them, don't use an impact wrench. There is a lot of rubber in this assembly that will

absorb the energy supplied by the wrench and the nuts won't tighten the way you have seen nuts tighten in other applications. I use a 3-foot-long cheater bar, take them up to about 75-ft-lbs and apply it evenly. When you do, you may break a sweat.

The above is by no means an exhaustive list of the causes for handling problems in your T-Bird or any other car. However, these are some common causes. You might get lucky and find one or more of the above hints to be just what you needed to get your Bird back on track.

-- by the late Walt Nuckels, a highly regarded T-Bird expert, from the Rose City Thunderbird Club's Bird Watcher newsletter, January 2002.

Web Site Continues to Expand, Offers Great Features

Our thanks to Bob Callard for all the time he's spent building our new PSEB Web site. Although not complete, the site offers information, entertainment, and a good glimpse into what our club is all about. Bob is eager to develop a photo gallery that will showcase each member's car. Toward that end, he needs a quality photo of your Bird, hopefully something similar to what you might see on the cover of the CTCI Early Bird. Please send hardcopy photos or digital photos to Bob at 9616 47th Ave. S.W., Seattle, WA 98136; rcallard@pugetsoundearlybirds.org.



PSEB North Cascades Loop Tour Sept. 12-15, 2008

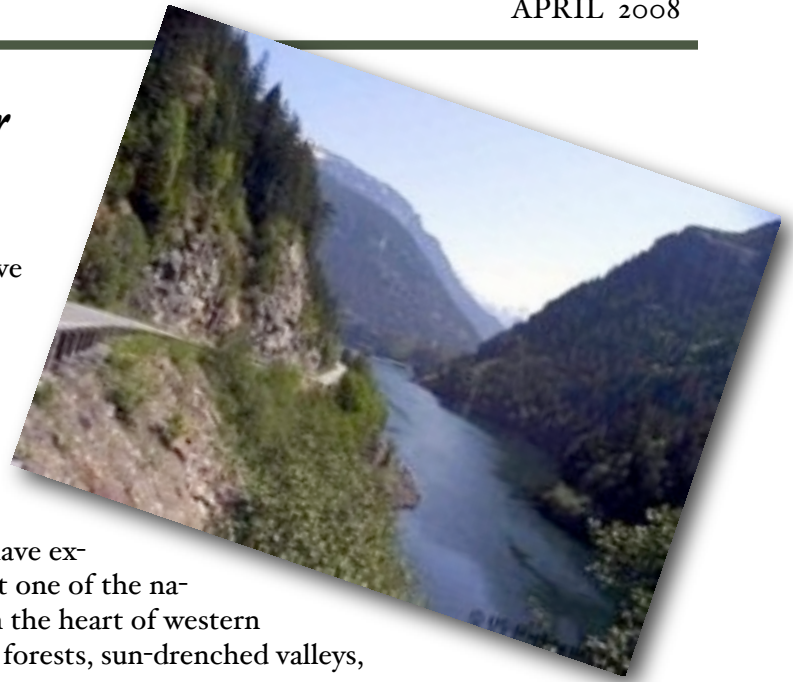
As the song says, "It's a long, long way from May to September," and it's even longer from April -- but save the date now for the first-ever four-day, three-night PSEB tour around the Cascades Loop scenic highways, Sept. 12-15. Based on the success of our September 2007 three-day, two-night tour around the Olympic Peninsula, we are preparing this unique and leisurely tour of the entire Cascades Loop in all of its stunning autumn beauty.

For the past three decades, millions of travelers have experienced this 300-plus mile phenomenon, making it one of the nation's top scenic destination drives. It winds through the heart of western and central Washington -- lush farmlands, evergreen forests, sun-drenched valleys, rolling rivers, high-desert vistas and glacier-clad peaks.

The spectacular scenery alone will be a feast for the senses. But we'll also have unique overnight stops in the Old West-theme town of Winthrop and the Bavarian mountain village of Leavenworth. And we'll participate in the 33rd Annual Winthrop Auto Rallye on Saturday, Sept. 12. It includes a parade of classic cars, a Show 'n' Shine with judging, a 16-mile classic car cruise of the beautiful Methow Valley, a hilarious return to the golden age of radio at the Cowboy Jamboree, chuck wagon eats and entertainment.

Tour leaders Gordon and Judy Thorne are planning an exciting tour. A block of 20 rooms has been secured at the Virginian Inn in Winthrop for Friday and Saturday, Sept. 12 and 13, and at the charming Obertal Inn in the heart of downtown Leavenworth for Sept. 14.

The tour begins officially in Burlington on Highway 20 as we cross the North Cascades Highway east to Winthrop. It continues south along the Columbia River to pretty Lake Chelan for winery visits before turning westbound at Wenatchee to Leavenworth. Day Four will be westbound over Stevens Pass to look for fall colors before concluding at Monroe or Snohomish. We'll have much more information in the months to come, but for now, reserve the dates. We will be inviting our Pacific Northwest sister clubs, and we are limited to only 20 couples.



SWAP MEETS AND CAR SHOWS

Call before you go!

April 13 -Issaquah Emergency Vehicle Show, XXX Drive-in. 425/865-9587.

April 19 -- Mount Vernon Swap Meet, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Skagit County Fairgrounds, parking fee. 360/421-1407.

April 20 -- Olympia All-City Rally. 360/413-7645.

April 26 -- Issaquah Vintage Military Vehicle Show, XXX Drive-in. 253/670-1046.

April 26 -- Bremerton Blast from the Past dance. 360/792-3355.

April 27 -- Puyallup Annual Breakfast and Poker Run, 8:30 a.m., Puyallup Elks Club/ Gallopin' Gertie Model A Ford Club. 253/566-4374.

May 3 -- Lynden Swap Meet and Tractor Pull, Bertusen Park, 360/966-3884.

May 4 -- Puyallup Model Car Show/Swap Meet, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., 253/627-1005.

May 4 -- Snohomish Rendezvous and All-Ford Picnic, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Bickford Ford, 425/481-4243, ext.108.

May 8 -- Lakewood Clover Park Technical College Car & Bike Show., 9 a.m.-2 p.m., 253/589-5608.

May 10 -- Shelton Yesteryear Car Club Garage Sale, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., McKenzie Farm, 5465 E.Agate Rd. 360/426-0048.