

FOX VALLEY ELECTRIC AUTO ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER FOR JUNE, 2000

**NEXT MEETING: Friday, June 19 at 7:30 PM in the Triton INDUSTRIAL
CAREERS BUILDING, (East Campus), Room 139**

DISCUSSION TOPICS: 1. Triton Project request. 2. July 4th Parade in Riverside. 3. Web status update 4. National EAA membership report. 5. Additional open topics.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Any person interested in electric cars is welcome to join the FVEAA. The cost for a full year's dues is \$ 20 which will entitle members to receive our monthly Newsletter that contains useful information about electric car conversions, construction, news, policies, and events. Membership is not required to attend our meetings. Dues for NEW members joining in July will be \$ 8.

To obtain info about the FVEAA you may contact either Past-President Ken Woods or President Shafer

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JUNE , 2000 PRESSEZ

The major topic to be discussed at our June meeting is the Triton request that the FVEAA commit to help Triton students and others interested in converting a car to electric power. Details are contained in this Newsletter issue. It will be similar to the Nissan Project except Triton will provide the financing and has Auto Shop facilities for the work.

It is Independence Day Parade time again. Fred Kitch and I will be in the Riverside Parade. We will have an opportunity to exhibit our cars after the Parade. Originally, Net Gain planned to have their dragster participate, but that has been superseded by an event at the Joliet Route 66 Dragway. Any ideas on how we can take advantage of \$ 2.05/gallon gasoline prices and our Declaration of Energy Independence on this occasion.?

The website is developing slowly. Dave Stensland has an especially informative description page of his Mazda pickup conversion under the Member's Projects category. The website will be discussed at the June meeting.

BILL

MINUTES OF MAY 19, 2000 MEETING

The meeting at Triton College was called to order by President Shafer at 7:45 PM. Seven members and one guest, a Triton College student, attended. The meeting date was on Good Friday.

The May minutes were approved as published. There was no Treasurer's report due to the absence of Dale Corel. Secretary Ness was also absent due to a family visit to Nebraska.

The May 6th Event was discussed. Comments - excellent, informative program and exhibit content. Disappointing attendance even though press releases were sent out to over 80 organizations, individuals, newspapers, and TV stations. Conclusions - (1) Obtain a corporate sponsor with a good PR system before trying this kind of stand-alone event in the future. (2) Have members exhibit their cars and pass out literature at events where people are already coming for another purpose. The most-successful event in the past has been the Downers Grove *HERITAGE FEST*.

It was noted that this year's *Renewable Energy and Sustainable Living Fair*, originally held in Amherst, Wisconsin has moved this year. On June 16-18 the event will be at the Dane County Expo Center in Madison, WI. This year over 400 vendors have signed up to provide exhibits, too many to be accommodated at the former site. Information can be obtained at www.the-mera.org website. The FVEAA has a number of members who earlier learned about our group due to our participation. We stopped going there after one of our member's car had a solar panel blown off during trucking.

Curtis controller failures were discussed during the Member's Projects section. President Shafer described his controller failure. A possible failure cause was "breathing" of the unit and subsequent internal moisture condensation. Go to our website message board for a further discussion of the subject.

President Shafer adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM.

From Bill Shafer's meeting notes.

AN E-MAIL SENT TO CAR TALK - 5/22/2000

The car show is broadcast every Saturday morning 9-10 AM on WBEZ, the Chicago Public Radio Station.

To: "Click & Clack"

Subject: Your comments about hybrid and electric cars.

Your comments on hybrid and electric cars were accurate. However, I believe you goofed when you dismissed electric cars as impractical with their limited range about equal to the 1907 Franklin you mentioned. You have bought the automakers argument that consumer will not buy a limited range electric vehicle. GM spent; about a billion dollars on the EV-1 in California and Arizona proving this.

You ignored another important factor. Limited range electric cars are just fine for short trip driving that account for over 70% of all driving. Think of your toolbox. You choose a hammer when that is the right tool and a box wrench when the job requires loosening a bolt. A "toolbox" of cars should include an electric to be used when the trip is appropriate. Opportunity charging is a range-extending option, particularly for commuters.

Thousands of hobbyists around the U.S. and abroad, such as members of the FOX VALLEY ELECTRIC AUTO ASSOCIATION (FVEAA) have converted conventional cars to electric power. Their experience has demonstrated that an electric car can be a money-saving transportation tool. These vehicles are simple, have a long life, offer energy independence and environmental improvement. The \$ 7000 conversion cost can be recovered in just three years of use. In Illinois a converted car is eligible for a rebate for 80% of the conversion cost with a cap of \$ 4000. This reduces conversion cost to a mere \$ 3000.

For additional information log on to our new website, www.fveaa.org and click on member's cars or member's projects.

Bill Shafer
FVEAA President

FROM OTHER EV NEWSLETTERS

Many of our exchange newsletters are published on a semi-monthly basis so this month there are only two to review.

EEVC, the Eastern group in Valley Forge in their May newsletter had an extensive report on the Junior Solar Sprint Competition at the Franklin Institute. In this event, sponsored by the Philadelphia Solar Energy Association, high school students build and race solar-powered model cars. Entrants in the seventh annual competition ranged from things seemingly assembled from cardboard and Scotch Tape to one with a carbon-fiber chassis, one with a Lexan body, and one with an articulated solar array. The EEVC was there to judge the event. The full-sized solar racer built by the University of Pennsylvania was on display. It had a brushless dc motor from New Generation Motor Corp., a 1.1 kW solar array, and will have a NiMH battery. The Cinnamonsen High School will again compete in this year's Tour de Sol. Entries in the event include a converted '59 Berkely entered by Boston University (Attention member Alan Wagner).

VEVA, the Vancouver Organization, in their May Newsletter, described activities in the annual REV (Ride Electric Vehicles) demonstration that will include an annual Electrathon competition. Damon Crockett will be there with his RX-7 and Rich Rudman with his Fiero. According to their meeting minutes the group approved continued affiliation with the national EAA that requires five VEVA members to also be EAA members @ \$42 annually.

THE FVEAA WEBSITE

About half of the FVEAA members have provided e-mail addresses and can, presumably, access our new website, www.fveaa.org devised by member Doug Mather. For the information of those without a computer the site now has excellent presentations of Doug's converted Fiero that he drives 50 miles per day and Dave Stensland's conversion of a Mazda B-2000 pickup that he expects to complete soon. I have sent Doug material to add my RX-7 to the site. Get in touch with Doug if you have something meaningful to offer. There is also an informative discussion of Curtis Controller failures experienced by FVEAA members.

Our website was originally to have each newsletter password protected and accessible only to paid FVEAA members. I am informed that other groups have tried this approach and have been damaged by a lack of accessibility. Until membership renewal time in November, everything on the website will be freely accessible. We will see if this helps or hurts our membership and renewals. Doug has put FVEAA Newsletters on the website beginning with December of 1999. The Australian group, with whom we exchange newsletters, should applaud this move because postage cost is much higher than domestic rates. Personally I favor full access but am also aware that we depend on membership renewals to fund FVEAA activities.

MEMBER JERRY MITCHELL DIES

Jerry Mitchell died on Saturday, May 5th at the age of 75. Jerry was an early member of the FVEAA, building his first conversion from an *Amphicar* he bought in the 1970's from Santa's Village, a local amusement park for children. He used a voltage-switching arrangement to control speed. Jerry's business was broadcasting. He spent over 50 years as Chicago radio & TV personality after serving in the U. S. Navy as a land wire communications Chief Supervisor. He often noted that he had no technical expertise. He found out about the FVEAA and later converted two other cars to electric power. He regularly commuted in these but never was able to negotiate plug-in privileges at work. His stories of experimental goofs were hilarious. Jerry would often observe that if he could convert a car, then anybody could do it. We will miss him and so will Station WYLL.

RECENT ARTICLES ABOUT THINGS THAT AFFECT EV's

Current Affair. Autoweek 5/24/2000, Page 16-21. This is a comprehensive story about the one-passenger, 3-wheel *Corbin Sparrow*. The term, "Wheeled Banana" comes to mind when one takes a good look at the Sparrow. It looks like it was created by pointy-headed scientists at Cal Tech, certain they have built the pure minimalist, most-efficient transportation that humans will ever need. This vision evaporates when you meet Mike Corbin, a burly, wide-shoulder biker with tattoos on his arms, a garage full of Harleys, and an aggressive stance. He is not some enviro-nutcake. He wants to make socially and environmental responsible transportation for the 21st century with something that makes sound business sense.

The vehicle is considered to be a motorcycle by the Feds, insurance companies, and meter-maids. It can use the restricted commuter lanes in California where the Company is located in Hollister. Unlike the motorcycle the vehicle has a fully enclosed passenger compartment, steering wheel, windshield wipers, and stereo.

How did Mike Corbin, a hard-core motorcyclist get to this point? It probably started with his Navy experience as master electrician. After discharge Mike started his own electrical contracting business and later a motorcycle firm. He developed and sold a widely-used motorcycle seat. Later he made a kit that could be used to convert a VW beetle to electric power and sold 3000 of these. The business was deep-sixed when the price of gasoline sank in the 70's. Corbin grosses over \$ 18-million a year.

The basic principles behind the Sparrow were direct; it was to be a one-person vehicle, it had to be approved to use the diamond lane and the footprint was limited to the size of a large bike. The Sparrow is eight feet long, less than four feet wide, has a frontal area only 30% that of a standard car. Sparrow development started in 1995 when he built a million-dollar prototype using Corbin motorcycle seat money (No Federal Program here!). Another \$ 2 million has gone into development, and the company sold \$ 2 ½ million in Series A stock with another offering expected soon.

The finished product has a few problems. If you crank over the steering wheel too sharply the vehicle will roll over more times than the most-tippy SUV. It hasn't yet been crash-tested, although the reinforced body should help protect the occupant. Crash testing is planned in 18 months.

The production line looks as if it were Willy-Wonka's miniaturized version of a Ford plant manned by 30 employees. The goal is to produce one car a day.

A test drive elicited these comments. It is the easiest vehicle in the world to enter. It is a capsule for one person and no more, similar to a *Mercury* space vehicle. Inside is a flat seat sloped forward, not ergonomically correct. When the door is closed there are several inches of headroom. The motor is directly belted to the rear wheel. A unit modified with a 1200-amp controller does ¼ mile in 15 seconds at 95 mph. Top speed was over 120 mph. Driving the Sparrow is a bit like driving your personal telephone booth.

Current Applications. Naperville Sun 5/10/00. Fourth graders at Prairie Elementary School have been building and testing model electric cars. The elements are a wooden frame, two motors directly connected to wheels, a pair of batteries, and a switch made of pushpins and a paper clip segment. The idea was suggested by Alan Bartholomew in his book *Electric Gadgets and Gizmos* (Kids Can Press). When Nadine Jones tried her car the wheels, made from film container caps were uneven and she had to try again. Doing the project helped teach which substances will and will not conduct electricity and also learn the value of experimentation. It will also help these students when they later this school year take the Illinois Goal and Assessment Test.