





Era of Excellence Volume XXXI, Number 12 December, 2018



ETC Cars at the Boone and Scenic Valley Railroad See "Wednesday at the FHR" inside (photo/ Kurt Kelsey)

Dedicated to the preservation and restoration of 1926 - 1954 Pontiacs Published monthly by the Early Times Chapter of the Pontiac Oakland Club International

Dresident's Message

October 2018

Ames Flathead Reunion

The 2018 Flathead Reunion is in the books and WOW! Members came from all over the country; from New England to the mid-Atlantic in the east, Minnesota to Alabama in the middle of the country and northern Washington state down to southern California in the west. Amazingly we had more member households from California than any other single state. Both Kurt and Arliss Kelsey had done a super job of planning the many details. Wednesday things kicked off for the early arrivers with a visit to the Boone Historical Center. That afternoon we took an excursion on the Boone and Scenic Valley Railroad. From there on, the remainder of the week was packed. We will have more coverage of the Ames Flathead in the coming months.

I hope that some of you have been able to drive your old Pontiacs as much as the Landvoigts. The Flathead Reunion drive was just over 2,400 miles round trip. The Prestons and Byerleys who convoyed there with us did about that amount also. Then this past weekend we led a group from our local AACA Region on a visit back to Ligonier. The three day weekend didn't allow us to explore as much as last year's Flathead, but we had done another 480 miles by the time we got home. Then this coming week we will drive the '37 up to Hershey. While we've experienced a few hiccups, she always got us home. If I seem to have a continual theme of getting you car reliable, this is why.

Wednesday at the FHR Kurt Kelsey (Iowa Falls, IA)

It started by accident a few years ago when people figured out much fun the Flat Head Reunion is. Members of ETC started to get to the host city a day early to explore the area. Pretty soon the hosts started planning a Wednesday event.

Arliss and I hadn't much more than gotten the Thursday-Friday-Saturday events planned when people started asking us about a Wednesday event and if they should get to Ames on Tuesday night.

We were familiar with Boone, Iowa, and what it had to offer. Since it was only 20 miles from our hotel we started to make our plan.



Boone is famous for two things, the birthplace of Mamie Dodd Eisenhower and for being a railroad town because of coal mining in the area in the 1800's. Mamie's birthplace home used to display her memorabilia, but it has been transferred to the **Boone County Historical Museum** for climate controlled preservation. The museum also has a large millitary and local history display.



The railroad history is celebrated by having a restored passenger car railroad. It is called the **Boone and Scenic Valley Railroad**. It runs every afternoon and gives passengers a two hour ride thru the scenic Des Moines River valley. They also have a railroad museum that is included with your ticket.

Wednesday morning started out with some heavy rain, so we got to use our vacuum wipers (eat your heart out Charles Bolten) as well as our defrosters. We headed out with about 15 ETC cars, driving thru Ames to Boone. First stop was the Boone County Historical Museum. After that we took advantage of several of the great restaurants in Boone before heading to the Boone and Scenic Valley Railroad for our train ride. At the depot we were joined by several late arriving ETC members from California who arrived just in time for the ride.





ETC cars at the railroad station

When the train ride was over we headed back to Ames to have dinner/supper before the Meet and Greet. The Meet and Greet was held in Buford's Lounge in the hotel. By then almost all participants were there and ready to hear our plans for the rest of the week. The Meet and Greet always lives up to it's name as we greet old friends and make new ones.



Meet and Greet L to R: Mike Smith, Ralph Hamilton, Mary Van Altvorst, Lisa Lynch, Ellen Hamilton, Jay Van Altvorst, Jerome Lynch.



Lunch in Boone at the Dutch Oven Bakery

Tuesday Night at the Flathead Reunion Kurt Kelsey (Iowa Falls, IA)



A new tradition at the FHR is the Wednesday early bird tour. A Wednesday tour means many people are in town in time for another fun filled group meal on Tuesday night.

Ames, Iowa is famous for several things, probably most notably Iowa State University. If you are watching an ISU game on ESPN often times the announcers will say, "It is good to be back in Ames so we can eat at Hickory Park." Hickory Park is without a doubt the most famous restaurant in Ames and also is on the top 10 list in the whole state.

My sales pitch that night was that everyone who comes to Ames should eat at Hickory Park at least once. When I was telling that to the group, I noticed that Mark & Laura Stiles from California were getting a laugh out of my presentation. Come to find out that morning while waiting for a plane in Phoenix they were visiting with another couple. When the other couple found out Mark & Laura were going to Ames their advice to them was "Be sure and eat at Hickory Park."



Ames, IA Flathead Highlights



Early arrivers to the Flathead Reunion prepare for a scenic train ride. (photo/Arnold Landvoigt)



You can't say the Flathead Reunion is just about cars. It's about the people. (photo/ Kurt Kelsey)

Thursday at the FHR Kurt Kelsey (Iowa Falls, IA)

Even though Thursday has more of a set schedule, it is always a winner with those who attend.

The ladies usually leave around 9:00 am for the day. This year, Arliss had a tour lined up at Reiman Gardens. In addition to its multiple gardens, Reiman Gardens is home to 800 exotic butterflies in the butterfly wing and an indoor tropical conservatory. The grounds were complemented by many sculptures on display.



At The Reiman Gardens L-R: Sandy Norby , Marilyn Lewis , Lisa Lynch, Betsy Thomas.

After the tour the group was back on the bus for lunch at Aunt Maudes'. Aunt Maudes' is one of the top three restaurants in Ames and is "almost" as famous as Hickory Park.



Butterfly House at Reiman Gardens: Front L-R: Lynda Sullivan, Cynthia Wehrle Back L-R: Mary Van Altvorst , Arliss Kelsey, Maryellen Myers



After lunch, they went to the Iowa State University campus for tours of the Farm House Museum which was the first building on the Iowa State campus and is full of historical items. They also viewed paintings and murals at the University Library.

Thursday is the day for our tech sessions. When 40+ vintage Pontiac owners get together the time and the stories fly by! First, Everyone gets to introduce themselves and tell us about their cars.



L-R: Mark Stiles and Ralph Hamilton

Next were the actual tech sessions. This year Ralph Hamilton and Mark Stiles gave a very good presentation on wood graining , which they have completed on their own '40 Pontiacs . They brought a sample of their work along with some tools of the trade. We were all impressed with the quality of their work.





Huck Mundell was up next with a presentation on mechanical brakes. He drives his '34 many miles every year and has his brakes in top condition. Several years ago when I was bringing my '34 back to life, he was a big help to me on brake adjustment.

There was a discussion on pulling steering wheels, replacing the horn wire in the steering column as well as electrical, fuel and tune up problems.

The real kicker of the day was "The Tale of Three Engines" told by Miles Hampton, Jim Brown and Mark Stiles. This story is a

great example of why we all belong to a "car club". Fellow member Fred Menger in Minnesota ran an ad in EtCetera for three '39 & '40 six cylinder engines. Since Miles, Mark and Jim could use these engines they were interested. However the problem was the 2100 miles between them and the engines. Enter Fastenal, and the problem was solved. Fred mounted each engine on a pallet and hauled them to his local Fastenal store. Someone at Fastenal was smart enough to figure out that money could be made hauling freight on the back haul as opposed to driving back to the warehouse empty.

The buyers all live in California but for some reason the closest the engines could be shipped was Southern Oregon. So after all kinds of trailer and trailer light problems, the engines are in California and will run again.

About the time the ladies returned from their tours, we were ready to start our annual chapter meeting.

The meeting had the usual items such as minutes of previous meetings and treasurer's report. It was reported that all directors and officers were willing to run again and would not accept PAC money!

One thing the chapter has done is to place a plaque in the Pontiac Museum in Pontiac, Illinois to honor our deceased members. The chapter will donate \$500 every year in their memory.

It was announced that the 2019 Flathead Reunion will be held in Bardstown, Ky. and hosted by Dave & Bobbi Luken, Pete & Andi Woodruff and Paul & Marjo Prinsing. The date is September 4th thru the 7th.



Group dinner at the Old Main Brewing Company.

Thursday night everyone went to dinner together. Lukey told me that no matter where we went he wanted a pork chop, so with that in mind Arliss and I talked to several restaurants and decided on the Old Main Brewing Company. They have a nice facility with room for a large group. Since they are on Main Street in historic downtown Ames it was a great place to park our cars. The Ames parking meters are hungry until 6:00 PM. The Old Main Brewing Company was so glad to have us, they were out feeding the meters and taking pictures!



We were able to pick five items from their menu, and we could order from those items to speed things up. The hostess made up special menus so everything would be easy. When we walked in the first thing I heard was Lukey asking me where the pork chop was? I talked to the manager and pretty soon the owner and hostess showed up to thank us and apologize. They said it was a mistake and we could order pork chops. We had several tables and several waitresses, and they were hustling around to get food and drink orders. Apparently, no one told one waitress that the pork chop we were to get was the \$16 one, not the \$30 super big one. As a result, Cliff & Marcia Oster got to try a \$30 lowa pork chop! It must have been good because they were smiling.

After dinner everyone was on their own. Most of us headed back to the hotel for more conversation and planning for Friday's big tour day.

Ladies Day at the Flathead Reunion By Mary "Floozie" Van Altvorst (Dayton, MN)

Another reunion in the books. This makes 10 for myself and Jay, and never a disappointment. Great friends, food, entertainment, and cars. What more could you ask for? If you want friends all over the country that you can call on, visit, or even

exchange Christmas cards. Go to a Flathead Reunion. I will warn you though, you will not be ignored or feel left out!

While the men have their tech seminar day, us ladies adventure out and explore. This year we boarded a very nice luxury bus. We began our day at lowa State University at the Reiman Gardens. Being a gardener I could of spent the whole day there. It was so beautiful with so many varieties of plants. Many I had never seen before. We split our group into



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groups to make it easier on our tour guides. My group started in the indoor Conservatory full of tropical plants and trees. Then we moved on to the Butterfly wing. First we had to remove jackets and large purses so no butterflies would decide to hide on us and try to escape. We walked into another conservatory with exotic plants, trees and butterflies! Beautiful butterflies from all over the world. Flying around us. Don't swat Maryellen Myers! Not a single monarch that we're used too. These are big and little bright vibrant colored butterflies. Some would land for a little to get a picture, others kept flying and we kept snapping our cameras trying to catch them. One butterfly chose Arliss, our host, to land on and walk with her through the garden. As we left we went into a small room and had to make sure we had no extra friends tagging along with us.

Then we continued outside to tour the 17acre gardens and unique art. I enjoyed getting ideas of what I could possibly grow in MN. There

were many gardens to explore. Vegetable and herb gardens,





roses and plants that encouraged butterflies and hummingbirds. Also water features along with the art.

After a delicious lunch break in a private room at Aunt Maude's

we headed back to the university for a walking tour of the sculptures, architecture, and murals throughout campus showing us the history of the college. I loved seeing the



original part of the library built in 1928. The architecture was so beautiful. Our final stop on campus was the Farm House



Museum. The first original building on campus built in the early 1860's. We enjoyed exploring and looking at all the vintage furniture and accesso-

ries throughout the house. Ellen, Marcia, Lisa, and I had a little fun looking at antiques in an upstairs bedroom.

Thanks Arliss for the fun day!

See you in Kentucky!

Mary "Floozie" Van Altvorst Marcosta21@yahoo.com



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Flatheads at the Boat Club on the Iowa River in Iowa Falls (photo/ Kurt Kelsey)

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ETC Cars lined up at the Hemken Museum in Williams, Iowa (photo/ Kurt Kelsey of Iowa Falls, IA)

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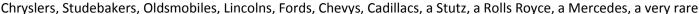
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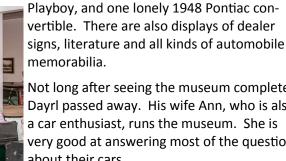
Friday at the FHR Kurt Kelsey (Iowa Falls, IA)

Friday is always a great day at the Flathead. It is a chance for everyone to drive their car and explore some local treasures with their Pontiac friends.

When Arliss and I started talking about hosting the Flathead, we had one place in mind as a must on tour day. That must was the Hemken Museum in Williams, Iowa.

Dayrl Hemken graduated from high school in 1948 and after several years in the military came back home to Williams, lowa and started his farming career. Like many of us lowa farm boys, he liked cars. His first plan was to buy 1947 and 1948 convertibles. They were dirt cheap in the mid-late 50's. He kept buying, selling and trading old cars. The collection now includes Packards, Nashes, Hudsons, Buicks,





Not long after seeing the museum completed, Dayrl passed away. His wife Ann, who is also a car enthusiast, runs the museum. She is very good at answering most of the questions about their cars.

So a caravan of eighteen flatheads ranging from 1928-1954 and several late model cars and pickups left the hotel parking lot at 9:00

AM Friday. We headed north on a series of county blacktop roads on our way to the Hemken Museum at Williams, Ia. Many people do not realize that Iowa is second only to Texas for having the most miles of road. A square mile is 640 acres and most of them have a road around it. Out here we talk about north, south, east and west. I was informed however, that in many parts of the country the roads are not in straight lines and most of the time it is hard to know directions, so left and right are needed in directions. From then on I had to give directions in two languages. I heard

many comments on the museum. They said they would not have expected to find such a gem in small town Iowa.

From Williams we headed north and west to Iowa Falls. Iowa Falls is my hometown and I was anxious to show it off. There is a Boat Club on the Iowa River. It is a nonprofit community owned facility that is rented for parties, wedding receptions, class reunions and other events. The Scenic City Empress is a riverboat that features a river cruise with the Captain telling interesting points and how the river was an important part of the history and development of Iowa Falls.

The plan was to have lunch catered at the Boat Club. After lunch we were all going on a river cruise. However, the club manager was concerned about the speed of the current as we had received large rains up north in the river's watershed. The Army Corp of Engineers monitors rivers, and on Friday morning said no passenger boats could leave the dock.





The lunch was a buffet of meats, cheese and condiments to make your own sandwich as well as baked beans, potato salad, fruit salad and a chocolate chip cookie. I won't mention any names of people I saw head back to the cookie jar.

Originally, we didn't think there would be time to come to our farm and parts department. So we offered to be home on Sunday and everyone was welcome. Since the riverboat ride was now off, we changed to Plan B. I explained that Arliss and I would head home to get everything opened up and that we needed an hour before anyone arrived. We suggested they explore lowa Falls. There is a very nice antique shop, and I heard that that was the only stop for several people.

Our son Kent and his wife Sara are our farming partners. I had asked Kent if he would get some machinery out on Sunday morning. When I called with a change to Friday he was ready to get a combine sprayer and tractor out and have some machine sheds open for display.



None of us live at our farm headquarters, but we were ready when the old Pontiacs started driving in after braving the 3 miles of gravel that I have been driving on all my life. Everyone got to see some of the workings of an Iowa farm. I did offer a short course in Agronomy 101 as well as AG Engineering 101. We answered many questions about raising corn and soybeans. We are No-Till and conservation farmers so I gave some information on these methods. Kent and Sara told me they enjoyed meeting many Early Times members. One member who really enjoyed her self was Ellen Hamilton. Once she got up in the seat of my combine she was all smiles. I told her I'll bet she could find a farmer

in her neighborhood who is looking for a combine operator!

The other person who was pretty high on the fun list was Mike Smith. I have an antique 1951 Massey Harris combine and had it out for display. When Mike saw it he climbed up on the the driver's platform and was grinning from ear to ear. When he was a young man back in Kansas he worked on a large wheat farm and ran a similar combine. I tried to sell it to him but I guess I need to practice my salesmanship.

After the farm tour the group headed ½ mile east and ½ mile south to our home and parts dept. Just to be safe I did explain that we would be turning right out of the farm onto the road, right at the first corner, then right again into the first place on the right.

Arliss had cookies and drinks ready when the crowd arrived. In my hour of prep time I got our '56 Star Chief convertible, '37 two door and '34 two door



out in the yard



After we were done in the parts building and had looked at our Pontiacs we headed west to the "Red Shed" where I have most of my antique tractor collection as well as lots of Pontiac sheet metal in the loft.

My tractors include a 1938 Massey Harris Twin Power Challenger which is my favorite tractor. We restored it in





1984. It won "Best of Show" in many tractor shows back in the 80's and 90's. Also, I have a 1935 John Deere Model A that my Grandpa Kelsey bought new in 1935. I rescued it from the junk pile and restored it 14 years ago. The biggest horse in the stable is a 1944 Case LA that my neighbor bought new. When I was a kid, it was the biggest, baddest tractor in the neighborhood. I found it and brought it home in 2010. Guess what? The next thing I know Mike Smith is sitting on the Case. He claimed that at the farm with the Massey combines, they had several Case LA tractors, and he ran them all. What a way to get your picture taken!

Arliss and I had lots of fun and enjoyed having everyone visit our

home and farm. Several people told me they were glad the river was too fast and we are too!

Everyone headed back to Ames for dinner/supper on their own and to prepare for Saturday's show and shine. As Arliss and I headed the '40 toward Ames I was expecting a fun filled evening going out to dinner. Little did we know!

The plan was for Arliss and I to take Cliff and Marcia Oster with us in our '40 and meet Arnie and Lois Landvoigt as well as Larry and Cynthia Wehrle at a popular Ames restaurant "Provisions."

We were on our way leading with the '40 when at a red traffic light, Lois was was banging on our window to tell us their '37 was dead in the street behind us. We made a U-turn and parked in a driveway. The guy in his pickup behind Arnie was lowa-nice and stayed there with his 4-way flashers on. I had already talked to a flatbed towing service in lowa Falls and Ames in case someone's Ford pickup that was following the tour broke down, so I had their numbers. Since I knew Arnie had AAA, I went ahead and called the Ames service. They were there in less than five minutes (It helps when their shop was ½ mile away), loaded his car, and hauled it back to the hotel. Then we were able to get on with the important part of the evening, eating dinner.

Later in the evening most people gathered in the hotel lobby for conversation and plans for the Saturday Show and Shine. Stay tuned for next months story that will reveal why Arnie's car had to be hauled.

Tech Insight: Hood Ornaments & Cylinder Heads

Illuminated hood ornament mystery

A few times over the years I've come across cars that had clear plastic illuminated hood ornaments instead of the familiar amber colored ones. There were three states, I believe New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania, that had laws at the time where red or yellow lights could not be displayed of the front of vehicles due to possible confusion with police and emergency vehicles. In these states the amber had to be replaced with clear. One old school Pontiac mechanic told me he remembered a 55 gallon drum in his shop almost full of amber hood faces they replaced. Unfortunately they were ultimately thrown away.

Cylinder heads

Standard and high compression cylinder heads were offered to original purchasers of ETC cars. Either head used entailed no additional cost to the buyer. High compression gave somewhat better driveability in high altitude areas but was offered nationwide. The high compression heads required higher octane gasoline and a different initial timing setting.

Today having a high compression head has a "cool" factor but produces little in additional power. Pinging will probably be noticed on heavy acceleration (mainly going uphill).

Standard head compression ratio 1951 and earlier: **6.5:1** Standard head compression ratio 1952 and later: **6.8:1**

High compression head compression ratio 1951 and earlier **7.5:1**

High compression head compression ratio 1952 and later 7.7:1

Charles Bolten (Phoenix, AZ) Straight Eight Tech Advisor



ETC Cars at the Kelsey Farm (photo/ Kurt Kelsey of Iowa Falls, IA)



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Arn and Lois Landvoigt at the Flathead Reunion in Ames, Iowa (photo/ Jim Brown of San Carlos, CA)

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Saturday at the Flathead Reunion in Ames, Iowa (photo/Arliss Kelsey)

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Saturday at the FHR 2018

Kurt Kelsey (Iowa Falls, IA)
(Photos courtesy of multiple attendees)



On a beautiful September Saturday morning in Ames, Iowa, it was a good day because it was show day. When I went out to the parking lot, the first thing I saw was our fearless leader Arnold Landvoigt. He was wearing his Pontiac Service Craftsman coveralls with his trusty multi-meter in hand. He was trying to figure out why his '37 lost electrical power Friday night and had to be hauled back to the hotel on a rollback car hauler. The problem was that a fuse had been installed between the battery terminal and the main power wire that feeds the car. That fuse looked fine, but it was not! With a new fuse, the car came back to life and was ready to head to the show.

Knowing how important it is to have the car display in a highly visible area with lots of local people around, we set our goals high. Arliss and I had a warm reception with the Chamber/Main Street director. She assured us we could get the street closed in the location we wanted. Historic downtown Ames is a great place. There are lots of restaurants, and stores as well as a Farmer's Market on Saturday morning. And we were right in the middle of it!



L-R: Bill & Wanda Harris' 1948 Convertible (attended the first POCI Convention 1972). Ron & Betsy Thomas' 1941

Lukey has always been the car "line up man" on show day. He lines them up oldest to newest with enough room for displays. Each member is given one ballot to choose their favorite Pre-War and Post-war car. That's when the fun escalates, and we are surrounded by local people sharing their thoughts and asking questions about the cars. Most of the time, they are astounded to find out



Local artist painting ETC cars.

Older cars Van Altvorst's 1928, then Hankin's 28

that the majority of the cars are driven to the meet! A '37 from Maryland, and two '40's, one from New York and one from Oklahoma, as well as a '41 from Ohio, were driven to Ames. Most of the post-war cars were driven in from all



Harold & Jan Glatz's 1953

over the country. This is a real chapter and hobby builder, hoping to stir interest and confidence in antique cars. Those participants who

dress in period correct clothing to match their car, often have period correct displays for people to enjoy.



Maylon McDill's 1935 Merrill Mundell's 1934



Ralph Hamilton views Reid Williamson's recent purchase

I'm not sure who the youngest member in attendance was, but I do know the oldest one was - Reid Williamson. Those of you who know Reid will not be surprised to hear about his trip. He saw a '54 Star Chief for sale in Mississippi. He lives in Utah. He flew down, bought the car, drove it right up to Ames, and later drove it home to Utah. It was a very nice original car.

The cars always stay in place until 3:00. After dinner on their own, members headed back to the hotel for the 7:00 dessert and awards meeting.

There are two long distance awards given each year. The driving award went to

Rich and Nancy Byerley from Cuba. OK, it is Cuba, New York! They drove their 1940 4-door. The trailering award went to Larry and Cynthia Wehrle from Pasadena, California. They trailered their 1949 convertible.

The Pre-war car/display award went to Jay and Mary Van Altvorst for their 1928 4 Dr Landau Sedan. The Post-war car/display award went to Tom and Maryellen Myers with their 1952 DeLuxe station wagon.

We were given information on the 2019 Flathead to be held in Bardstown, Ky. The meeting concluded with many good byes and plans being made to meet in Kentucky in 2019.

Arliss and I had a great time putting this event together. I tell people if I could only go to one old car event per year, it would be the Flathead Reunion!



Joe Wheat & Reid Williamson talking about cars they should have kept.



Long distance driven ('40 from NY state) Rich and Nancy Byerly



Tom & Maryellen Myers receiving Best Post-War car/display



Jay & Mary Van Altvorst receiving Best Pre-War car/display



Long distance trailered, Larry Wehrle (49 from Calif)



ETC Saturday night Flathead Reunion Awards

Tech Insight: The Rise and Fall of the Flathead Engine

Throughout the 20's and 30's flathead engines were the conventional design used by most manufactures. The available fuels and existing roads at the time allowed for the acceptance of modest-output, low-revving engines. Non-detergent oils were also accepted for what was then, a reasonable life expectancy. Pontiac offered full pressure lubrication and superior cooling system design (aka water distrubution tube). In 1941 the precipitation oil cleaner extended its life even further. It achieved a reputation as a long lasting, durable unit at its peak of popularity.

After the war, country roads gave way to freeways. High-octane fuels were available. This went hand in hand with the overhead valve engines and high compression. Flathead engines were limited in compression ratio and the intake and exhaust systems had several inefficient twists and turns. Pontiac, Packard, and Hudson developed the flatheads to just about the max possible, while high-compression, overhead valve V8's were just getting started. The Pontiac flatheads had a good run from 1926 - 1954. Without them there would not have been any GTO's or Firebirds later on.

Epilog: Rambler Americans had flatheads thru 1965. Limited production Dodge Power Wagons used them up to 1968. Flatheads continued on for industrial purposes a while after that.

Charles Bolten (Phoenix, AZ) Straight Eight Tech Advisor

Flathead 2018 Update

Kurt Kelsey (Iowa Falls, IA)



Writing about the Flathead is like the Flathead. It is lots of fun!

In my Thursday night article I told the story of the \$30 pork chops Cliff and Marcia Oster got by mistake. It turns out that Jay Van Alt Vorst also got one! Same story, the gigantic pork chops must have been good as I heard no complaints from them.

When I wrote about Saturday I said that Reid Williamson was our oldest member. I was wrong! I learned that even though she does not look it, Wanda Harris is two months older than Reid. Both were 87 at the Flathead.

My other mistake about Reid was where he found that very nice '54 Star Chief. It was in Oklahoma, not Mississippi.

If there are other additions or corrections let me know.