

Regional Group #24 - The Recent Years (1998-2012)

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“The Beginning Story of Regional Group #24”, part one in a series of three, focused on how RG #24 received its charter as a member of the Early Ford Club of America in 1969, the founding members and the election of S.R. Jones in 1970 as the first local club president. Part two, “The Early Years” covered the period of significant club growth from 1971 - 1997. This installment, part three, covers the period from 1998 - 2012.

In 1998, Harold Thompson, the club’s twenty-second president, presided over a year of activity. The highlights were a tour to Euharlee, a small town between Cartersville and Rome which derived its name from the Cherokee “Eufaula”, meaning ‘she-laughs-as-she-runs’. The tour then moved on to Berry College, located on the outskirts of Rome, GA. Berry College had a close association with Henry Ford. Berry College founder, Martha Berry, was invited to a dinner party by Thomas Edison in 1921 where Miss Berry and the Fords began a life-long friendship. Henry and Clara Ford became the major benefactors to Berry College, and are credited with providing the funds that kept the college financially viable through the depression.

Next followed a tour to Chateau Elan, the 3500 acre winery and resort in Braselton, and Panoz Racing. Chateau Elan was founded in 1982 by Don Panoz. His son Danny Panoz (Don Jr.), founded Panoz Auto Development and Panoz Racing. The Panoz’ own Road Atlanta where all their road cars are tested. The year ended with a tour to Juliette with lunch at the Whistle Stop Cafe, featured in the 1991 hit movie, “Fried Green Tomatoes”.

The club was led by twenty-third president Mitch Gwinn in 1999 and Y2K. Members attended a picnic and car show at Millard Young’s country estate in Piedmont, Alabama, an event which became an annual affair for a number of years and is still fondly remembered by many members. The club celebrated its 30th Anniversary with a 2-day tour to Jekyll Island and later, an overnight tour to Blue Ridge to ride the Scenic Railway along the Ocoee River to McCaysville, GA and Coppershill, TN. In 2000 the club visited the town of Clayton and Rabun County with an overnight at the historic Old Clayton Inn enjoying an all-you-can-eat prime rib and gulf shrimp buffet. Other tours included a visit to Gene Terrell’s home and car collection in Newnan, an overnight tour to Americus and participation in the Warm Springs parade.

Jerry Reichel was elected president for 2001 and 2002. Under Jerry’s leadership, the activity level increased to nearly one tour or outing per month. A picnic at Lake Allatoona was enjoyed and became an annual event. In 2001 the club car, a 1939 standard coupe, was entered in the The Great Race sponsored by the History Channel. The club car was prepared for the race by shop students at Forsythe County High School; the engine was rebuilt by Putt Smith; race drivers included Kelly Adams and Rod Hill with the students acting as navigators. The race team captured a second place finish. Waymon Brownlee donated many of the parts needed to prepare the club car for the race.

Two-night tours to Chimney Rock, NC and Lake Lure, NC were followed later in the year by a tour to Chattanooga which included a visit to Coker Tire, the aquarium and a dinner cruise on the Southern Belle. One-day tours were taken to the Michael Carlos Museum at Emory, to the Cofer auto collection and lunch in Stone Mountain and to the Railway Historical Society Museum in Duluth. The next year included day tours to Mayfield Dairies with lunch at Fender’s Diner in Cornelia; the old Georgia state capital in Milledgeville; Eatonton to visit the birthplace of Joel Chandler Harris; the monastery in Conyers with lunch at the Blue Willow Inn in Social Circle; historical Cave Springs in Northwest Georgia with its impressive stalagmites and legendary “Devil’s Stool”, also noted for its pure and wonderful tasting spring water, and the Etowah Indian Mounds near Cartersville. An overnight tour was taken to the Warner Robbins Air Museum and the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in Macon **PLUS** a minor league baseball game and the

Ocmulgee Indian Mounds featuring major earthworks built more than 1000 years ago by the South Appalachian Mississippian Indian Tribes. The site has evidence of 17,000 years of Indian habitation.

For the period 2003 - 2005, Fred Lindquist served as the twenty-fifth president. The events calendar continued at a full pace of one activity, or more, per month each of the three years. In 2003, a Valentine party was added and by its popularity, the event became an annual one. The club participated in the Avondale Estates Easter Parade which also has become an annual event. A proposal to host the 2005 Eastern National Meet, the 4th ENM to be hosted by RG #24, was accepted by the national club. A three-day tour to St. Simons Island, off the Georgia coast, was enjoyed. In 2004 the club built two flathead V-8 engines to be raffled at the 2005 ENM to be held at Hiawassee. Day tours included the Berry College Ford Festival, the Ty Cobb Museum in Royston, and the Bruce Weiner Microcar Museum in Madison (aka, the Double Bubble mini Car Museum - Bruce Weiner was an executive of Double Bubble). A day tour to the downtown Varsity Grill attracted 68 members, spouses and friends and thirty flathead Fords, Mercs and Lincolns. In 2005 the Eastern National Meet in Hiawassee, with slogan "A Mountain Drive in '05", was considered a successful national meet by all who attended. The meet committee turned over \$9500 to the club from the meet proceeds. During the year, day tours to the Fox Theater and to Bostwick, GA for the Fall Festival Parade were conducted. In 2005 Jerry Reichel became the third member of the club to serve as National Director, joining Joe Smith and Waymon Brownlee. Jerry served two, three-year terms as national director (2005-2010), and concurrently also served 1-year terms as national club Secretary, Vice-President and then National President in 2009.

Lamar Hart was elected to three terms, 2006-2008, as the twenty-sixth president. Day tours were organized to the Varsity Grill, to Gillsville for the October Turning & Burning Festival, one of the biggest Fall festivals in GA which includes old farming & pottery making demonstrations, horse & buggy rides, quilt-making, blacksmithing and fine mountain music. An overnight tour was taken to Mentone, AL and DeSoto State Park. In 2007 another flathead V-8 engine was built and later auctioned at the 2008 Hershey Car Show, raising \$17,654 which was donated by the club to the Early Ford V-8 Foundation and Museum in Auburn, IN. Tours in 2007 included day trips to the Varsity Grill, the Booth Western Art Museum and Etowah Indian Mounds in Cartersville, and Mayfield Diary and lunch at Fender's Diner in Cornelia. An ambitious 3-day tour to Charleston was made with the Model A club. In 2008 two tours were made to the Varsity Grill plus day tours to Athens visiting George Bugg's car collection and Stone Mountain to visit the Cofer car collection followed by lunch at the German Restaurant. Also a day trip to PDK Airport was made to hear a retelling of the P-38 twin-boom-tailed Lightning recovery from the Greenland glacier by Epps Aviation.

In 2009-2010, David Jumper served two active terms. A number of earlier tours were repeated with good attendance. A day outing to the Cofer car collection drew fifty-one club members, plus seventeen invited members of the Corvair club and two from the Lincoln club. A tour of George Bugg's collection attracted more than forty members and guests, and the Avondale Estates Easter Parade also attracted forty club attendees. In 2009 a new outing became an annual tradition as thirty-four members and guests enjoyed a Gwinnett Braves game. A number of day tours were taken including revisits to the Cofer car collection, the Bruce Weiner Microcar collection and the Southeastern Railway Museum. Overnight tours included trips to Perry, and a tour of north Georgia to visit the Chief Vann House, and to tour Larry Bailey's car collection with lodging at Amicalola Falls Lodge. In 2010 another club tradition was started with a spaghetti diner and auction at the Reichels which raised more than \$1500 for the club treasury.

An overnight tour to Rabun and White County attracted twenty-five members and guests and included a visit to the Hardman Farm in Sautee (Lamartine Hardman was two-term GA governor, 1927-1931), shopping at Mark-of-the-Potter in Batesville, a visit to Babyland General Hospital where Cabbage Patch dolls blossom from cabbage heads, and tours of the car collections of Cleve McAfee and Donald Allison in Cleveland, and an enjoyable stop at the Harold (Jesse) James eclectic auto memorabilia collection in Clarksville. The tour overnights at Unicoi State Park Lodge.

During the year additional day tours visited historic Oakland Cemetery with lunch at Mary Macs Tea Room in Atlanta, the High Museum of Art to view the Golden Age of Design featuring classic car designs from 1930-1960, and Briscoe Field where members were invited to display their flatheads on the tarmac and ride in the 1928 vintage Ford Tri-motor airplane owned by the Experimental Aircraft Association in Oshkosh, WI. Former RG #24 member, Sam Bass, was the pilot. In 2010 a proposal to host the 2012 Eastern National Meet in Hiawassee, GA was accepted by the national club. The meet theme was, "Y'all Come Back". The 2012 meet would be the fifth hosted by RG #24, making the local club a leader in number of national meets hosted.

Jerry McIntosh succeeded David as the twenty-eighth president in 2011 and is currently serving his third term. A fourth raffle engine was built by J. Reichel and Bob Padovano, and raffle tickets were sold to financially support the upcoming ENM. The engine was displayed at many local car shows, plus the Charlotte and Hershey shows, by a cadre of dedicated members including Reichel, Padovano, Lamar Hart, Fred Lindquist and Bob Schwartz. Ticket sales reached \$17,500 from car shows, sales to other Regional Groups and internet sales providing important financial support for the 2012 meet. Other activities included an outing to the downtown Varsity Grill, picnic at Lucky Shoals Park with Thirty-seven participants, a day tour to Social Circle and lunch at the Blue Willow Grill. The Avondale Estates Easter Parade attracted Thirty-six participants and thirteen flatheads. A day tour to Truett Cathy's car collection with the Cadillac/La Salle Club was attended by thirty members and guests. Thirty-nine members and guests joined a day tour to visit the car collections of the Breedlove brothers of Buford and Johnny Adams with lunch at Chateau Elan. Also day tours were made with the Lookout Mountain club, RG #161, to visit the Tellus Museum in Cartersville, examine two car collections and lunch at a special venue in Cartersville; a tour to Lake Arrowhead near Waleska followed with participation in a car show sponsored by the Cadillac/LaSalle club.

In 2012, Bob Padovano conducted a technical seminar on the flathead fuel delivery and electrical systems which was attended by fifteen members. The Reichel spaghetti dinner and auction raised \$700 for the club treasury. Seventeen members and guests joined with the Dixie Wing of the Commemorative Air Force in celebrating WW II Heritage Days at Falcon Field in Fayette County. The flatheads looked great on display with 1930 and 1940 vintage aircraft, and the event was further jazzed by the appearance of a trio of re-enactors, voluptuous Betty Grable, stunning Rita Hayworth and talented Judy Garland. There were also day outings to the Governor's mansion and the A.G. Rhodes Hall in Atlanta with lunch at the Landmark Diner followed by a second outing to Lake Arrowhead Estates for a cruise-in hosted by the Cadillac/ LaSalle club. An overnight tour to Helen during Oktoberfest featured German food, beer and music and attracted thirteen members. The picnic was held at Lucky Shoals Park with 43 members and guests attending. Perhaps the highlight of 2012 was the hosting of the Eastern National Meet at Hiawassee in June with 197 registrants from 23 states and 147 cars displayed. The meet committee turned over \$12,000 from meet proceeds to the club treasury.