



## *"T" Time*

### *The Suncoast T Newsletter*

A Chapter of the Model T Ford Club International  
&  
The Model T Ford Club of America

The Suncoast T club was founded in Pinellas County August 16th, 2008. The Club's members are dedicated in promoting the interest in the preservation and restoration of antique automobiles, particularly the Model T Ford, its accessories, lore and literature, and the enjoyment thereof. It's a fun club with annual dues (October 1 – Sept 30) set at only \$5.00.

**TO BE A MEMBER OF THE SUNCOAST T'S YOU MUST BE A MEMBER OF THE  
MODEL T FORD CLUB INTERNATIONAL.  
DUES FOR THE NATIONAL CLUB ARE \$35.00 A YEAR.**

President.....	Scott Conger
Vice President.....	Ben Umberger
Secretary .....	Althea Conger
Treasurer.....	Althea Conger
Newsletter Editor...	Althea Conger
Activities Director...	Donna White

December 2009

Sunday November 15<sup>th</sup>, Bill Brown, Ed & Mary Jean Daniels, Bill & Judy Saitta and Scott & I participated in the St. Petersburg's Yacht Club Vintage Motor Classic Car Show. You couldn't have asked for better weather to hold a car show. Bill Saitta, as always, was letting people sit in his car while showing them how to operate all the pedals...many people came away with huge smiles on their faces. Bill & Judy also had a notice on their windshield telling people that they could sit behind the wheel and have their picture taken. Hopefully one of these people will want to become a new Model T driver one day.

At the end of the day awards were given out and all the Suncoast Model T'ers won plaques (they didn't give out the usual trophies this year). The BIG award was the Mayors Choice Award. Mayor Rick Baker presented this award to our own Ed & Mary Jean Daniels for their 1920 Race Car "The Beast". What a wonderful honor for Ed & Mary Jean.

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Saturday November 28<sup>th</sup>, started off chilly but we all got warmed up by having coffee and hot chocolate at Keith's Café where we all met to start off our "T" tour. We drove down and around Passe-a-Grille beach and Vina Del Mar. Afterwards, we motored on over to the Don CeSar for a Ghost Walk and History Tour.

### **Construction**

In 1924, Thomas Rowe purchased 80 acres of land in St. Petersburg, Florida for \$100,000 to begin his dream of building a "pink castle". He hired Indianapolis architect Henry Dupont to design the hotel and Carlton Beard as contractor. To ensure the stability of the hotel on the shifting sand and avoid the high cost of sinking so many pilings, Beard devised a floating concrete pad and pyramid footings. To this day there is no sign of evident settling of the hotel. The architecture is a blend of Mediterranean and Moorish styles modeled after different hotels and developments that Rowe and Beard saw in Palm Beach, Coral Gables and Boca Raton. Arched openings, red clay tile grooves, balconies, stucco over hollow tile and tower like upper stories were some of the elements that they borrowed. The original design called for a \$450,000 six-story hotel with 110 rooms and baths. It was later expanded to 220 rooms and 220 baths and the costs soared to \$1.25 million, 300% over budget. Rowe named it Don Ce-Sar after Don Caesar DeBazan, the hero of William Vincent Wallace's opera *Maritana*.

### **Opening**

Rowe's "**Pink Lady**" opened on January 16, 1928, with an extravagant party attended by the elite of Tampa and St. Petersburg. The hotel quickly became a favorite romping ground for the rich and famous of the Great Gatsby era, such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Clarence Darrow, Al Capone, Lou Gehrig, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. The Pink Palace continues to attract the rich and famous throughout the Great Depression, thanks in part to a deal made with New York Yankees owner Jacob Ruppert to house his team during spring training for three years. However, after the sudden death of Rowe without a will, "The Don" was left to his estranged wife and began to fall into despair until the United States entered into World War II and the hotel was bought out by the Army for \$450,000. It was converted into a military hospital and reopened in December 1942. In February 1944 the Don Ce-Sar became a U.S. Air Force convalescent center. In June 1945 the Don Ce-Sar was ordered closed and was vacant by September of that year. It was converted into a Veterans Administration Regional Office by the end of 1945.

### **Rebirth**

In November 1967 the Veterans Administration began moving out of the Don Ce-Sar. By spring 1969, the once grand hotel was vacant. The General Services Administration planned to raze the graffiti-covered hotel, but this was met with fierce opposition from local residents. In March 1972 the Don Ce-Sar was sold to William Bowman Jr., a Holiday Inn franchise owner. The Don CeSar (now spelled without the hyphen) reopened on November 23, 1973. Multiple renovations from 1985 to 2001 have updated and added on to the hotel, including a 4,000-square-foot spa, a signature restaurant, and a second outdoor swimming pool. After the addition of the full-service beach club and spa, the official name of the hotel was changed to The Don CeSar Beach Resort and Spa. The Don CeSar was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975 and became a founding member of the National Trust Historic Hotels of America in 1989.

Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers filmed a music video at The Don CeSar in 1985 and The Don CeSar has a long list of famous guests and has hosted every president since Gerald Ford (excluding Ronald Reagan) and also Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Also the TV program "Ghost Hunters" has been at The Don CeSar to help search for ghosts. It is said that the original owner of the building, Thomas Rowe, still walks the halls and talks to guests and employees.

Afterwards, Nick & Ben treated us to a wonderful BBQ lunch at their home. Thank you Nick and Ben for putting on such a nice event.

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**Speaking of Nick and Ben...You are Invited to a Christmas Lighted Boat Parade / December 20<sup>th</sup>** – The Suncoast T Club is invited to Nick & Ben's home on Sunday Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> to see the Lighted Boat Parade. This is a wonderful display of assorted boats that are beautifully lit with Christmas lights and assorted Christmas items. Last year there was even a dancing snowman on the deck of one of the boats. A buffet dinner will be served. If you would like to attend please **RSVP** to Nick & Ben (727) 393-9270.

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**Membership Status:**

Welcome to Doc Wallace, our newest member! This now makes 35 club members!!!!

**Presidents' Note:** Records indicate that we still meet requirements for MTFCA active Chapter status. However, anyone not a member of MTFCA is still encouraged to join.

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**Upcoming Club Planned Activities:**

**December 26th** – Bob & Donna are putting together a tour to the Vinoy. The Vinoy Tour **without** lunch is \$12 per person; **with** lunch it's \$27.00 per person. Any questions please call Donna at 727-385-1048 or email [bwhite125@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:bwhite125@tampabay.rr.com). **See flyer below for more details.**

**January 16<sup>th</sup> 2010** – Milt will be hosting a Dual club meeting with the Fun T's & the Suncoast T's, to talk about his adventures on his Coast-to-Coast tour. This will be a **MUST ATTEND** event for all of our members: see Milt's barn, his collection of "T's", and enjoy some hot dogs and chips while hearing about his exploits. Plan on asking questions for the question & answer portion of his presentation.

**February TBD** – "How To" Clinic on Vehicle Safety Check – Hosted by Scott

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**Future "How To" Clinics:**

Check rear axle bearing & sleeves / Changing Transmission Bands / Plus more...

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**What are Members doing?**

Ed has his race car certified for vintage racing.

Bill Brown is planning his annual car day at his school. He's looking for volunteers, so give him a call.

Rewooding on Scott & Altheas roadster continues.

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**Reminder:**

Please contact Donna, our Activities Director, if you know of an interesting place in your local area that might be of interest for the club to visit. She will make maps, and help route it out.

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**Final Word:**

Let me know what **you're** working on or doing and I will post it in the next edition of the newsletter. We all like to hear what everyone is doing with their "T".

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## **Local Interest: 2010**

**January 13 – 16 – Florida Flywheeler Park** - <http://www.floridaflywheelers.org/>

Florida Flywheelers Antique Engine Show & HUGE flea market

**January 20 – 24 – Take a Tour with the Fun T's to the Annual MTFCI Meeting & Banquet**

Tour Central Florida – wind up in Orlando for the MTFCI Annual Meeting. Contact Milt or Rosemary at: [mroorda@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:mroorda@tampabay.rr.com) or (813) 926-1636.

**January 22 – 24 – 56<sup>th</sup> Annual MTFCI Meeting & Banquet**

**SEE FLYER BELOW FOR MORE DETAILS.**

**February 12 - 14 – Winter Extravaganza Automotive Swap Meet** (Sumter County Fairgrounds)

7620 S.R. 471, Bushnell, FL 33513 (Only 2 1/2 Miles North of Webster Flea Market!)

Admission: \$5 - 1 Day or \$12 - 3 Day Pass

For more information <http://www.floridaswapmeets.net/>

**February 18 – 21 – 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter AutoFest**

Location: Zephyrhills at Festival Park on U.S. Hwy 301. Opens 8:00 AM each day; Parking is Free

Admission: Thurs & Fri - \$8.00 / Saturday & Sunday \$10.00

For more information [www.zephyrhillsfestivals.com](http://www.zephyrhillsfestivals.com) or [www.zephyrhillsauction.com](http://www.zephyrhillsauction.com)

**February 24 - 27 – Florida Flywheeler Park** - <http://www.floridaflywheelers.org/>

Florida Flywheelers Antique Engine Show & HUGE flea market

## **National Interest: 2010**

**January 22 – 24 – 56<sup>th</sup> MTFCI Annual Meeting**

**SEE FLYER BELOW FOR MORE DETAILS.**

**February 19 – 21 – 45<sup>th</sup> MTFCA Annual Meeting**

**SEE FLYER BELOW FOR MORE DETAILS.**

**March 18 & 19 – 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Chickasha Pre-War Swap Meet**

World's Largest Early Meet. Pre-War Only: Gas, Steam, Electric, Bicycles, Air Planes, Motorcycles, Horse Drawn, Railroad items, Tractors, Trucks, Stationary Engines, Boats, Buses, Etc. For more information visit their web site [www.pwsm.com](http://www.pwsm.com). **SEE FLYER BELOW FOR MORE DETAILS.**

**June 30- July 3 – AACA will be celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**Where:** Louisville, Kentucky. Tours are planned for part of the week, and on the last day, there will be a grand car show that is both judged and non-judged. We are encouraging our members to get those cars out and get them to Louisville! Concerned about the weather? The car show will be indoors in a beautiful climate controlled facility. We are also planning a special commemorative item for those that participate. For more information contact Joe Gagliano [Gagliaj@aol.com](mailto:Gagliaj@aol.com)

**July 18 – 24 – South Dakota 54<sup>th</sup> Annual MTFCI National Tour**

The 54th Annual MTFCI National Tour will be held in July 18-24, 2010 in Rapid City, South Dakota.

Great Places, Great Faces. Contact Sheryl Stier by email at [sastier@prodigy.net](mailto:sastier@prodigy.net) for more information.

**SEE FLYER BELOW FOR MORE DETAILS.**