



BCHRA General Meeting

April 3, 2007

Meeting held at West Langley Hall, 208th St. & 94th Ave., Langley B.C.

Meeting called to order by President **Harold Swift** at 7:30pm.

Harold welcomed everyone to our February Meeting.

87 Members and 13 guests were in attendance for a total of 100. What a great turn out!!

President Harold called for introductions of new guests. We were pleased to meet Bruce Anderson, Mike Socka, John MacMillan, Mike O'Neil and Ted Wilson. Harold also welcomed **Jack Williams** back from injuries from his car accident.

President Harold reminded all members that this was the deadline for submission of any suggested changes or deletions to the club Constitution and asked if there were any submissions to be turned in. There were none.

Minutes were presented and adopted as read.

Keith Biddlecombe moved that **BCHRA** rejoin **NAAACCC**. Second by ?

John Carlson attended this meeting as the representative for NAAACCC and gave a presentation on what NAAACCC stood for and the challenges coming up on a Federal Government level regarding older automobiles and the new legislation concerning the new emission standards that would soon be enforced. This new legislation would have devastating effects on our hobby and all of our collector cars. NAAACCC is a National organization that represents all levels of collector car owners all across Canada. They are our link to representation in the lobby of government officials and how the new emissions standards will be applied to our collector cars.

Harold Swift followed up with a brief presentation which reviewed the **BCHRA** position regarding this very important issue and reinforced that it was the executive's position that we needed to have National representation through NAAACCC. **John Carlson** has offered **BCHRA** to join this year without having to contribute the normal membership dues of \$5.00 per club member. **Keith Biddlecombe** (our treasurer) reviewed our club's financial position and **Ken Ransford** suggested that we increase our club's annual dues from \$25.00 to \$30.00 per year to cover the additional cost of the NAAACCC dues.

It was put to a vote and the modified motion was carried.

Harold Swift advised the club members that **BCHRA** was entering a number of cars into the next Abbotsford Tradex Show the last weekend in April to again promote the **BCHRA 50th Anniversary** event. He called for several members to step up and sign up to display their ride as well as for other members to volunteer to man our table and ticket

sales for the **50th Anniversary event**. Sign up sheets were available for those who could participate.

Committee Reports:

Keith Biddlecombe - Treasurer: brought us up-to-date on our finances and reported that all was well in his department.

Bill Alder – Membership: reported that the club membership was growing very rapidly and that we had already had 286 paid up members. This was getting close already to last year's, year-end total.

Darlene Driedger – Headliner: reported that all was in good shape with the Headliner.

Cam Hutchins – Web Site: **Cam** asked for a list of all members first cars for a project that he was working on. So help him out and email him your name and the details on your first ride. He can be reached at **cam@carnut.ca** or phone him at 604-574-3611.

Harold Wellenbrink – SVA: introduced **John Sterling** of SVA. He asked members if there was any one who had a copy of the poster for the 40th Anniversary Easter Parade. If you have one or know who does, please let Harold know 604-574-5457.

50th Anniversary Committee Report: **Bill Townsend** reported that things were really rolling now and they now need to get a number of members to become

committed as volunteers for the activities for Friday and Saturday events. Please let Bill know if you can help out. This is very important.

Bill also advised that they have sold 420 tickets so far. This is a good start but their target was 1000, so we have a ways to go yet. **PLEASE MAKE YOUR PURCHASE NOW IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO!!!** Bill also asked members to ask your friends to come, as well, as family members to come to this great event.

There is a need for additional corporate sponsors. **Bill** also asked for those who could help out with suggestions for him to approach companies for contributions of items for the “Goodie Bags” or door prizes. Please call **Bill @ 604-589-3404**.

Cliff Haller is busy getting the Programs completed and printed. There will be 8 or 9 old hot rods from 40 and 50 years ago on display for Saturday. You will not want to miss seeing these gems from the past!!! The **Vancouver Sun** will be doing some stories soon on this great event so watch out for them.

Bill Alder spoke about the activities planned for Friday evening and the fact that you will need to have purchased your tickets for this event in order to be able to attend the Friday evening activities and BBQ. He asked for volunteers to help man baracades from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm on Friday evening. If people offer one hours time, then you can help out and take part as well. Please call **Bill** at 604-576-4955. Do you part as a member to help out.

There will be auctioned off a **Special Pedal Car from A&W** as well as a “special edition” **A&W 50th Anniversary Jacket** at our future meetings so make sure you get out and bid on these treasures.

Coffee Break & 50/50 Draw:

McGuires Car wash donated by **Bodo** was won by **Carol Alder**.

Easter chocolates were won by **Bill Townsend**

Easter Bunny was won by **Norm Flewwelling**

A&W jacket went to one of our newest members **Sylvia Braddick**

The winner of the 50/50 pot of \$212.50 was **Denny Bromley** who donated \$20.00 back to the club to go toward purchasing donuts for the next meeting.

Thanks Denny.

New Business:

Bill Alder spoke about his recent trip south to Barrett Jackson Auction. He had a great time. He said there was a lot of hype, and a lot of **GREAT** cars to see, and **Bill** even shared a great story about a horse that passed Gas. Thanks **Bill**.

Coming Events:

Be aware that the club is planning some cruises this summer.

Also the PNE show will be on again this year in August

There will be a Whistler run in July.

More details to follow.

Don't forget to send in your registration in advance for the **50th Anniversary Celebration**. Check out the Anniversary web site. Click on the link from **BCHRA** web site **bchra.org** or **else bchra50.org**

Also the project car for the **50th Anniversary** still need some parts: Front break drums from an early 50s Ford 150 truck and a small fuel tank of any type. Call **Denny Bromley** at 604-922-0280 if you can help out.

Motion to adjourn 9:30 pm.

Buy & Sell

For Sale: 1951-'52 Chev. hardtop stainless trim for rain gutters (full set). Call Pete Graw @ 604-589-8830.

For Sale: Chev. 235 or 261 Chev. exhaust manifold, rebuilt for dual exhausts, ceramic coated. \$150. Call Harold Wellenbrink @ 604 574-5457.

For Sale: 1966 or '67 Chev. Nova Acadian trunk lid. \$125. Call Kevin @ 604-271-3847.

Wanted: 1963 or '64 Chev. Impala hoods or other front end parts and wiring. Call Kevin @ 604-271-3847.

Those who would like a room for the "Sleepy Hollow Run" please contact Bob Ewen @ 604-274-5765.

BRITISH COLUMBIA HOT ROD ASSOCIATION . . .

The early days . . .

In the late '40s, the Hot Rod craze began showing up in BC as many '30s and '40s vehicles appeared in primer, fender-less, with dual exhausts, some speed equipment and a few with minor body mod's and custom accessories.

This era invented the modern term 'Rat Rod' as this was all most of us could afford! "HOT ROD" magazine came out in 1948 and was soon our 'Bible' dedicated to articles on the blossoming sport emanating from southern California. Eager to get involved, local lower mainland motor heads began travelling to Arlington, Wa. where drag racing was held sunny Sundays at this little used airstrip. Racing rods was not new to us but was restricted to an oval track, Digney Speedway where the BC Racing Assn. tried desperately to field enough cars to put on a show. The costs were high, sponsors few and the payoffs were low. Midgets and Sprints dominated the track and it was the place to be on Friday nights. As a result, street racing and grudge matches evolved and most towns had their own straight stretch where illegal drags took place. Thus many of us ran afoul of the law, lost our licences and cars and had some crashes.

In 1950, a small group of rodder's and customizer's formed a club and called it the B C custom Car Assn. purposely avoiding the name 'hot rod' which was viewed by the public as a bunch of rag-tags. They got the club sanctioned, registered and sponsored by the Vancouver Police. The main thrust was to obtain a place to drag race legally and many locations were viewed from Vancouver to Chilliwack. In 2 years the membership exceeded 200 and permission was received to use a strip at the far side of Abbotsford Airport. Bi-monthly drags were run by the club and the new sport mushroomed spawning a car club or two in almost every town all over the province.

Enter the BCHRA . . .

Some of the car clubs were structured and took a page out of the national body, some had fresh ideas and were successful while many others started up and failed almost as soon. Since BCCCA was busy running and improving the strip, a group of natural born leaders recognized the need to amalgamate the various clubs and form a similar organization as the new National Hot Rod Assn. of California. All the clubs we knew of were contacted and asked to send a representative to a meeting for discussion of a BC body. We met in an old then, log cabin building on the Kingsway side of Central Park in Burnaby...it was free! The Assn. was born and Ron Latham was elected to head it. We patterned the name after the US group, the BC Hot Rod Assn., began setting up a constitution and arranging provincial registration. We recognized the need for a means of communication and the newsletter "The Headliner" was started the next month. Income was derived from a small per club fee

but funding was hard to come by and I'm sure many Corp's and Co's never knew the contributions they made to our early endeavors. Gerry Normand, a typewriter repairman, procured an old Gestetner hand operated machine. We spent many hours typing the wax masters and transferring Jack Schmidt's comic art on to them and cranking out copies for all

the members. But the medium worked well allowing us to advise the clubs of the ways and means of raising money, running events and having fun.

Early BCHRA Activities

To promote legal use of our rides, we arranged:

Gypsy Tours - a pre-arranged group drive to a park, museum, eatery, a roller rink, a race track etc.

Reliability Runs - a mapped, timed and checked cruise from start to finish with prizes for those closest to the route time and obeying the limits. Safety Checks of members cars on reliability runs by accredited mechanics led to expanding this practice and then led to extending it to the public as a fund raiser and club awareness.

Go-Whoa's were another test of the driver's abilities and reflexes then later evolved into Gymkana's with more intricate tests that could now be seen every weekend in un-used parking lots allover the lower mainland.

Cruising, every burg had a local hangout at a garage, drive-in, parking lot or corner store. We'd fill-er-up with a couple of bucks and drive 5 to 50 miles to just 'hob-nob', chow down or have a drag with their best car.

Other get-to-gether's included dances, bowling parties, parades, car washes, and cruises to the tracks. Some of the popular places to meet and eat were 'the Crat', Harvey's, Kings, White Spots and Churches Chicken in Vancouver, 'the Tomahawk' and 'White Spot' in North and West Van, 'the Spinning Top' and 'Stan's' in Burnaby and New Westminster, 'Mom's Apple Pie' and 'Whalley Drive-In' in Surrey and the 'Hi-Lite Burger Bar' in Mission. For the more adventurous we also visited Herfy's, the XXX and Tasty Freezes in Bellingham, Wa. to name a few.

Speed and accessory shops opened up, another place to meet and talk cars. Some of them were Western Accessories, Cal-Van, Payless Auto, Kerrisdale Speed, Jack Williams Shop, Blackie Green's Shop, Bud Child's Engine's Unlimited' and Walkers.

1st BCHRA Car Show . . .

In 1957, Del Towne of the PNE board invited us to prepare a show for that year's exhibition using the basement of the old Manufacturer's Bldg. It was a great opportunity to show off our new Assn. to thousands of people and spread the good work being done by hot rodder's, so we grabbed at the chance. They gave us \$250 to cover all our expenses. a new sign shop donated the Car Display Signs, Kelbert Trophies provided all the awards and lots of them and George Black Motors supplied a lot of display material. All the clubs were invited to enter and we crammed over 50 into the space, the last one being former Pres. Ed Bressler who filled the building with blue smoke as he backed in his old Buick sedan! Since the 1st Vancouver car show in 1951, the booths were getting fancier and sporting lights, picket fencing, mirrors, trees and trophies won. We were fortunate to host one of the 1st showings of Cliff Rich's finished Lemon T and Milt Goodman's '55 Chevy but the Count's Tom Parsons '40 Merc coupe with its new Tiajuana upholstery stole the show! The BCHRA membership nearly doubled form this venture, now including clubs from all over the province.

The BCHRA '60s . . .

By this time several clubs dominated the sport and were constantly showing what could be accomplished by a bunch of 'gearheads'. to name a few, the Shifters, the Igniters, the West Point Kustoms, the Counts, the Westrods, and the Kingsmen.

Many of these had club garages, were building club dragsters, helping each other with projects, hosting their own shows, were involved in community events, charity drives and the term 'Hot Rod' was becoming an elite group of conscientious young men. The sport was now in 'high gear' and the Calif., Ore., and Wa. influence was encouraging more and more BC'ers to venture south and challenge them at their shows, their tracks and the salt flats. The hardware we brought home attested to the abilities of several of our ranks and the successes were many and often. The new BCCCA track opened at Mission with lots of BCHRA members represented. Street racing died right down as 'Bracket Racing' was introduced and sponsors were eager to get recognition in the various classes.

The new Langley Speedway paved oval track was opened and locals Mel Keen, Bud Childs, Jim Marchant, Les Dyak and Ralph Monay to name a few, thrilled us every weekend as they burned up the circuit. We stressed club co-operation with local law enforcement and it was helping our member clubs, the sport and improving our image. Most clubs handed out cards after helping out stranded motorists and it was often recognized by a letter to the editor of the local community paper.

The BCHRA '70s and '80s . . .

During this era, we lost the use of the Mission Drag strip, the Langley Speedway gave way to urban sprawl and the Westwood Track was not far behind to feel this impact. Consequently, the racers took to the back roads again and became quite sophisticated in their attempts to move in, race and move on before 'John Law' caught up with them. Some of the ones I remember were Annacis Island (speed bumps killed this site) Steveston area and Pitt Polder. I'm sure there were lots of others and amazingly there were no serious accidents, thank goodness. By now, most of the old crowd were busy running business', raising families and building houses instead of cars or pursuing new activities and the Assn. folded quietly for lack of leadership.

The BCHRA in the early '90s . . .

Doug Harder approached me and a few of the original members with the idea of a BCHRA 40th

Anniversary Reunion to be held in '97. We began to meet every other month, encourage more to attend and soon a committee of 20 or so started the planning process. Three years in the making, lots of meetings, lots of ideas to ponder, locations to check out and all the while attempting to reach as many of the old members as we could find. It took over 100 ex-members and their friends to produce the event and we had a ton of fun doing it. Seed money to fund the project was raised by selling George Bell designed shirts and sweats along with donations from various members business.

The BCHRA 40th Anniversary Reunion . . .

It was decided to hold the reunion at the PNE grounds since so much of the Assn. history and activities were a part of this location, namely our 1st car show, many of the past meetings and banquets had been held here and we would be the last event they would host before demolition of the building. We engaged the PNE staff of the Dogwood Room to cater the food and set up for a crowd of over 500. The response to the event was overwhelming and becoming so huge we decided to host a car show in the PNE Showmart Bldg. during the day to keep everyone occupied til the evening banquet. Another idea that just took off, over 100 cars were displayed and it was hugs and hand-clasping of old friends greeting old friends after many years apart. It was a bonus seeing some of the original cars that made up the 1st ever car shows including Jim Greenlees '32 Ford Vicky, now owned by Mark Zomar, and the 'Syndicate Scuderia' dragster just as pretty as ever and shown by 'Mr. Hot Rod' himself, Jack Williams.

The showcases on the mezzanine ringing the old BC relief map were chock full of 'long-gone' clubs memorabilia. There were old jackets, car plaques, membership cards, pins, crests, photos, newspaper clippings and on and on, what a show! Attendees were also the who's who of the early years of the sport including some very now-prominent people who were responsible for the leadership, registration, programs, drag-strips, and motoramas. Some of these were Sgt. Rossiter of the Van. City Police, 'Whistilin' Bernie Smith, ex-BC Atty Gen., Chuck Robinson, longest running Pres. of BCCCA, Stu Braddick, owner of Payless Auto parts, Larry McBride, famed Digney Speedway and street racer, 4 ex BCHRA Pres. including Ron Latham, Ed Bressler, Bill Townsend and Doug Harder. The evening opened with a no-host bar, lots more old friends re-uniting for the 1st time in decades, then a sumptuous buffet dinner that never ran out of anything.

Following the meal, MC Doug Harder thanked all the committee and friends who helped make the evening happen and was himself thanked with an award for all his hard work. The V.I.P's were introduced and invited to 'say a few words' ... this lasted till almost 11pm. Then a band thumped out 'Golden Oldies' for the next 2 hours but hardly anyone danced as the camaraderie continued to 2 am. It was a grand affair, enjoyed by hundreds and an event that will live in the memories of many old rodder's to the end of their days.

BCHRA, the late '90s . . .

A few weeks later following the reunion at some wind-up committee meetings, about 40 of us decided we'd had so much fun, found that so many of the old clubs membership were still into rods, why not see if there was interest enough to resurrect the Assn. We spread the thought through personal contacts email and phone calls. The response was greater than we anticipated. A hasty executive was formed, meetings scheduled anywhere we could get a room and the numbers began to grow. New Assn. apparel was ordered, summer/winter jackets, t's, golf shirts, hats, crests and pins. The 'Headliner' was also resurrected with new artwork courtesy of George Bell and we were now in touch with all the members again. As the attendance increased, it became more difficult to find a meeting site large enough. We settled for the Lion's club hall in Ft. Langley and called it home for the next 3 years. A web site was developed and enabled us to reach more members than ever before. The membership was close to 200 and we adopted a charity, the Langley Equestrian Center to

assist with our money raising schemes. An ambitious group put together some fine displays for the larger indoor shows depicting a lot of the early fun times we enjoyed in our youth. They built 'Drive-Ins', 'Drag Strips', and set up booths full of early memorabilia and won many awards for their efforts. As in the past, the 'new' BCHRA is successful thanks to all the volunteer work of the now over 250 members.

BCHRA today . . .

Remaining a strong force in the rodding world in BC, the Assn. along with its now annual club events, is currently planning a 50th Anniversary. A committee of over 2 dozen is dedicated to the planning and presentation of another gala reunion that promises to be one of the premier 'gearheads' events of the 2007 season...

Stay tuned and experience what a bunch of 'rag-tag' old street rodder's can still accomplish !!!

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