

# CHICAGOLAND PT CRUISER CLUB

## NEWSLETTER



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## OCTOBER IS FRIGHTFULLY BUSY FOR THE CRUISER CLUB . . .

Don't miss the October Chicagoland PT Cruiser Club meeting as there will be much to discuss. The first order of business will be the nomination of new officers for the club. There will be six positions to fill. . .

President - Vice President - Treasurer

Secretary/Newsletter - Web Master - Events Coordinator

Are you interested? Do you know someone who would like to be nominated for one of these positions? The nominations will take place in October, elections will be in November and new officers will take over in January.

We will be handing out the new by laws for the club. Changes were made to the original by laws to allow a current member to remain an active member of the club even though he or she no longer owns a PT Cruiser :(

Although it is only October, we will have to decide on the annual Christmas party. Bring your ideas to the meeting. Anyone out there interested in chairing this event?

There are two events for October to choose from. The first is the Cruise the Dells. If you are participating in this event you should have already registered. This looks to be a fantastic weekend, a welcome party on Friday, a horse drawn carriage ride at the Lost Canyon, lunch and car show at Moosejaw Pizza and Dells Brewing Company and a train ride! This event has people coming in from six states, and is sure to be a fun time.

We are also participating in a car show on Sunday, October 9 in Long Grove. The money raised at this show will go to the Alzheimers Association. Registration for those who would like to compete (must be a modified PT) is from 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM. Registration is free. Everyone else can park and look at all the fantastic cars that will be on display as well as tour beautiful Long Grove shops and eateries.

## CHRYSLER – THE BIRTH OF THE PT CRUISER

We all drive a Chrysler car, but how many of us know what started this great company and how did we end up with a PT Cruiser? Over the next few months we will be featuring an article submitted by Bob Repin. Bob and his wife Judy recently purchased a new 2005 Signature Series PT and they were trying to get some history about the company and the car. The following is the first of a series of articles . . .

Walter Percy Chrysler was the founder of what is today known as the third largest North American automaker, the Chrysler Corporation. Walter Chrysler was born on April 2, 1875 in Wamego, Kansas. Several years later the Chrysler family moved further west to Ellis, Kansas where Walter's father worked for Kansas Pacific Railroad as an engineer. Walter spent much time with his father as a young boy, in the shops of the Kansas Pacific Railroad. That is where he developed an acute interest in the workings of a locomotive. After finishing high school Walter took a job as a sweeper at the railroad, working his way up to a machinists' apprentice. At the age of 18 he designed and built a miniature steam locomotive that ran on an eight of a mile track that he also built. As an apprentice Walter forged and tempered steel to make some of his own tools, these became known as the "tools that money couldn't buy". Walter was well on his way to making a name for himself.

Walter Chrysler finished his apprenticeship and received his Journeyman's Certificate at the age of 22. He then left Ellis to search for fortune. He went to work for the Rio Grande & Western Railroad in Salt Lake City. He quickly gained a reputation for being proficient at his profession. Many rail companies wanted Walter among their ranks. While working at Chicago & Great Western Railroad in Oelwein, Iowa he got his first glimpse of horseless carriages in the streets. The mechanical nature of these things naturally piqued the curiosity of Walter and led him to attend the 1905 Chicago Auto Show. There he saw a Locomobile Phaeton. It was white with a red leather upholstered interior. He bought it with his \$700 savings and financed the rest of the \$5000 price tag. He had it shipped home to Oelwein. After getting it home he proceeded to completely disassemble his new Locomobile. He did this several times to learn every detail of its workings and see if he could design and make improvements.

Chrysler moved again to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where he took a job as Works Manager for the American Locomotive Company. He made this move to gain management experience as he thought he would go no further with his current abilities in railroading. His reputation soon included proficiency as an executive as well as being an excellent mechanical engineer. It was this combination of extraordinary skills that impressed a director of the company, who also happened to be the chairman of the financing committee of General Motors. The Buick Motor Car Company was in need of a Works Manager. A meeting was arranged for Mr. Chrysler with the president of Buick, Charles W. Nash. After his many accomplished years in railroading, Mr. Chrysler was eager to accept the challenge that the automobile industry had to offer.

Walter P. Chrysler's automotive career started in 1911, as a Works Manager for Buick in Flint, Michigan. Buick had been the cornerstone on which William C. Durant built General Motors in 1908. Two years later, in 1910 Durant lost the presidency position at GM.

Buick was in dire need of an overhaul when Walter came on board, as production had slipped drastically. He went to work resolving many engineering and production problems. His reputation quickly included a tremendous ability in automaking and sound management. In 1916, W. C. Durant regained the presidency of GM and fired Charles Nash who was the current president of Buick. Walter Chrysler was made president and General Manager of Buick. When Durant found out that Walter was considering an offer to take over Packard Motors he offered him a raise from his salary of \$50,000 a year to \$500,000. He accepted. He was also named General Motors Vice President in charge of production. Now the other divisions with GM had the fortune of Mr. Chrysler's expertise.

Chrysler was promoted again to Executive Vice President of GM where he worked closely with Durant. He became troubled with Durant's style of business: constant over-expansion. Chrysler thought this was a path to imminent disaster. It was this disagreement in business philosophy that led Chrysler to retire from GM in 1920. His reputation in the automotive industry was immense. He had regained Buick's name as a synonym for soundness and quality. He had increased production from 40 cars a day to over 500 a day and helped GM reach a profit of almost fifty million dollars annually.