

# The Chalmers Automobile Newsletter

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## IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS

Tommy Nelson (member #4) recently sent me some suggestions concerning improvements for the Chalmers Registry. While restoring his 1917 Chalmers 35-B, Tommy realized that it would be beneficial for registry members to have a faster and more convenient alternative for exchanging information compared to the U.S. mail. Consequently, Tommy has suggested that I include telephone numbers in our membership list (which is published every spring). My policy has been to respect the privacy of all members who have provided me with their telephone number. The telephone number is an optional item on the registration form for this very reason. However, Tommy has a good suggestion and I would like to implement it while still respecting members' privacy. Therefore I need your comment and opinion on this matter; particularly if you do not want your telephone number included in the membership list. Depending on your feedback, I plan to include telephone numbers in the next publication of the membership list.

Another good suggestion from Tommy is to publicize Chalmers cars and parts that are for sale and/or wanted by registry members. In the past, I have intermittently advertised parts wanted based on individual requests. I think this could be expanded to a classified section in the newsletter if there is enough interest. So, this is a second item to send me your comments on; and include your list of Chalmers cars or parts for sale and/or wanted.

## 1916 CHALMERS "PICK-UP" UPDATE

Some of you may recall the June 1997 story in newsletter 2-3 about Tom Van Meeteren (member #14) and his unusual restoration of a 1916 Model 35-A "Six-30". The previous owner had cut off the rear section of the body and converted the Chalmers to farm duty as a pick-up truck. Tom sent me a photograph of the 1916 "Chalmers pick-up" truck, which I published in the article. The photo depicted a pick-up truck (with the help of some imagination) and the cut off Chalmers body parts loaded on a trailer. This was definitely a condition 5++ restoration project; here is a report of progress made so far.

The car has been restored to its original five passenger touring style with a blue body, black fenders, and pin-striped wheels. Fortunately the cut off rear section was recovered and six to eight inches of metal around the bottom had to be replaced. A new driver door was completely built from scratch because the original was missing. All four fenders needed reworking. Tom found an old body craftsman who moved metal (rather than using "Bondo") to repair the fenders; over 100 hours was spent on one of the front fenders. New front and side splash aprons were fabricated as well as side engine pans to control dust. The seats have been reupholstered with material that matches the original patterns based on remnants of the original seats. A new top with storage boot has been fabricated and installed. Gunk in the old gas tank was cooked out and the tank is now sealed with poly resin. The windshield has been updated with safety glass.

Rework of the engine includes a re-ground crankshaft, new poured babbit rod and main bearings, re-bored cylinders (to 0.030" oversize), new pistons and pins, and re-finished block and head. At first, the engine was so tight the starter

would not operate. Tom had to tow the Chalmers to get it started. He continued to run it in and loosen it up until it could start on its own.

In October, Tom entered his Chalmers in the Norfolk, Nebraska Fall Tour. The weather was chilly, especially with the top down, but a raccoon coat kept him warm during the tour. At the banquet that evening, the Chalmers received first place, People's Choice Award. Congratulations' Tom on an excellent restoration project!

### CHALMERS CLASSIFIED

WANTED - Front wheel (with 10 spokes) and hubcap for a 1917 Model 35-B "Six 30" Standard touring body - contact Tommy Nelson (member #4).

### HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHALMERS CAR FOR THE YEAR 2000

I thought that with the approach of the year 2000 (Y2K) and all the hype associated with Y2K preparedness, we should consider how to prevent Y2K problems for your Chalmers cars. The primary problem will be with all factory installed computers. When Grandfather Chalmers hired computer programmers in the early 1900's, he instructed them to save as much computer memory as possible (frugality was in his Scottish blood). He did not know it at the time, but this has the potential for creating computer errors when we roll over to 2000. Consequently, I have prepared a simple procedure, which you can follow, to prevent all Chalmers Y2K problems.

1. Make a list of all computer controlled devices on your Chalmers. Do not forget the *Chalmers computers* that may be used to control the spark advance, carburetor choke, heating/ventilation/air-conditioning (HVAC), anti-lock brake, and airbag systems. Note the manufacturer and software version number for each item.

2. Contact the manufacturer of each item and ask about Y2K readiness.

3. For those items which the manufacturer says can not be made Y2K ready, you will need to develop a strategy for taking action to mitigate any problem. Your strategy depends on how you drive your Chalmers and what year it was manufactured. For example, if you only drive short distances and the year of manufacture is early, then there should not be a problem due to the typically slow computer speed of that time. Longer distances combined with later year of manufacture will likely cause *year-bugs* to creep into your Chalmers. Driving across the International Date Line can cause special problems too complex to be addressed. So, some examples of actions you might employ are: keep your trips short, slow down, use reverse all the time, stop driving across the International Date Line, or simply *do nothing (after all, Chalmers is a 20<sup>th</sup> century car)*.

That's all for now and I hope everyone has a happy and healthy New Year!  
REMEMBER TO LET ME KNOW IF YOU DO NOT WANT YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER INCLUDED WITH THE MEMBERSHIP LIST.

Dave Hammond