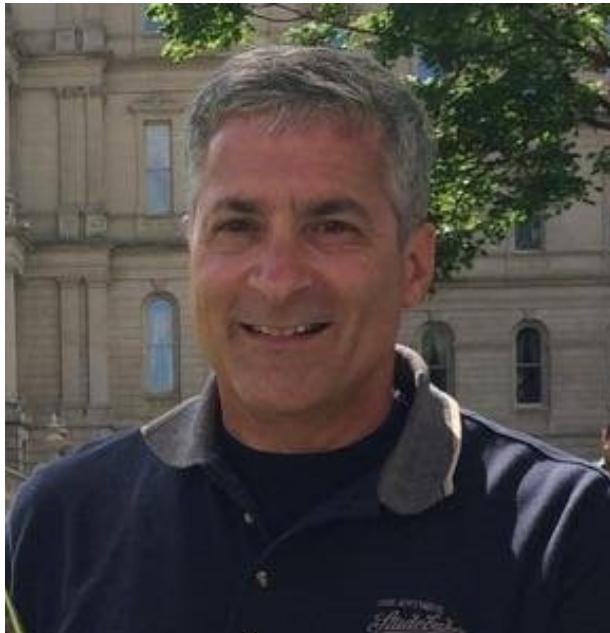


THE SPIRIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE
R.E. OLDS TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM

Jan–Feb
2021



Welcome Scott Mrdeza

So, a few things we know about our new Executive Director?

AncestryDNA says he is 100% Croatian.

His father, Bill, designed the transporter for the Saturn V first stage as part of the Apollo program.

His wife is Susan and he is the father of Dillon and Chad. He has 2 brothers and a sister.

He earned a BS in Mechanical Engineering at Oakland University while maintaining a 3.8 GPA, graduating in 1985.

He owned a 72 acre farm before moving into a Victorian style house on only 4 acres.

As a helicopter pilot he has flown Batman around and he ran into burning buildings as a firefighter for the Chesaning Brady Fire Dept Station 1. (We found no record of him leaping tall buildings or being faster than a speeding bullet.)

He owns Heliflite Heliport (MI46) and is a fight instructor. He has used his fight skills in conducting high school programs about aerodynamics.

He just retired from GM as an Engineering Group Manager working with a focus on chassis systems. He has his name on at least 4 US Patents.

He is the owner and restorer of an award winning 1923 Studebaker Light Six. He was runner up to the Best of Show winner at our 2017 Car Capital Show.



240 Museum Drive
Lansing, MI 48933
(517)372-0529

Mission Statement

The purpose of the R.E. Olds Transportation Museum is to collect, preserve, study, and exhibit those objects that will serve to illustrate the part Lansing played in the development of transportation with emphasis on the automobile and its effect on this community and its people.

Museum Hours of Operation

Tuesday through Saturday: 10 a.m.— 5 p.m.
Sundays: 12 noon— 5 p.m. (April— Oct.)
Closed major Holidays & Mondays

Admission

Adults: \$7, Seniors & Students: \$5
Families: \$15

Members: Free

Special group rates and tours available

The R.E. Olds Transportation Museum is a 501(c)(3), non profit organization

Email:

autos@reoldsmuseum.org

Website:

www.reoldsmuseum.org

Executive Director

Scott Mrdeza

Operations Manager

Rick Kaiser

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Director's Corner

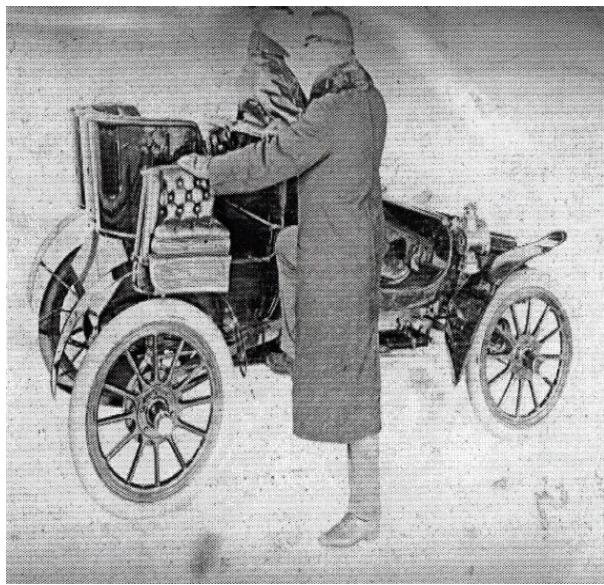
As I write this, the thought of taking over the reins from Bill Adcock as Executive Director of the RE Olds Transportation Museum is rather humbling. Although I have not been intimately involved with the museum in the past, the last few months of working with Bill, several Board members and the wonderful team of staff and volunteers has provided a great opportunity to see how much Bill and the group have done. Bill's tenure and background in construction came at a perfect time for the museum and, with the building ownership, a new roof and numerous updates, has created a structurally and financially sound base to keep the momentum going. I can't thank Bill and the team enough for allowing me to begin my leadership with such a solid start.

I have been an automotive engineer for over 30 years and am retiring from General Motors to take on this next adventure in my life. I have a lifelong love of history, vintage machinery and cars which really began with my Mother's love of antiques that surrounded me growing up. My first car was a 12-year-old 1967 Pontiac GTO that I bought when I was a junior in high school. After high school, I began working for GM Truck and Bus, in Pontiac, as a co-op student while attending Oakland University for a degree in Mechanical Engineering. After college, my interests shifted to aircraft and I started a helicopter training company. Once married, and with plans for a family, I decided to get back into engineering and re-joined General Motors, now working in Flint. My hobbies shifted back to my love of antiques and I furnished my home with restored furniture and a few choice pieces of equipment. When I bought and restored a vintage pump organ, my wife, Sue, knew she was in trouble as we really had no use for an organ as neither of us can play. I just liked how I was able to take a 110-year-old machine and make it operate like new (and it looks nice). Next were hit/miss engines, then a 1939 Allis Chalmers tractor, then

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REO

TRANSPORTATION
MUSEUM



An Oldsmobile Show Car

Early in 1903 Oldsmobile exhibited an experimental/show car at auto expositions in New York City, Cleveland, Ohio, and London, England.

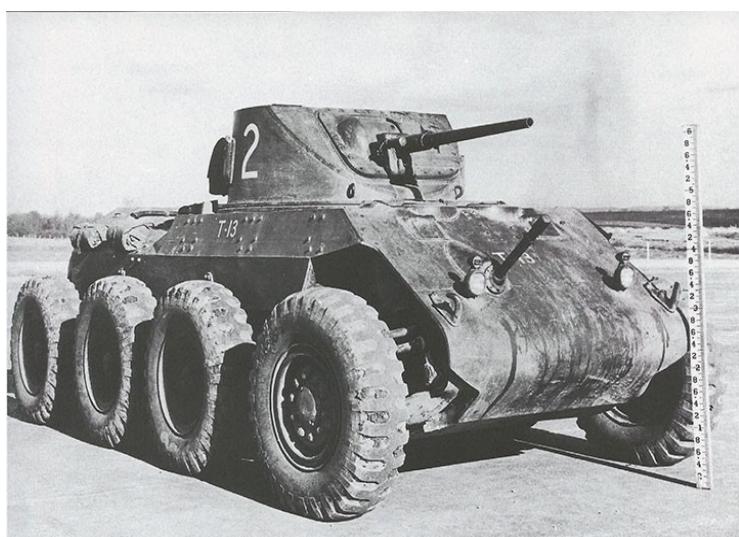
The vehicle was described in the January 28, 1903 issue of *Horseless Age* as: "The tonneau is a two cylinder car with horizontal opposed cylinders, developing 10 horse power. The transmission and the operation of the car are similar to the smaller cars (the runabout. Ed), the only difference being that all parts are made heavier to meet the increased strain due to the higher horse power. A novel feature is embodied in the body design, the tonneau being entered from the side instead of by a rear door. This is the only vehicle so far seen that uses this mode of entrance, the desirability of which is realized when it is seen that one can leave and enter from the curb instead of a muddy street."

"The tonneau is removable and allows of replacement by a flat touring back fitted for carrying a large hamper or luggage."

"The company have (sic) increased their plant considerably and are figuring on doubling their last year's output."

No evidence has been found indicating that any of these unique Oldsmobiles were ever produced for sale. Perhaps two were made based on photo evidence. Photos from the REOTM archives.

Researched and written by Dave Pfaff, REOTM Historian



T13E1 Trackless Tank Prototype — being tested at Ft Myer Virginia. Built by REO for the Trackless Tank Company in 1942. The Army had ordered 1000 but production stopped after only 2 were built. It was replaced by the T22 built by Chevrolet.

Origins of the Car Capital

Auto Show?

In the spring of 1915, the Lansing Chamber of Commerce began planning for the cities 1st Annual Automobile Day. The original idea was for it to be held sometime in the summer, but it was later moved to a later date. The thinking was that it would be a perfect fit for the Industrial Expo that was being held the second week of November. The Expo was to be a 6-day event highlighting Lansing's varied industries - their advancements and contributions to the world. With two major automobile manufactures in REO and Olds, along with multiple minor auto companies, Lansing was rightfully considered The Automobile Capital of the World.

The event would be a large showing of varied makes and models by their owners from around the state. Early showings of interest and registration boasted attendance projections to over 2,500 automobiles. Plans for the show included a parade down Washington and onto Michigan Avenue where the cars would pass by judges. The 10 Best Appearing cars (based on how pretty they were decorated) would receive prizes provided by local merchants. Promotions for the show included a "driving demonstration" given by a 105-year-old man who claimed to be the oldest driver in the United States. Also featured would be a display of "The Oldest Automobile in the State". [since Ransom was living in Lansing at the time could this have been our 1897 Olds?] Both REO and Oldsmobile promised to award 'valuable aftermarket and original parts' to those bringing the oldest versions of their cars.

Daylong events for participants included several contests of driving skills. There would be a "Potato Dropping" contest where the female driver would drop potatoes into a bucket as she drove the car drove by. A "Needle Threading" contest for men involved driving from one point to another where the man would get out and thread a needle (no magnifying glasses allowed), get back into the car and drive back to the starting point. A gymkhana style event was planned where points would be deducted for "killing a pedestrian" by hitting obstacles.

A highlight event would be "Time Trials" run on a downtown street with 'no speed limits enforced'. Both male and female divisions were planned. Since there were separate groups for both crank start and self-starting it appears that the driver must first start the car then race to the finish line. Winners with the fastest times would be declared the winners.

Everything looked like this was going to be a grand success – right up to the morning of the event when the skies opened, and rain began to fall. It appears that the organizers simply never showed up. The newspapers the next day reported thousands of people who came for the show were left to wander downtown Lansing wondering what was going on.

There is no record of a 2nd Annual Automobile Day in 1916 or any other year. The next time any type of major car show would appear in the news would be on August 28, 1923. As part of the Central Michigan Fair being held in Lansing there would be a gathering of automobile for public display as well as a race between a 1905 Curved Dash Olds and a One-Cylinder REO.



**E
FOLDS**
TRANSPORTATION
MUSEUM



1963 Olds J-TR

**If They Had Built
It—Would You
Have Bought It?**



Unveiled at the 55th annual Chicago Auto on February 16-24, the J-TR made the rounds of the national show car circuit in 1963. Was there in fact a Jetfire turbocharged aluminum V8 under the hood as the name implied? Bill Mitchell's styling group went wild on the interior. Check out the brushed aluminum door panels.



**THEY PROMISED US
FLYING CARS !**

What might GM have new for the 2022
model year?



4th Quarter Donators

GM Retirees Lars Anderson OCA Members

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Journey FCU Ted Holmberg Roberta Dewitt

Penny and Erik Sather Dr & Mrs. John Davenport

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Did you know that you can also help support the Museum when you make purchases on Amazon? Go to [Smile.Amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and select **Re Olds Museum Assoc Inc** as your charity of choice; .5% of every purchase you make on [Smile.Amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) will be donated back to the Museum! Don't worry! Item prices are exactly the same in [Smile.Amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) as on normal Amazon (but make sure to sign in through Amazon Smile)!





a vintage Stirling engine fan....the list goes on. Until, one day, I ended up buying a 1923 Studebaker Touring Car. That tied my love of vintage machines with my automotive career which is currently centered in the development of the next generation of electric vehicles, working at the Milford Proving Grounds. Today I have 3 orphan brand cars...the Studebaker (now restored), a 1939 LaSalle and a 1968 Pontiac 4 Door Tempest (family owned since new).

I am very interested in the early history of the automobile and the intricate web of names and manufacturers in those early days of automotive production. My desire for the museum is to continue to tell the story of RE Olds, grow and showcase its great collection and to tell the larger story of how the recognized names in the industry (Olds, Ford, Dodge) and the not so recognized names (Duryea, Hardy, Seldon, Leland), were all part of this narrative of what was happening elsewhere in the industry when RE was active in his companies. I want to do the same for the post-war era of REO and General Motors in Lansing.

I feel the museum needs to have a balance between some of the excellent fixed displays and the addition of several rotational displays to keep the museum “fresh” with changes. I plan to utilize my connections with GM, other museums, clubs and collectors to examine the sharing of artifacts. I will be adding focus to artifact preservation and would like our volunteer staff to shift their efforts to getting some of the museum artifacts in operational condition so we can participate in tours and shows and have a greater presence outside of the Lansing area to garner more interest and, hopefully, more membership, visitors and donations.

In 2021, we are planning to hold the Car Capital Auto Show, participate in several external shows and tours, build the long-awaited ADA compliant restrooms and begin work on a vehicle repair facility within the museum that can provide hands-on experience for local students. I have plenty to work on and will do my best to continue to make the RE Olds Transportation Museum successful. I am looking forward to the challenge and to meeting many of the friends and supporters of the museum.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean M. Murphy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Sean" and "Murphy" being the most prominent parts.

Executive Director, REOTM