

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

At the July 2014 Reo Meet in Lansing, the Club Archives received a box of Reo photos and copies of Reo literature and material. The material was generously donated to the Club by Deb Wehrin, a friend or neighbor of early Reo Club members Pete and Bobby Peterson. Their full names were Curtis R. and Barbara Peterson of Ellicott City, Maryland. They were Reo Club membership No. 99, and their principal Reo was a 1929C sedan.

The items printed here came from the Peterson collection. It's fun to be reminded of Ray Wood's 1975 business letterhead, and to read of the continuing Reo excitement after Ray, Norm Horsfall and Leonard Hoffman formed the Club in 1974. Ray's letter to Pete is referring to the sale of Diamond Reo to a liquidator. See the Cleveland "Plain Dealer" and WSJ articles printed herewith. The James Duncan mentioned in the Cleveland newspaper was in attendance at the July 2014 Reo Meet, and reminisced about those sad days in 1975.

While the copy quality is poor, because its newsprint, the Club will enjoy (especially the senior Club members) the *St. Alban's Newspaper's* December 9, 1978 photos of Ray Wood and "Tug Boat Annie." Most Club old timers remember Ray referring to his tow truck as simply "Tug Boat."

Pete Peterson also undertook a project of illustrating the locations of Reo car and truck serial numbers. It's especially helpful that the location of the "car" serial number, now called the "VIN" number, was identified. Seems the early Club membership applications included these drawings. We are working with Jim Zingaro to have these drawings placed on the Club web site, for ready reference. The three most frequently asked Reo questions seem to be: (1)

"What's it worth?" (2) "Where do I get parts?" and (3) "Where is the VIN?"

At least, we'll have a quick answer for the last of the big three questions.

If the Club likes "From the Archives," I'll try to submit them on a regular basis.

Jim Neal  
Membership #973

THE PLAIN DEALER, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1975

### Diamond Reo acquired

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (AP) — Diamond Reo, the nation's 10th largest maker of trucks before being declared bankrupt, was sold to an Ohio firm specializing in company liquidations yesterday for \$11 million.

U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Edward Benson said he asked officials from Consolidated International of Columbus, O., what they plan for the Lansing firm but received no indication.

Consolidated International, which had the high bid of \$11,050,000, was one of two bidders for the bulk of Diamond Reo's assets. The other was identified as International Easteners Research of Los Angeles, Calif.

Benson identified both firms as liquidators. He said the Los Angeles firm started the bidding at just over \$9 million.

Since Diamond Reo was declared bankrupt May 30, there have been a variety of reports about potential purchasers. One of those, James Duncan, a private investment broker, attended the sale but offered no bid.

Attorneys said the sale included Diamond Reo's inventory valued at more than \$27 million. The firm listed assets of almost \$38 million while owing almost \$40 million when it filed with the court last December.

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November 5, 1975

Dear Pete, and Mrs. Peterson,

How time does go... This REO-thing still continues to gain momentum- almost daily- as enclosed copies of a couple letter indicate. It's unbelievable.

The most digits I noted in REO serial, plus engine, numbers seem to the '29 REO Mates. Example:

Serial #	Engine #	
B2-14401	16E26174	
12345678	+ 12345678	: 16 spaces + one space between (17) makes 17 spaces.

There are about 6 or 8 REO Mates in the REO Club. Other REO models seem to have a digit or two less.

We enjoyed Hershey- even though the weather wasn't too cooperative. We enjoyed seeing you folks and the Jay Leonards.

I understand, by Charles Stebbins of Birmingham, Mich. and Rolph Fairchild of Fremont, Calif., went for \$11 million to Consolidated International of Columbus, Ohio. A copy of the clippings from Francis Silky of Lansing of the State Journal are enclosed. Will also send to Jay. Looks like the final end of the road of REO's 70 year career in Lansing...

According to the last letter from Jack Perkis, Norm Horsfall wrote him why not the Olds-REO Clubs acquire the historic REO Club House on So. Washington Ave. as hdqtrs, museum etc. An interesting suggestion, where- oh where would the money come from- and who would man it and maintain it???

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, Tuesday, Oct. 21, 1975

### Diamond Reo Assets Are Sold for \$11 Million

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich.—The assets of Diamond Reo Trucks Inc., a Lansing, Mich.-based truckmaker that was declared bankrupt in June, were sold for \$11 million by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court.

The buyer was Consolidated International Inc., a Columbus, Ohio-based company that describes itself as a "buyer and seller of automotive and truck parts." Consolidated said it would announce today its plans for Diamond Reo's facilities.

It appears doubtful that any plans exist to restart manufacturing operations at Diamond Reo, which was once a major heavy-truck maker. A Consolidated spokesman said the concern doesn't have any manufacturing operations.

Sincerely,

*Ray Wood*

Excerpted from "The REO Days of Glory" printed in the *St. Albans, VT Messenger*, December 9, 1978

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Those who remember World War I, 'the Charleston' and the big band sound of the 1930's may also remember the REO. Built between 1904 and 1936, this streamlined automobile transported Americans everywhere, that is, until keen competition and post Depression difficulties caused its demise.

Ray Wood, of St. Albans City remembers the REO and so do some 500 other persons belonging to the REO Club of America an antique auto club focusing on the old-time car.

Wood, whose father was a REO-Marmon (another rare car) dealer in St. Albans, is the editor of the REO Echo published by Vermont Publishing in St. Albans. The publication is distributed internationally to such places as South Africa and Australia. Members share a common bond; an acute interest in REOS. . . .

Alvin Woodard, who lives on Johnny Cake Hill, has a 1930 REO, originally sold by Wood's father 48 years ago. . . .

Residents might remember that a few of the St. Albans taxis during the 1920's were REO's. One, according to Wood replaced a horse drawn "hack" which used to meet the Montrealer when it pulled into the St. Albans Train Station.

Then, in 1922 REO buses replaced the electric trolleys running from St. Albans to Swanton. Wood also recalls a REO bus which ran between St. Albans and Burlington in the late 1920s costing \$5,400 on its delivery. . . .



ANTIQUÉ CAR FAN — Ray Wood, editor of the "REO Echo" is an antique car buff and regularly corresponds with other club members scattered throughout the World. While Wood loves almost all antique cars he has a special place in his heart for the REO, a line of cars (the trucks are still being manufactured) made between 1904 and 1936. (MESSENGER photo—Drew)



RAY WOOD with the old '25 REO tow-truck "Tug Boat Annie", still remembered by a few locals, is shown pulling in a disabled Hudson car up the east side of French Hill towards St. Albans in January 1939. (Photos Courtesy of Ray Wood)

In 1939, Wood gave his wife a ride in a REO tow-truck called "Tug Boat Annie." It was said to be one the most durable trucks in the area. "My wife never heard of a REO until I met her," said Wood.

Wood and his wife live on Congress Street where he receives correspondence from fellow REO buffs around the world. His club, founded in 1973 has been

increasing at an astonishing rate, and Wood gladly welcomes new members. . . .