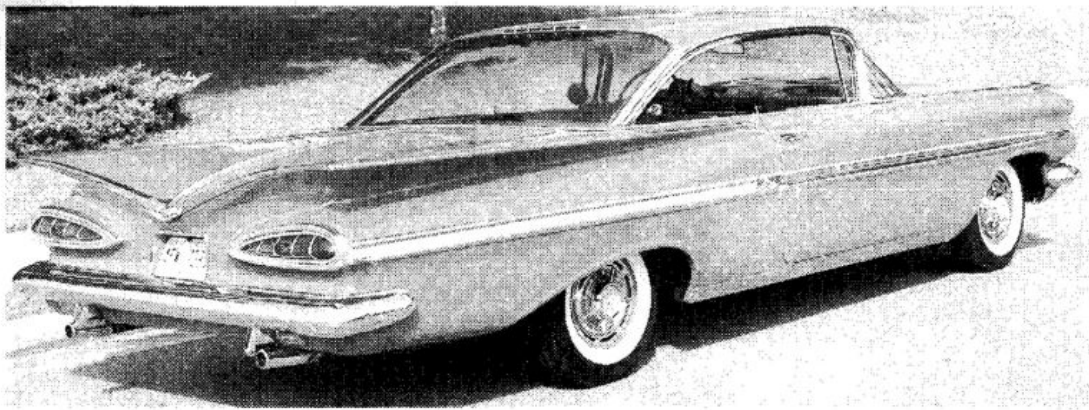


AutoSCENE

Pair-A-Dice Cruisers



The Pair-A-Dice Cruisers car club has a name some might find a bit too cute. But, hey, it recalls a day when big dice often dangled from rear-view mirrors, so the name is appropriate, especially when the club exists so members can have fun.

Based in the west metro suburbs, the club was founded by Ed and Mary Larson and Dar and Mary Lou Koecher, with its logo sketched on a bar napkin. The club's website says the group is for car enthusiasts "who buy, admire, drive, polish and show all types of cars, classic to new."

The last phrase is certainly true, though the club members interviewed for this article definitely skew toward Chevies. The Larsons' pride and joy, for example, is a 1959 Impala two-door hardtop, while the Koechers, currently "between classics," have a 2003 Corvette 50th anniversary model and a 2005 SSR. Larry Dalchow, who likes the club because members "take the initiative to do something besides go to meetings," drives a '67 Camaro SS and an '87 Monte Carlo SS. And new club president Darryl Goskey owns a '53 Chevy cab-over truck and a '55 Chevy two-door sedan.

The club's many social events include picnics, hayrides, go-karting and holiday parties. It's even held two just-like-in-high-school adult proms. Club members also clean a stretch of Wright County highway, take car cruises — including spring and fall weekend jaunts to places like Lanesboro and Duluth — and visit auto museums, collections and shows. Many members collect automotive memorabilia. The Koechers' collection, for example, includes 700 oil quart containers, 30

pedal vehicles, die-cast models, restored gas pumps and more. (You can arrange to see it free by calling 763-477-4908).

Club members bring their cars to an area nursing home each spring as part of a barbecue party. "It's very rewarding to see the smiles on their faces," Ed Larson says of the home's residents.

The club's big show is at Delano's city park each August (the 19th annual show is August 11). It attracts more than 200 cars, with three trophies awarded in each of 21 classes. The show stays true to the club's philosophy of fun, first and foremost. There's a DJ, door prizes for answering automotive questions, plus muffler and pipe rapping contests measured by decibel meters. There are also awards for the loudest car stereo and the best paint job, flames, upholstery, mascot and license plates.

There's also a slow drag race. The idea is to be the slowest to drive 50 feet without stopping or using the brakes. Judges at each car's wheel raise a flag when a wheel stops moving. Three flags up and you're out. Winners can take three minutes to finish the course.

Originally, you could join Pair-A-Dice Cruisers by buying a club jacket. Expenses for mailings and a monthly newsletter made annual dues of \$12 necessary, however. So, while the club counts some 200 members, about 50 are currently active.

The club will stay true to its founders' vision, predicts Dar Koecher. "We'll keep having a lot of fun and enjoying the cars." For more information, visit www.pairadicecruisers.com (or .org), e-mail padcruisers@aol.com or call 763-498-0055. ■

— Jim Bohan
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