

SPRING 1967

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# KF magazine

*Racing the Moon...*



*through the tunnel of night...*

" M Y K A I S E R " by Ken Knauf

My wife hates Kaisers. Yes she does, and very vehemently. If I were to tell you some of the terrible things she has said about them, you would be shocked!

She knows how I feel about our Kaiser, and she knows how very much I enjoy the KFQC publications, so like any good, dutiful wife, which she most certainly is, she lets me indulge myself in this particular make with only a minimum of derogatory lip.

She must never know -- I have never driven a Kaiser.

You see, our Kaiser -- correction, MY Kaiser, does not run, and did not when I bought it. Now I know YOU understand purchasing a non-running car, but I had best clarify this for the sake of the non-believers:

It was, as I remember, shortly after World War II when some play-mates of mine -- I was about eleven years old -- vowed me to secrecy if they would show me something their dad had stored away. I agreed, and was led to an old tin building, which still stands, and inside was one of the earliest Kaisers. It was blue, and had the interior push-button doors, and smelled so new. I must have been impressed, for the incident is so clear in my mind it could have happened yesterday.

I can remember a particular 1949 Frazer, all two-tone green and chrome... and a 1951 green Frazer... and (again green) a Henry J. But most of all, I remember a two-tone blue 1954 Kaiser Manhattan. I saw this car in a Milwaukee dealer showroom, while I was gathering material for a research paper I was doing entitled "The Thousand-Dollar Car" -- which epic I'm sure you have never heard of. A local radio announcer did drive an identical blue Manhattan for a couple of years, but he and the '54 dropped out of sight long ago.

Well, time passed -- I got a B-plus on the paper, and many things changed. The local Kaiser garage has been a municipal parking lot for many years, and fewer and fewer Kaiser products are seen around.

While always having been a great admirer, I never seemed to be in the right place at the right time.

Then, in May 1964, while on a routine visit to the local wrecking parlor -- also since liquidated -- I glanced down the line and saw the radio announcer's '54. It was in fair shape, and with the left front tire flat, looked like a friendly cocker spaniel. The Kaiser had reason to look friendly, because it was fourth in the line to be cut up. The "hot wrench" was really bearing down on it! I made several ridiculous promises to my wife, in order to convince her that we really needed a seventh car, and a non-runner at that. I was successful, and the Kaiser was promptly moved out of line. The rest is anti-climactic. Numerous projects have taken precedence to its restoration. But some day I will be on the road with it, fulfilling a desire that has been waiting over seventeen years.

To drive a Kaiser!

## KAISER-FRAZER OWNERS' CLUB

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## ORGANIZATION:

The Kaiser Frazer Owners' Club of America is a nationwide organization, founded and chartered in 1959. It is an incorporated, non-profit organization whose sole purpose is the preservation of and promotion of interest in the automobiles manufactured by the Kaiser-Frazer Corporation and the Kaiser Motors Corporation. Inquiries concerning the nature of the club and its activities should be directed to the officers of the club.

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"A spoken word and a thrown stone cannot be recalled."

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Tom:

I see that you are going to save the test Kaiser. I hope you can get the title. I found an early Kaiser, hood supports but not a Graham-Paige. The junk yard does not have the title. If I can get a bill of sale I might be able to get the department of motor vehicles to issue a new title for me. (I hope) This car is really in great shape for a junked car - inside clean and body sound. Also, I am sending you a picture I came across of my Henry J.

Dave Tag  
Baltimore, Md.

\*Perhaps it should be clarified that the Graham-Paige name appeared only on the Frazer, not the Kaiser. Dave's beautiful Henry J. is featured on page 22. Ed.

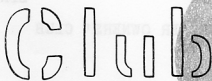
Dear Tom:

This Christmas has been made very happy for me, when I received the KFM and saw that I was a winner in the contest. I was just overjoyed. I am in favor of another contest showing both cars and girls. The model, Terry Gamble, who posed for my pictures was very happy indeed. Should there be any extra calendars, she would like to have one.

Ferd Staub  
Turtle Creek, Pa.

Dear Tom:

I wish to congratulate you for your fine efforts in originating the Miss K-F photo contest and the Kaiser-Frazer calendar, so that we can be K-F minded all year long. Mr. Godshall's article "Frazer, product of G-P" was very interesting. I wondered if Mr. Godshall was associated with K-F, since his article has so many facts about the Frazer. Mr. Godshall mentioned a third K-F product with a rear engine. I have read of Mr. Wm. Stout, of Stout - Scarab fame. He constructed a rear-engine auto of impressive performance (cont. p. 24)



# Club

from the HAMILTON JOURNAL  
Hamilton, Ohio, 1/28/67

Hamilton will be host to the first national convention in this city in several years on July 20, 21, and 22, when the International Kaiser-Frazer Club meets here in conjunction with the 15th annual Antique and Classic Car Festival and Parade.

Many regional, state and district conventions have been held in Hamilton in connection with the Antique Car Parades, but the attraction of the K-F club national convention is a first for the Antique and Classic Car Club of Butler County which sponsors the parade with the Hamilton Association of Trade and Industry.

K-F members from all over the nation are expected to be in Hamilton for the three-day convention which will be climaxed by the annual parade. Milton Mehl, president of the club, said nearly 30 automobiles have already been registered for this years parade and registrations can now be made by contacting Parade Headquarters, 6 Court St., Hamilton, Ohio.

Cars from the earliest manufacture up through 1942 models, in various classifications, are eligible for the parade.

Since the first parade was held in Hamilton 13 years ago, Hamilton and Butler County have become the center of ownership of old and classic cars. It is now estimated that antique car and classic car ownership in Butler County is greater, on a per capita basis, than any other portion of the United States.

# Features



from the METRO-EAST JOURNAL  
E. St. Louis, Ill., 1/16/67

from the WICHITA BEACON  
Wichita, Kansas, 2/1/67

## ODYSSEY OF WANDERING REPORTER WITH A RELUCTANT FRASER

It isn't every day that a fellow has a chance to drive cross-country in an unrestored 1951 Fra-er Vagabond, so naturally when my chance came I snatched it up. Some people wouldn't think of such a thing, but then everybody isn't lucky enough to belong to the Kaiser-Frazer Owners Club. I figured it was pretty much of a bargain, to get such a rare car for a mere \$150. Besides, I always wanted to go to New Jersey or someplace.

A Vagabond is a car that looks like a sedan but unfolds like a station wagon. Fifteen years ago they sold them by the dozen. Obviously, the public wasn't ready for this gem. Then Frazer was discontinued and its sister automobile, the Kaiser, struggled on for a few years. So naturally, I jumped at the chance to pick up a genuine Vagabond when I ran onto one the other day. Who wouldn't? (never mind.) The owner, Lt. (jg) Richard Langworth, U. S.C.G., suggested towing the car back to the Land of Lincoln. Well friends, it didn't take a moron to figure out that to tow, you need something suitable to tow with. So I decided to drive it, although a few thoughtless people hinted that it was a fool's errand. As if eight or nine hundred miles

(cont. p. 16)

## WICHITAN OWNS RARE K-D AUTO

The current demand for sporty "personal cars" that has brought about the introduction of the Mustang, Camaro, Cougar, and now the Firebird was anticipated over a decade ago. The first group of limited production sporty vehicles appeared in the early 1950's. The fibreglass Nash Healy, the first of the Corvettes, the Muntz, the very early Thunderbirds, and the Kaiser Darrin were among these cars. One of the rare Kaiser-Darrin cars is owned by Wichitan Larry Rivers, who acquired the car seven years ago. Rivers' K-D is one of approximately 435 made in 1954. It sits on a 110 inch wheelbase and has a fibreglass body that weighs just 345 lbs. The body is of very unusual design, although it appears more in keeping with today's cars than with those being built when it was produced. The styling was done by "Dutch" Darrin a famous body man who designed the Kaiser Darrin along the lines of an earlier custom Packard. One of the most unusual features of the K-D is the doors - they open by sliding forward into the fender. Another feature is the top, which can be used in three positions, full up, half back, which gives the car the air of a true boulevard landau, and full down. The top, completely hidden when in the full down position, has

(cont.p. 25)

# Kaiser • challenge

As the leaves rustled, blowing about the yard last fall, so whispered the voices of rumor. Someone said there will be a Wagoner sedan from Kaiser in the near future. A friend wrote of hearing from another friend that doors for a convertible were being stockpiled in Detroit, for the Kaiser plant in Toledo. The Kaiser-Frazer Bulletin reported of a possible Kaiser passenger car, a friend suggested the possibility of a new offering by Kaiser, about January. Now it is 1967, the "new offering" is a reality, hundreds being hauled away from the Toledo factory, national advertising proclaiming it, new models in the showroom . . . and the talk has not died. Would ownership qualify one for KFOC membership? Will members and other "Kaiser lovers" eagerly buy them, feeling it will be a true Kaiser vehicle? Is it a Kaiser?

What is a Kaiser? Here are some comments of K-F owners, taken from membership blanks and published in the Summer 1960 Kaiser-Frazer Quarterly: "good car", "outstanding cars", "excellent car - best I've had", "beautiful styling", "Kaisers are tops with me", "best riding car yet...best looking car yet", "outstanding car, modern way before its time!", "beautiful and practical", and many, many more. And from the folder "The 1947 Kaiser Special" we quote: "This 1947 automobile had to be all new. There were no old dies and tools, no precedents - no hampering traditions even. The car was developed as the best possible expression of wartime advances in engineering, design, and manufacturing technique. The result is everything you have hoped to enjoy in a postwar automobile -- modern lines that achieve beauty through functional design and provide maximum interior roominess; a new weight distribution that means remarkable riding comfort;



First Kaiser offered to public featured fenders that flowed from front to back in one line and a passenger compartment cradled between front and rear wheels. Such features placed Kaiser far in advance of contemporary automobiles.

# of '67

KF

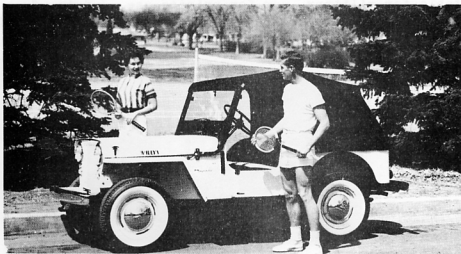


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100 hp, and a horsepower-to-weight ratio that results in an amazing performance with real fuel economy." A Kaiser then, appears to be a passenger automobile that excelled in beauty and comfort, that combined functional arrangement of passenger space with this comfort, that provided high performance (for its time) with economy.

Does the 1967 offering fit this description of our "Kaiser?" From the Saturday Evening Post, January 28, 1967, p. 66: "Only Toledo could build this rugged rascal ... that's where Jeep ruggedness comes from! Now its built into a bold new sportscar. ... and world-famous Jeep 4-wheel drive is standard equipment. Flip one simple lever... you can leave the crowds behind, and blaze your own trail! Testing is believing. Test the adventure and safety of Jeep 4-wheel drive. Climb a mountain. Cross a creek. Take the gang right down on the beach." Surely this is not the same type of vehicle described in the previous statements about the "Kaiser." Further, the ad for the 1967 offering bears the name "Kaiser" only in small print in the lower right corner of the text.

Such a short examination of descriptive literature is too simple an approach to arrive at any intelligent conclusion, however. The 1967 offering is called the "Jeepster", a combination of the words "Jeep" and "roadster." If the reader will allow us to take a liberty of assigning the "Jeepster" to a "Jeep" brand or category of automobiles (what could be simpler) then we can present a comparative pictorial history of what we consider to be two lines of vehicles:

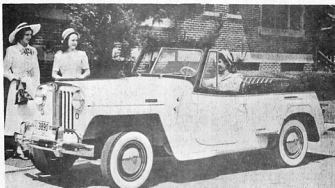


After War, Willys offered general public a vehicle which was practically identical with the durable vehicles seen on the battlefields of Europe. The theme was one of utility and service, rather than luxury and comfort. Beautification was confined to hub caps and paint job.

turn to p. 8

To conclude, we feel that the choice of action, or who determines the action, does not lie with the Kaiser-Frazer Owners' Club, nor with this publication. Any person is free to join the KFOC, whether he owns a Kaiser, Frazer, Jeep, Essex, or nothing but a pogo stick. No person is going to pretend that any 1967 vehicle is going to compete for any award as a "classic" or relic of any kind. Competition for such a car would have to be based on performance, such as reliability runs or the recent river-bottom excursion of Scouts, Broncos, and the like, rather than restoration or preservation. Even "Special interest" would not be a feasible category, as the car can be seen in a showroom in almost any community.

The 1967 Jeepster should be accepted for what it is, a ruggedly-built cross between a utility vehicle and a sports car, rather than pretending that "the 1967 Kaiser is out." The IaSalle, a beautiful and exciting car by most people's standards, was discontinued by General Motors more than a score of years ago. That company survives today, producing .cont. next page)



Army "Jeep" became "Jeepster" around 1948 with addition of such luxuries as divided windshield, doors, back fenders, slanted back, and "v"-contoured grille. Vehicle was no longer suitable for military, nor for private use, judging from public acceptance. Willys continued as major supplier of the original type Jeep, however.



Attempting to break its own record of advanced styling, Kaiser presented drastically redesigned 1954 model. Streamlined styling was again one-up on the competition. Kaiser acceptance by public and new styling combined to make car an immediate success. Emphasis was again on beauty and comfort.



several lines of cars and trucks. Do we call a G.M. truck a LaSalle? The thought is absurd! The name LaSalle does not appear on the truck, even though the name of the parent company does. Nor does the name "Chrysler Corporation" make a Dodge truck a Chrysler. The same is true of the Kaiser-Jeepster relationship.

Will Kaiser lovers accept this car? Many would, but only if they, as individuals, were in the market for a utility/sports type vehicle. Many would not, as they favored the Kaiser for its beauty and comfort. A point of economy may also be made. One who favors a Kaiser can buy one for from about \$50 for a junker to \$700 for a really well-preserved specimen. For less than \$1000 he may own several cars for several different uses, such as trophy competition, shows, transportation to work, hauling, parts, etc., whereas purchase of a 1967 model will certainly represent an investment in excess of \$2000!

The challenge of 1967 is yours!



Kaiser continued emphasis on beauty and comfort in 1954, its last full model year, by face-lifting its 1951 original design. The car was loaded with a more massive front end, plush interior, and huge taillights, but the public wasn't having any. They wanted a V-8, which Kaiser didn't have. Sales zoomed... downward.



1967 offering is called the "Jeepster 4-wheel drive sports convertible." Major improvements over earlier jeepster model include smoother side styling, roll-up windows, luxury interior. Interior includes bucket seats and sports-car type console, but basic form and construction of vehicle remain same as original wartime utility model.

Due to circumstances beyond our control, reprint of Motor Trend, 1956 Kaiser Road Test will not appear. Instead, we are reprinting three ads contributed by Bob Davis, Afton, Wyoming, on pages 10, 11, and 26.

# How are you going to buy your next Car?



The KAISER Convertible

- 2 SHOPPER?** Shop them all. Let the salesmen tell you their stories. Sure, the Kaiser salesman will be most convincing! Why not? He knows that dollar for dollar his product has what it takes—in economy, in trouble-free performance, in lasting value. More than a quarter-million satisfied owners agree—after more than 3 billion value-proving owner-driven miles!

## KAISER

4500 KAISER-FRAZER DEALERS INVITE YOU TO—

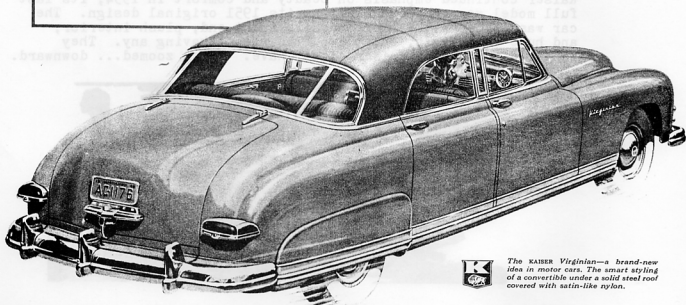
**RIDE - THEN DECIDE!**

- 1 LOOKER?** Look wherever you will, you'll find the Kaiser way ahead in advanced styling, in advanced engineering and mechanical features, in roominess and comfort. Look at the Kaiser's years-ahead design. As other "new" cars are announced the Kaiser keeps on being America's most copied car.



The KAISER Special

- 3 DRIVER?** Put the Kaiser to every test you know. Learn what the highest-compression engine in its price class will do. Take the roadworthy Kaiser over bumps and around curves. A satin-smooth ride, minimum side-sway and vibration! Triple-control steering brings a new thrill to driving. You'll like it—for keeps!



The KAISER Virginian—a brand-new idea in motor cars. The smart styling of a convertible using a solid steel roof covered with satin-like nylon.

Hear! Hear! Hear! *Walter Winchell* Every Sunday...same time...same station!



**Production schedules doubled  
at Willow Run this year!**

*Compare the Ride!*

KAISER and FRAZER owners say they enjoy a ride unequalled in any other car. Try it!

*The Frazer Manhattan!*

In nine months it has become the largest-selling car in its class! Because it offers buyers the greatest postwar value!

SEE IT AT  


LAST YEAR, we produced 125,000 KAISER and FRAZER cars. While this broke all production records for a first year in the industry, it was only the beginning. For we still have tens of thousands of waiting customers.

This year we will do far better. The world's only 100% postwar automobile plant is about to hit its full stride! Willow Run has the capacity—and we have scheduled production at a rate *double* that of 1947. So go to your nearby K-F dealer and discover the difference between *prewar* and *postwar* cars! Drive one of these sensational products of ultra-modern engineering and styling! You can get one, now, almost as soon as you would like to have it.

KAISER-FRAZER CORPORATION • WILLOW RUN, MICHIGAN



**FRAZER**



The Kaiser as Henry wanted to build it.

KAISER FEATURES: A PORTRAIT FOR YOUR COLLECTION

HENRY MERIAN



The Kaiser as Henry built it.

## "IS SOMEONE MISSING THE BOAT AGAIN?"

by Art Glenn

The Kaiser Jeep Company's advertising in newspapers, magazines, and by television has either neglected or overlooked a made-to-order source of advertising. That is the hundreds (perhaps thousands) of fine Kaiser products still giving excellent service and dependability after ten to twenty years of service.

As a professional engineer with over twenty years service in both industrial engineering and university engineering teaching, I have been "sold" on these cars since their introduction in nineteen forty-seven. At the present I have a Darrin Sports Roadster (10,000 mi.), a 1954 Manhattan two-door, and 1954 Special four door. All were purchased new and are in excellent condition. I recently purchased a used 1951 Frazer four door convertible and had hoped to completely restore it to the same like-new condition of my other Kaiser products. Restoration is now about 90% complete but some chrome body parts are impossible to obtain, as are some parts for the Kaisers. I have written the company offices in Toledo, Ohio and in other eastern cities, also the Kaiser-Frazer warehouse in Chicago, and many individual club members. None of them can supply some of the needed parts.

I feel sure that there are many other frustrated owners of these fine Kaiser automobiles who cannot obtain parts. Will these many, many, interesting cars soon disappear because of the inability of their owners to obtain parts? In an area within a 50 mile radius of my home in western Pennsylvania are two Darrins, two Dragons, and a club coupe, eight sedans (1951 to 1954), one 1947 Frazer Manhattan, one 1951 Frazer Vagabond two 1951 Frazer four-door convertibles. A little addition will show a total of seventeen Kaiser products operating in this small area. Therefore, I am sure there must surely be literally hundreds of these fine motor cars, in good condition, displaying the Kaiser name and demonstrating Kaiser ruggedness, beauty, dependability, and engineering advancement.

How many times I have heard comments such as the following, from people looking at my cars:

"So this is where they (meaning the other manufacturing companies) got the idea for the oval shaped headlights!"

"Why did they stop building cars like these?"

"Kaiser certainly was first with the depressed hub steering wheel!"

"This must be an expensive foreign car."

"They are nicer than the new models."

"These were certainly built for safety."

There have been many, many more complimentary comments. I was

(cont. next page)

amused by a policeman's description of my 1954 Kaiser 2 dr. on a parking ticket last year as a "new imported sports car."

It is my firm belief that it would "pay off" richly in advertising alone for the Kaiser Corporation to continue to supply unavailable parts to their many unofficial sales representatives all over the nation, both in the club and out, in order to keep these cars before the public.

The writer is not familiar with the intricate details of automobile manufacture, but feels this short dissertation would not be complete without saying that there is certainly a market for five thousand or more units of a vehicle like the 1954 Kaiser. Let us just dream for a moment. Try to visualize the 1953 Kaiser Dragon with an all-vinyl pleated and rolled interior, large pull-down arm rests (to hold and cushion the occupants), a dash with Darrin instrument cluster recessed in the 1954-type dash padding, a recessed-hub steering wheel like the airline styling of the 1954 except with tilt and telescoping action, a non-glare adjustable rear-view mirror recessed in padding, padded sun visors, power steering and power disc brakes, Kaiser safety windshield and tinted glass, no vents in front side windows (air exhausts through vents in the back), huge over-the-top-of-fender tail lights like the 1954 Kaiser, dual stacked head lights in the oval chrome rims, a vinyl-covered top with the back opening to make a "carry all" like the Kaiser Traveler." Now, as if this weren't enough, add the Kaiser hood air scoop and dragon's mouth grille, with 1954 type bumpers that stand slightly away from the body to help cushion contact. Then with the low center of gravity, sensible headroom, add a roll bar, and power with the present Kaiser Jeep V-8 or V-6 power plant with automatic transmission, and the greatest innovation in any passenger car SELECTIVE TWO OR FOUR WHEEL DRIVE.

It would seem to me that all of this would involve a minimum of design, development, and engineering. It would show good faith with the government's "safety-design program," and would not have to compete with any other automobile being produced, since none are being produced with the same design and features described.

It would be impossible for this writer to hazard a guess as to the number of units described that would need to be marketed in order to break even. However if this point could be achieved, wouldn't it be worth doing for the publicity and advertising value?

