

Antique Outboard Club News

Southern California Chapter

April 2021

First Meet of the New Year! Out with 2020! In with 2021!



Our group celebrates Spring and the New Year at Les' Place!

What might be our last visit to Les Gunnarson's residence....on a hilltop in Orange; our group gets together and enjoys fabulous pizza cooked on-site by Les' son-in-law Craig. Thanks again Craig! It was a beautiful day; Kip Fjeld brought a batch of motors that had been donated to the Club by Les' Estate. They were quickly snapped up.....to become restorations in progress in preparation for them to roar across the lake once again.

From left to right: Darryl Webber, Marsha Brinkman, Russ Czuleger, Paul Brinkman, Larry Feece, Mark Strikwerda, Tom Lockwood, Doug Penn, Charles Peterson, Frank Fowler, Glenn Strobehn, John and Mary Van Dyke, Bob Loll, Kip Fjeld and Craig Smithback. The photographer; Chuck Kober, isn't in the picture so we photo-shopped in a recent shot of him. What outboard is that; Chuck?



We're going to remember the Mountain-top in Orange



**Chapter President Paul Brinkman and his wife Marsha
Great to see you Marsha!**



**Mary Van Dyke seems to be eyeing the last of the
pizza on John VanDyke's plate. Give her some;
John!**



**Kip Fjeld came to the meet with several motors for sale
....and lots of expertise in cooking Pizza! Man of SO
many talents!**



**Craig Smithback accepts a Certificate of
Appreciation from Paul Brinkman.**

Thanks to Paul Brinkman for another great meet!



Glen and Yvonne Lane manned the oven!
When the Chef eats the food.....you know the rest!
Can't blame you Glen; FABULOUS PIZZA



Newest Member Charles Peterson enjoys lunch and a chat with Larry Feece. We're still going to see you after your move to Arizona; Larry?



Everyone loves Glen and Yvonne's Pizza. Different from any I've ever had!



After we were all fed Glen and Yvonne take a much needed break.

A great turnout; 30+ of us had a great time!



Desert! Pizza!!
DESERT PIZZA!!!



Chuck Kober does a double-take after spying something of interest among the raffle items.



Larry Feece and Doug Penn have lunch in the Motorcycle Garage.



Kip shows great form with that blade! Sliced a few pizzas in your day; eh Kip? Thanks for your help!

A Short History of Neptune Mighty Mite Outboards Made in Cordele, GA

By Doug Penn



Most collectors are familiar with the Neptune outboards made by the Muncie Gear Works of Muncie, Indiana. Under the brand names of Muncie, Neptune and several others, they produced a line of outboards from 1930 to 1951 that included horsepower ranging from 1.2hp to 16hp. In 1951 Muncie announced that they were ceasing production of the outboard line to concentrate on Korean War production of jet engines. The 1952 January show issue of *Yachting* announced their demise.



In 1954 Muncie Gear Works returned to the outboard motor market. They reintroduced only one model, the 1.7hp “Mighty Mite” which had, prior to this time, been labeled the Jr. Single and Model A1. The very first reference to the moniker “Mighty Mite” we can find is in the 1954 Boat Show editions of the major boating magazines. At this time they also announced the transfer of outboard production from Muncie, Indiana to Cordele, Georgia. Muncie Gear Works produced outboards at Cordele from 1954 to the early 1970’s. Those Cordele GA. engines are the focus of this article.

A Model AA1A currently on Craigslist

Cordele, Georgia is the county seat of Crisp County. Other than claiming to be the “Watermelon Capital” of America, it really isn’t much different from a lot of other small cities all across the Southern U.S. Its location, just off I-75 between Atlanta and the cities on Florida’s West Coast, made it a transportation hub. Several major Southern Railroads had junctions in Cordele in the late 1800’s, right up to WWII. Population in the last census, 2020, was 11,000 plus. It was probably much larger in the period right after WWII and into the 1960’s when Mighty Mites were being produced.

Does anyone alive today know the reason for the restart of outboards at Muncie and the move to Cordele? Probably not, but if you take into account the industrial move of factory production out of the unionized Northeast and Midwest to the Sun Belt to take advantage of cheaper labor and less government restriction plus the fact that Muncie already had a plant there that made air handling equipment, it would seem to have been a logical move. My wife Jane and I spent a couple of days there in January 2017, plowing through the records at the local historical society and reading the local newspaper accounts of the times. Turns out the building where the outboards were produced is still standing and very much alive. Marvair Company makes air conditioner parts in the same building, pretty much as they did back in the days of the Mighty Mites.

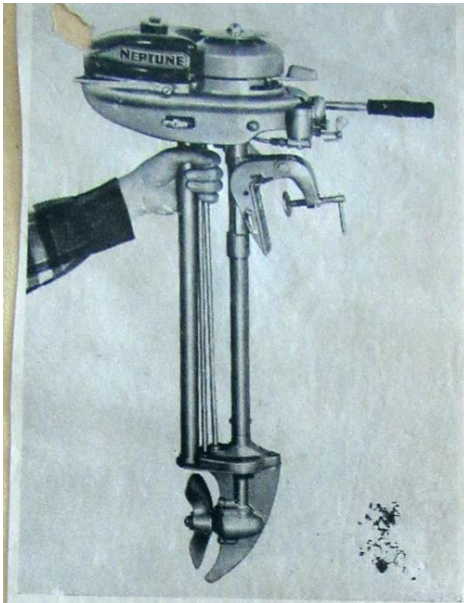


The Factory Bldg. in Cordele in 2017

The first Mighty Mites from Cordele were almost certainly assembled from left over parts, shipped down from the main factory in Muncie Indiana. In fact it is very unlikely that any of the component parts were ever made on site. It is our belief that the Cordele plant only assembled and finished the engines. The proprietary parts came from the factory in Muncie. The vendor parts were shipped from outside sources: Tillotson carburetor and Recco Phelon ignition were major suppliers.

The first engines, made 1954-56, were labeled model "AA1" on the brass flywheel plate. There were also A1 engines which were left over when the shut down came in 1951. The ID plate also includes an alpha numeric serial number. No one, we know of, has ever been able to decode those serial numbers. The very first engines had red/orange heart shaped fuel tanks. The rest of the engine was painted dull silver. The later AA1 models had maroon tanks. The dull silver was retained for the rest of the engine.

Below: 1955 News Clipping



THE 1955 Neptune "Mighty Mite" is specially adapted for family boating, since it features extreme light weight and compact design with plenty of power.

In spite of its light weight of only 17 pounds, costing \$79.50, Mighty Mite furnishes 1.7 hp. at 4,000 rpm. Overall engineering is precision-controlled, based upon 25 years of manufacturing experience with this type of motor, a product of Muncie Gear Works, Inc., of Muncie, Indiana.

At Right: 1954 News Clipping -----

A major change came about in 1957 with the model AA1-A. This engine had the same color scheme but the fuel tank shape was changed to square, with a flat back and a decal that announced "Made in Cordele Ga." The side covers were changed at the same time to accommodate the square back tank. It is possible that the AA1 engines had the "Cordele" decal on the back of the tanks as well.

1961 brought about a major change in cosmetics. The new WC1 model was introduced in early 1962 although the announcement was probably earlier. It was basically the same engine with very minor changes except for the gold paint job. The Mighty Mite "Goldbug" Model WC1 remained the same for most of the next decade.

► Muncie Gear Works, Inc., of Muncie, Ind., will concentrate its entire 1954 output on its Neptune "Mighty Mite" model outboard motor. Weighing only 18 lbs., this machine is capable of producing 1.7 hp. at 4000 r.p.m.

Because of its small size and weight, the "Mighty Mite" is expected to appeal particularly to weekend or flying fishermen, for use where the size of motor is restricted, and for dinghys, canoes and sailboats.

Features of this latest Neptune motor include a moisture-proof magneto, self-lubricating Amplex Oilite bearings, 13 to 20 gear ratio, aluminum semi-weatherproof carburetor, water exhaust, centrifugal pump cooling, and non-flooding automotive type carburetor.

List price of the "Mighty Mite" is \$79.50.

04/22/2021

At the end of the 1960's Mighty Mite history gets cloudy. The outboard division at Cordele Ga. was sold by Muncie to a holding company who resold it to TMI TerMar Inc. who were to relocate the production to Lehigh Acres, FL. The main focus of our day at the archives was to try and determine exactly when the physical transfer to Lehigh Acres took place.

You would think that the transfer would have been noted in the local newspaper as Mighty Mite and the companion air conditioner company Crisp Air would, with over 65 employees, have been one of the city's major employers. We could find no mention of their demise.



Model 700; TMI



Mighty Mite III; Mighty Mite Marine

From then on the Cordele Mighty Mite history gets even more nebulous. The Mighty Mite Model 500 was supposedly produced in Florida. However, examples of the Model 500 have been found in at least three different color schemes including the WC1 gold paint job. They all have the “Cordele Ga” decal on the tanks. Were these later models made in Florida, or still back at Cordele? This investigation continues. It could be the basis for another Mighty Mite article.

The Mighty Mite brand struggled along for another twenty years under different owners until it finally settled with Mighty Mite Marine in Old Lyme CT in the 1980's. It was a better and more modern outboard. Sadly it was hardly recognizable as the iconic Mighty Mite.



How to order repair parts

1. In ordering parts, write plainly, giving Model and Serial Number of motor (stamped on rope starter plate); then list parts wanted by part number and name.
2. To insure prompt delivery, always include remittance, including postage for carrying charges, and state sales tax.

A minimum charge of \$3.00 will be made for orders of less than that amount.

ALL PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

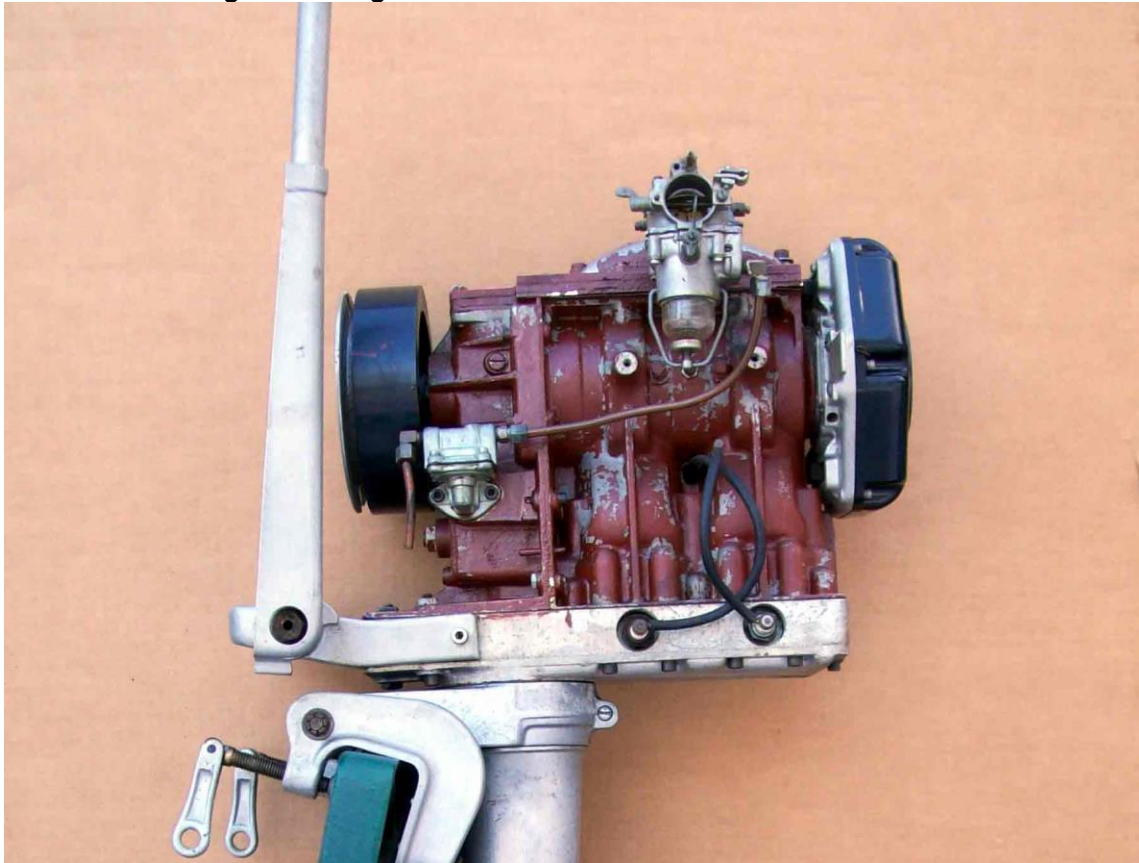
CANADIAN PARTS DEPOT
Longwood Equipment Co., 132 Rollside Rd., Don Mills, Ontario
Dealer Minimum \$10.00

WARRANTY

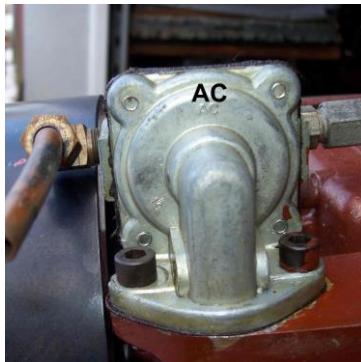
The Neptune "Mighty Mite" is warranted free from any defects in workmanship and materials under normal use and service for a period of one year from the date of sale to the original user. Our obligation under this Warranty being limited to replacing or repairing at our factory in Lehigh, Acres, Florida, any part or parts returned to us and which our examination shall disclose to have been thus defective. All parts, assemblies and complete units must be returned with transportation charges paid, and we will not be liable for any labor or other expenses, damage or loss occasioned, or claimed to be occasioned by such defective parts.

TMI TerMar, Inc.
P. O. Box 998, Lehigh Acres, Florida 33936

Mystery Motor! What is it?



Some Hints Below



Can you identify it? The Answer is on Page 12.

Website Library Additions

More keeps getting Added

The Library section of the Southern California Chapter website is expanding....little by little. Use it as a resource and tell your friends. The files on the site turn up in world-wide searches and hopefully will be useful to people outside of our little group. It also serves as a way for our Chapter to draw attention to itself.....hopefully resulting in new members.

<http://socalaomci.com/library>

YOU have things to add. Think about it and lets get more up there!

New Member SPOTLIGHT

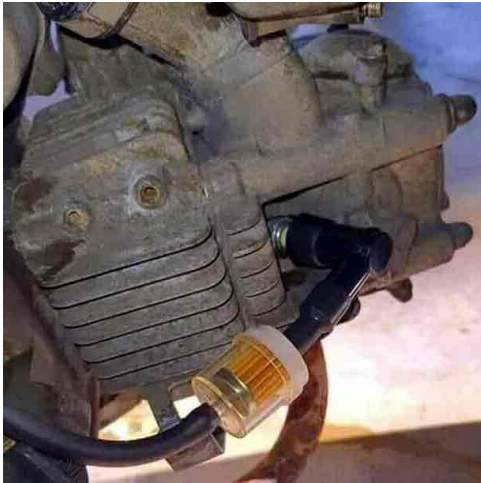


Meet Charles Peterson

Welcome Charles; great to have you!

Charles hails from Chula Vistaand found his way to Les Gunnarson's place; a feat all in itself.....and then proceeded to snap up TWO of the motors offered for sale! Way to go Charles! We hope you had a great time and a great lunch at your first meet with the Southern California Chapter. Tell us more about your projects!

The Quest for Spark



A Good Clean Spark is Vital.
Who says we can't learn something from the motorcycle guys?



I think it's fair to say that
ALL ELSE FAILED HERE!
In case you are wondering....that outboard is a "BIYSK" (Russian)





The Wizard was sure at work here.....I wonder if outboard coils are ever used on cars or is it just the other way around?

Buy/Sell/Trade Section

WANTED TO SELL/TRADE

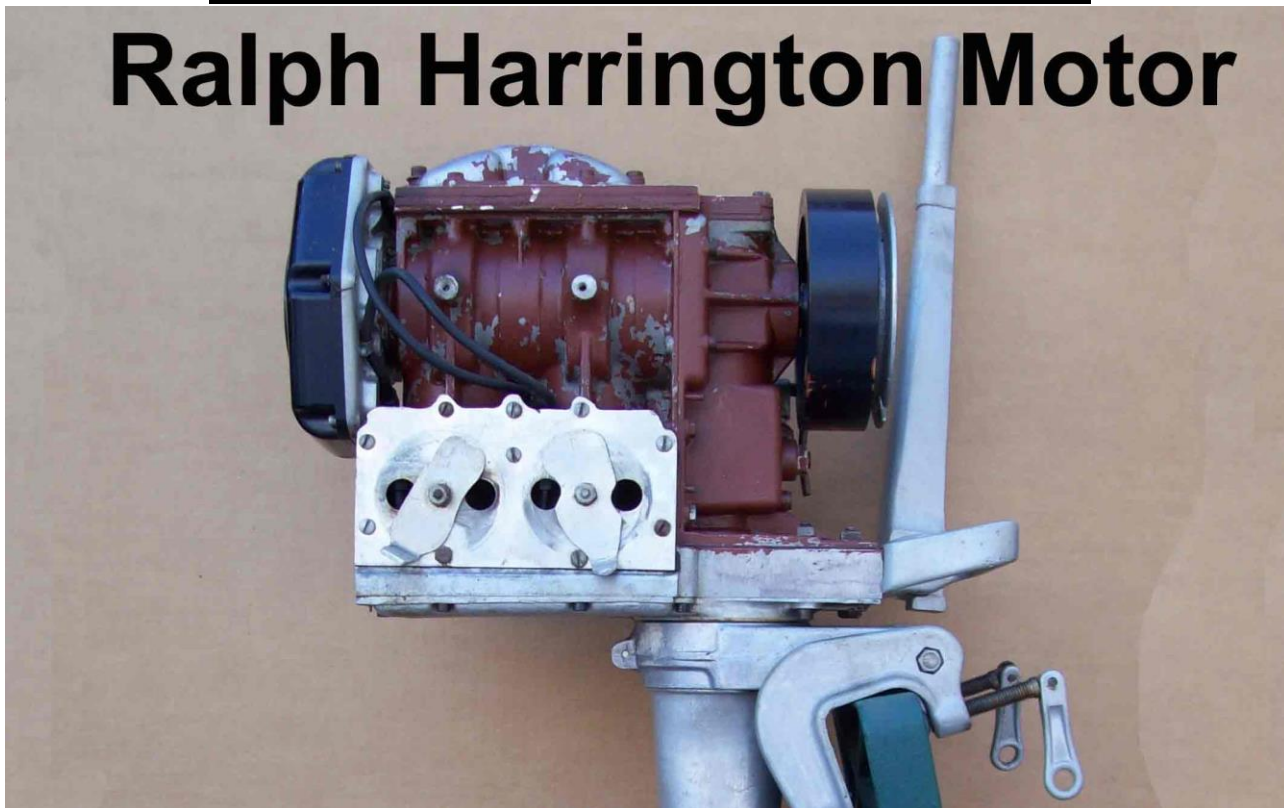
	<p>1950 Evinrude 4389 Lightfour 9.8HP</p> <p>Complete</p>	<p>\$100.00 or Trade</p> <p>Contact Doug Penn douglas.penn@gmail.com</p>
	<p>Elto Pal 1937 Beautifully Restored</p>	<p>\$800.00</p> <p>Contact Paul Brinkman</p>
	<p>Johnson 3HP <u>LONG SHAFT FOLDER</u></p>	<p>Club Motor \$125.00 Including Nice Stand</p> <p>Contact Paul Brinkman</p>
	<p>1951 Johnson 25hp RD11</p> <p>Has mounting for aftermarket remote controls but no controls</p>	<p>\$100.00 or Trade</p> <p>Contact Doug Penn douglas.penn@gmail.com</p>
	<p>Sailmaster/Yachtwin 10" Extension Parts Convert your 9.9 or 15HP OMC to a 25" Shaft . Extension, Driveshaft, Shift- shaft and Water tube</p>	<p>Offer/Trade</p> <p>Contact Chuck Kober cwwk@cox.net</p>

WANTED TO BUY/TRADE

	<p>Always looking for a West Bend 18HP Shark.</p> <p>Any Condition. Ugly is OK but not too ugly.....</p>	<p>Contact Chuck Kober cwwk@cox.net</p> <p>Let me know what you have.</p>
 <p>Wanted</p>	<p>14' Aluminum Boat Gregor H-42 or Equivalent On Trailer Motor or No Motor.</p>	<p>Cash Paid. Tell me what you have.</p> <p>Contact Chuck Kober cwwk@cox.net</p>

Answer to the Mystery Motor Quiz

Ralph Harrington Motor



You are looking at what is probably a one of a kind “experimental racer” twin cylinder designed and built by Ralph Harrington; a racer and an engineer at Champion. It is currently owned by Minnesota AOMCI Member Harry Nicholson who has furnished these pictures and information about the motor. It is not known what year it was built but some features are reminiscent of a 1949 Merc KF9 such as the rope start, direct drive, AC mechanical fuel pump with remote fuel tank, and a water pump in front of the prop.

The purpose of the horizontal crankshaft with pistons below it may have been to lower the center of gravity.

Some features: (Engine is estimated to produce 15-20HP)

- Tillotson MD32A Carburetor with a Bowden Cable Throttle taped to the tiller.
- The magneto has a lever fire manual control of spark advance.
- Transom pads like those used on 1940-1956 Champions.
- All castings made expressly for this motor. Only the fuel pump, carb and magneto are out-sourced
- The flywheel is thick iron; No shrouds are known to have been used.
- The vertical driveshaft has a gear on top (driven by a crank gear), and a gear 8" below that one which drives a gear for the fuel pump cam.

Want to Join the Nationals?

Please see Tom Lockwood or Paul Brinkman.

The benefits of National Membership are many and varied. The small annual fee gets you a beautifully done magazine “The Antique Outboarder”, access to the full aomci.org website, Member Registry and unlimited fun at meets all over the country.

The Application for submittal can be found at:

[/ https://aomci.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/
New-Membership-Application-AOMCI-19.pdf](https://aomci.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/New-Membership-Application-AOMCI-19.pdf)

Next Meet Information:

Chapter President Paul Brinkman is working on it! Your suggestions are always welcome. Not only suggestions as to where we should meet....but suggestions relating to activities at our 2021 meets. What would YOU like to do at up-coming meets?

Watch your e-mail for more details