

SAH JOURNAL

THE SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS, INC.

March-April 1990

Issue Number 125

EDITORIAL COMMENT

SAH goes electronic; sort of. No, we don't have a system allowing you to make an electronic funds transfer of your dues, nor can we transmit *SAH Journal* direct-to-you at the speed of light via satellite. But enough of us have become computer literate in this information age that we can at least make modest use of our newfound technology.

This was brought home to me recently when member D.J. Kava submitted a manuscript for *Automotive History Review*. Along with his typed, word-processed manuscript, he included a 5¼ inch diskette, with files in both his word processing format and ASCII text. I could not use his wp file directly, but the ASCII file was easily converted and I was able to accomplish the final editing quickly, and to easily produce a "clean" copy for our typesetter.

While no means obligatory, submitting manuscripts in diskette format is very helpful to me, especially for items destined for the *Review* (one- or two-page letters and other items for *SAH Journal* need not come in diskette form; typewritten copy is fine, preferably double-spaced, and if you don't type I'll figure out a way to read your handwriting). Since I use an IBM-compatible personal computer with the ubiquitous MS-DOS operating system, all "magnetic manuscripts" should be on 5¼ inch DSDD DOS-formatted diskettes. I use both WordStar and WordPerfect, so files from either of those programs are fine, and I can also convert directly from MultiMate. If you use other than the above, sending an ASCII text file is your best bet.

There's a potential down-side to all this technology, of course. With the means for heavy duty editing so readily at hand, I might be tempted to do more of a hatchet job than heretofore. I won't though. If I've made a radical departure I'll send it back to you for review, as I have done since assuming this job last year. Publishing quality manuscripts is my goal, but I want *you* to be happy with them, too. And, no, I *won't* blame the mistakes on the computer.

— Kit Foster

NEWS

JOSEPH TEACHES RESTORATION

Society president Matt Joseph is currently teaching a course on auto restoration at the University of Wisconsin – Rock County, in Janesville, Wisconsin. The course, entitled "Old Car Restoration: Grass Roots Historic Preservation," runs for nine Thursday evenings; it began February 22nd.

Presented in a lecture format, the course covers automotive renovation from the philosophy of restoration to mechanical repairs, body, and interior work. Interspersed with the technical details is advice on how to be an intelligent consumer of restoration services. Topics such as selection of professional restorers are being covered.

Matt Joseph is the proprietor of the Martinsville Antique Transportation Technologies Company, in Cross Plains, Wisconsin, a restoration and consulting firm. He has taught history and other motoring-related courses at the University of Wisconsin, and has been featured on numerous public radio programs.

SOCAL LITERATURE FAIR

The Southern California Chapter will hold their eighth annual Literature Fair and Exchange on Sunday, June 24, 1990 at Pasadena City College, Colorado Boulevard at Hill Avenue, Pasadena, California. This popular automotive literature, memorabilia, and collectible swap meet features free parking and free admission. Vendor spaces (20 x 20) are \$15.00, available from Bill Lewis, chairman, 600 Kiama Street, Anaheim, CA 92802. Bill reports that many of last year's vendors are returning, and that the event promises to be about double the size of two years ago.

GRANT SOURCES SOUGHT

At the February 9th board meeting in Philadelphia, it was brought to the board's attention that the Toyota Foundation of Tokyo supplies grants for international research. This information came courtesy of member Raymond Vaes in Belgium. Recognizing that there may be other potential sources of grant funds in our area of interest, we would like to compile a list of same. If you know of any possible sources of grants for automotive history research, archive collection or preservation, or publication, please communicate them to *SAH Journal*. We will publish a list at the earliest opportunity.

1990 SILENT AUCTION

The SAH Silent Auction, such a successful fund raiser the last two years, carries on in 1990. This year, director Tom Deptulski will take over the receiving and cataloging of material, and Tom asks that all items contributed for the auction be sent to him not later than June 30th.

The Society welcomes gifts of automotive books, literature, photographs, artwork, and most any kind of (small) automobilia. As in the past, a catalog and bid sheet will be sent to each member in August, and bidding will close on or before the first day of Hershey. Auction results will be posted at the Society tent at Hershey and at the annual banquet on Friday, October 12th.

Please send all material to:

Tom Deptulski
18745 Codding
Detroit, MI 48219

no later than June 30th.

Last year the auction netted nearly \$7000 for the Society treasury. Help us fight inflation by contributing your excess literature and automobilia to this major fund raising effort.

DUES DEADLINE APRIL FIRST

The Society by-laws adopted in October 1988, and which became effective in August 1989, require a member to be placed in a state of suspension if dues for the current year remain unpaid after April first. Accordingly, if you have not paid dues for 1990 this is the last *Journal* you will receive. Renewal notices were mailed last autumn, and a reminder for non-renewers should have been received by the time you read this. If you have not yet done so, please remit your dues of \$20.00 (US) to secretary Jim Cox at P.O. Box 339, Matamoras, PA 18336. We don't want you to miss a single history-packed issue of the *Journal*, nor the *Automotive History Review* which will follow it.



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Subscription to *SAH Journal* is by membership in the Society of Automotive Historians. Dues \$20.00 per year.
Membership inquiries and renewals should be sent to the Secretary at P.O. Box 339, Matamoras, PA 18336.

AT THE MUSEUMS

SMITHSONIAN SEEKING RACING CARS

The Smithsonian Institution, the United States National Museum, is launching an effort to augment its collection of American racing cars. The museum has a few early racing vehicles, including the 1904 Winton Bullet II, a 1906 Stanley Steamer, and some more recent cars including Mario Andretti's 1967 STP Indy car, but it has no racing vehicles for the period 1906-1967.

Recognizing the importance of auto racing both as a sport and for its contributions to automotive development, and noting that the centennial of the first auto race in the United States will be observed in 1995, the Smithsonian is seeking suggestions from racing historians as to cars it should attempt to acquire.

The museum is also actively seeking donations, either gifts or bequests, of significant examples of American racing cars, and funding for acquisitions of such cars, from individuals, corporations, or foundations.

Eventually the museum plans to mount an important exhibit of American racing.

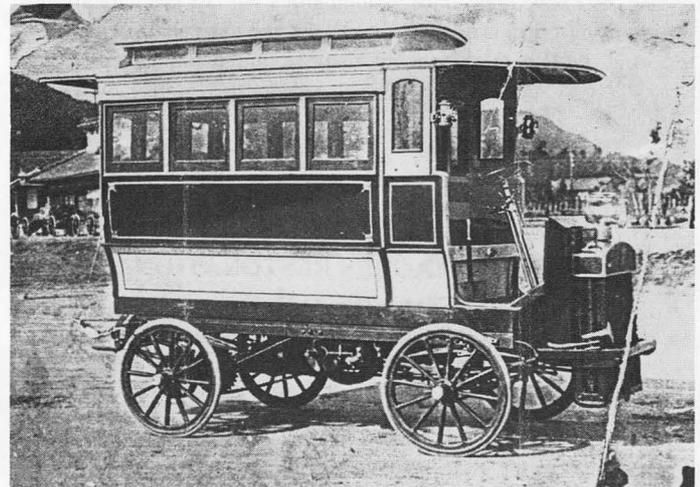
Since the Smithsonian's storage and exhibit space is limited, the museum must be selective in what it can accept. As the nation's premier historical institution, it seeks to display American racing vehicles that played an important part in the sport, or that typify significant racing types, including Grand Prix cars with an American connection.

SAH member Gordon White, now working at the Smithsonian as a specialist in auto racing, will coordinate the Museum's efforts. He can be reached either at the Smithsonian's Transportation Division ([202] 357-2401) or at his office at Box 3067, Alexandria, VA 22302 ([703] 836-2922). Mr. White will be glad to work with all racing historians and others on this important project.

SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS
TREASURER'S REPORT - Cash Accounting December 31, 1989
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1989

INCOME	
Dues	\$11440.00
Interest	173.30
Contributions	1314.50
Other - Decal Sales	226.75
Other - Publication Sales	587.00
Other - Silent Auction	6382.72
Voided Check to Kit Foster - Decal Expense	33.96
Awards Dinner Receipts	1664.00
Refund from Brigham Books	860.00
SUB-TOTAL	\$23032.23
Closing Transfer from T. Rowe Price (Reserve Fund)	157.81
TOTAL INCOME	\$23190.04
EXPENSES	
Publications Expense (Brigham Press)	\$ 8967.20
Printing, typesetting, layout, postage and mailing	
Other - Decals	3.55
Non-Profit Corporation Fee, Indiana	10.00
Liability Insurance (J.C. Taylor)	476.00
Award - Cugnot Benz Expenses	1479.46
Award - Bradley & Friend of Auto History	686.80
Silent Auction (Printing)	691.95
Contributions (Detroit Museum and Library)	200.00
Secretary's Expenses	1017.98
President's Expenses (Stationery)	90.83
Awards Dinner Expenses	2210.00
Public Relations (George Cutlip)	200.00
Board Meeting Expenses	200.00
Grace & Dick Brigham (History of SAH)	1000.00
Refund for dues overpayment	20.00
Returned checks by bank	43.15
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$17296.92
Balance in Checking - December 31, 1989	\$ 9415.92
Balance in Reserve Funds (Vanguard) - December 31, 1989	\$29821.57
CHANGE in Reserve Funds from 1988 to 1989	\$ 2390.31
TOTAL in Reserve Funds and Checking	\$39237.49
CHANGE in Total Funds from 1988 to 1989	\$ 8283.43

Respectfully Submitted,
Robert J. Gary, Treasurer



MYSTERY BUS

This mystery comes to us from Hayden Shepley. It looks very much like the archetypal two-cylinder Autocar, a nice example of which was in Austin Clark's collection for many years, but Hayden assures us it is not. It has two cylinders, like the Autocar, but has chain drive rather than the Autocar's shaft. Readers?

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

INTO THE MAINSTREAM

Change in any important area of human endeavor always breeds public interest in that area of endeavor. In the last half of the 1980s there was tremendous change in every aspect of world automotive affairs. The product itself changed more in the last five years than in any similar period since the end of World War II. The methods and processes of producing cars underwent the beginning of a revolution; the completion of that revolution is promised in the next decade, and beyond. By the dawn of the 21st century, the materials, operating systems, and configurations of automobiles will, for the most part, bear little resemblance to what is being put on the road today.

The production of automobiles is rapidly becoming a global business and is being promoted on a scale that dwarfs most efforts of the past – the efforts that historians study and report on.

One result of all this change, and the dislocations and relocations that are inherent in it, is that a great deal is being written in the popular press chronicling, documenting, and analyzing recent events in autodom. Much of this is focused on recent history and short term prognostication. Take, for example, the case of General Motors. In the last few years we have had popular books like *Call Me Roger* (Albert Lee), *Rude Awakening: The Rise, Fall, and Struggle for Recovery of General Motors* (Maryann Keller), and *Irreconcilable Differences: Ross Perot versus General Motors* (Doran P. Levin). A more general appraisal of GM, and of the U.S. auto industry, *Changing Alliances* (Dyer, Salter, and Webber), was widely read, and the surprise hit film, "Roger & Me" (Michael Moore), will be seen by millions of people. More generally, analyses of automotive affairs and pop automotive histories, like the enormously popular Lee Iacocca polemic, and David Halberstam's *The Reckoning...* have been tremendously popular and influential.

Now all of this might be of only passing interest to automotive historians, were it not for the fact that the authors of these works have, with varying degrees of ability and sensitivity, delved into the history of the automobile as background or foreground for their analyses and prognostications.

There was once a food company, I think they made pickles, that had a slogan that went something like this: "If a young man likes a young woman, that's his business. If a young woman likes a young man, that's her business. But if they both like pickles, that's our business."

The history of the automobile is *our* business. And there's the "rub." Much of what has been written about this important subject – in some works cited above, and elsewhere – is rubbish, adulterated with an occasional correctly stated fact or sound interpretation. Some of these books average two or three factual errors per page. At least one of them routinely compounded misstatements of fact into interpretations that were at best, fanciful, and at worst, good-old-fashioned stupid.

I suspect the incredible levels of error and interpretational superficiality that are evident in the "history sections" of many popular works that deal with automotive products and affairs derives from the fact that the authorship of these works rests with writers who have no particular grounding in automotive history. They don't know, and they don't take the time, or make the effort, to find out. In most cases, they use automotive history only as an embellishment to their scintillating analyses and profound theories; so getting the facts perfectly right is not a matter of high priority. That's too bad, because there are people – many of them in our Society – to whom automotive history is not a fuzzy, amorphous blob, but a distinct body of stated fact and accepted or emerging historical interpretation. To these professionals, automotive history is an on-going enterprise in discerning historical truth.

It angers me when a shoot-from-the-hip writer misstates the entire history of a marque in a passing reference in a popular book or article; when I know that there are people who have devoted decades of their lives to researching and understanding the history of that marque perceptively and correctly.

There is more involved in this than a personal pet peeve. Often, these defective historical backgrounds are used in contemporary works on automotive affairs as the bases for elaborate theorizing. Computer people have a word for what happens, "GIGO," or "garbage in garbage out."

Part of the blame is ours. Many of us read the kind of thing that I am talking about and resign ourselves to misstated facts and silly interpretations with the reasoning, 'well, it's just the popular press.' We should stop making that allowance.

I hope that in the future more popular books that contain elements of automotive history will be reviewed in this publication, even if automotive history is not their primary focus. If they contain error, or are imperceptive where our subject area is discussed, I hope that this will be pointed out in this and in other automotive publications. Of course, when they get things right, they should be praised for that. I hope that our members will write to the organs of the popular and automotive press that give favorable reviews to books that contain bad elements of automotive history and protest those good reviews. When the automotive and general presses publish material that contains errors in automotive history, we should protest the errors. We won't generally raise the level of writing on the automobile immediately, but we could and should have an effect.

As this industry and its products continue on the path of radical change, we will probably have plenty of opportunities to add our "two cents worth" to what is written, and to what is written about what is written. I think that we should do this. I think that it is our responsibility.

The minutes of the early February SAH Board meeting appear elsewhere in this *Journal*. It was a long and particularly productive meeting. There were a couple of highlights of the meeting that I would like to emphasize.

Through the efforts of Howard Applegate we have found a new site for our annual banquet. The board accepted arrangements to move our annual Hershey banquet from the Harrisburg Marriott to the Palmyra Country Club. The Country Club is located on the eastern edge of Hershey. Aside from being vastly more convenient to the Hershey area, and providing adequate parking, members will find the menu and ambiance at the Country Club to be an improvement on what we have had at the Marriott. The Marriott served our purposes well for almost a decade, but I think that most members will find the Country Club a distinct improvement on it.

Your board adopted two important changes in SAH's internal operations that should improve our financial stability and our efficiency in serving members in the future. We are beginning to adopt a budgeting system for our expenditures. In the past, expenses have been handled on a sum-sufficient basis and it has been difficult to project our financial condition very far into the future. The new system will involve a one year transition period, after which every expense incurred by SAH will be posted against a budget and tracked by an account number.

The second internal change was pioneered by Shelby Applegate when she was our Membership Secretary, and then Secretary. It involves the conversion of membership data to a computerized data base. Shelby had largely completed this conversion at the time of her retirement as Secretary. David Babb, our new Membership Secretary, is now completing what Shelby started. He informed us at the Board meeting that all member information has now been entered in a data base. You will see evidence of David's work when our membership directory is issued later this year.

It will be the first such directory that we have generated entirely from a computer data base. It is very possible that the enormous economies of producing the directory this way will enable us to issue it annually, instead of biennially, as has been our practice in the past.

At the Philadelphia meeting, your board discussed revising our brochure. The old brochure was largely the work of John Peckham, and has served us well. However, much of the text in it has become obsolete and there was a general feeling that we need a new brochure. Howard Applegate volunteered to look into the design and production of a new brochure and he should have something ready for distribution later this year, or early next year.

One important new use for our brochures involves an offer from the Eastwood Company to use their extensive old car hobbyist mailing list and facilities to help us recruit new members. Curt Strohacker, President of Eastwood, has offered to put an item in his catalogs stating that Eastwood will send an SAH brochure to those who indicate that they would like to receive one, on the Eastwood order form. Eastwood will then do the "fulfillment" on this item by mailing a brochure to anyone who indicates that he wants one, or by including a brochure with the merchandise order, if merchandise is ordered. Eastwood's active mailing lists are enormous and this generous offer was enthusiastically accepted by your Board.

Since becoming president of SAH, I have received some mail that contains information about funding sources for automotive history projects. I emphasize that these sources are limited in scope and number, but they do exist. When your Board discussed the matter of outside funding for automotive history, it was agreed that Kit Foster will gather a list of known sources and publish it in the *SAHJ*. As information is received, he will add it to the list to keep it current. If any members know of such sources of funding, please drop Kit a line, so that he can include them in the list that he will compile and publish.

Since taking on the responsibility for the renewal of our brochure, and adding that responsibility to his load as Cugnot/Benz/Brigham Awards chair, Howard Applegate asked to be relieved of the chairmanship of the Archival Committee, if a suitable replacement could be found. Taylor Vinson was easily persuaded to head this committee, and this change was made. Taylor will undoubtedly do a superb job in this capacity.

A change next year in our membership intake format will have renewals sent directly to our treasurer, Bob Gary. This will involve additional work for him and he asked if a replacement could be found to undertake his silent auction duties. Tom Deptulski volunteered to receive and catalog contributions for the auction, and his offer was accepted. The other half of Bob's silent auction job – collating and tabulating the bids that come in, will also be assigned to someone else, in the near future. Any volunteers?

It would be difficult to adequately appreciate the work that Bob Gary has done, and continues to do, for SAH. Aside from the considerable effort involved in tasks like keeping our books, paying our bills, monitoring our invested funds, and keeping track of our banquet reservations, Bob was the instigator of the silent auction. He not only had the idea for it, but he has also done all of the work involved in making that idea a lucrative and useful reality. The result has been an addition to our finances that has saved us from the abyss of another dues increase, and the satisfaction of many successful bidders in the auction. Thanks Bob.

– Matt Joseph

MINUTES OF THE SAH BOARD MEETING

FEBRUARY 9, 1990

The winter meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Automotive Historians was held at the Wyndham-Franklin Plaza Hotel in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Present were officers Matt Joseph (president), James H. Cox (secretary), Robert J. Gary (treasurer); directors William T. Cameron, Thomas M. Deptulski, Walter E. Gosden; committee chairmen Howard Applegate (Cugnot/Benz), Taylor Vinson (Archival), George Ward (Nominations); assistant secretary David Babb; editor Christopher G. Foster and publications chairman Robert M. Hall III. Absent were vice-president Jack L. Martin and directors Helen J. Earley, John A. Gunnell, Strother MacMinn, Keith Marvin, James K. Wagner and James A. Wren.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by president Matt Joseph. Matt noted that the meeting room had been furnished with the compliments of the AACA, for which the board was very grateful. Thanks were extended to Howard Applegate for his efforts in securing the meeting room.

The minutes of the board meeting of October 5, 1989 were approved as recorded in *SAH Journal* No. 123. A motion to waive the reading of those minutes was made by Bill Cameron, seconded by Bob Gary and approved.

Matt reported on the efforts of George Cutlip, who is coordinating our public relations effort but was unable to attend this meeting.

In Jack Martin's absence, Matt had been asked by letter from Jack to address the issue of chapter relations for input from the board on how he should proceed as chapter liaison. The consensus was that Jack should personally be in touch with all chapter presidents, ask them how the board could be of service to them, and elicit their input regarding how the SAH board matters help or hinder them. It was unanimously agreed that chapters are a very important part of SAH. Further discussion involved the issue of whether SAH membership is required in order for a person to be a chapter member. The by-laws are not explicit on this point and no further action will be taken.

Jim Cox reported that dues renewals for two-thirds of the membership have been received to date and that the renewal mailing has resulted in 35 orders for stationery, 91 for decals and donations from 36 members totaling \$591.00. Since the autumn meeting, 30 new memberships have been processed and 12 members reinstated. In late November, a mailing was made to 160 European clubs in the automobile hobby requesting that information about the Society be printed in their club newsletters. This overseas mailing was the idea of Belgian member Raymond Vaes. Due to the nature of the request, the results of this mailing will not be known for several months, but one new membership has been received thus far from a club director who had received the mailing.

Bob Gary reported that the total funds in the SAH reserve and checking accounts at the close of 1988 was \$30,954.00. That figure increased to \$39,237.00 for the year 1989. This was largely due to the proceeds of the silent auction. The treasurer's report was accepted following a motion by Bill Cameron, second by Bob Hall.

Kit Foster reported that SAH publications are being produced in a timely fashion and that all is well at present. To a written query regarding the lack of "want" ads in the *SAH Journal*, Kit replied that if more were received, more would be printed. He publishes all ads submitted. He will make the solicitation in the *SAH Journal* more specific on this issue.

Prior to the awards report, Bill Cameron asked to resign from the Cugnot committee for personal reasons. Matt accepted his resignation and asked chairman Howard Applegate to select a replacement. Howard reported that several nominations have been received for the Cutnot, Benz and Brigham awards, and that all is in order.

George Ward reported that nominations will be needed for three directorships this year. The directors whose terms are ending are William T. Cameron, Strother MacMinn, and Keith Marvin.

Howard reported that the Archival Committee has selected three states – Indiana, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin – as the first phase in the project to locate and evaluate automotive manufacturing records. Because of a heavy work load, however, progress has been limited. He asked for volunteers to assist in completing this phase. There is nothing active or pending in the oral history subcommittee at this time. Howard also asked for input before July first as to what we are seeking and what process to follow.

David Babb reported that the membership data base is up-to-date and that a directory can be expeditiously prepared. Due to the nature of the data base, cross-reference appendices will not be possible at this time. Everyone agreed that this cross-referencing is quite helpful but that the old directory will have to suffice for this purpose for the time being. Whether the directory should be published annually or biennially was discussed, this in part because the effort needed to publish is minimal with the computer data base and the costs to mail will be considerably less because the directory can be downsized. The consensus of the board at present is to publish the directory on a yearly basis if final costs permit. Matt appointed David Babb as assistant secretary, and the board thanked David for his efforts.

A discussion followed on the subjects of increasing membership and the kinds of members we are seeking. Matt reported on his efforts regarding promotional mass mailings, specifically his contact

with Curt Strohacker, president of the Eastwood Company, who has offered to include information regarding the SAH in his direct mail catalogues. Other similar contacts have been made, and Matt asked the board's permission to act on these at his discretion. The board agreed unanimously. Regarding the kind of new members we wish to recruit, the board confirmed that interest in automobile history in any of its many phases remained the major criterion. Through membership drives, many may join; those with a real interest in automobile history will stay, those with a peripheral interest may not.

Matt reported that arrangements for the SAH spaces and tent at Hershey are progressing. Howard reported on his contacts with the Hershey Country Club and the board decided to move the annual banquet this year to the Hershey Country Club. Howard asked for input from the board regarding menu selection and cost per person. Howard will check to see if two price ranges are possible and will finalize the arrangements. Matt thanked Bob Gary and George Ward for their efforts in previous years with the arrangements at the Marriott.

The winter board meeting for 1991 will be in Indianapolis. The date selected is April 5.

Tom Deptulski reported on the Detroit Automotive History Conference proposed for April 2-5, 1992 and presented an outline of activities as well as some projected costs. After discussion, the board agreed the conference was a good idea but asked for a balance sheet as to costs. Tom agreed to have this available by July for consideration at the autumn board meeting and was given permission by the board to sign an agreement with the Dearborn Inn to secure the date. This carries no cancellation penalty at this time. A final decision on the conference will be made by the board at the autumn meeting.

It was agreed that the SAH would support the 1996 centenary celebration of the American automobile industry planned by the SAE Historical Committee which SAH director Jim Wren heads. Two further centenary dates were mentioned: 1993 and 1995, the 100th anniversaries of the first Duryea and the Chicago Times-Herald Contest respectively. Discussion was tabled for a later date.

Some SAH members have complained about the lengthy reply time to queries made to the National Automotive History Collection. While this is recognized as a problem, the board can do little about it. The lack of funds for proper staffing and the Detroit Public Library's apparent indifference to the importance of the NAHC collection are contributing factors. SAH board member Jim Wren is on the NAHC board of trustees and wrote Matt indicating that this issue will be considered by the NAHC board at its next meeting.

Matt instructed Bob Gary to inaugurate a budgeting system by assigning accounting numbers to offices submitting expenses. From data received, hopefully we can establish budget figures for the year 1991, and the years following.

Because director attendance is relevant to conducting a productive board meeting, it was agreed that the by-laws be amended to read that any director missing two consecutive meetings be removed from the board and a successor named, this to be automatic and require no further action. This provision will replace a similar provision that is stated in terms of missing two meetings in one year. It was also specified that prior to any person's name being placed on the ballot, that person should be made aware of this rule. Finalization of this by-laws change will be made at the autumn meeting.

The subject of allowing SAH members to use the membership mailing list to announce and promote their published works was discussed. Matt explained that while commercial use of our mailing list is prohibited by our by-laws, no guideline obtains in reference to member use. He asked the board for permission at his discretion and with the approval of the treasurer to issue mailing labels at a nominal cost to members requesting same for valid purposes. Board authorization was unanimous.

Discussion of member status as it relates to Founding, Honorary and Life membership was tabled for the autumn meeting. With regard to reciprocal memberships, Matt proposed that he be given the authority to initiate these and authorize the treasurer to pay the dues for same if it is in the SAH's best interest to do so. The board authorized one reciprocal membership pending, with further discussion and resolution of the subject to follow at the autumn meeting.

Matt suggested that a listing of grants and funding sources that might be available to the Society be compiled and asked Kit to publish a notice regarding this in the *SAH Journal*.

There was discussion about updating the SAH membership application brochure, first, to change some of the language therein and, second, to come up with a different look. Matt acknowledged John Peckham for his efforts in designing the current brochure. Howard agreed to head the committee to look into the brochure update, with Kit assisting.

Following Howard's request that he be relieved of the Archival Committee chairmanship, Matt appointed Taylor Vinson to that post. Bob Hall volunteered to assist.

There being no further new business, Bill Cameron made a motion for adjournment, second by Walt Gosden.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James H. Cox, secretary

LETTERS

TOP AMERICAN RACING CARS

The Smithsonian Institution has asked me to advise them on a part-time basis as to how they can augment their collection of race cars, of which they have nothing for the period 1906-1967. I have compiled a tentative wish-list, but not feeling that a compilation arrived at pretty much off the top of my head is adequate, I would like to enlist the advice of SAH members to achieve a fairly well-considered list.

To make the effort really worthwhile I would like to put together:

1) a list of the top 100 *American* racing cars, 1895-1990, from all parts of the sport, with regard to their significance technologically, or their importance to racing as a spectacle, (even if not breaking any new technical ground.) In some cases these would be specific individual cars, in others a generic type, i.e. Kurtis-Kraft Offenhausers. I would include the Shelby Cobra, despite its British AC chassis, and Jim Clark's Lotus, but not generally foreign-made cars. Cars should be listed without regard for whether or not they still exist.

2) a list, in order of importance, of the top 24 *presently existing* American racing cars. If possible their ownership and location should be indicated.

Having in mind Lee Beck's letter in the March-April 1989 *SAH Journal* about the U.S. Government's not being interested in a car collection, let me say that the Smithsonian's Bill Withuhn is quite interested, but Gramm-Rudman has cut off the money. Perhaps, given the upcoming centennial of the Times-Herald race five years from now, American auto companies would help. I should hope the Smithsonian mounts a celebration in 1993 of the centennial of the automobile itself in the U.S.

I would welcome all suggestions at my office here (703-836-2922) or at the Smithsonian, Transportation Division, Room 5006, National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. 20560. **Gordon E. White, P.O. Box 3067, Alexandria, VA 22302.**

MICROCAR ILLUSTRATIONS

Mr. Jan P. Norbye in France was so kind to give me your address. I am going to finish a book on the history of microcars worldwide 1945-1965. Recently, I found out that there were many such constructions in America, too, like Bobbi-Kar, Publix, Airway, Comet and Brogan, just to name a few.

Meanwhile, I got enough information to write about these cars, but the problem is still to find photos or other illustrations (drawings, brochures, etc.) on these long-forgotten machines. I would be very thankful if you could inform me if you have illustrating material on American microcars of the post-war era, and if I could borrow such items for the purpose of reproduction in a book. **Walter R.J. Zeichner, Elisabethstrasse 28 RGB, D-8000 München 40, GERMANY.**

Members having such material which might be lent to Mr. Zeichner are encouraged to contact him directly. — Editor

THE GOURMET MODEL A

I was happy to see my unique 1930 Ford Phaeton pictured on the back cover of the *SAH Journal* No. 123.

The photo pictured (you credit the James Petrik Collection) is from the standard Ford Archives collection and is negative #55048.

As your caption suggests, the car was indeed built by the LeBaron Detroit Company of Detroit. This company and its president and chief designers were close friends and business associates of Edsel B. Ford, president of the Ford Motor Company. Through their relationship with the Lincoln Motor Car Company (of which Edsel was also president) the LeBaron company built not only Lincoln (amongst other high priced automobiles) but also some of the custom-built Ford Model A's (primarily the very low production custom-built Town Car).

Edsel's primary automotive love was designing cars. And in this regard he was recognized by his peers as being very good. Edsel designed many automobiles for his personal use. He actually had a full stable of these custom-built cars designed by him, as well as many other American and European classics. With a close working and social rapport with the management of the LeBaron company, it was only natural that LeBaron would build many of his designs, including the 1930 Ford Model A Sport Phaeton I now own.

With the classic lines of the British Bentley serving as a role model, Edsel down-sized the proportions to mesh quite handsomely with the light weight and quick acceleration of the Ford Model A. As was a habit of Edsel's, he chose standard Ford models from which to form hybrids. Hence, his "Sport Phaeton" was to a large extent a customizing of existing stock components. His specially-designed Model A utilized the entire, though modified, Model A chassis, including frame, drive chain, wheels, muffler, dash panel, steering column, radiator, and a blend of the '29 and '30 radiator shells.

Memoranda from Ford company files disclose that an extensive research was made to make use of as much of the Model A as possible. Parts like bumpers, fender and running board brackets were modified to fit and blend with the special design.

In addition to these many Model A parts, the car's design also made use of Duesenberg-patterned doors and ornamental hardware, fancy Parisian headlamps (taking a quick look, I see that they are Marchal lamps) and attendant support bars, Newport-styled windshield, and a great many other smaller parts available to custom builders of the period.

The main body of the car was of special design and construction, being of all-aluminum fabrication – a common material of the custom-bodied period. Mouldings, rear deck cowl, hood and fenders also were of aluminum.

In sum, it must be said that the assemblage of all these custom and existing components blended magnificently together to create a completely original design. Although Edsel worked with a LeBaron stylist to smooth out some rough design adjustments, and some LeBaron production problems, it cannot be denied that Edsel's talented eye for auto design was responsible for mating the correct parts at the right places and finished with an artistic showpiece. It would not be his last.

The engine/chassis was taken from the Ford production line during the first part of the second week of August 1929, and trucked across town to the LeBaron factory for body construction and assembly. The job was a winter project sandwiched in between other more profitable "Classic" job orders.

As a specialist in custom-built Ford automobiles, I especially cherish Edsel's Ford Model A. I also equally cherish my custom coach-built European Model A's – one from France and one from Germany. I also am currently building a 1930 Ford Drop-Head Coupe (European term for convertible cabriolet) using the plans and direction from Gordon Buehrig. Gordon designed this Model A Ford while working as a designer/stylist for the Auburn, Cord, Duesenberg Co., during 1930. He built it with Augie Duesenberg in Augie's shop, and used "off duty" Duesenberg craftsmen to do the work. Using his plans and with his co-operation three others were built by a custom coach builder in Pasadena during the 1970's. I suspect that I will be building the last of the Buehrig-designed Model A's done with his personal guidance. **Doug Vieyra, 17687 Kneeland Road, Kneeland, CA 95549.**

We seem to have astounding luck with our cover photos (c.f. The Derham Parade Phaeton, SAH Journal No. 121). But this story gets curiouser and curiouser. See the next two letters.
– Editor

I am quite certain that the Ford A on the back cover of *SAH Journal* 123 is the one I inspected at Bar Harbor in June of 1930, where I was told it belonged to Edsel Ford. My curiosity was aroused by the Grebel headlights, and the radiator badge which said "Fabriqué aux Etats-Unis" under the Ford logo. I'm not quite sure, but I think I can see the front shackle bolt under the rear door, the front anchor of the *cantilever!* rear springs. I had been converted to that delightful technique by RR and used it on all 4 of the specials I built between 1926 and 1930. I don't recall the coachbuilder, but isn't that his plaque showing below the cowl, forward of the front door? **Charles W. Bishop, 2033 NE 32 Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33305.**

Regarding the 'Gourmet Model A' photo which adorned the Nov.-Dec. 1989 SAH Journal, I was surprised and very pleased to see this picture since it evoked some good memories. And, yes, I can add some information because for a few years I owned this very car.

As well as I can remember, circa 1949 I bought it from (Fred?) Sierra who lived in the Pasadena/Altadena, (CA) area. I believe it had been previously owned for a short time by my friend Rex Goode. Circa 1955, another friend, the late Bob Berry shamed me into selling it to him since "it wasn't being taken care of" (I had no garage). Berry soon sold the car to "a museum in Florida," where it may still exist.

During my ownership I heard the story about Edsel Ford; that it was later owned by actor Walter Pidgeon and many other more-or-less vague rumors.

As revealed in your photo, the car was a beautiful, *miniature* 'dual-cowl phaeton'. The body, from the windshield back, was aluminum on ash framing with hand crafted hardware and fixtures, red leather upholstery and red carpets. Fenders were steel united with mahogany running boards protected with plated metal strips. The valance between the front fenders and chassis, and that between the body and the running boards was leather (painted the body-color, which was gray, when I had it). The chassis was not Model A Ford as it had cantilever rear springs but the front axle/suspension was very similar although with a narrower track (perhaps a European Ford axle, etc.).

By the time I had acquired this automobile it had been modified (see photo) with a front end resembling the 1937 Ford, re-engined with a V-8 60 and equipped with 16 inch wheels, etc.; these alterations appearing to be professionally done except that there seemed to be no provision for carrying a spare tire. Thus, the only addition I made was the installation of a narrowed Model B tubular spare-carrying cross member at the rear of the chassis; this was necessary because I used the car for daily transport and many long excursions. Its most memorable expedition was a camping trip from Hollywood, up Highway 1 to 'beatnik' era San Francisco with luggage and a guitar strapped on the running boards and firewood between the fenders and hoodsides: sleeping under the redwoods, in the Nevada Desert and back down through the Owens Valley – 2000 miles in two weeks.

Not really obvious in the photo you reproduced is the fact that this was a very small car, its body just wide enough for two people. Nevertheless, its excellent proportions are a tribute to its designer(s). Today, I would have to say with some regret, "I wish I had" **Frederick A. Usher, 1066 Mission Canyon Rd., Santa Barbara, CA 93105.**



BUGATTI, by Hugh Conway. 500 pages. 700 illustrations – 57 in color. Hard covers 9½" x 12¾" in slipcase. ISBN 0-87938-390-9. Motorbooks International, P.O. Box 2, Osceola, Wis., 54020. \$225.00 plus \$3.95 shipping and handling.

If any study on a specific make of car and its colorful history was worth its price, this is that book, the only tragedy being that Hugh Conway died shortly after the book was completed.

Hugh Conway doesn't need to be introduced to most of us. His *Bugatti: Le pur-sang des automobiles*, which ran to four editions and eight printings between 1963 and 1987, was literally the Bible of Bugattiphiles. But why shouldn't it have been? He was well known as "The Bugatti Pope." In addition, he was the retired ex-Director of Rolls-Royce. There weren't many around like Hugh Conway!

This is a beautiful piece of art (yes, truly) and it covers not only the complete history of the big sports and luxury cars from Molsheim, but goes into intimate detail surrounding the mystique which the name Bugatti commands. There is ample coverage on Ettore Bugatti himself ("Le Patron"), and his magnificent motoring machines which performed with equal prowess on both boulevard and the track between 1909 and 1956.

But it doesn't stop there. There is also considerable coverage on Ettore Bugatti's other interests and projects – his railcars, airplane, boats, horse-drawn carriages (you'd better believe it) and the miniature cars built for children. There is also a fine coverage of the Bugatti family itself.

Nothing has been spared to make this *the* up-to-date repository of matters Bugatti and I dare say it won't be surpassed in the immediate future. My only regret is personal: that author Conway didn't live long enough to see the public acceptance on one of the finest single-marque books to date.

The slipcase is something of a work of art in itself, being covered with a silver surface and engine-turned motif, typical of so many of the dashboards on the original Bugatti cars. On the front appears a brass plaque, a perfect reproduction of the cars' serial/motor number, the number stamped thereon being the number of the copy of the book itself.

Approximately 7800 Bugatti automobiles were produced of which some 2000 survive and are accounted for. That tells us something, doesn't it!?

– Keith Marvin



SAH Journal welcomes advertisements from members. Ads are free, and should concern items of interest to historians: books, literature, photographs, illustrations, memorabilia, information; for sale, wanted, to trade. Ads for vehicles or parts are not accepted.

WANTED: Book, *At the Front in a Flivver*, by William Yorke Stevenson. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1917. **Peter Winnewisser, 4508 Ridge Road, Cazenovia, NY 13035.**

WANTED: Literature, photos, or illustrations related to the Jackson 1911 Model 41. Originals are preferable, however copies would be appreciated as an alternative. **Paul N. Eoff, 544 East Limberlost Drive, Tucson, AZ 85705 (602) 888-2211.**

WANTED: Original manuscripts of complete stories of American automobile marques. Are you interested in publication? Please reply explaining what you have (or, if copyrighted) mail copy of manuscript. All letters will be answered and all manuscripts returned. **Marvin Arnold, P.O. Box 50715, Amarillo, TX 79159.**

WANTED: Any information, including addresses, on descendants of F.B. Abenheim. He was a pioneer motorcyclist who lived in Japan 1900-1910, returning to USA. **Hayden Shepley, 5467 Taylor Avenue, Port Orange, FL 32127 (904) 756-8580 (after May 7th: P.O. Box 481, Toughkenamon, PA 19374).**

WANTED: 1954 and 1955 Cadillac post cards. These are oversize full-color post cards of each model. Am trying to complete a collection for each year. Need a few specific models/have some duplicates for trade. **Grayson Nichols, 10114 Mt. Gleason Ave., Tujunga, CA 91042 (818) 353-8699.**

WANTED: For a descendant of the Simson family living in Connecticut, I would be interested in learning if any Simson automobile remains extant in the United States. Purportedly, of the approximate six that are known, one is domiciled here but *where* is the question. Last year a book was published in East Germany about the Simson (which was produced in Suhl from 1911-1932) but no reference was made to a possible car in the U.S. The best known Simson was the sports Supra model which arrived in the mid-Twenties, but whether the missing U.S. car is a Simson Supra is not known. **Beverly Rae Kimes, 215 East 80th Street, New York, NY 10021.**

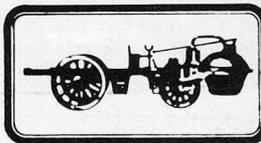
DIRECTORY UPDATE

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