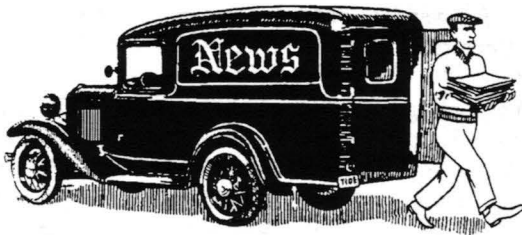
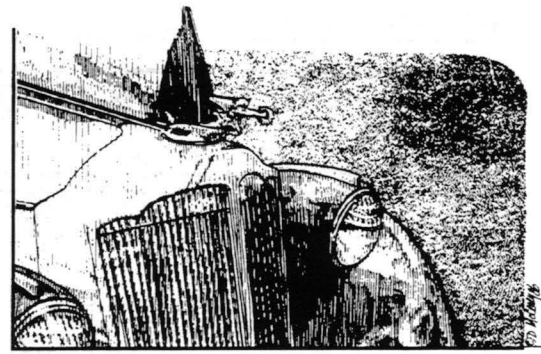


# SAH JOURNAL

The Newsletter of the Society of Automotive Historians

July-August 1996

Issue Number 163



## BOARD NOMINEES CHOSEN

SAH's outgoing presidents don't escape entirely; by tradition, they're recycled as chairs of the Nominating Committee. This year's committee consisted of chair *Taylor Vinson*, president *Kit Foster*, and director *Nick Fintzelberg*.

The Committee notified the Board at its meeting in Flint that it had chosen a slate of six nominees for the annual election of three directors. Unusual interest was shown, six of the seven members contacted consenting to run. Unlike previous years, none of the three incumbents whose term expires in October 1996 (*Pat Chappell*, *Macdonald Leach*, *Jack L. Martin*) will be running for reelection.

This year's nominees in alphabetical order are: *Sue Davis* (founder and president of the Stanley Museum), *Pat Foster* (AMC historian), *Don Keefe* (editor of *Pontiac Enthusiast*), *Leslie Kendall* (curator of the Petersen Museum), *Mike Lamm* (writer and former SAH president), and *Charles Roy* (Canadian, rallyist, enthusiast). The biographies of the candidates will appear in full on the ballot. Lest you accuse them of tooting their own horns, be advised that the Committee has modified the bios to emphasize the strengths that each candidate would bring to the Board. It is an unusually strong slate of nominees.

Members may wonder how nominees are chosen. The nominating process is open to members but few if any recommendations originate this way. Generally a nominee is personally known to at least one Board member who simply recommends him or her as a person having something to contribute to the running of the Society. Two of this year's group came to the Committee's attention through their visits to the Hershey Reunion tent in '94 and '95. One nominee is known only through email, but the Committee was impressed by his energy and thoughts for SAH's future.

It is anticipated that the ballots will be mailed in mid-July with a return date of **August 31**. Information on the annual meeting at Hershey on October 11, 1996, will be mailed at the same time.

## END OF SCHLUMPF LITIGATION

It's been about 20 years since textile-industry empire of the brothers Hans and Fritz Schlumpf collapsed. No one could guess what would be the fate of the car collection, housed in a former factory in Mulhouse, France.

The Schlumpf brothers were Swiss citizens and fled to Switzerland, leaving thousands of workers whose wages had not been paid for months, plus a mountain of debt to other creditors. Jean Panhard, scion of the family whose car manufacturing company was taken over by Citroën in 1965, inveighed with the French government to turn the Schlumpf collection into a paid-entrance public museum.

The workers and creditors saw the events as tantamount to confiscation by the French state, and local labor unions occupied the buildings while the creditors sued for compensation. The first court decision gave them a mere FF11 million (about \$2.2 million).

Now a higher court (Tribunal of Commerce in Metz) has ruled that the French government must pay FF25 million (\$4.85 million) for the famous oldtimer collection, comprising 440 cars including 50 Bugattis, six or seven Maybachs, two Buccialis, four Hispano-Suizas, and an assortment of racing cars with a preponderant Gordini ingredient.

Its total worth is estimated at FF60 to 70 million (\$11.6 to \$13.6 million), which is an outrageously low figure. Selling the Bugattis alone would bring in a good bit more. But laws protecting historical monuments on French territory effectively prevent the breaking-up of the collection. And that puts any discussion of price into the realm of hypothesis. In any case, it was a bargain for France.

- Jan P. Norbye

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### EDITORIAL COMMENT

Among my interests not advertised in the SAH membership directory are show cars. Concept cars intrigue me probably because of that fact that they are out of reach to the general public.

I thought I was alone in this interest until *Automotive History Review* number 29 reached my mailbox. Grace Brigham's article "Those Elusive Vehicles" mentioned a quote from *Newsletter* number 6. Charles Bishop wrote, "I favor inclusion of any car exhibited at any automobile show, where there exists a written record of the same date of its being on

exhibition. Otherwise the record will lose those prototype cars which are often of great importance in the long run."

Last year, Buick released the XP2000 show car. Included with the press kit about the car was information about the history of Buick "Dream" cars.

"Historians generally claim the first true dream car was a Buick — a black two-place convertible created by General Motors Styling and Buick Engineering back in 1938." Of course, we all know this car as Harley Earl's "Y-Job."

The Y-Job was followed by such concepts as the LeSabre, Wildcat, Centurion, Questor, Lucerne, Essence, Bolero, and the Sceptre.

Also according to the press kit, "In June of 1993, the 13 then existing Buick dream cars were brought together for Buick 90th anniversary, photographed at Grand Traverse Resort near Traverse City, Mich., and publicly appearing at 'Eyes on the Classics,' an auto design show in Grosse Pointe Shores, Mich."

The photograph included the aforementioned concept cars (with the '53 Wildcat I, '54 Wildcat II and the '85 Wildcat) as well as the '51 XP-300 and '63 Riviera Silver Arrow I. This picture is a wonderful (and rare) piece of automotive history.

Are there pictures of those missing concept cars, Buick and otherwise? Buick mentions the '55 Wildcat and the '58 XP-75, which no longer exist in the sheetmetal. We need to keep pictures of these cars in circulation for their historical significance.

Taking Mr. Bishop's idea, this issue I will begin running a picture of a concept car (past or present) every two months.



Additionally, I'd like to hear feedback from the small changes made to the *Journal*. This issue, the back page has been revamped to reprint old advertisements. Last issue, the cover logo was brought more up-to-date. Previous changes include the email address, the cover page table of contents and the this-date-in-history corner.

I'm trying to keep the *Journal* as a historical periodical and prevent it from becoming a club newsletter. I'll take advice from members at any time.

- Sam Fiorani

### PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

"Check out our exciting web page!" That refers, of course, not to someone's dusty book or magazine but to the world wide web, the multimedia part of cyberspace that is said to be the future of information sharing. No, SAH doesn't have a web page, and based on my own surfing through the on-line motoring sites on the internet I'm not sure we should rush to get one.

I'm not computerphobic, as many of you who correspond with me over the 'net are well aware. Call me, perhaps, a conservative techie; I want to see some really good examples of "net history" before we start pushing our own.

I've visited a number of the on-line magazines, and while I like the idea of having access to a great variety of information

from my office computer, I'm underwhelmed by much of it. Even with my 14.4 kilobit modem it takes a long time to download a page, especially when graphics are involved. Recently I tried the web site of one of the popular car magazines. When I logged off, I noticed I had been connected for 45 minutes, but I got probably less information than I could have gleaned from a good five-minute browse through the same mag's print edition. A member put it another way: "Until they come up with a computer terminal that works well in bed (or in the bathtub)," he told me recently, "ordinary books and magazines have nothing to fear."

The other shortcoming of the internet for historians is that most the information sources we seek, the period publications, the corporate record books, the oral history tapes, are simply not on the internet, and it's unlikely they will be any time soon. For real down and dirty research you still have to go to the archive and examine the records yourself. There aren't enough programmers and technicians in the world to put "our" information wholly into computer form.

But there are roles for computers, and the internet, in automotive history. The first step most archives take in becoming computer literate is to automate their catalogs, and what better way to begin disseminating history than to make those indices accessible over the internet. Think how much easier it would be, for example, to learn which files are in the Ford Museum archive before you make a trip there. One day, perhaps, you'll even be able to surf the index and order copies, all without leaving your home - virtual research, as it were. The internet, because it has no boundaries, can permit you to search for things worldwide.

First, of course, we need the on-line tools to enable us to do so, and they need to be proven and made "user friendly," *really* friendly. That goal is attainable, if, in fact, the community is not on the verge of it already. Then we must somehow get the contents of those musty file boxes converted to bits and bytes, accurately and completely. That will be the challenge, but, for us, an essential step. SAH's web page should lead to new ways of accessing real automotive history. Anything else would simply be entertainment.

-Kit Foster

## IT HAPPENED YEARS AGO

*One hundred and twenty years ago...*

August 29, 1876 - George F. Kettering was born.

*Ninety-five years ago...*

August 22, 1901 - The Cadillac Company was founded.

*Eighty-five years ago...*

1911 - General Motors combined the Rapid and Reliance Truck companies, along with a number of other firms, to form General Motors Truck Company.

July 1, 1911 - C. Kettering debuted the self-starter.

*Eighty years ago...*

July 11, 1916 - President Woodrow Wilson signed the Federal Aid Road Act into law, establishing an interstate highway system in the United States.

*Seventy years ago...*

1926 - SAE introduced viscosity ratings from 10 to 70.

*Sixty-five years ago...*

August 31, 1931 - The Ford Model A ended production.

*Sixty years ago...*

1936 - Buick produced its 3,000,000th car.

*Fifty-five years ago...*

1941 - Ford produced its 29,000,000th car.

1941 - Dodge produced its 5,000,000th car.

1941 - Plymouth produced its 4,000,000th car.

1941 - The final Pierce-Arrow was built by the Pierce-Arrow Buffalo Parts Company out of spare parts. The part years were averaged and a model year of 1934 was given to the car for registration purposes.

August 3, 1941 - The eastern United States began gasoline rationing.

*Forty years ago...*

1956 - The final Packard to be built in Detroit rolled off the assembly line.

*Five years ago...*

July 1991 - Volkswagen formed the partnership with SMH, maker of the Swatch Watch, to build a small city car. In January of 1993, claiming lack of resources, Volkswagen bowed out, leaving SMH in the project alone. Mercedes-Benz would later take up where Volkswagen left off. The car, now to be known as SMART, will be built in France before the end of the century.

## 25 YEARS AGO AT SAH

August 1971 (*Newsletter* No. 19), President Naul announced that the Society had created a yearly award "for outstanding published work in automotive history", which was to be named after Nicholas Joseph Cugnot, and which would be presented for the first time at the October annual meeting.

The *Newsletter* noted that "almost 1/5th" of the membership resided outside the U.S., terming SAH "an international organization." It is interesting to see that SAH's 1995 Membership Directory shows that the proportion today is still "almost 1/5th", more precisely, 17%.

Obituaries for W.O. Bentley and Joseph W. Frazer appeared.

## ROBINSON RECOVERS SOCIETY SENDS WISHES

Former Society president *W.F. (Frank) Robinson* suffered a stroke in early June. He is recovering well, and would appreciate hearing from his many friends in automotive history. Cards and letters may be sent to him at:

15014 SE 20th Street  
Bellevue, WA 98007-6128 USA

## CUMBERLAND'S KELLY-SPRINGFIELD TIRE PLANT TO BE DEMOLISHED

*This article appeared in the Spring 1996 issue of the Society for Industrial Archeology Newsletter. It has been reprinted, in its entirety, with the permission of the Society for Industrial Archeology and editor Patrick Harshbarger.*

- editor

The 84-acre factory of the Kelly-Springfield tire company at Cumberland, Maryland is slated for selective demolition. Closed since 1987, the vacant buildings were made available for an architectural salvage walk-through in October. Little was salvaged but personal mementos. On February 3 the powerplant's 250-ft. twin smokestacks were destroyed. The major buildings of the local landmark now quietly await award of the pending demolition contract. The site is proposed for an industrial park.

An innovative leader in the field of tire design and production, Kelly-Springfield had horse and buggy beginnings. The clattering of carriages on cobblestones was softened in 1894 when blacksmith Arthur Grant, backed by Edwin Kelly, wrapped strips of rubber with embedded strands of wire around carriage wheels. Immediately in demand for providing, safety, quiet and comfort, 15,000 handcrafted tires were produced monthly by 1897 at the Kelly-Springfield plant at Springfield, Ohio. In 1906, responding to the potential of the emerging automobile market, Grant and Kelly began manufacturing of molded-tread pneumatic tires for passenger cars. In 1910, they introduced the reinforced block tire for truck use. By 1915, Kelly-Springfield was producing 50% of the tires on American trucks.

Manufacture at Cumberland was proposed in 1916, when the city guaranteed \$750,000 and free land. The first bias-ply tire was pulled from its mold at the Cumberland factory on April 1921. Kelly-Springfield consolidated all aspects of manufacturing at the 39-building brick factory site that sits in the flood plain of the Potomac River at the "big bend," adjacent to tracks of the Baltimore & Ohio RR.

In 1935 Goodyear Tire and Rubber purchased Kelly-Springfield and ran it as a wholly-owned subsidiary. Unionization followed in 1937. World War II caused major retooling for the plant to produce .50-caliber ammunition and 8-inch shells. Tire production resumed in the autumn of 1943. At the end of the war, the plant and its production line were revamped for the anticipated demand in passenger bias-ply tires. In 1976 employment peaked at 2,973 workers.

The precipitous downturn began in the early 1980's, due to the plant's commitment to bias-ply tires at a time when demand for radials was strong. In 1984, the employees voted for a "give-back" five year contract. Two years later, Goodyear was under pressure from a stock takeover. Subsequent corporate reorganization in late 1986 closed the Cumberland facility, as well as another in New Toronto, Ontario. At closing, equipment was removed for use at a plant at Fayetteville, North Carolina. Workers dismantled machinery they had used for decades, in a plant where their fathers had worked a lifetime.

- Arleen Weinstein, Society for Industrial Archeology

## WHAT'S A SANTAMAYO?

I recently came across this time while leafing through the "Correspondence" section of the February 23, 1926 issue of *The Motor*. Was this just a "leg-pull?" G.H. Brooks, Unit 9, Wattle Grove, 1 Wynward Grove, Wattle Park, South Australia 5066.

### A Speedy Straight Eight

"I have read with interest the correspondence on 'the fastest standard car' which has appeared lately in your columns, and I note that Mr. H.J. Nash claims this honour for the Stutz. I, personally, think that some of the much maligned American cars could teach European manufacturers a lesson with regard to speed.

"I have driven a Vauxhall 30-98 h.p., a three-litre Sunbeam and a three-litre Bentley, besides many slower cars, and I have never found a single car that could touch the 1920 model straight-eight Santamayo, an American car very little known in this country. The car I refer to was admittedly built for speed, but I know for a certain fact that at least 30 cars of the 'vintage' to which I refer were sold, and I know of four that are still going strong in the U.S.A.

"When it was built this car was the most up to date on the market, and except for the large cylinder capacity (over 5,500 c.c.) closely followed modern European practice. The manufacturers were the S.M.O. Corp., of Detroit; the firm has recently been 'bought up' by one of the big American firms, I believe, their latest production being the 1924 Santamayo Six, several of which I have seen on the Continent, although I have never seen a Santamayo in this country.

Weston-super-Mare.

A.N. WALLACE"

## PREWAR DATSUN HISTORY PUBLISHED

From the Land of the Rising (dat)Sun has arrived a photographic history of the first years of one of Japan's oldest marques, Datsun.

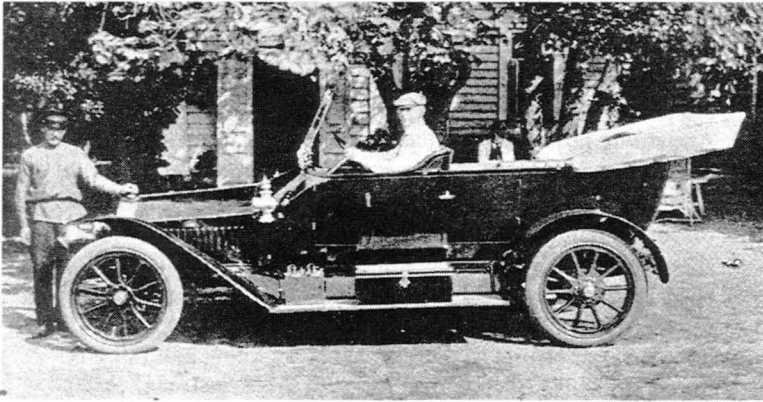
Written by Shotaro Kobayashi, the Editorial Director of Nigensha Publishing Co., Ltd., the 124-page volume contains color photographs of four restored Datsuns of the 1930s, and numerous black and white photos of the same period, including sections on racing and commercial vehicles. At this time, the company appears to have produced only little two-door sedans and convertibles.

The single page of English text informs the reader that the first Datsun prototype was completed in 1930 by D.A.T. Jishoda Manufacturing Company. Equipped with a 495 cc engine, it was not, as popularly supposed, inspired by the Austin 7, but by France's 750 cc Benjamin of the 1920s. But Kobayashi comments that aside from the basic layout of the side valve engine, the parallels are few. The exterior of the production car resembled the American Austin of 1930/31, but during the mid-30s it sported a '33 Ford-like grille. Production increased from 202 units in 1932 to a prewar high of 8353 in 1938 when the manufacturer's name had become Nissan.

We are indebted to *Griff Borgeson* for asking his friend, Mr. Kobayashi, to provide a copy of his book.

- Taylor Vinson

## MYSTERY CAR



The pianist-composer Sergei Rachmaninoff at the wheel of his first automobile, nicknamed "Lorelei." Photo was taken in 1912 at his estate Ivanovka near the town of that name about 350 miles SE of Moscow. The car was purchased during a trip to Italy, Switzerland and Germany, but the make is unknown.

- Photograph from the collection of G. Marshall Naul

## SAH MEMBER RECEIVES TOP ITALIAN AWARD

On May 15, 1996, the distinguished Associazione Italiana per la Storia dell'Automobile presented its major literary award to a foreigner. The Premlo Itala for 1995 was adjudged to *Griffith Borgeson*, in recognition of the considerable body of work on Italian subjects which he has produced over the years. The Premlo Carli, for the best magazine article of 1995, went to Donatella Biffignadi for her "Decline of a Queen," which is devoted to the final years of the grand old Italian marque, Itala. The well-attended ceremony took place at the Leonardo da Vinci Museum of Science and Technology in Milan.

## NEW FRENCH AUTO HISTORY MAGAZINE

We're indebted to *Laurent Friry* for providing a copy of Issue No. 1 (April 1996) of a handsome new magazine called *AUTOMOBILIA*, devoted to automotive history in France. It's a sister publication of *Charge Utile*, which covers the history of trucks and other utility vehicles.

The initial issue is a veritable hors d'oeuvres of something for everyone. Most interesting to this reader was an account of the aborted effort of Chenard & Walcker in the late '20s to form an association with Delahaye, Unic, Rosengart, Donnet, and Ariès to become the "General Motors of France." Also dealing with the prewar era is noted writer René Bellu's "Dossier" on the Traction Avant Citroën 7A/7B of 1934. The initial article on the postwar era covers the early years of the Simca 1000, while racing fans may be interested in the story of the 1952 Sacha Gordine, a one-off Formula 1 car. For the model collector, there are articles on the Solido Bugatti Royale and the Dinky Simca 5, Huit Sport, and Aronde. For the literature collector, a reprint of the 1952 Renault Frégate folder is stapled in the center.

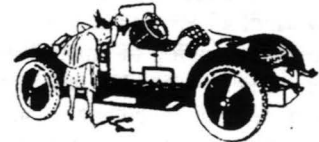
Using color photos where available, *AUTOMOBILIA* refers to itself as "the review with a drawing on the cover" and, indeed, a red and black Citroën 7 "at speed" adorns it. Inside, cartoon-like drawings of three French prototypes of the '40s and '50s serve as a background for the table of contents and editorial material. This is also promised to be a regular feature.

The overseas subscription price of 370 FF (approximately \$74, roughly \$6.20 an issue) entitles one to 11 issues and a choice of three other French auto literature reprints, gratis. The three reprints are available from a choice of four: 1934 Citroën 7CV catalogue, 1939 Matford V8 F 92A folder, 1951 Salmson Randonné folder, and 1954 Dyna Panhard catalogue. You can have the fourth for 20 FF more. Subscriptions should be sent to Histoire & Collections, 5, avenue de Ré la publique, 75541 Paris cedex 11, credit cards accepted.

- Taylor Vinson

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## RECOVERY OF THE LOST ARMSTRONG by Dennis David

As automotive historians, we can only hope that once in our lifetime we will make a discovery that truly has an impact on the history of the automobile. For some of us, it may be a previously undiscovered piece of information that solves a decades old mystery. For others, it may be an interview with an auto industry employee that yields a new perspective on an old story. There is, however, one other discovery that only a true automotive historian could appreciate and that is the discovery of a car itself. Not just any car, but a car that truly represents an impact on the history of the automobile. Such finds may be rare, but they do happen. Proof lies in the recent discovery of a long lost Armstrong. While most reference books attested to the fact that the Armstrong was never built, the car is for real. Its discovery was perhaps the most exciting moment in this writer's career. It is with great enthusiasm that I share the story of its discovery with others in hopes that every writer will someday have the opportunity for such an exciting moment.

While on a routine business call to a historic farmhouse in northwestern Connecticut, I noticed many old items lying about. One item in particular caught my attention. While only the top portion was visible, it appeared to be a horse-drawn wagon of some sort. I remarked that it looked like a most unusual horse cart where upon the home owner replied, "That's not a horse cart, that's a car." I immediately requested a closer inspection and was quite surprised at what I found.

It certainly was a car, but not like anything that I had ever seen. According to the owner, the year of this vehicle was 1895. This only added to my excitement as a close inspection revealed several refinements that were very unusual for a car of this vintage. It has a steering wheel instead of a tiller. It had leaf spring suspension on both axles. The engine was a horizontally opposed, two-cylinder gas combustion. Most intriguing was a foot brake located on the floorboard. Although the wood spoke wagon wheels were mostly splintered, one had enough left to prove that this car ran on solid rubber tires.

By this time, my heart was thumping, and my blood pressure was racing. The workmanship on this vehicle was not the work of a backyard mechanic. The die cast parts and complex gear changing mechanism proved without a doubt that this vehicle was the culminated effort of a well engineered design. Such precision could only have been possible through a well organized manufacturing facility.

I immediately began extensive research into this previously unknown make. All indications seem to confirm that this vehicle was the original Armstrong. The *Standard Catalog of American Cars* listed two companies named Armstrong doing business in Bridgeport, Connecticut at that time. Both were listed as manufacturing electric and only one had slight mention of even building a car in 1896. The recovered Armstrong is certainly not an electric, but it is a confirmed Armstrong. The conclusion was that this must be the company's only attempt at a gas engine car.

Realizing the importance of such a discovery, I immediately contacted some friends who for some years now have been slowly assembling a museum of cars built in Connecticut. Negotiations for the vehicle lasted about six months. The effort was well rewarded with the lost Armstrong now firmly in the hands of someone who has the time and resources to restore it to its former glory.

Not everyone will be fortunate enough to make such a discovery, but the satisfaction of such a find is something all should enjoy. Every time someone finds an old relic in a barn, or finds some old paperwork stashed in an attic trunk, we all gain a little. As automotive historians, we can only hope that our efforts to preserve what we know will fall into the right hands. Such is the case with the Armstrong. After languishing for some 101 years, it has now surfaced to reveal itself to a somewhat amazed audience. How many more are out there sitting in old garages or barns just waiting to be discovered? Only time can answer when they will all be accounted for. Remember that the next time you travel down an old dirt road, or even pass by the old barn in your neighborhood that you've driven by for the last twenty years, it pays to ask why. Curiosity is the engine that drives all of us. Keep it well tuned.

## PACKING UNCLE TOM: A TOM McCahill SAMPLER by Pete Whittier

Tom McCahill died 21 years ago this May. No one wrote more engagingly about automobiles than he did, and, writing for an ostensibly blue collar magazine, he demonstrated remarkably catholic tastes in cars. Growing up in New Jersey in the 40's and 50's, his *Mechanix Illustrated* was the first magazine I bought every month. He was that magazine in the postwar years, of course, and its managers made a heroic effort to keep him alive after he died -- an endeavor that would make the keepers of Jeremy Bentham proud.

Now packing to move to Florida, I'm scanning my collection of *MI's* as they go into cartons for the movers. From 100 or so issues, here is some stuff I still enjoy; and a plea, to someone with the time and talent for a definitive work on this most interesting writer.

From May 1946, on the new Pontiac: "I like above all things comfort in an automobile, and the front seat felt as if it had been cushioned with rocks...it gave all the comfort of sitting on a park bench in an earthquake."

On the '47 Studebaker, in September 1946: "At a glance, it's hard to tell which end of the car is which because the rear luggage compartment tapers back in lines like those of the hood. Other angles show similarity to the Chrysler Air-flow of a dozen years ago..."

Not always prescient, in January 1948: "The three major companies will all be out within a month of each other with radical design changes called 1949 or even 1950 models, and when this happens Packard won't be far behind with a brand new model."

A year later, hints of "comparison" tests to come: "The Lincoln Continental and Cadillac offer twice the room and comfort of an MG [TC] but get only about 11 miles to the gallon. The MG goes better than 30 miles to a gallon and will run the ears off either of them."

Perhaps the most famous McCahill quote of all: "The paint job on some new [1951] Buicks is not the best by a long shot. Some I have examined looked as though somebody took aboard a mouthful of paint and sprayed it on through his teeth."

In 1952 on the buyer of fast cars: "...so like the V8 Chrysler owner, he gets a vicarious kick out of knowing that any car that passes him does so only with his permission -- because without his permission no car on the road has enough speed to do it."

On safety, in "Mail for McCahill," January 1967: "The Washington boys and their safety demands remind me of a group of plumbers at a convention laying down rules and procedures for brain surgeons to follow in an operation."

From Tom's 25th anniversary issue, "Smokes four packs of cigarettes a day; coughs, limps," February 1971: "The finest handling car was the 1948 Davis three-wheeler...But the...*best* car I ever drove has to be the 1962 Chrysler 300."

At the end of a day-long session, Editor Bob Beason has the last word: "It's 2 o'clock in the morning. *The Star Spangled Banner* is played on TV. Tom even watches it. The station goes off. Still smoking and coughing, he limps back through the paneled door. The day is over for Uncle Tom."

Finally, November 1978, the magazine's 50th anniversary issue, on pages 150 and 151 was "Mail for McCahill," with his likeness at the top of the page and this macabre notation: "Answers to most interesting letters are prepared by Tom McCahill Reports, Inc."

## PUBLIC SAFETY VEHICLES

by Kevin P. Murphy

Ever since the first automobile was used to patrol American streets by a police department in Boston's Back Bay at the early years of this century, American police and fire departments have used the automobile as a foundation for rapid and reliable service.

This article will briefly point out some of the more rare autos used in American public safety. The California Highway Patrol has used many autos in its history. In the year 1927, the C.H.P. used Gardners as patrol cars. In 1929, the Hudson became the main patrol car of the C.H.P. As the 1930's progressed, the California Highway Patrol was using Grahams and the futuristic Chrysler Airflow to keep law and order on the Golden State's seemingly endless highways. Into the late 1930's and early 1940's the Highway Patrol used DeSotos.

In what is perhaps the most unique police car built, the C.H.P. in 1955 ordered over 200 Buicks from General Motors to be used as patrol cars. The specially made cars were of a Buick Special body, but from the firewall forward was the body of a Buick Century. The V8 engine had a 236 horsepower capacity. These powerful vehicles could easily pursue anything on the road.

The Michigan State Police used Packards in the 1930s. During the Prohibition Era, some police departments used Cadillacs as pursuit vehicles. Specially made luxury cars such as Cadillacs, Oldsmobile, Chryslers, etc. were used as ambulances by many fire departments throughout the U.S.A. Due to federal regulations, the "auto ambulances" were phased out in favor of the current van style ambulance by the 1970s. American luxury autos were often used as Chief's cars in many American fire departments, also.

Today, the vast majority of U.S. police and fire cars are either Chevrolets or Fords.

## THE PHOENIX KNOWN AS THE DUESENBERG by Sam Fiorani

While I was researching the 1966 Duesenberg for *AHR* #30, *Gregg Buttermore* of the Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg Museum reminded me of the 1979 attempt to revive the famous marque.

Fred and August Duesenberg built cars from 1920 to 1937 and their nephew Wesley worked in the Indianapolis plant. Wesley's sons Kenneth and Harlan announced their intention to build a luxury car to the media in the mid-1970's.

Ken Duesenberg quit his job in Benton Harbor, Michigan, where he was the manager of Whirlpool's Industrial Design Center. Ken had designed many products for Whirlpool and his previous employer, International Harvester. After leaving Whirlpool, Ken set up the Duesenberg Studio of Design in Scottsdale, Arizona, to produce interior and industrial designs.

Brother Harlan, who took up stock car racing following World War II, built the prototype of the Duesenberg car in Chicago. Ken designed the new car to ride on a 1977 Cadillac Fleetwood Brougham chassis using the existing 425cid V8 and automatic transmission.

Robert Peterson aided in the engineering work on the new car. Peterson's background with Lehman-Peterson limousines would come in handy when extended versions of the Duesenberg were needed.

Initially the car was expected for the 1976 model year for an estimated \$70,000. The prototype was finally displayed in 1979 with a price tag of \$75,000. Production was not expected to exceed 40 cars per year.

Styling of the car could be termed very conservative. From the front, sides or rear, few angles were anything but right angles. Vertically stacked quad rectangular headlights flanked hidden driving lights and a large Continental/Rolls-Royce style radiator shell. The enormous front bumper wrapped from wheel arch to wheel arch forming a "bow tie" reminiscent of the post-depression era Model J Duesenbergs.

Unfortunately, yet another attempt to bring this phoenix up from the ashes failed. Like the 1966 attempt, only one prototype survives. Although the 1979 car lacks Virgil Exner's distinctive styling of a decade and a half earlier, it does give a glimpse of what the Duesenberg might look like if E.L. Cord's empire had not dissolved and taken Fred and Augie's car down with it. America may never have a modern successor to the Duesenberg, but it's not for lack of trying.



***THE DAIMLER CENTURY - The Full History of Britain's Oldest Car Maker***, by Lord Montagu of Beaulieu and David Burgess-Wise. 304 pages, many photographs. Hardbound, 9" x 11", ISBN 1-85260-494-8. Patrick Stephens, Ltd., price in England £19.99.

The name of Daimler will always be associated with the birth of motoring. Not only was it Britain's first manufacturer of motor cars, it is also one of the oldest surviving marques in the world. This book, written jointly by Lord Montagu and David Burgess-Wise, is published to celebrate the centenary of the Coventry-based company in 1996.

It has always been considered dignified to drive a Daimler. Indeed, for the first half of this century, Daimler reigned unchallenged as exclusive suppliers of Britain's cars of state.

I was privileged to be invited by David to attend the official launch of the book last autumn. After the official unveiling and speeches I had the opportunity to talk to both the authors about the book. Lord Montagu was extremely enthusiastic, and confirmed that he was able to open many doors to research which, up until recently, were ajar but had never been pushed hard open until the excitement of the project was first mooted.

David also talked about the need to side-step previously-accepted "facts" and previously glossed-over areas, and the need to engage in worthwhile primary source research. Of great help was the wealth of Frederick Simms papers deposited at the Museum of London. "I spent five full days going through that paperwork," said David, "and never did get to the bottom of it." Indeed, when reading the first few chapters of this 300-plus-page book a new and worthy insight into Simms' part in the formation of the original company is highlighted. Very useful conversations also took place with both Simms' daughter and the son of Undecimus Stratton.

The minute books of the Daimler Board, via the diligence of an enthusiast who found them on a rubbish tip, were very useful in the confirmation (or otherwise) of assumed facts about the early financial proceedings of the company. Indeed, one wonders, had the Royal family (and Prince (later King) Edward in particular) known what a precarious hand-to-mouth existence the company had experienced, how enthusiastic would orders for the firm's cars have been?

The painful reading of stylized copperplate text, while researching the archives at the Coventry Museum Records Office, is quite unusual for a motoring historian, but the authors' tenacity was rewarded by some fascinating,

previously-unrecorded slants. For example, later research revealed a forgotten note, dated in the 1920s, for an order from Bugatti for a fluid flywheel. Other papers revealed off-the-record discussions for a Sunbeam-Daimler merger in 1928, the meetings taking place in Louis Coatalen's flat!

Daimler has made history in many other ways. A Daimler was the first car to drive from one end of Britain to the other. Daimler played a leading role in the development of land and aircraft weaponry, pioneered car radios, and revolutionized automotive transmissions. The authors also tell us that the company built police cars, commercial vehicles, ambulances, armored cars, and even flying machines.

David admits that, because history never stands still, a few errors creep into a book this size. Indeed, some significant information has come to light since the book's publication, and I have no doubt that the authors will supply a follow-up article for the benefit of SAH members. This engrossing record of an eventful hundred years is a must for any enthusiast, and, given the wealth of historic illustrations and easy-to-read, studiously-researched text, is a snip at the price.

-Peter Card

***RUDOLF CARACCIOLA - Titan am Volant*** by Günther Molter, Motorbuch Verlag, Stuttgart/Mercedes-Benz Museum, Archiv-Edition. 206 pages, text in German, many b/w illustrations, racing posters in color. Hardcover, 9.5" x 10.6", ISBN 3-613-01716-4, price in Germany DM78.00.

Rudolf Caracciola, arguably the greatest racing driver of the 1930's, was born on January 30, 1901. He competed for the first time on a little German Fafnir in the Avus-race of 1922. (Yes, that was the car with the funny sheet-metal masque face in front of the radiator.) He beat the more experienced works-drivers and finished 4th in his class. In a smaller race on the Opel circuit he tasted the sweetness of winning later in the year.

Already in 1923, the Daimler Motoren Gesellschaft had noticed the talent of the young man and offered him to drive one of the new small supercharged 6/25/40hp Mercedes in a number of hill climbs and German events. He stormed from one win to the next and had bagged 11 first places when the season was over. From then onward he was an accomplished works driver competing in touring and sports cars events on various types of Mercedes cars. From 1925 till 1931, he masterfully drove the heavy touring and sports cars of the types K, S, SS, SSK, and the hairy SSKL in national and international events. Perhaps one of the greatest successes in his whole career was winning the Mille Miglia in 1931. He was the first "non-Italian" to win this famous race.

As Mercedes-Benz did not support any works team in 1932, Caracciola went to Alfa Romeo for the season scoring nine wins and seven 2nd and 3rd places in various European Grand Prix and hill climbs. He crashed in the GP of Monaco in the spring of 1933 and could not compete for the rest of the season. By 1934, Mercedes-Benz was back again and ready with their first Silver Arrows, the famous W25. Caracciola immediately returned to his German mount. For the next four years he was the undisputed number one in the Mercedes-Benz



team. He was extremely strong in the rain which earned him the nickname of a "Rain King." Even if his driving was very smooth and not very spectacular, he was terribly fast with the various Mercedes GP cars.

Three times, in 1935, 1937, and 1938, he was European Champion of Grand Prix racing. In 1938, he set a new class B (5 to 8 litre capacity) World record on the autobahn with a speed of nearly 270 mph. On the same day, the young Auto Union champion Bernd Rosemeyer, when trying to beat this record, was killed. Caracciola, who had been living with his wife in Switzerland since before the war, became a Swiss citizen in 1946. In this same year, he suffered another accident in the qualifications for the famous 500 mile race of Indianapolis from which he never fully recovered. In 1952 when Mercedes-Benz launched their gull-wing 300SL, he drove one in the sports car race at Berne and, due to a seizure of the brakes, hit a tree. It was his first serious accident in a Mercedes, but it ended the career of the great driver. He died in 1959 of a liver infection.

Günther Molter, who was the responsible chief for all press relations of Daimler-Benz from 1973 till 1987 and is well known for his work as a motoring journalist and author of several fine books, had access to the personal collection and archives of Rudolf Caracciola. Therefore many of the great pictures are published for the first time and a wealth of new information and details on the life and career of Rudolf Caracciola were used for this new book. There are most interesting statements, facsimile letters, documents and last but not least a good selection of Mercedes-Benz racing posters printed in full colour.

The attractive book is extremely well made, carefully bound, with easy to read typography on fine paper. There are a few minor errors and mistakes which should however not deter any seriously interested historian from buying. At the time of writing, an English version is not planned but the publishers would be interested in such a proposal. If you do not master German, you should still consider a purchase as the pictures alone make this book a gem in any automotive library.

- Ferdy Hediger



## DUFAUX BROTHERS HISTORY

The article in *AHR* No. 29 on the Dufaux brothers was most welcome and useful, to me at least, in clarifying the relationship between two pairs of Dufaux—Armand and Henri of the Motosacoche motor-bicycle while Charles and Frederic were those involved with the cars, that of the Hon. C.S. Rolls having been previously noted.

It is, however, not entirely clear to me that their run did constitute a land speed record. The text of the article appears to rest its case on the Baras run not having been confirmed due to the course not having been measured correctly. The Baras record does, however, appear in most accounts of the L.S.R. whereas the Dufaux attempt does not. This would be, I believe, because a time of 23 seconds for the kilometer had been attained as early as May 1904 by De Caters on a 90hp Mercedes. Additionally, Rigolly cracked the 100 mph in July that year with a 130hp Gobron-Brillié which went through the kilometer in 21.6 seconds. Whether the Baras attempt was under suspicion, therefore, appears to have no relevance.

Regarding the recent notes in the *Journal* about the Renault 4cv, it should be noted that its engine was water-cooled and was initially, and for the first few seasons, of 760cc capacity. The later Dauphine was certainly more fragile than, say, the VW, but it was one of the prettiest looking cars about in its day. **Max Gregory, RMB 8825, 3818 Victoria, Australia.**

## ON RAVELS AND COOL POSTERiors

On page 9 of *SAH Journal* No. 153 [Nov.-Dec. 1994] was mentioned the Ravel steam automobile built by Joseph Ravel, father of the composer, Maurice.

Roland Manuel, author of the book *Ravel*, a biography of Maurice and not Joseph, noted that "no known family of that name could be located from that area" [i.e. Versoix, in the Canton of Geneva].

I live 5 miles from Versoix and went down to the registrar of births and deaths where I was able to obtain without difficulty a copy of the birth certificate of one Joseph Ravel, born September 19, 1832 at 10 a.m., the son of Ami RAVEL, an illiterate farmer [who, it is stated on the certificate, was unable to sign it] and of Caroline GROSFORT, a merchant woman.

There is no proof that this person is *THE* Joseph RAVEL in which Mr. Marvin showed some interest; however, it is feasible that he could have filed a patent, in Paris, in 1868, at the age of 36, for the RAVEL oil-fired, steam-powered car. It is equally possible that he might have been the father, at age 46, of the French composer, Maurice RAVEL, born at Ciboure, near Bayonne, in the Basque area of S.W. France.

Mr. Marvin mentioned that Joseph had worked for some time in Spain and that his wife was Basque, which could explain her grandson being born in that area. On the other hand, the name, Caroline GROSFORT, somehow has a Swiss "ring" to it which seems to belie any Basque origin.

A local chapter of auto historians, here, is to provide me with information on the RAVEL automobile which I shall pass on to SAH when I receive it.

On another subject, while browsing thru a 1937 Cadillac price-list I came across the following accessory: "Water cooled cushion." Is this what I think it is? Something to keep the seat of one's pants cool in summer? Has any member heard of this accessory or seen one used on a car? **Yann Saunders, 1 rue des Charmilles, CH1208 Geneva, Switzerland.**

## STEAM GREYHOUND?

Has anyone heard anything about a steam-powered bus supposedly built by Greyhound in 1946 or 1947 and tested in New England? It was magnificent on hills I was told.

In 1950 I went with some Lincoln-Mercury people to the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry. In the steam auto section we had some long talks with museum personnel who were long-timers in the business. They told us of Greyhound's magnificent steam-powered bus, tested so wonderfully in New England: "It ate up the hills."

A Doble steam engine was reportedly used. I would guess it was an existing Doble car engine from the late 1920s, but Abner Doble was still living and perhaps he was contacted. Another guess is that it may have been put in the Highway Traveler, though not necessarily. I have always had this wonderful picture in my mind of spooky silent Greyhound steamers going lickety-split straight up the side of mountains. Does anyone know about this, or if it did exist at all? **Richard Stout, 232 NE 8th Avenue, Delray Beach, FL 33483.**

## OTTO'S LEGACY

The licensing for the "Otto cycle" internal combustion engine was brought to the United States by a Mr. Goebbel. A factory for the manufacture of this engine was established in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with Mr. Goebbel as the chief engineer and manager.

During the early 1950s, I resided at the home of the late Mrs. Goebbel. She was kind enough to show me her husband's legacy: letters signed by Chrysler and Ford, her husband's tool box, and descriptions of the Otto Engine Factory in Philadelphia.

It is only forty years later that I realize the extensive historical value of this brief encounter. I do not know to what extent the legacy remains; Mr. Goebbel had two sons, by now quite possibly deceased or quite senior in age.

Does anyone know of a published description of this early pioneering automotive effort, the Otto Engine Factory, or chief engineer Mr. Goebbel? **Alex J. Szecsody, 2885 Pleasant Valley Drive, Prescott, AZ 86301**

## SERIOUSLY SEEKING NEWPORT

I have four framed old drawings of commercial vehicles signed "J.H. Newport," about whom I seek information.

The futuristic color sketches show a van, two truck/trailer rigs, and one trailer. The trailer has the lettering "Tot-em Trailer Co Birmingham, Michigan U.S.A." My guess is that the drawings are prototype designs from some time in the 1935-45 period. They were acquired by a relative of mine, now deceased, from an antique dealer, also deceased, in the area of Birmingham/Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, fifteen or more years ago.

The Automotive Hall of Fame informs me that a J. Herbert Newport was a designer for Studebaker, where he designed the Commander in the early 1930s, and that he transferred to Duesenberg in Indianapolis. [They had] no further information on him. A J. Herbert Newport Jr. wrote the book *The Duesenberg*, which I have not seen, published by

Chilton Publishing Co. He lived in Maryland and died around 1983.

Can anyone point me toward any further information on J. Herbert Newport that might help me figure out where/when/why he produced the drawings now in my possession? **David Shank, 135 North Edgewood Street, Arlington, VA 22201-1102**

## KEEPING RIGHT OR LEFT

*Recently I received this letter. Having no one particular person to forward it to, I present it to the entire Society. Please reply to the writer directly, as well as presenting any information to the Journal.*

*-editor.*

At the suggestion of Mr. Paul Scupholm of the Detroit Library, I am writing you to see if you can help me with a question.

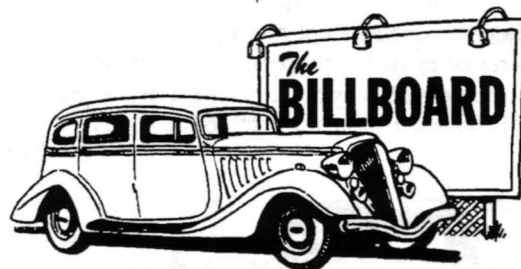
The question is "what is the origin of the difference in left-hand versus the right-hand side of the road rule that is practiced in various countries?"

I have received some answers to this but none seem authoritative and all are reasons that would apply to the 19th and 20th century.

I suspect that the Romans, with their emphasis on good roads, had and enforced some rules. Whatever the rule was, probably served as the basis for one of the current practices. Then came the other--for some reason.

If I am lucky, you are aware of someone who researched this and wrote a paper on it.

Thank you for any help. **Erwin L. Schaub, 8124 Shady Grove Road, Jacksonville, FL 32256.**



The Billboard welcomes non-commercial advertisements from members. Ads are free, and should concern items of interest to historians: information, books, literature, photographs, illustrations, memorabilia; offered, wanted or to trade. Ads for vehicles or parts are not accepted. To advertise regular sales or services, contact ad manager Don Leach, One Poplar Point Road, Edgewater, Maryland 21037 for display ad rates.

**WANTED:** Information, programs, posters, photos, press reports, movies, videotapes, etc. of the February 24-28, 1960 Gran Premio Libertad in Cuba, March 26, 1960 12 Hours of Sebring, May 22, 1960 Nurburgring 1000km, and the June 25-26 24 Hours of Le Mans relative to the CAMORADI racing team and their Corvettes. **Loren Lundberg, 15257 N 52nd Ln, Glendale, AZ 85306. Phone: (602)938-5942. Fax: (602)547-2253.**

**FOR SALE:** Of the 162 issues of the *SAH Journal* and its predecessor, *SAH Newsletter*, about 117 numbers remain in stock in reasonable quantities. The price is \$1.50 each for single copies. Quantities from 2 to 20 are \$1.25 each, over 20, \$1.00 each. A full set of those available (about 115 issues) is \$90.00. Out of print *SAH Journal* numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 20, 23, 25, 27, 28, 31, 33, 34, 39, 41, 43, 47, 48, 62, 63, 65, 68, 94, 96, 97, 99, 100, 101, 115, 118, 124, 125, 126, 129, 131, 138, 148, 160.

Also, we can offer sets of the 20 issues remaining in stock of the *Automotive History Review* (numbers 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28) for \$70.00 in US funds postpaid in the USA. Single copies of any issue listed are \$5.00. Shipped postpaid in the USA. Inquire for additional shipping costs to other countries for both the *Journal* and the *Review*. Payment must be in US funds. These prices supersede those in all previous notices. Orders and/or inquiries to **Fred Roe, 837 Winter St., Holliston, MA 01746-1159**. Make check or money order payable to **Society of Automotive Historians**.

**WANTED:** Original 1965 Chevrolet literature and memorabilia, including letters; brochures; mailers; press kits; showroom and show car features kits; advertising campaigns; radio and television commercial kits; merchandising items; and official sales, parts, & service magazines. **A.J. Ball III, 1775 Manor Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. Phone: (707)542-9441.**

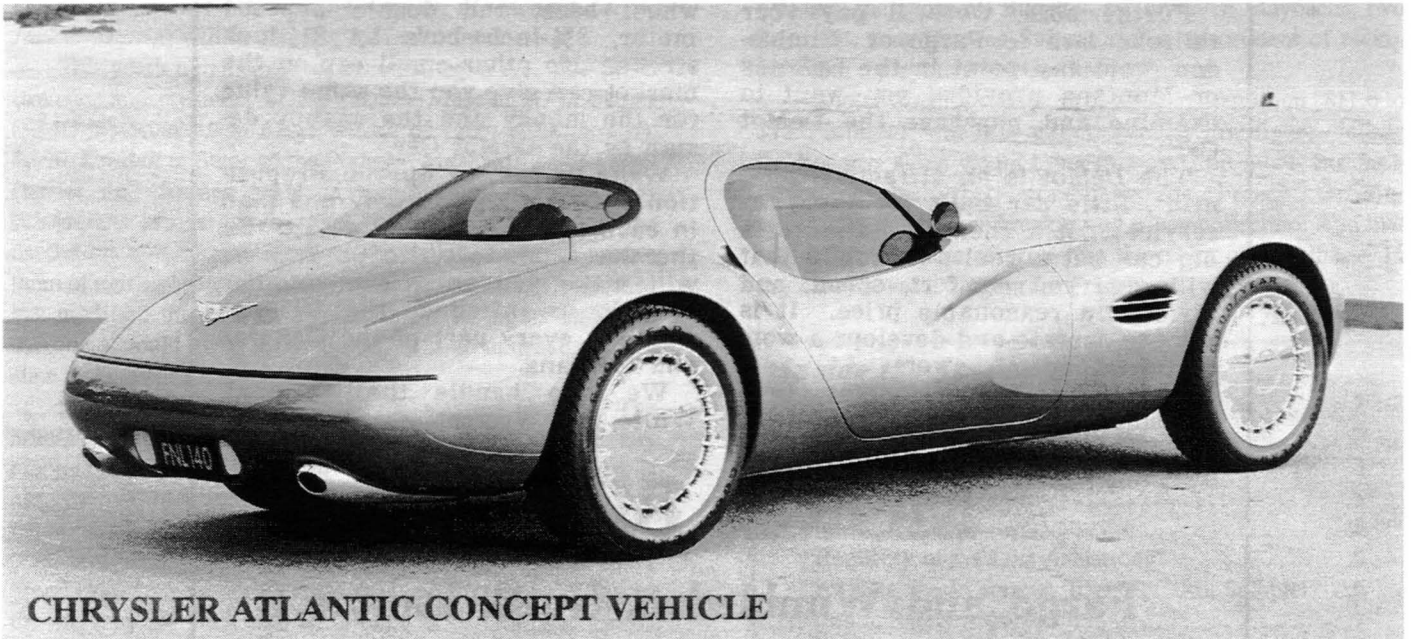
**FOR SALE:** *Transport History*, published by David & Charles. Issues: Vol. 1 No. 1 & 3 (1968); Vol. 2 No. 1 & 2 (1969); Vol. 3 No. 1, 2, & 3 (1970); Vol. 4 No. 1 & 3 (1971); Vol. 9 No. 1 (1978). All for \$35.00 including US postage. **G.M. Naul, 534 Stublyn Road, Granville, OH 43023.**

**WANTED:** Vanderbilt Cup, Long Island Motor Parkway and other pre-1917 auto racing historical material. All responses answered. **George Spruce, 33 Washington Street, Sayville, NY 11782. Phone: (516)563-4211.**

**WANTED:** Examples of reintroduction candidates of practical vintage automotive safety and convenience technology. For example, Studebaker's 1936 Hill-Holder innovation, licensed by Subaru and featured in the 1996 Subaru Outback. **John Chevedden, 2215 Nelson Ave., No. 205, Redondo Beach, CA 90278. Phone: (310)371-7872.**

**WANTED:** Antique and classic cars for bridal procession in August of 1997. Will pay costs and offer dinner. Contact: **Sam Fiorani, 2102 Harrison Court, Norristown, PA 19403. Phone: (610)275-6866. Fax: (610)277-2505.**

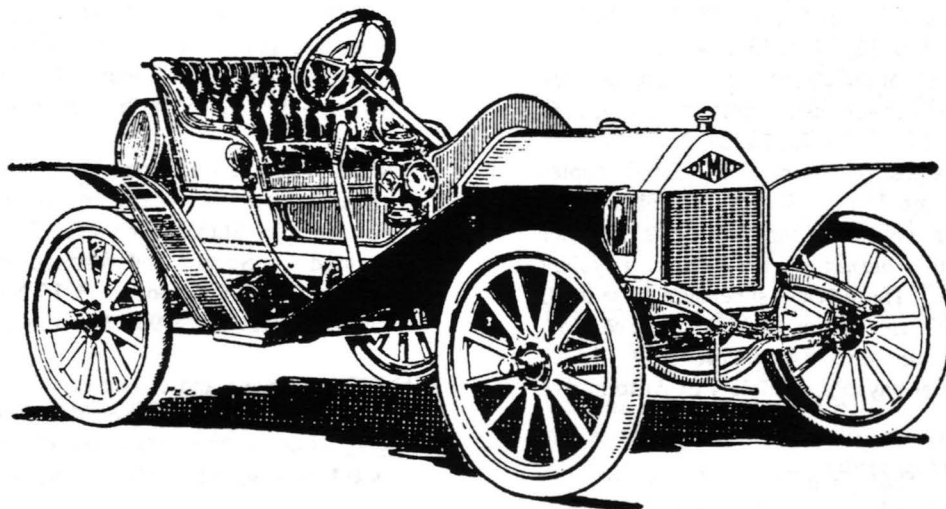
**WANTED:** *SAH Automotive History Review* Issue No. 18 required to complete collection. Also, information and photographs on Louis Mooer's 1903 Peerless as used to compete in the Irish Gordon Bennett race. **Bob Montgomery, Dreoilin, Tankardstown, Garristown, County Meath, Ireland. Phone or fax: 01-8354481.**



*Borrowing cues from the Talbot-Lago and the Bugatti Atlantic (pronounced At-lan-teek), this show car named the Chrysler Atlantic (pronounced At-lan-tick) showcased Chrysler Corporation's in-house design abilities. From a peaked rear window to the enormous wheels and tires, the Atlantic brought many features of the classics into the modern era. A fully running model, the car's power came from a 4.0L DOHC straight-eight engine (two Neon four-cylinders back-to-back). The Atlantic debuted in January of 1995 at the North American International Automobile Show in Detroit.*

*- photograph courtesy of the Chrysler Corporation*

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Address correspondence to Wimbledon

*This advertisement appeared in the Dakota Farmer on September 15, 1910. The newspaper was from the collection of the late John Harney who passed away this June. He was nearly as proud of my work on the SAH Journal as if one of his own children had produced it. For his encouragement, I will miss him.*

*From the collection of the late John "Jay" Harney*