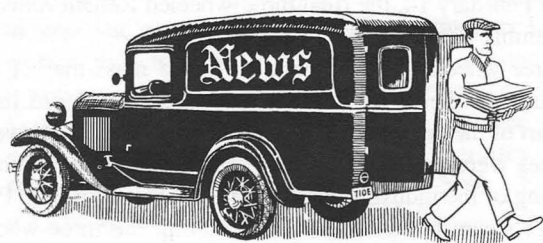


# SAH JOURNAL

The Newsletter of the Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

January-February 2001

Issue Number 190



## 2001 VALENTINE AWARD NOMINEES

Once again, the Southern California chapter of the Society of Automotive Historians is looking for nominees for the Jim Valentine Memorial Award. This award is given each year to encourage the writing and publication of automotive historical research with a focus on Southern California.

All members of the Society of Automotive Historians are invited to submit published articles and books to the SoCal chapter selection committee for recognition for this honor. Personally, I was overjoyed when yours truly was bestowed this award in 2000.

The criteria for this award are (in no particular order):

- Is it a published work?
- Is the author a member of the SAH and SoCal chapter?
- Is the research and concept of the work original?
- Does the work contribute to historical knowledge?
- Is the work well written and documented?
- Are illustrations or photos used?
- Are there connections to Southern California?
- Are there connections to California or the Western US?

Anyone who knows of a worthy article or book, or anyone with questions about the award, should contact:

Robert G. Ewing  
Secretary, SAH SoCal chapter  
Chairman, Valentine Award Selection Committee  
5841 Greenleaf Avenue  
Whittier, CA 90601  
(562) 693-3580

Nominations must be submitted by May 1, 2001, and each nomination must be accompanied by at least one copy of the nominated work. The winner will be announced at the SoCal SAH gathering on Saturday, July 21, 2001, at the Justice Brothers Museum in Duarte, California, with the presentation of the award at the annual Literature Fair a month later.

- Sam Fiorani

## YOU WON'T HAVE OLDSMOBILE TO KICK AROUND ANY LONGER

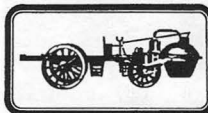
After years of critics calling for the plug to be pulled, General Motors announced on Tuesday, December 12, that the 103-year-old brand would be put out to pasture.

From its early days when the "curved-dash" model helped the Olds Motor Works rise like a phoenix from the ashes of their devastated factory fire to the attempt for resurrection under John Rock in the 1990s, Oldsmobile has had many ups and downs in the century-plus of its existence. The "Rocket" division has been a winner and a loser more times than most people would care to count. The brand went from a high of being the second General Motors brand (behind Chevrolet) to record sales of over one million units in a year in the 1970s to tremendous market share losses of the 1990s, it's been a tough 15 years for Olds.

All of the competitive pressures inside and outside of GM put the American icon in trouble but it took years for the General to notice that the ship was sinking. Now, the oldest brand in the American industry is being laid to rest. It's sad to see it go.

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# SAH JOURNAL

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	Issues	Dates
Richard B. Brigham	1-29	September 1969-(undated) 1973
G. Marshall Naul	30-50	July 1973-December 1976
John Peckham	51-59	Feb 1977-July 1978
Walter Gosden	60-87	Nov 1978-Dec 1983
Richard B. Brigham	88-117	Jan/Feb 1983-Nov/Dec 1988
Kit Foster	118-157	Jan/Feb 1989-July/Aug 1995

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# EDITORIAL COMMENT

## HISTORY CLAIMS ANOTHER BRAND

Few people have noted the recent passing of an automotive era. It has appeared briefly in some European magazines, but Americans, and many Europeans for that matter, never noticed.

On February 14, the final three-wheeled Reliant rolled off the assembly line.

Three-wheelers, never popular in the mass-market, had their place in the niche markets just as cyclecars did in the early part of the last century. Cyclecars only lasted a few years, but trikes were produced, in some form or another, from the beginning of the industry until this past Valentine's Day. From Cugnot's steam tractor to Reliant's Robin, the three-wheeler has had a small place within the market.

Company spokesperson Noel Palmer reported to the press that the last model, a Robin 65, left the Burntwood, Staffordshire, assembly line "just after lunch" on the 14th.

The Robin 65 was a special edition of the long-running model to commemorate 65 years of Reliant production. The 65th, and last, Robin 65 was painted with a special gold metallic paint and featured a two-tone leather upholstery, walnut-finished dashboard, alloy wheels, and much more.

The British tabloid the Sun purchased the car and will be giving the car away.

According to the website Just-Auto, "[Noel] Palmer said an exact count of three wheelers produced by Reliant over the years cannot be made due to the various changes of ownership and two major factory fires in the company's chequered history. However, it is thought to be around 300,000 since production began in January 1935." He added, "over 44,000 of those cars are still on the road today."

Reliant three-wheelers have their small, but enthusiastic following. Bodies are made of fiberglass. The car's size and three-wheeled stance make it very maneuverable. Also, the design of the car required drivers to hold a motorcycle license.

With the demise of the Robin, Reliant also stops producing its own vehicles. The company will continue to operate, selling Ligier cars from France and Italian Piaggios.

Reliant had attempted to keep its products fresh. In the 1980s, the company introduced the SS1/Scimitar in an attempt to resurrect the British roadster. By 1990, the company was in receivership.

Now, a decade later, the company stops production entirely. Sadly, we've lost another marque to the history books.

- Sam Fiorani, Editor

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

The annual membership renewals for US residents were mailed in mid-January. If you have not yet received yours and intend to renew, please send a check for \$25 to the order of SAH, or your VISA number, to Kit Foster, Treasurer SAH, 1102 Long Cove Road, Gales Ferry, CT 06335.

## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

"Happy New Year!" Having said that so many times in my life I have never said it concerning a new century and a new millennium. Technically we have now entered the 21st Century, and can survey the complete 20th Century.

What a Century it was! It started with the threat of the noisy, smoking, stinking, motor car and ended with the threat of all our computers shutting down. Neither threat developed and these two "inventions" directed, drove and now define the past century. Unplug the computer and remove the internal combustion engine and you have, well, you have what 3rd world countries have. To re-spin Harry Truman's famous saying, "The buck starts here; the auto "bankrolled" the 20th Century.

But it's gone. "Time like an ever flowing stream bears all its sons away." (Isaac Watts) And it goes so quickly we can not grasp the day to savor it. That is what historians attempt to do, to capture a moment in time and to know, understand, and savor it.

We take the events, large and small, the people, the product, "the man and his machine" and put them into context and perspective. It is given to them to live that time, it is our to understand it. Why do we like to spend our time engaged in such labor? It is innate; a natural curiosity about the past; it is useful knowledge for present decisions, and it gives constancy and thankfulness to life. Does not history teach lessons? Is not the thrill of building something from nothing encouraging to us and our generation? We were not dropped here from the planets Venus or Mars but rather our roots are deep in our ancestors lives.

Perhaps what intrigues us is the "mobile" of automobile - "self propelled," moving around at our command; going, seeing, being there. I have never forgotten the starting of an Oliver 60 tractor, pushing in the clutch, shifting into gear and letting out the clutch, which lurched ungracefully forward (tractor clutches are very strong) and then steering the tractor down the lane, solo! My first trip indefinably delicious at age 13. This great invention, the extension of a man's feet, and definition of his taste and character, demands our study as do all those who developed it into the economic transporter of the Century.

The History Channel had a series on the Classic Car Era and through out it were comments by our members. Many of these have been long time members of S.A.H. and all of them, with us, have benefited by shared knowledge. This connectiveness is now enhanced by our Web site and our Motor Mail. This Motor Mail allows questions to instantly show up on the screen of those members who are signed up for this free service. It has been gratifying to watch the exchanges of knowledge.

We need to encourage all members and especially the senior members to get on line. What opportunity for curiosity and knowledge to meet. What a stimulation of the mind for those members who have decades of stored up knowledge to down load it into "inquiring minds." We are a Society that still meets in the 20th Century. Join us!

- Leroy Cole, President

## 25 YEARS AGO AT SAH

In No. 46, *George Tesar* provided the Society with a list of electric car manufacturers around the world (17 in the US and 13 in other countries) who were able to meet California's Zero Emission legislation more than a quarter-century early. Unfortunately, few of them have lasted long enough to help out with today's environmental lobby. Additionally, one of my favorite books, *Bugatti: Thoroughbreds from Molsheim*, received the description of "sumptuous" from *Marshall Naul* in his review, where he also gave kudos to the great book *Bugatti: le pursang des automobiles*.

Terry Dunham opened No. 47 with an outline of "Oral History for the SAH Researcher," which could only be enhanced today with the proliferation of video equipment. Terry gave some great advice on the recording and interviewing of automotive history ending with "prepare yourself properly and you will find it one of the most rewarding sources of information in the hobby."

Active member *Pat Chappell* celebrates the 25th anniversary of her membership in SAH.

- Sam Fiorani

## MORE AWARDS

It seems a few of the awards from last year's banquet were omitted from the November-December issue. In order to rectify this situation, this space is dedicated to the 2000 SAH awards.

The first **E.P. Ingersoll Award** given to a website was awarded to *Yann Sanders'* "The (new) Cadillac Database" ([www.carnetion.com/yann/](http://www.carnetion.com/yann/)).

Jerry Windle, editor of the Early Ford V8 Club's *V8 Times*, accepted the **Richard and Grace Brigham Award** for his publication.

The **Nicholas-Joseph Cugnot Award** was given to *Sinclair Powell* for his book *The Franklin Automobile Company* published by SAE International. Henry L. Dominguez' "Edsel Ford and E.T. Gregorie," published by SAE International, took home the **Cugnot Award of Distinction**.

*Hanomag—Personenwagon von Hannover in die Welt* by Horst-Dieter Görg and Torsten Hamacher took the **Cugnot Award of Distinction for non-English books** while Emilio Polo's *La Hispano-Suiza, El vuelo de las cigüeñas* was given the **Cugnot Award for non-English books**.

**Benz Award of Distinction** was awarded to *Karl Ludvigsen* for his biography "Edmund Rumpler: An Engineer's Life" that appeared in four issues of *The Automobile*. *Mike Lamm's* "American Originals: The Sports Cars of Frank Kurtis" from *Collectible Automobile* was given the **Carl Benz Award**.

J.B. Nethercutt accepted the **James J. Bradley Award** for the Nethercutt Collection of Sylmar, California.

The co-awardees of the **Friend of Automotive History** title, Paul Berliet and *Tom Warth*, were honored in last month's issue.

## BILL FRICK (1916-2000)

William H. Frick, the man who built Fordillacs, Studillacs and Briggs Cunningham's race cars after World War II, passed away on 12 November 2000. He was 84 years old.

Frick was born in Berlin on 1 November 1916. His grandfather, an American, owned a business in Germany. In 1925, the Fricks returned to the U.S., settling in the Lynbrook, N.Y., on Long Island. Willie Frick loved cars, and in 1934, at age 18, he transplanted a four-cylinder Dodge engine into a Model A Ford, the first of hundreds of subsequent engine swaps.

After graduating from Lynbrook high school, Frick worked in auto repair shops. In 1936, he became a riveter for Republic Aviation. Republic soon made him a P-47 field rep, and he spent most of World War II in New Guinea and Australia. After the war, he returned to Long Island and opened a garage in Baldwin, N.Y.

A small, wiry, energetic man and known to his friends as "Bill" or "Willie," Frick built and drove a V8-60-powered midget race car during 1946-47 until an accident sidelined him with a severed biceps. When he stopped driving, he still campaigned his midget, but with friends behind the wheel. Frick's car won the American Racing Drivers Club outdoor championship (V8 section) in 1947 and the Kingsbridge Armory Championship in 1947-48.

In 1949, he built a modified 1939 Ford stock car, #23, and teamed with Phil Walters, who drove it under the pseudonym Ted Tappett. Walters and Ford #23 took 45 features in 65 races and won the circuit championship. Frick's garage soon became Frick-Tappett Motors in Baldwin and Freeport, New York. One of his mechanics was driver/journalist Jerry Titus.

Also in 1949, Frick bought a new Ford and installed a 1949 Cadillac V8 in it. He used this first "Fordillac" as a tow car, and one day when he wasn't allowed to enter his Ford #23 in a hillclimb, Walters ran the Fordillac up the hill instead, winning the class and posting the fastest time of the day.

Frick's work on Cad Allards and Cad Healeys in 1949-50 resulted in Speed Age magazine naming him Sports Car Racing Mechanic of the Year. Frick/Walters cars entered six major road races in 1950-51, won five of them and placed second once.

The Fordillac caught the attention of Briggs Cunningham, who asked Frick to build him a similar car. Frick did, and Cunningham liked it so much that he wanted to enter a team of Fordillacs in the 1950 Le Mans. Race officials, though, disallowed the car, saying it wasn't "production," so Cunningham--with Frick's and Walters' help--ran two Cadillacs instead, one almost stock and the other rebodied and nicknamed "Le Monstre." The Cunningham Cadillacs placed 10th and 11th that year.

Cunningham became obsessed with winning Le Mans and secured the services of Frick and Walters by buying Frick-Tappett Motors and moving it to Florida. Here, they built the Chrysler-powered 1951-55 Cunninghams that ran

at Le Mans. Frick, meanwhile, kept producing Fordillacs (between 100 and 200, he said) and, in 1953, began installing Cadillac V8s in Studebaker coupes, Allards, Healeys and Lincolns as well. And in 1956, Frick became a full-fledged automaker. Three \$9000 Vignale-bodied, Cadillac-engined Bill Frick Specials--two coupes and a convertible--took form before he conceded that small-scale car manufacture wasn't profitable.

Cunningham had entered three Corvettes at Le Mans in 1960. This led to Frick meeting Corvette engineer Zora Arkus-Duntov. In 1961, Frick worked with Duntov on a TV commercial featuring the experimental Corvette CERV I. This led to a 20-year career for Frick and his second wife, Pat, who, in the early 1960s, began creating eyepopping visual effects for Chevrolet commercials. They orchestrated Chevys coming together from flying parts, Corvairs tooling down the canals of Venice and Impalas perched atop mountain peaks. Frick also helped make the movie Grand Prix, starring James Garner.

The Fricks retired in 1985 in Florida, and Willie kept busy building and restoring aircraft. He fabricated a Bakeng-Duce from plans and, on St. Patrick's Day 1999, was tuning it--something most 83-year-olds couldn't and wouldn't do. The engine was running, Bill tripped over a ladder, and the propeller nearly sliced off his left arm. He was rushed to the hospital, and surgeons saved the arm, but he lost the use of his left hand. Pat says Bill was never the same after the accident. Frick passed away quietly in Boynton Beach, Florida. He's survived by a sister, his first and second wives, a son, a daughter and two stepchildren.

- Michael Lamm

## WARREN HASTINGS (1940-2000)

When I returned from a two-week mission trip to Rumania, my wife Sally met me with some terrible news. Her voice was filled with grief as she told me of Warren Hastings' sudden death. To say that I was stunned is putting it mildly.

Warren and I had known each other for some twenty years. We first got acquainted in early meetings of the SAH Canadian Chapter, SAH's first regional group. Around 1985 the Chapter went independent, and has been known ever since as the Canadian Automotive Historians. The CAH has had a very interesting existence, meeting usually each spring and fall to tour car factories, other industrial sites and visit private car collections. At one of these meetings we have an auction of donated automobilia, for which Warren has served as auctioneer in recent years. The CAH spends lots of time having fun like this, and the least amount of time on club business. Proof of this is the fact that Warren was the CAH Director for nineteen straight years - members were quite happy with him as the head, and with the others in their respective positions.

A few years ago, a CAH member moved to California. He missed the CAH, so suggested a meeting be held at his place in Ontario, California. With Warren's usual

**DURYEA TRANSPORTATION  
SOCIETY MUSEUM**

enthusiasm and effective planning, it took place in March 2000. That gathering was the weekend before the SAH history conference in Los Angeles, so Warren and I, along with our wives, stayed to take in both events. The four of us got much better acquainted on that trip, and hoped to travel more together. In June, we went to Owosso, Michigan, to meet with the SAH Leland Chapter and tour the remarkable private collection of the Mitchell Corporation.

Warren lived his whole life in Stratford, Ontario, where he was the city planner. But he spent a great deal of time buying and selling car literature and magazines. He attended every automotive flea market he could get to, and handled a huge amount of material. While gathering up his things at the close of a flea market last September 24th, he suddenly dropped dead. As far as his car activities were concerned, he literally died with his boots on.

Whatever era, his vast knowledge of automotive history was amazing. He frequently contributed articles to *Old Autos* under the nom de plume of F. Lee Marquette. That pen name was just a small hint of his continual sense of humor.

His passing left a big gap in many of our lives. There is an ironic personal example. Years ago I arranged for him to look after the disposal of my automobilia when I die. Since my family does not want it, and has no idea of its value, I felt this was needed. Alas, he cannot answer my request.

Our sympathy and prayers go out to his wife Pauline and son David, who have suffered the loss of several family members in the last few years. One of them was their son Doug. May God grant all their needs.

Warren's sudden and untimely death is a powerful reminder for us. This fragile life can end quite unexpectedly, so it is of utmost importance that each of us prepare properly now for the life to follow.

- Perry Zavitz

**JOHN COOPER (1923-2000)**

Racing car designer and namesake for the Mini Cooper, John Cooper died December 25 in the United Kingdom at the age of 77.

According to the obituary in *Automotive News*:

"The Cooper Car Company was the first British motor racing manufacturer to win the Formula One championship. It triumphed in 1959 and 1960.

"But Cooper is best known for the 1960s Mini Cooper cult car. He persuaded Alec Issigonis, designer Mini, to let him produce a high-performance model.

"The racy version became an immediate hit and celebrity owners included Paul McCartney, John Lennon, and Peter Sellers. The British Motor Corporation produced the Mini Cooper until 1971 and nearly 150,000 were sold. Cooper continued to sell conversion kits through the 1980s, primarily to Japanese buyers."

The Greater Springfield, Massachusetts, area has a proud history of transportation in the United States. Transportation firsts have been part of Springfield's history since the Nineteenth Century. We have had the honor of producing the first successful American gasoline automobile, the Duryea, which first ran on the streets in 1893. The GeeBee airplane was built here in Springfield by the Granville Brothers. The Indian motorcycle, Knox automobile, Warwick automobile, Wasson Car Company, Westfield automobile, and American Rolls-Royce were all products of the Springfield area. In fact, over 29 cars in all were built here. However, there wasn't any place in the city where you could see evidence of this. Jack Hess, Stanley Krahala, Richard Stevens and Keith Korbut decided to do something about it and opened a museum dedicated to transportation in the Pioneer Valley, the region in western Massachusetts of which Springfield is the principal city.

The dream started around 1993, during the observance of the 100th anniversary of the Duryea. Jack Hess and I were disappointed in the turnout of what we thought should be a major event for the city. Within a short time we formed the Duryea Transportation Society and met at Jack's house for a few years. Our goal was to promote the history of automobile transportation in the city of Springfield but we soon realized that planes, trains, bicycles, boats were also built here.

Thanks to Jack and all the members of the Society we found a location at 25 Mill Street, Springfield, above the Tavern Restaurant. It's a great space and we filled it with memorabilia of transportation and technological innovations produced in this region. We officially opened Sunday November 7th, 1999 and will be open every Sunday and Wednesday from 11AM to 3PM. Please take the time to see our museum. It is free to the public. For additional information you may call me at (413) 783-5624 or email kakorb@solutia.com.

- Keith Korbut

**JAPANESE HISTORY  
DISCOVERED ONLINE**

It's not a new website, but I've recently run across it.

History of western automotive companies is fairly easy to come by. Finding history of eastern nameplates isn't as simple. But the Japan Automotive Manufacturers Association (JAMA) has a website that has a few key points of the history of the Japanese industry. It names names and is divided up into groups of years.

The site ([japanauto.com](http://japanauto.com)) covers a brief history of the Japanese industry from the first car dealer in Japan (a Locomobile garage in 1901) and the first car built by Komanosuke Uchiyama in 1902. Also included are some major policy changes affecting the industry up through the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA). Check it out.

# THE MOST FAMOUS OF ALL CAMPERS

by Donald F. Wood

No discussion of early camping vehicles would be complete without reference to the widely publicized trips taken by Thomas Edison, Harvey Firestone, Henry Ford, and other luminaries. This was not one, but a series of outings, conducted nearly every year from 1915 to 1924.

In 1915, Thomas Edison, after being feted at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco, traveled by his private rail car north to Santa Rosa, accompanied by Luther Burbank, Ford, and Firestone. The visit to Santa Rosa was to see Burbank's experimental gardens. Edison, Firestone, and Ford then had to leave for San Diego, where Edison was to be honored again. Firestone suggested that part of the trip down the California coast be made by auto; the other two agreed. The trip was enjoyable and, at its end, Edison suggested to Firestone and Ford that they go on a similar trip the following summer.

In 1916, Firestone, bringing a small staff, a cook, and a truck outfitted with a refrigerator to carry food, went to Orange, New Jersey, to meet Edison, who provided the truck loaded with tents, cots, folding chairs, storage batteries, and



*Part of the staff used on the 1923 trip in front of a Lincoln with a special body.*

*- courtesy of the Firestone Archives*

lamps. The two of them went to the Catskills, where they persuaded famed naturalist John Burroughs to join them in a trip to the Adirondacks. Ford, although invited, could not accompany the group because of the demands on his time in Detroit.

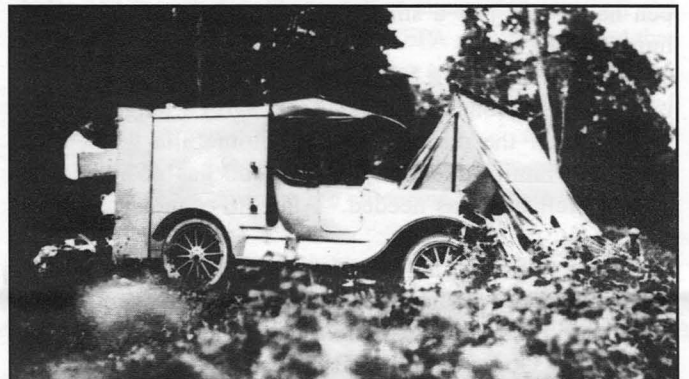
In 1917, the group did not camp, but in 1918, they camped in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. That year's group included Edison, Firestone, Ford, Burroughs, R.J. DeLoach (a plant pathologist), and Edward Hurley, chairman of the wartime U.S. Shipping Board. The entire trip lasted 12 days and the group agreed to go again in 1919.

Henry Ford prepared two special camping vehicles for the 1919 trip; one with a kitchen and the other to carry camping gear. The principal four were Burroughs, Edison, Firestone, and Ford, and they traveled from Albany to Troy, on to Saratoga Springs (where they had lunch with Barney Oldfield), then to Lake Placid and points in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts.

In 1920, the group was unable to schedule a trip although they met in November for a weekend near Burroughs' home in Napanoch, New York. Several months later, the elderly Burroughs died.

The 1921 outing received the most publicity of all, mainly because the group was joined by President Warren G. Harding, at Licking Creek, Maryland. The President was given a chance to "earn" his lunch (or at least work up an appetite) by chopping wood. Others who joined the 1921 outing were the wives of Edison, Firestone, and Ford; Mr. and Mrs. William Anderson (friends of the President); and Mr. and Mrs. George B. Christian, Jr. (Christian was Harding's secretary).

In 1922, the group made no camping trip but did agree to do so in the following year. Just prior to the start of the 1923 trip, the group learned of the death of President Harding, and they attended services for the late president in Ohio. Edison, Firestone, and Ford then traveled about Ohio a bit, and visited Milan, Ohio, Edison's birthplace. The group then went to Dearborn, to Fairlane, Henry Ford's home.



*This photo from the 1919 outing shows the "kitchen cabinet" car, built on a Model T chassis.*

*- courtesy of the Firestone Archives*

The caravan included three Lincoln automobiles, a Ford, a kitchen truck, and two trucks with camping gear. At Grand Traverse Bay, the group boarded Henry Ford's yacht, the *Sialia* (300 feet long with a crew of 30), and sailed to Escanaba. At the same time, the autos and trucks were driven to Frankfurt where they were carried by ferry to Escanaba to await arrival of the camping party. The group camped at various sites in Michigan's upper peninsula until they reached Houghton, where they boarded the *Sialia*, which carried them back to Detroit.

In 1924, Edison, Firestone, and Ford traveled in Massachusetts and called President Coolidge at his ancestral home in Plymouth, Vermont. Coolidge gave Ford a wooden sap bucket that had been his great-great-grandfather's. Reporters were present and one asked Edison: "Will the President be elected?"

"Sure, if he doesn't talk too much," was Edison's response.<sup>1</sup>

All of the participants were famous in their own right and singly, and—in a sense—together, shaped much of our life in the 20th century. In our own time, it is difficult to think of as small a group that is anywhere near as influential.

On these outings, these men were scarcely “roughing it.” No doubt they were enjoying themselves and the company of others. All had been hard workers in their youths; maybe they felt they were collecting some long overdue fun in the out-of-doors.

Of the group, only Burroughs, the naturalist, seems to be an outsiders. Firestone’s biographer, in describing the conversations around the campfire at night said that Edison, Firestone, and Ford liked to talk about “practical” matters and that it “was an effort for Burroughs to stimulate an interest in literary subjects.”<sup>2</sup>

Burroughs loved the out-of-doors as it was; the others saw it as a supply of raw materials. When viewing streams, Edison and Ford would calculate the amount of power that would be generated if the stream were dammed. It is unlikely that Burroughs would agree with the others in defining “progress.” Of the group, Burroughs would have been most disturbed by the adverse impact the auto has had on certain facets of our environment.

From the viewpoint of automotive development, these outings are of relative insignificance although one cannot discount the possibility that a conversation between such giants of technology and invention may have generated ideas which either Ford or Firestone implemented. The vehicles themselves—aside from the kitchen body—were not especially unique. Luckily, at least one of the vehicles and some of the camping gear has been retained by the Henry Ford Museum.

The outings were conducted over a nine-year period, during which use of the automobile and truck spread greatly. The Edison-Firestone-Ford camping trips—because of the wide publicity they generated—no doubt helped illustrate the usefulness of the auto to those who wanted to reach and enjoy the out-of-way camping site.

1 Alfred Lief, *Harvey Firestone*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951, p. 215.

2 Lief, p. 176.



*This picture of the 1919 outing was taken on Green Island, near Troy, New York. From left to right: Harvey S. Firestone, Jr., Harvey S. Firestone, Thomas Edison, John Burroughs, Mayor Watt, Henry Ford, Chauncey Hakes, and Edward G. Kingsford (a Ford employee). Ford was interested in building a tractor-producing facility near this site. Note the water spigot on the side of the “kitchen cabinet” car.*

*- courtesy of Firestone Archives*

# DAVID L. LEWS ON BOOK INDEXING

by David L. Lewis

The best general histories of Ford Motor Company remain the trilogy authored by Allan Nevins and Frank Ernest Hill between 1954 and 1962. Yet one is constantly frustrated by their indexes, so unworthy of their fine research and writing.

For example, if one seeks a reference to James Couzens in *Ford: The Times, the Man, the Company*, one finds "Couzens, James" followed by 83 numbers without subheadings, just numbers. Dozens of pages may have to be checked to find, or not find, a specific reference. One may as well look for a needle in a haystack. Similarly, "Liebold, Ernest G." and "Sorensen, Charles E." in *Ford: Expansion and Challenge, 1925-1933*, are followed by 89 and 86 numbers, respectively. In *Ford: Decline and Rebirth, 1932-1962*, there are 121 after Sorensen, 94 after "General Motors," and 79 after "Rouge Plant."

Obviously, these indexes were not meticulously prepared by the authors, rather on the cheap by a hiree seemingly unfamiliar with the subject matter. Even if instructed to break subjects into subheadings, the employee would have been hard pressed to do so.

There is a better way, and it usually begins with an author-prepared index. In any event, all headings with say, five or more numbers, should have subheadings. In the second volume of my *Ford Country* series, for example, entries for Henry Ford, Henry Ford II, Ford Motor Company, and Model T, have 158, 101, 55, and 77 subheadings, respectively.

Also, a well-prepared index should list certain subjects under two or more headings, cross-index, and cite page numbers for material appearing "between the lines." In *Ford Country*, typically, "cigarettes," "smoking," and "tobacco" have separate headings as do "Glasshouse," "World Headquarters," and "Henry Ford II World Center" (all the same building). There are separate listings for "Depression, Great" and "Great Depression;" "Civil War" and "War Between the States;" "markers, historical" and "historical markers;" "briquets, charcoal" and "charcoal briquets;" and "Beetle" and "Volkswagen." "Rouge Plant," itself a subheading under Ford Motor Company, is separately cited with 26 subheadings of its own. England, Scotland, and Wales are cited individually and under United Kingdom, and there's an entry for Great Britain/British as well.

In addition, page numbers are entered for such intangibles as Henry Ford's genius, mistakes, vision, and values, although the words themselves may not appear in the text. Thus the difference between an author-crafted index and one compiled by a professional indexer of the usual computer printout.

An index should follow rules of consistency, yet in the interest of common sense not be enslaved by them. It also makes sense to have the subheading, "mentioned," in some entries to signify a mention, and nothing more.

My best advice for indexing came from the publisher of my first book, *The Public Image of Henry Ford*. "There are no rules," he said. "Just make sure that you, yourself can find whatever you're looking for. That way, your readers will be able to find the same things." If one follows such advice, one

is bound to prepare the best index of which one is capable—and, if possessed of a hardy constitution, survive the ordeal as well.

Equal time: My long-suffering wife, Yuri, assists me with my research and edits/proofreads my manuscripts including indexes. She wrote the following unsolicited remarks at the end of the above manuscript:

"For what it's worth, you tend, I think, to over-index, mostly because when you are looking for something in your books you are unwilling to waste any time looking for it. You want to find things indexed to the point of finding them immediately. If authors of great tomes indexed in such detail, the number of pages and cost of their books would increase substantially. I agree that the indexes of most books should be expanded, but not be so detailed as you wish them to be."

My wife is nearly always right, and she may be right in this instance. But I'm sticking to my guns, preferring to live the rest of my life with indexes providing fast, straight paths to every subject in my books.

## 2001 SAH AWARD NOMINATIONS

It's that time again. Time to start thinking about books, magazines, articles, organizations, and people worthy of the accolades bestowed annually by the Society.

The **Nicholas-Joseph Cugnot Award** recognizes the best book in the field of automotive history published in the prior year. Nominations can be made to: **Michael L. Berger, Beaver College, Ofc. Academic Affairs, 450 South Easton Rd., Glenside, PA 19038-3295.**

The **Carl Benz Award** recognizes the best article in the field of automotive history published in the prior year. Nominations can be made to: **Don Keefe, Chair, 6173 Doe Haven Drive, Farmington, NY 14425.**

The **Richard and Grace Brigham Award** recognizes the best overall treatment of automotive history for a magazine as a whole. Nominations can be made to: **Jeff Godshall, 406 Oakland, Apt. 5, Royal Oak, MI 48067.**

The **E.P. Ingersoll Award** recognizes the best treatment of automotive history in media other than print. Nominations can be made to: **James Wren, 5930 Glen Eagles Drive, West Bloomfield, MI 48323.**

The **Friend of Automotive History Award** recognizes exceptional contributions to the cause of automotive history by an individual. Nominations can be made to: **David L. Lewis, 2588 Hawthorn Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.**

The **James J. Bradley Award** recognizes outstanding contributions to automotive history by an organization. Contact: **James Wren, 5930 Glen Eagles Drive, West Bloomfield, MI 48323.**

The new **Student Writing Award** recognizes the best treatment of automotive history by a student. Nominations can be made to: **Sinclair Powell, 8 Ruthven Place, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2612.**



# IT HAPPENED YEARS AGO

## *One Hundred Years Ago...*

**January 10, 1901** - The first signs were placed on American highways.

**January 10, 1901** - Oil was discovered in near Beaumont, Texas. The gusher, known as Spindletop, dropped the price of a barrel of crude oil to five cents.

**January 12, 1901** - Henry Ford and Barney Oldfield set a land speed record of 91.37 mph on Lake St. Clair.

## *Ninety 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.

**January 11, 1911** - The Selden Patent was held valid but not infringed upon in court (Electric Vehicle Company v. C.A. Buerr). The ruling stated that the Selden Patent was for vehicles powered by Brayton-type engines and not Otto-type.

**January 26, 1911** - In Florida, a Stanley Steamer sets a record of 28.2 seconds for a mile.

## *Seventy-five Years Ago...*

**1926** - SAE introduced viscosity ratings from 10 to 70.

**January 1, 1926** - Ford Motor Company begins the five-day, forty-hour work week.

## *Sixty-five Years Ago...*

**January 11, 1936** - General Motors was hit by the first large-scale strike.

**February 26, 1936** - The Volkswagen makes its debut.

## *Sixty Years Ago...*

**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.

## *Fifty Years Ago...*

**January 1, 1951** - Fabryka Samochodów Ciezarowych (truck factory) in Lublin created.

**January 18, 1951** - Ferdinand Porsche died.

**February 3, 1951** - August Horch, founder of the company that bore his name, died.

**February 17, 1951** - Packard debuts a convertible model.

## *Forty-five Years Ago...*

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

## *Forty Years Ago...*

**January 16, 1961** - Volkswagen shares offered to the public for the first time.

## *Thirty-five Years Ago...*

**1966** - Jaguar merged into the British Motor Corporation

## *Thirty Years Ago...*

**February 4, 1971** - Rolls-Royce declares bankruptcy.

## *Twenty Years Ago...*

**January 1, 1981** - Porsche built the 100,000th 924, the company's first front-engined model.

## *Fifteen Years Ago...*

**January 1, 1986** - Toyota Motor Manufacturing, U.S.A., Inc. founded in Georgetown, Kentucky to build Camrys.

**February 1, 1986** - General Motors buys 58% of Group Lotus for \$31.8 million.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## JULY 2001

**July 10-15, 2001** - Pierce-Arrow Centennial Celebration, Buffalo, New York. **The Buffalo Transportation Museum, call: (716)853-0084.**

## SEPTEMBER 2001

**September 23, 2001** - The Seventh Annual Castle Hill Concours d'Elegance & Antique Car Show—an exhibition of classic cars, vintage sports cars and racing cars will be held on Sunday, September 23, 2001, in Ipswich, Massachusetts, from 9am to 3pm on the Crane Estate (rain or shine). Tickets, \$20 for adults and \$10 for children, are available by calling **Castle Hill at (978)356-4351. www.castlehillconcours.com**

# DOING SOMETHING INTERESTING

## MAYS JOINS LIDSTONE PUBLICATIONS

James Mays, well-established freelancer and author of *Rescued and Restored: Canadians and their Collectable Cars; For Canadians Only* and *Rambler Canada: The Little Company that Could* (Sept. 2001), has accepted a position with Lidstone Publications, Inc. of O'Leary, Prince Edward Island as Senior Editor of *Canadian Classics*, that country's leading vintage car magazine. His e-mail address is: [jmays@sprint.ca](mailto:jmays@sprint.ca).

## ROSSI JOINS McLAREN

*Steve Rossi*, formerly vice president of global communications for DaimlerChrysler Corporation in Auburn Hills, Michigan, has been appointed to president and chief executive officer of McLaren Performance Technologies of Livonia, Michigan.

Steve has covered much of the automotive industry in his career. So far in his 24-year career, he has worked in engineering, product planning and development, marketing, industry relations, government relations, and public relations for DaimlerChrysler, Mercedes-Benz of North America, General Motors, Saab Cars USA, Inc., and Ford Motor Company.

The press release mentions his associations with the International Motor Press Association, Automotive Press Association, Washington Automotive Press Association, Motor Press Guild, Arthur Page Society, and the Society of Automotive Engineers. It fails to mention that Steve has been a long-time member of the Society of Automotive Historians with an interest in Saab and Triumph cars, Italian motorcycles, and cars of Connecticut.

Good luck in your new endeavor, Steve!

- Sam Fiorani



***A HISTORY OF THE NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW, 1900-2000*** by Gregg D. Merksamer. Published by the Greater New York Automobile Dealers Association, 18-10 Whitestone Expressway, Whitestone, NY 11357

Following on the heels of Szudarek's Detroit Auto Show book this book begs comparison. At first glance Detroit's 277 pages seems to out do the New York 192 pages but then you notice Detroit has larger type and tons of white space. The New York book has no white space and is densely packed with triple columns of text. The New York book probably has the greater word count.

Like Detroit, the New York book is also what I call a format book. Each show has descriptive section essentially who, what, where and when plus considerable number of interesting additional sections: Vital Statistics; What's New?; Showstoppers; Side Shows; Special Guest Stars; & a Quote of the Year.

It was interesting to note that the November, 1900 Madison Square Garden Show was not the first multi-make auto show in New York City. Three weeks before publisher William Randolph Hearst sponsored the first hotel auto salon at the Waldorf-Astoria as a charity event to help orphans of the September Galveston Texas hurricane that killed 5,000 people.

There was also considerable conflict on the number of cars at the November show but the author settles on AMC's John A. Conde's analysis of trade publications and reproduces his conclusions from a 1956 press release. Answer: 159 cars by 34 companies.

In my immature explorations of auto history I was always confused about the dual New York shows. The first shows were sponsored by the Automobile Club of America. These initially were industry trade shows where the manufactures closed dealer contracts for the next season and since this was a high tech attraction, then let the public pay admission to view the manufactures' offerings. The Club and ALAM shared the January, 1905 show and the next year ALAM took over sole operation of show at the Garden. The hostile independents under the guise of the Club, were off to the 69th Regiment Armory for a simultaneous show in January, 1906. ALAM upped the ante with much more lavish displays and decoration. Contemporary comments suggested this was good since the previous Garden shows were smoky, noisy and "the restaurant service worst of all." Subsequent "independent" shows 1907-11 were held at the Grand Central Palace at Lexington and 43rd St. By 1909 ALAM converted the show primarily into a retail customer presentation; the industry having matured enough to sign contracts on a regular business franchise sense.

The local dealers staged the 1919 Show when the ALAM remnants now called the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce lacked energy after the WWI. When the national organization took over the show again the local dealers held a successful "Closed Car Show" from 1921-24. The Chamber of Commerce sponsored the show until January, 1935, then the Automobile Manufactures Association would carry on through 1940. They would return in 1956 for one year. The author handles all this convoluted history quite clearly but it's hard to describe simply.

The 1922 Show had the peak number of "makes" at 92. In this count for example Hudson was a make and Essex a make.

In the post-WWII era I was surprised to find the 1952 & 53 Herb Shiner Grand Central Palace International Motor Sports shows and the fact the building was converted to IRS offices!!

The book is remarkably error free. The only mistake noted was a photo caption of a 1936 Buick inline engine called a "V-8".

The book offers a rich tapestry of the shows and their times. Even the most expert of us will find something to amaze. Then at only \$20 it represents another great bargain.

- DJ Kava

***HOME ON THE ROAD: The Motor Home in America***, by Roger B. White. Hardcover, 9.3 in x 6.4 in. 220 pages with 46 black and white photos. ISBN 1-5609-8892-4. Published by Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC. Price: \$24.95.

A small-town Iowa tinkerer is the hero of Roger White's new book, *Home on the Road: The Motor Home in America*. As Henry Ford did a half-century earlier, John K. Hanson of Winnebago Industries in Forest City, Iowa, applied mass-production techniques to the making of motor homes. Thus in 1965, history repeated itself: one innovator with a penchant for introducing production efficiencies drove down the price of motor homes to the point where they were no longer merely playthings of the rich. Mimicking the Model T, the Winnebago became the universal motor home and driving and living in a motor home became an accepted way of moving to and fro in America.

But White, a Smithsonian Institution land-transportation historian, devotes less than 10 pages of his 220-page book to Winnebago. He is more concerned with the pre-history of the "motor home," a term coined in 1958 and applied to the highest form of an evolutionary process that began in the early 1900s. If Hanson is a hero, White implies, so too are the thousands of ordinary Americans who, through ingenuity and self-reliance, sought to "merge the comforts of home and the freedom of the open road."

His book, a seven-chapter social history, traces the bloodline of the motor home through its various precursors: sleeper cars, house cars, station wagons, bus conversions, pickup campers, converted delivery vehicles, and van campers.

Readers who are interested primarily in the vehicles themselves will have little use for the detailed biographies of the builders and owners of the many one-off creations that White describes. Obviously, he is more interested in the people who used the early motor homes and the luxuries they found

indispensable than he is about the greasy vitals of the machines themselves. But *Home on the Road* will appeal to a large number of marque specialists because of its mention of various makes from the teens through modern times, including Corvair, Dodge, Nash, Packard, Reo, Volkswagen, and many more.

Millions of autocampers explored America by sleeping in their cars or in tents attached to their cars during the teens. A few automakers capitalized on the growing demand for a home on wheels. The Spaulding Sleeper of 1914 (Spaulding Manufacturing Company, Grinnell Iowa), the Pan sleeping car of 1918 (Pan Motor Company, St. Cloud, Minnesota), and Overland in the mid-1920s (Willys-Overland, Toledo, Ohio) were among the earliest factory-produced autos with beds. White suggests that the earliest regular-production camping vehicle was the 6-cylinder touring landau that Pierce-Arrow introduced at the January 1910 auto shows. "The elegant, chauffeur-driven automobile was made in limited quantities and was furnished with deluxe camping appointments: a folding washbasin in the back of the front seat, a toilet, water tank...and a roof rack and rear boots for trunks." Its base price, \$8,250, excluded the trunks (\$200 extra) and a "luncheon kit" (\$65 extra).

In the teens and 1920s, many motorists built homemade wood-bodied house cars. It was the station wagon, however, that served as a scaled-down version of the motor home in the 1940s and 1950s, at least for wealthy suburbanites with extra money and leisure time to invest in vacations. Beginning with Willys in 1946 and continuing with Chevrolet and Plymouth in 1949 and Ford in 1952, automakers replaced their anachronistic wood-bodied wagons with lower-maintenance, steel-bodied versions. Motorists loved the streamlined new vehicles, according to White. "The station wagon became a cozy home on wheels for many vacationing families who learned to sleep in the cargo area and cook on the tailgate."

The evolution of the motor home continued with camping vans, pickup campers, and converted delivery vehicles. White credits Volkswagen for introducing a new body style, the van (and its home-on-the-road counterpart, the camping van), in the late 1940s. U.S. automakers were slow to follow suit. Unveiled in 1955, General Motors' experimental "L'Universelle"—a stylish cross between a station wagon and a van—never saw production. Likewise, Ford went no further than to build "several full-size prototypes" of its "Pushbutton Camper." Based on a 1958 Ford station wagon, the Pushbutton Camper bristled with "electrically-deployed accessories, including a folding car-top tent with a double bed, aluminum power boat on mechanical davits, slide-out tailgate kitchen unit, and projecting rear canopy."

Motor homes of the 1960s bearing the names of Dodge, Ford and even Clark (a maker of forklifts and other industrial equipment) were all built for the high-priced market. Then, in early 1965, John K. Hanson, who was making Winnebago travel trailers and pickup campers in Forest city, Iowa, signed a contract to produce the motor home designed by James and Bettye Baker of San Jose, California. According to their contract, Hanson would sell the finished vehicles to the Bakers, who would distribute them to retail outlets. This arrangement lasted one year.

A similar motor home that Winnebago began selling under its own badge in 1966 was an instant hit "because of its

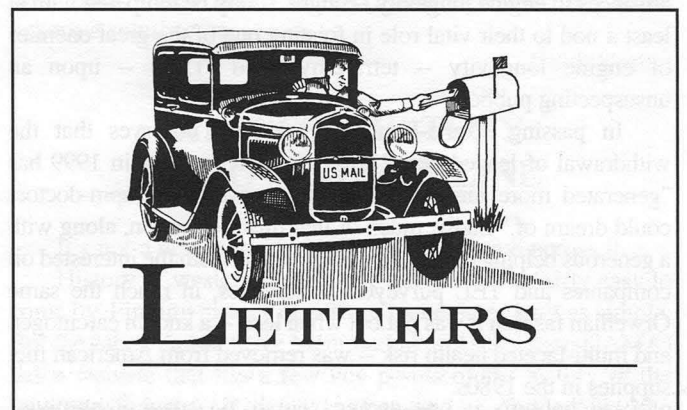
handsome, trailer-like body, well-planned interior, driveability, and good mechanical performance," White says. (Never mind that the Bakers sued Hanson and Winnebago and won a \$5.8 million breach-of-contract judgement in 1973.) By applying automotive assembly-line techniques to motor home production, Hanson drove down prices, carved out a large share of the new market for Winnebago and gave America a new industry: the mass-produced motor home.

White notes that clashes between environmentalists and motor home owners during the 1970s, a decade of gasoline shortages, and the problems with motor homes caused in national parks. Motor homes slowed traffic, blocked views, spewed exhaust fumes, and required the building (or rebuilding) of roads and large parking lots to accommodate them. They also brought with them the noise of the city from generators, stereos, and television sets.

Overall, White does a masterful job of surveying the subject in a book detailed enough for scholars yet accessible to general readers. The book's greatest flaw is a lack of graphics. Describing how the Nash seat-bed works is not nearly as illuminating as seeing it work. Likewise, words can tell about the evolution of motor home design; photos can show that evolution. Furthermore, the author's short epilogue is disappointingly timid in offering a vision of the industry's future. Manufacturers have submitted lightweight materials and diesel engines to boost fuel economy from 7 or 8 miles per gallon to as much as 20 mpg, White notes. How much further can makers go in lightening their vehicles, lowering their center of gravity, improving handling, and reducing noise? Such questions go unanswered.

These objections aside, *Home on the Road* is a winner. In a conclusion to each chapter, White neatly and concisely summarizes the highlights of each stage in the development of the modern motor home. His 6-page acknowledgements section—one of the longest I have ever seen—reveals the large number of authorities that he consulted during his research. They are listed in 26 pages of endnotes that contain plenty of ideas for additional reading.

- Curt McConnell



## FORD AND ISSIGONIS

Two features in the September-October *Journal* (No. 188) prompted me to write. The first is the picture of, among other, Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone, and the white-bearded John Burroughs on page 15. It reminded me of a story in *The Fords*, by

David Horowitz and Peter Collier. Henry, Harvey, and John Burroughs, in the 1930s were fond of taking camping trips together. On one such trip, the three went into a general store. Henry spoke first, introducing himself and Harvey Firestone. The storekeeper stopped him dead in his tracks, saying, "And I suppose the other guy is Santa Claus? Get outta here!"

The second story is about Alec Issigonis, and shows a different side to his character from that of the quiet, obsessed academic that most people considered him to be. I am in the process of writing about a series of military vehicles made by Alvis Ltd. in the 1950s and 1960s. The staff of the company that I have spoken to maintain that the Mini had its embryonic stage in the drawing offices of the "The Alvis," and a story from their retired test driver, Tom Packham, bears this out. Issigonis had a number of small wheels and tyres in his drawing office, presumably from the very bubble cars that Len Lord had such an aversion to, so that he could carry out some design studies.

Tom Peckham was asked to run an air line into the drawing office from the yard so that Issigonis could pump the tyres up to pressure. This Tom did, but did not realize that the air line had been sitting in the yard for some time and drawn in some dirty water. Nor were the line connections pushed home. As Tom switched on the compressor, the connection came apart and a jet of dirty water covered both Issigonis and his precious sketches. Issigonis grabbed Tom by the lapels of his coat and slammed him against the wall, shouting at him and abusing him for his carelessness! **Bill Munro, 7 Galahad Road, Ifield, Crawley, West Sussex, England RH11 0PD.**

## OIL AND GAS

While *Graham Orme-Bannister's* "Let's Hear it for the Oil Companies: The Secret History of Engine Oil" (SAH Journal September-October 2000) sheds useful light on an underappreciated aspect of the developmental history of the internal combustion engine, his conclusion -- that the oil companies should be congratulated for their contributions to advances in engine longevity -- ought surely be tempered with at least a nod to their vital role in foisting one of the great enemies of engine longevity -- tetra-ethyl lead (TEL) -- upon an unsuspecting public.

In passing, Orme-Bannister correctly observes that the withdrawal of leaded petrol (from the UK market) in 1999 has "generated more misinformation than government spin-doctors could dream of." Sadly, much of that misinformation, along with a generous helping of disinformation, came from the interested oil companies and TEL purveyors themselves, in much the same Orwellian fashion it was put out when lead -- a known carcinogen and multi-faceted health risk -- was removed from American fuel supplies in the 1980s.

The chief argument TEL's boosters promulgated here in America in the Eighties, reprised again in Europe scant years ago, was that leaded petrol offered vital protection against recession of soft-metal valve seats, the implication being that there would be catastrophic financial implications for consumers should lead be eliminated from the fuel supply. Of course, this -- and a promised "octane crisis" -- never transpired in America, making the claim in Europe, when served up more than a dozen years later, that much more specious.

Ignore, for a moment, the fact that few modern machines are at risk for valve-seat recession (VSR) on account of the widespread use of hardened metal seats. Disregard the fact that the cost of retrofitting hardened seats is comparatively modest and that owners of many older cars were able to undertake the procedure at virtually no additional expense during the course of normal engine rebuilding or head freshening. And overlook for the moment that the dread octane crisis never did come to pass, on either continent.

Then ask yourselves these questions. Why have intervals between oil changes grown dramatically in the last ten or fifteen years? Why do spark plugs and exhaust systems last longer? Why do engines seem to run so much longer between rebuilds? While advances in lubricant composition, metallurgy and engine design all play their parts, try unleaded fuel.

In a report delivered to the Society of Automotive Engineers (Hinton, et al. "A Study of Lengthened Engine Oil-Change Intervals," Pless, SAE # 740139,) lead-free fuel was shown to significantly reduce engine rusting and piston ring wear and sludge and varnish deposits as well as minimizing camshaft and lifter wear. As far back as 1985, an EPA report concluded that reduced lead levels curbed piston-ring and cylinder-bore wear, preventing engine failure and improving fuel economy. Estimated maintenance savings exceeded the maintenance costs associated with recession of exhaust valves caused by the use of unleaded gasoline, while the average life an engine was seen to rise 150 percent.

While it may come as a surprise to many, the destructive properties of leaded gasoline were well known to its makers -- General Motors, Standard Oil of NJ (joint founders of the Ethyl Gasoline Corp.) and GM parent duPont -- as early as 1921, just as they were aware of the health risks it posed. Whatever benefits accrue to soft-metal valve seats from accumulated lead, the more salient point is that engines are destroyed by lead deposits.

As Prof. William Kovarik of Radford University has written, in May 1926, three years after Ethyl went on sale, GM's Alfred Sloan wrote Ethyl's new president Earle Webb to express concern that valve corrosion with Ethyl Gas was so bad after 2 to 3,000 miles as to render a car "inoperative." Rather late in the day, one would have thought given that the parties had fought a major battle before the United States Surgeon General to pave the way for the reintroduction of TEL-laced gasoline. Writing in 1926, Sloan urged further development of the product. Referring to Ethyl's decision to re-enter the market following a self-imposed withdrawal, he wrote, "Now that we are back in again and are considering pushing the sale [of Ethyl] to the utmost, I think we ought to be concerned with this question."

So the additive Standard, GM, duPont and Ethyl defended so vigorously before the nation wasn't even any good yet -- it rendered to junk peoples' second largest investment after their homes. Incredibly, in spite of the near-magical claims being made for it, GM's own car divisions were at this very time bitterly resisting engine modifications to take advantage of TEL. In fact, GM's Buick, Chevrolet, Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Oakland and Cadillac divisions would not recommend it to their customers until 1927, when they circulated bulletins to their dealers calling on them to withdraw any objections to leaded fuel. This was six

years after TEL'S invention and a full year and a half after a fractious national debate on TEL, which led to the high-profile Surgeon General's conference in Washington. The industry got the government's implicit blessing to add lead to fuel and, as a result, engines lasted less long than they might have in America for the next sixty years. Coincidence? In the very era where the phrase "planned obsolescence" was coined by some of the very same people in question, it's hard to tell.

One thing is certain. The engine-damaging effects of lead to which Sloan referred necessitated the introduction of chemical "scavengers" which would cause some of the residue of the spent lead to leave the engine along with the car's exhaust gases, to prevent build-up. (Contradicting, in the process, earlier GM claims to medical authorities that lead would never leave the engine.) After a little trial and error experimentation proved the destructiveness of chlorine, ethylene dibromide (EDB), a by-product of bromine invented by Dow Chemical in the 1920s, was selected as the scavenger of choice,\* though lead deposits remained an issue.

Don't believe it? Ask the Ford Motor Company. Lead removal is "a technology enabler for us," Gary Smith, an English Ford engineer working in the area of Fuel Economy and Quality and Vehicle and Environmental Engineering, told me in an interview in Dearborn two years ago. "It allowed us to put catalysts on [the cars]. The other thing is, the higher the lead content, the more it messes the engine oil up, and we wanted to get longer intervals between engine oil changes, so that's a negative for lead as well....[The scavengers] or combustion of anything with chlorine or bromine will make hydrochloric and hydrobromic acid, so the actual muffler systems get corroded. They end up on -- and affect -- the sparkplugs. 'Cause we're trying to keep warranty costs down and costs for customers, we found ourselves going away from lead..."

Too bad it took the oil industry sixty years in America and almost eighty years in Europe to do the same. Too bad over 90 percent of the gasoline in Africa, to name one affected area, still contains lead. Yes, let's hear it for the oil companies.

Proving the old maxim that you only make things worse when you tell a fib, Ethyl's adoption of EDB and its widespread use created several waves of secondary environmental disaster. In more recent times, EDB combustion has been linked to halogenated dibenzo-ital p ital - dioxins and dibenzofurans in exhaust, believed to be a cancer risk. Also, when EDB is burned in the engine, it creates methyl bromide, which component of automobile exhaust the World Meteorological Organization has blamed as one "three potentially major sources of atmospheric methyl bromide," which harms the ozone.

With the eventual demise of the U.S. market for leaded fuel written on the wall, Ethyl chose to find a new market for its lead scavenger EDB capacity and in 1972 it did -- as a pesticide. Twelve years later, EDB would be banned by EPA in this application following a 1974 finding that it was a powerful cancer-causing agent in animals; a 1977 finding of "strong evidence" that it caused cancer in humans; and a 1981 determination that it was "a potent mutagen" -- a carcinogen with especially damaging consequences for human reproductive systems, powerful enough that it should be removed immediately from the foodchain. This was bad news, as the U.S. was by now

putting 20 million pounds of EDB into its soils annually and it had begun to show up in cake mixes and cereal. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) would also act to restrict EDB exposure and the EPA would cite its reduction in the atmosphere as an additional benefit of its scheduled leaded gasoline phaseout. **Jamie Lincoln Kitman, lcommodor@aol.com.**

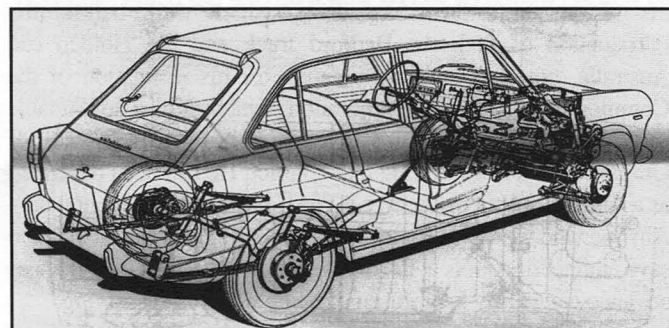
## GIACOSA AND FRONT DRIVERS

I was pleased to see tribute given to the work of Alec Issigonis in *SAH Journal* No. 188. His engineering achievements well deserve recognition. I was disappointed however, to find the canard repeated to the effect that his concepts underlie the designs of "most modern compact and subcompact cars." The statement is made that the cars shown on page 9 "shared their basic designs with the Mini." This is decidedly not the case.

Placing the engine transversely in a front-driven car was not a novelty with the Mini. There are many ways of organizing such transverse positioning. By the same token, there are many different ways of organizing longitudinal front-drive engine assemblies, just as there are many different ways of making cars with engines in the front driving the rear wheels. It is important to make clear distinctions among the different alternatives available.

The Issigonis initiative was useful only in demonstrating in a production car that transverse engine placement could be advantageous in giving a front-driven car a better space allocation. Otherwise, the Issigonis solution, with the gearbox incorporated in the engine sump, was a technological dead-end. I believe I can say with reasonable confidence that this arrangement is no longer used in volume production cars, although there may be a few obscure examples among the Japanese mini cars.

We may credit the engineers working under Fiat's Dante Giacosa with today's transverse-engine configuration. As shown



*Autobianchi Primula*

- courtesy of Karl Ludvigsen

in the enclosed extract from his autobiography, Giacosa was influenced by the rationality of the Issigonis concept but not by its technical realization. He and Ettore Cordiano originated the concept of an in-line placing of the engine gearbox transversely, finding a way to do it that would fit into the space available. First introduced in the Autobianchi Primula, this arrangement was later adopted by the Fiat 128. The 128 became the model for the VW Golf/Rabbit and subsequently for all front-driven cars with transverse engines. Thus, it is to Giacosa that we look for the origin of this concept, not Issigonis.

The British influence on automotive journalism and history is

such that it is very difficult to achieve a disassociation Issigonis from the technology that is used today. Nevertheless, I believe that we can make a contribution to accuracy in this respect through the pages of the *SAH Journal*. With my thanks for your continued efforts and all good wishes. **Karl Ludvigsen, 73 Collier Street, Islington, London, N1 9BE, United Kingdom.**

## GM DOWN UNDER

Thanks to David Manson for reviewing the book on Sir Laurence John Hartnett. However in case members become too impressed with the term "brigand," as selected by author Rich, and assume that he had uncovered some dirt on Hartnett, the situation should be clarified. According to my dictionaries, a brigand is a freebooter, highwayman, and robber, and there is no evidence that he was any of those.

As one who interviewed Sir "Larry," al numerous associates and his lieutenants, I can specifically state that none ever made any such inference about him. As a captain of industry, he certainly did not shrink from the cut and thrust of competitive business practice and, like the rest of us imperfects, did not always get it right. However, it remains the fact that he had a very positive, "can do" approach to whatever project was in his sights.

It was agreed that his own account, *Big Wheels & Little Wheels*, does leave itself open to the criticism of "puffery." However as a raconteur, he never let factual details stand in the way of a good story. That did not mean that the event did not happen or that the thrust of the tale was incorrect. An example, which was picked up, was the extent of production increase at Vauxhall after the GM takeover, greatly over-stated. Whether this was merely due to faulty memory, failure to check the record, or whether a deliberate untruth is a matter for individual assessment.

Hartnett might not loom large on the world scene but it was his vision, enthusiasm and drive, which were behind the introduction of both the Bedford truck and the Holden car. Australia, however, owes him much for his instigation of the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation, which proved so valuable in WWII, and for the brilliant work he performed as Director of Ordnance Production during that conflict. He has been described as a "go-getter" but that term can carry a self-serving connotation. Anyone who would volunteer to travel to Singapore in an effort to save engineering tools at the Seletar naval base from the Japanese advance can hardly be accused of being merely self-serving.

His huge disappointments with the Gregoire design small car and the later submission on behalf of Nissan to produce a 6-cylinder car under the Government industry plan can be recognized as a case of him being the victim of a "brigand" higher up the pecking order. His collaboration with the post-war Labour Government not only raised the ire of GM executives who objected to him working with "Goddamn Socialists," but also put him beyond redemption in the eyes of the leader of the Opposition, Mr. R.G. Menzies. They ran into each other one day in a Melbourne street and Mr. Menzies proceeded to give him a thorough dressing down for "going over to the other side."

Mr. Menzies became Prime Minister after the elections of December 1949 and there are no prizes for guessing why Commonwealth Engineering (still Government owned after the

War) failed to honor its contract for Hartnett bodies, why the Nissan submission went in the waste-paper basket without explanation and why "Larry's" knighthood for war-time services was not awarded until after the end of Mr. Menzies' administration.

For those who might assume that the Gregoire design project was his only endeavor after resigning from GM-Holden, the following list indicates the extent of his involvement. He was the Chairman and Managing Director of a publicly-listed yarn spinning company, Chairman of three public companies engaged in transport, ceramics, and engineering. He was also a board member of two public companies in engineering and marketing and, additionally, ran a number of private concerns. His association with the Ambulance Service led to his design for such a vehicle, which became the standardized unit in Victoria. His establishment of a small arms factory in Singapore resulted in him being awarded the Star of the Republic. Whatever else he may have been or not been, his outright ability is way beyond question. **Max Gregory, 1185 Main South Road, Drouin, Victoria 3818, Australia.**

## IDENTIFY THIS CAR

I have been doing some research on autos in my home town and have come across a 1929 newspaper article that describes the first car owned by a resident. Unfortunately the article does not give the make. I believe it was an Oldsmobile but would appreciate any help in determining the identify of this vehicle from the following description.

The car was identified as a 1901 model.

Engine - 1 cylinder, 4 horsepower, crank on side

Transmission - 2 speeds forward, 1 reverse. Control by a single lever.

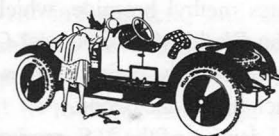
Speed - 20 mph

Cooling - Radiator consisted of several coils of pipe connected to a tank under the rear boot.

Wheels - Artillery with staggered spokes with 28 X 2 1/2 tires

This is all the information that was given.  
**Don Paul, email: dhlvpaul@muscanet.com.**

## WANTED:



### AUTOMOBILE LITERATURE, 1900-1975

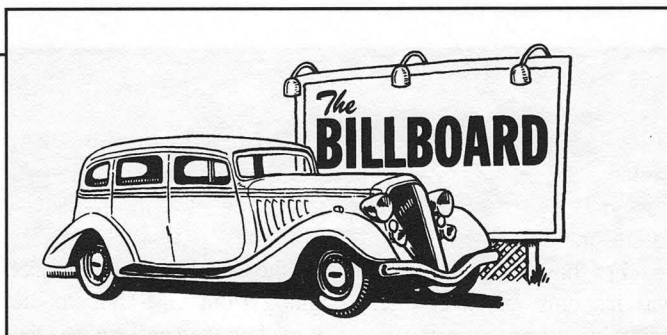
WALTER MILLER

6710 Brooklawn Parkway

Syracuse, NY 13211 U.S.A.

PHONE: 315-432-8282, FAX: 315-432-8256

I buy sales brochures, repair & owner's manuals, showroom items, artwork, models & toys, posters or any items pertaining to automobiles, trucks or motorcycles...I travel to purchase collections.



**WANTED:** Leads regarding a three-wheeled open vehicle, which was to be operated by a "tiller." The tiller was both to steer and provide acceleration and braking. I believe such a vehicle was shown in an issue of one of the following publications: *Popular Mechanics*; *Popular Science*; or *Mechanics Illustrated*; in the period approximately 1947-1948. **Darwyn Lumley 1911 Goodwin Drive Vista, CA 92084. E Mail: CARevent@aol.com**

**WANTED:** Information on something called a Quickie Sportster. It was supposed to have been made in Los Angeles by the Moreland Motorcar Company around 1948 or 1949. Was it a real car, golf cart, or some sort of children's car? Was it one of those gas-powered toy racers that were popular in the 1940s? Was it related in some way to the Moreland Truck Company of Burbank? **John Perala, 1407 South 59th Street, Richmond, California 94804-5005.**

**ATTENTION: Asian and Australian SAH Members.** I'm currently seeking any printed material, preferably factory press or sales literature, on the Timor car. Information on this company/car is scarce in the United States in any form. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated. **Sam Fiorani, 307 Kingston Drive, Douglassville, PA 19518. Email: SVFiorani@aol.com. Fax: (610)277-2505.**

**INFORMATION WANTED:** For a book I am writing, I would appreciate any information on the history of the Renault 40 CV in the United States (there was a dealer in New York City c. 1922-1927), as well as the later pre-war large cars Reinastella and Nervastella. **Claude Rouxell, Résidence Lamolinerie, 9A rue Lamolinerie, 33200 Bordeaux, France.**



*This is a 1907 Thomas-Detroit Forty and the driver is George Paddock while participating in a New York endurance race during May-June 1907. Who was George Paddock?*

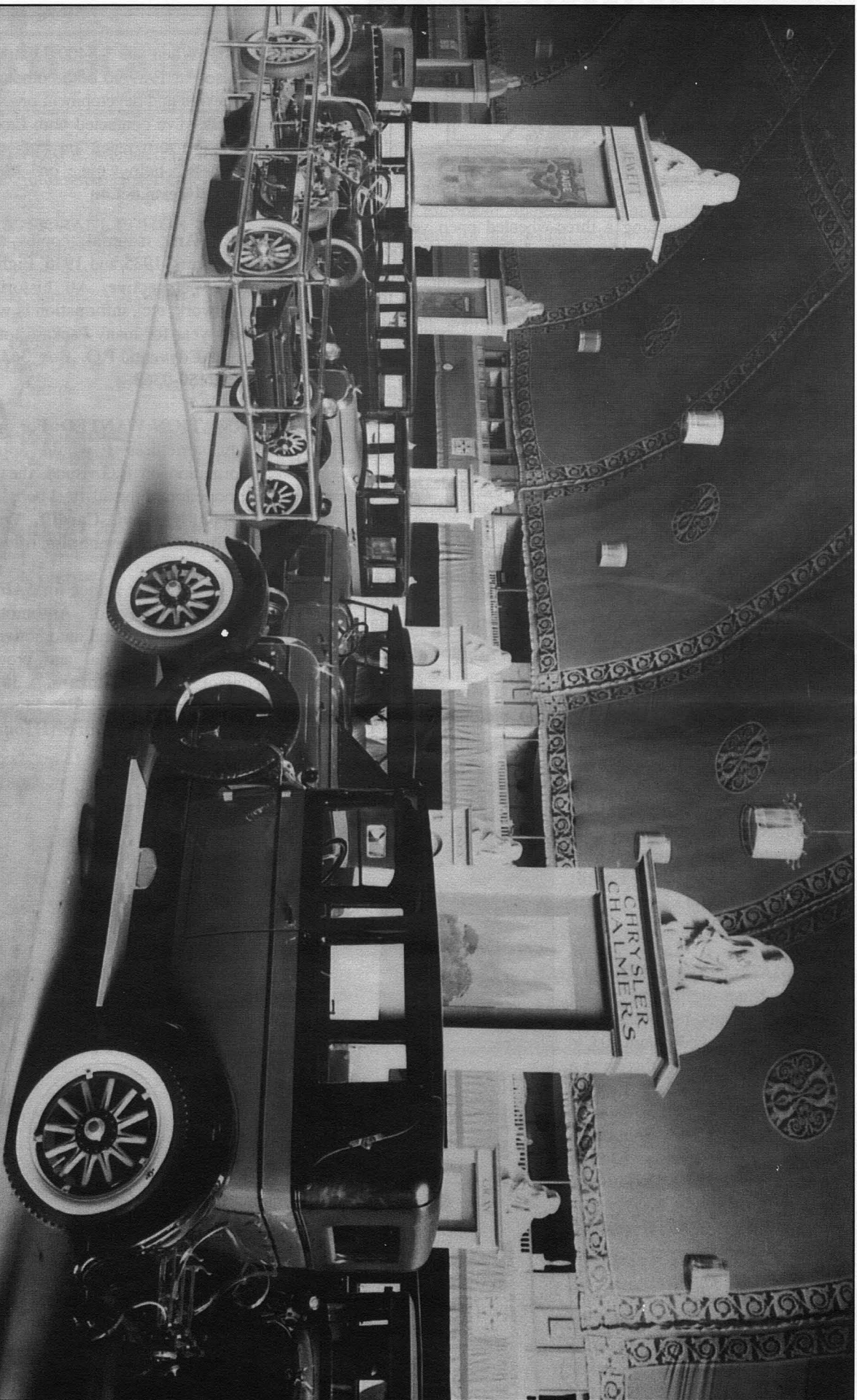
*- courtesy of DJ Kava*

**WANTED:** When the LS400 Lexus and Q45 Infiniti were released in 1989/90 both companies published books on the design and development processes for their respective models. I've contacted both Lexus and Infiniti over the years for zero result on both counts. Can any SAH members help me on this? **Gavin Farmer, roadkill@eisa.net.au**

**WANTED:** Any material, copies acceptable, on Packard Senior cars, 1935 and 1936, Eights and Super-Eights, for future perspective. All historical, technical, custom coachwork, etc., information is welcomed. (1936 was the final year for many Packard traditions.) Please contact: **David Edyvean, P.O. Box 363, Rotterdam Junction, NY 12150-0363.**

**INFORMATION WANTED:** For ongoing research into car body structures I would appreciate any historical information on E.G. Budd, the Budd company and his introduction of the all-steel body. **Paul Nieuwenhuis, 193 Caerphilly Road, Cardiff, Wales, CF14 4QD, UK, Email: paul.nieuwenhuis@ntlworld.com**

**WANTED:** Assistant Editor for *SAH Journal*, the newsletter for the Society of Automotive Historians. Good knowledge of general automotive history needed as well as excellent editorial and proofreading skills. Please contact **Sam Fiorani, 307 Kingston Drive, Douglassville, PA 19518. Phone: (610)385-6990. Fax: (610)277-2505. Email: SAHJournal@aol.com.**



*As Gregg Merksamer stated in a recent letter, and as the above picture shows, the 1924 Chrysler Six did in fact appear at the 1924 New York Auto Show. Gregg wrote the recent book 100 Years of New Concepts, Debuts and World Firsts: A History of the New York International Auto Show” in which he dispels the often spread fable that Chrysler was banned from showing the Chrysler Six at the 1924 show; a story that was forwarded once again in the SAH Journal (No. 186) following Daimler-Chrysler’s own lead at the 1999 New York show.. Note the Chrysler Six at right in the above picture.*

*- photo courtesy of Gregg Merksamer*