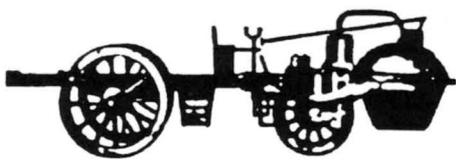


SAH Journal

The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
Issue 217 July–August 2005



www.autohistory.org

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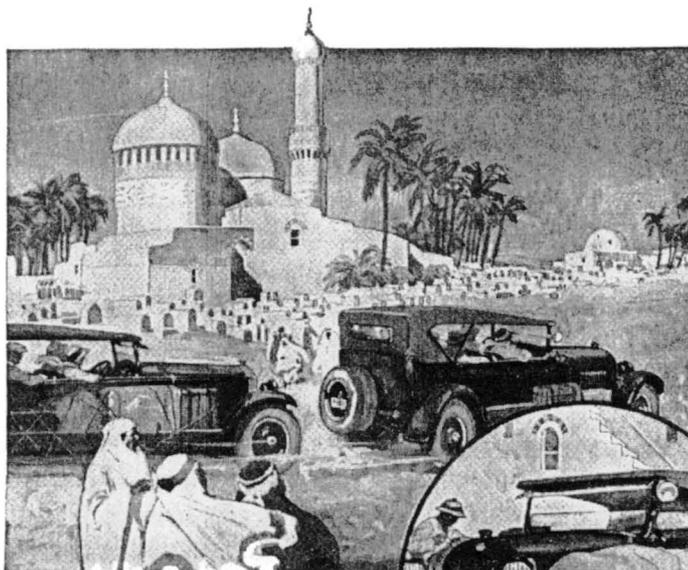
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and Board of Director Candidates
2005–2008 and an Official Ballot—

Deadline for ballots is September 1st.

Registration for Annual Banquet at
Hershey—**Deadline for reservations
is September 30th.**



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c1925 advertisement courtesy of Keith Marvin



Thomas S. Jakups, Editor

In a SEMA (Specialty Equipment Marketing Association) "Market Snapshot" earlier this year it was reported, under the heading "Single Badge for All GM Brands?", that a new General Motors corporate emblem would begin appearing on all recently introduced and all new 2006-model vehicles produced and sold in North America.

The report quoted Mark LaNeve, GM North America vice president, Vehicle Sales, Service and Marketing as saying, "The GM badge is a promise of trust to our customers, reflecting our

Single Badge for All GM Brands?

commitment to deliver the best value to them. Our own studies show that consumers place a tangible value on the General Motors name. They like knowing that the car or truck they're driving benefits from GM's global expertise in powertrain, design, engineering and advanced electronics.

He went on to say, "The name 'General Motors' speaks to people. It is a name people trust. We've been in business nearly 100 years and we're the global sales leader. Research tells us that many of our most outstanding segment-leading vehicles are not associated by the customer to be part of the GM portfolio. Seeing that GM badge on vehicles evokes our heritage of leadership and makes an easy connection between our great lineup of vehicle brands and the company behind them."

Does all this mean it's the end of the line for the Chevy bowtie, the Buick tri-shield, the Cadillac crest? A quick

check of the GM website determined that the GM logo, on a small silver square, will be added to the car, while presumably keeping the vehicle brand emblem.

As luck would have it, I had in my files an advertisement *Keith Marvin* had sent me that provided an early example of GM's global expertise and heritage of leadership. (See front cover.)

But is it really true that customers do not associate Buick, Cadillac, Chevy and Pontiac with GM? Or are the "outstanding segment leading vehicles" all Saabs, Hummers and Saturns?

I hope the summer is going well for you. This is the season that offers us countless opportunities to conduct "field research" at the many car shows that are held in these warm weather months. If your research yields a story, I hope you will consider the *Journal* for it. I am hard pressed for short articles, 600 to 1,200 words, along with book reviews.

—Tom Jakups

SAH Journal

The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
Issue 217 July–August 2005



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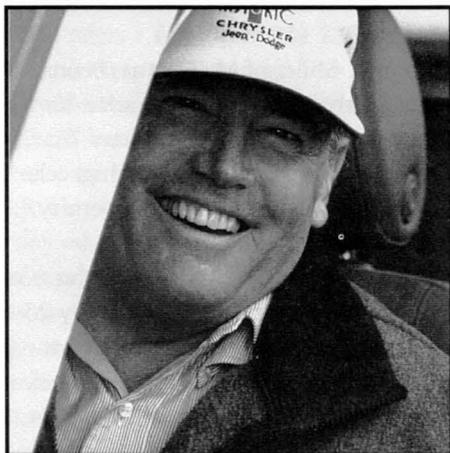
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**Copy Deadline for Journal 218
August 31st**



Joseph S. Freeman, President

After what seems to have been an endlessly wet spring, the drop top season has finally arrived. For your president, this has meant the beginning of lawn events at the Larz Anderson Museum here in Boston, a trip to Indianapolis for Carburetion Day and a very special week in England for the Goodwood Festival of Speed.

I won't bore you with all the details of this last very large and very well-organized event, other than to say that I have never been involved in an automotive gathering with such a fantastic array of significant people and vehicles. Great racing and street sports cars, Formula One and Indy racers, historic motorcycles of all kinds, all mixed in with celebrities and the English upper crust. I couldn't help but marvel at the remarkable listing of major automotive figures who were present at Goodwood: automakers from all over the world, world champion racing drivers from Sir Stirling Moss (celebrating his 75th) to Junior Johnson (driving his renowned NASCAR Chevy) with important writers and historians soaking it all up. I plead guilty to hobnobbing with the fast and famous; loved every minute . . . and the food was great, too. Three days of bliss for this enthusiast!

Having a bit of time to reflect during the trip home, I found myself thinking about the importance of capturing at least some of the remarkable collective memory of all these folks while they are still around. Now, I am hardly the first president of SAH to preach about the

Tempus Fugit

necessity of collecting "oral history." Indeed, I recall some years ago our Society initiated a special program to identify important figures and record them on tape or video. I don't think I have to say that there is something very special about getting first hand information from those who were "present at the creation," so to speak.

Of course, in many instances this can be a difficult task, requiring careful preparation time, good contacts, the right approach and significant questions to ask. Informants often find it difficult to simply reminisce on cue, particularly regarding facts and events that are long past or may reflect poorly on themselves or the organizations of which they were a part. Sometimes they will carry a particular point of view or version of a story that contradicts what has been generally accepted as the gospel truth. They may also wish to protect people they knew by consciously bending the facts a bit. Still, with all the problems the results of a well-conducted interview can be well worth all the effort and have the potential to leave a crucial legacy of important material for future historians.

I guess I feel this most strongly when I think about "the ones that got away." As a researcher who specializes in early automotive and racing history, I am time and again confronted with questions I wish had been asked before the greats from that era were gone. Talk about needing a time machine! My job would be much easier if any historian (including myself) had bothered to drop in on someone who could have easily cleared up any number of mysteries about why things went the way they did. It becomes a lot harder to reconstruct the past from questionable newspaper articles, spotty records and snippets of evidence left from an era much less interested in recording history than making it. But no matter how much we don't like to think about it,

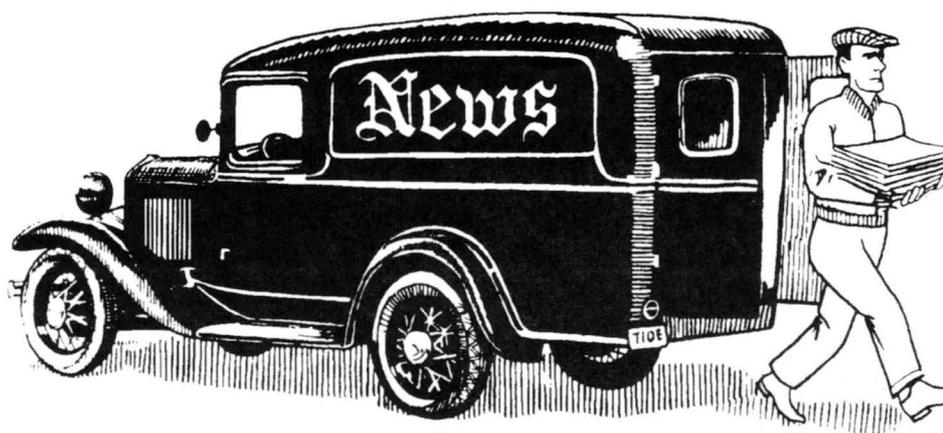
there inevitably comes a time when the golden moment is gone; the individual and collective memories disappear as the protagonists age and die off, leaving us to wonder why we never got around to recording their oral histories.

So your bossy president is off on another one of his crusades again! May I suggest we all make a simple mental or written list of important folks among the living, well known or not, who are repositories of important information concerning automotive history and follow through with a resolution to collect their information as assiduously as we collect stuff at flea markets? If all of us did just one or two interviews a year, think of what a great archive we would have on almost any topic we can think of. Then too, another approach would be to think of lost information we would love to have and pick out someone who might have similar knowledge of a more contemporary project or event.

What should an interview focus on? Well, of course, facts and figures are important, as well as the "who did what when." But perhaps even more important are the personal stories about people, their habits, eccentricities, family lives and relationships with others. Not only can these be highly colorful, but also most revealing about why certain decisions were made and sometimes how haphazard things really were in the midst of what appeared to be carefully planned events. I have just finished a good book on a famous racing driver of the '50s, and it is filled with just such detail, making it a fascinating volume to read, much more so than the ". . . and then he went there and won that race" type of account.

Without belaboring the point, I say, get out there with your video recorder, microphone or note pad and preserve the living history around you. We will all benefit from it!

—Joe Freeman



Studebaker Museum to Host Sixth History Conference New Facility to Open Autumn 2005

The Sixth Biennial Automotive History Conference, jointly sponsored by SAH and the National Association of Automobile Museums, will be held April 6–8, 2006, at the Studebaker National Museum in South Bend, Indiana. The Studebaker Museum, whose mission is to preserve the heritage of South Bend's industry spanning the transition from horse power to horsepower, will open a new facility in October.

The culmination of ten years of planning and a \$2.9 million "History in the Making" capital campaign, the new building is located at Chapin and Thomas streets, about a mile from the present location. When completed, it will have over 50,000 square feet of exhibit, educational and administrative space. Reflective of the design traditions of the 1920s and 1930s, it will be environmentally controlled to suit the needs of vehicles, artifacts and archives and will be a mecca for historians as well as a must-see attraction for visitors to South Bend.

Financing has been accomplished through city bonds, state of Indiana funds, gifts and grants from individuals, corporations and foundations and an outpouring of support from members of the Studebaker Drivers Club.

Entitled "Engine of Change—The Automobile and Its Influence," the

Society's Automotive History Conference program will feature presentations and panels emphasizing not only the role of the automobile in world society but ways in which historians can help interpret history, though museums, for the public. To this end, there will be one or more plenary sessions for all conference participants. Successful museum programs in local history will be described and proposals made for new types of programs.

Other potential topics of interest could include automobile manufacturing, directed marketing, design evolution, motor sports or the future of the self-propelled vehicle. Proposals are invited on all these topics.

Proposals should include the title of the submission, names and affiliations of presenters, chairs, participants etc., together with addresses, phone/fax numbers, e-mail addresses of contact personnel, proposed format (paper, panel, workshop, etc.) and a one-page abstract describing the content of the presentation. **The deadline for proposals is September 30, 2005; notification of preliminary acceptance is anticipated by October 31st. Proposals should be submitted to Christopher G. Foster, Program Chair 1102 Long Cove Road Gales Ferry, CT 06335-1812 USA Telephone +1 860-464-6466 Fax +1 860-464-2614 email <treasurer@autohistory.org>**

Rodney S. Miller (1955–2005)

Rodney S. Miller of Mt. Gretna, Pennsylvania, husband of AACA Librarian Kim Miller, died suddenly on February 7, 2005. He was 49. He and Kim had celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary last year.

Rodney had been a music educator in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, for nearly 25 years, teaching students to play instruments and directing bands in all five elementary schools in the district. He was also an accomplished musician himself, performing in big bands and jazz ensembles, and had been a member of the trumpet section in the Lancaster and Harrisburg symphonies. Also a composer, he had more than 40 published works and received six awards from the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his mother, Dorothy Gettle Miller, a son, Andrew, and a sister, LuAnn. *SAH Journal* extends the sympathy of the Society to Kim and the Miller family.

—Kit Foster

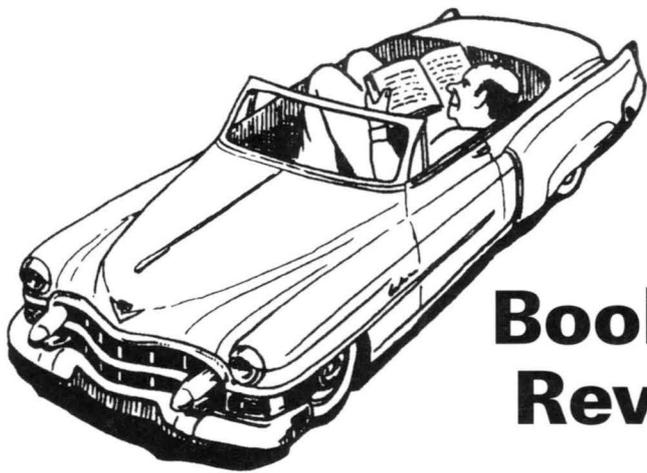
Reminder One

As the insert sheet in the May/June *SAH Journal* advised, 45 issues of *Automotive History Review* No. 43 (Spring 2005) were returned with their mailing labels missing. As of July 5th, only 11 members have written for their copies. Contact Taylor Vinson at ztv@comcast.net or 703-751-7903 if you have not yet received your copy of the *Review*.

Reminder Two

This issue of the *Journal* contains biographies of the candidates who make up the slate of officers for the 2005–2007 term and the nominees who are running for the Board of Directors, 2005–2008 term, along with a ballot sheet. **This ballot must be returned to Leroy Cole, postmarked by September 1st.**

There is also a reservation form for the Hershey Awards Banquet. **This form must be returned to Kit Foster by September 30th.**



Book Reviews

Cars and Culture: The Life Story of a Technology, by Rudi Volti, 2004, ISBN 0-31332-831-5. Hardbound, 192 pages, 21 b/w photos. Greenwood Publishing Group, P.O. Box 6926, Portsmouth, NH 03802. www.greenwood.com. \$45

Merely as a primer on the birth, growing pains and later refinements of the automobile and the industry it launched, Rudi Volti's engaging *Cars and Culture* knows no equal. But Volti's easy-to-read survey steps beyond the technology to explore the cultural changes or ripple effects wrought by the automobile. Who says the recounting of engineering achievements makes for stuffy reading?

Auto buffs and historians alike will thrill to Volti's brisk recounting of developments in carburetors, ignition systems, independent springing, windshield wipers, trustworthy brakes, automatic transmissions, safety glass, air conditioning, seat belts, air bags and on and on.

Just two highlights of innovations: Charles Kettering's invention as installed on the 1912 Cadillac and widely adopted thereafter—"the first effective self-starter"—cleared the way for larger, higher-compression engines and eliminated the chief selling point of the electric car. Hudson's Essex line introduced the first popularly priced closed car in 1921. Due to public demand for all-weather vehicles, sales of closed cars exceeded those of open cars by 1925, allowing many motorists to drive comfortably through wind, rain and snow. More than ever, the auto had become everyday transportation.

Technology aside, the story of the

automobile from a cultural perspective embraces politics, labor unions, personal freedoms, suburban growth, roadside architecture, gender roles, mass-production techniques, employment, pollution, traffic congestion and road building.

The story pivots on the ever-increasing involvement of the government, beginning with 1916 and 1921 federal legislation to finance new highways and continuing today with taxes, safety mandates and fuel-mileage standards.

Besides examining U.S. car culture, Volti includes just enough detail for readers to understand how the American auto industry developed differently from its counterparts in Europe and elsewhere.

Putting the past into perspective is usually easier than describing the here and now. Volti shines in his treatment of subjects that future historians will ex-

plore: the rise of SUVs, "an important source of rising gasoline consumption," and the flip-side emergence of gas-saving hybrid (gas-electric) cars by Toyota, Honda and others.

Especially topical given the likelihood that gas prices will remain above \$2 per gallon—and even climb as China, the slumbering giant of 1.3 billion people, awakens to automobile ownership—is his discussion of experiments with fuel-cell technology. Will hydrogen fuel cells—or alcohol-based fuels, for that matter—free us from our reliance on gasoline?

"At this point," says Volti, "it is unlikely that any alternative fuel will equal or surpass petroleum-based fuels in energy density, transportability and low cost."

Yet consumers remain so well pleased with their automobiles that they have borne climbing gas prices with little complaint. "Convenient and reliable transportation remains the chief justification for having a car," he notes, "but the automobile's unique ability to confer privacy, power, status and fascination are no less important."

Cars and Culture features a six-page Timeline (table of firsts) and a bibliography. The latter is especially useful because Volti's text, though tightly written, spans just 156 pages, forcing him to describe many trends only in outline.

—Curt McConnell

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Edelbrock: Made in USA, by Tom Madigan, 2004, ISBN 0-76032-202-3
Hardcover, 10.5 x 11.5 in., 324 pages,
200+ photos. Motorbooks, 729 Prospect
Avenue, PO Box 1, Osceola, WI 54020
www.motorbooks.com \$40

If you recognize the name Edelbrock; if you have wondered why some guys make it in business while others fail; if you want to know how an American company can get ahead and stay ahead; if you have been to a drag, oval or lakes race; if you have ever added aftermarket parts to your car; if you have ever raced a car or boat; if you are curious about how the automotive speed merchants came to be; if you are looking for an inspirational formula to success; if you are any sort of car guy who grew up in the last half of the 20th century, then you should get this book.

Author Tom Madigan has done a terrific job of presenting the long, storied history of the Edelbrock Corporation in a fast-paced, readable manner with 200 photos, inside information, anecdotes, and remarkably candid insight.

As you might expect, the history of Edelbrock Corporation closely follows the Edelbrock family history. Otis Victor Edelbrock, Sr. came to California from Kansas during the Depression. He decided early on that the best way to make something of himself was to own a business, as opposed to working for someone who could take advantage of his skills. He was a talented, efficient mechanic and had little trouble in finding employment, but always ached for the day when he could open his own shop. His first rented space was a four-stall repair shop at a Gilmore service station.

Depression-era people, even in Southern California, were typically short on cash and often operated their cars well beyond their expiration dates. Model T's Fords, Cadillacs, Hudsons, Studebakers, as well as the occasional Franklin, Peerless and Durant came through his shop.

Vic's willingness to work on anything, coupled with an innate ability to fix almost anything, soon brought him a loyal customer base and his business grew. He eventually found a larger shop

in an upscale neighborhood and moved in 1934. The new place had more affluent customers more in need of maintenance than "keep-her-running" repairs. Vic was constantly evolving as both mechanic and business owner.

In and around this same time hot rodders were finding their way to the dry lake beds and oval tracks sprouting up around Southern California. Vic's attention to mechanical detail often gave him an edge over the typical backyard guys and he soon had racers coming to his shop in search of more speed. Through initiative, knowledge and the occasional stroke of luck, Vic managed to incorporate changes into the existing products available. When those no longer satisfied him, he began designing and making his own.

That's how it all got started, and Tom Madigan does a great job of laying it all out in this book. The author deftly ties social times in context with the racing scene both in Southern California and across America. Madigan sets the scene well by explaining the important role played by Southern California in racing history through technology, venue development and sheer number of opportunities on all sides of the wheel. That the Edelbrock Corporation started here is no mere coincidence. Unfortunately the author does, at one point, credit Phil Hill for Parnelli Jones' exploits. But that's all just background for the larger story at hand.

Vic became Vic Sr. when Vic Jr. came on the scene in 1936. Vic kept very long hours and relied heavily on his wife, Katie, to keep the household afloat and she would often bring home-cooked meals to the shop. Vic Jr. started sweeping floors and polishing race cars at an early age and learned how to bench race by watching and listening intently after working hours.

A couple of points permeating the story are that Vic Sr. was willing to work as hard as he had to in order to be successful on his own. He was selective in his friends, but also loyal and supportive, expecting the same in return. Vic had mechanical know-how and also kept

looking for ways to solve problems and make things work better. In an era when most people were generally more mechanically able, he looked beyond the immediate problems and worked toward a future. It's unlikely he ever considered developing a classic business model, but that's what he followed nonetheless. His name appeared prominently on all his parts which became synonymous with high quality and performance. By 1959 the Edelbrock Corporation was one of the largest manufacturers of speed equipment in the country.

Vic Jr. was thrust into the company leadership position with the untimely death of his father in 1962. A graduate of USC business school, Vic Jr. had the benefit of growing up with an inside line on the automotive aftermarket industry. The combination of street and book smarts would serve him well throughout his career as he was able to communicate directly with his individual customers as easily as he could politicians, bureaucrats and corporate executives. As the racing game evolved and matured, so, too, did the Edelbrock Corporation. The company responded with equal vigor when confronted with the 1970s concerns for fuel economy and efficiency.

Madigan brings the story to the current time and details some of Vic Jr.'s involvement with boat racing. Edelbrock's Fun Team is ever-present at major vintage race meets and racing with his daughters has proven to be a great way to earn bragging rights at the next family dinner.

I do feel that the author gives too much detail when writing about Vic Jr.'s family. While important to the overall Edelbrock philosophy, the point of family importance had already been made and is overdone here.

Edelbrock, Made in USA has 324 pages covering all this history, answering many questions and explaining the hows and whys of the automotive aftermarket. What spurs new designs? How did SEMA form? Why does Edelbrock insist on producing in America? How did they do all they have done and how do they keep doing it?

After reading *Edelbrock, Made in*

USA, you will come to understand that Vic Sr. was first and foremost a dedicated family man. Everything he created was ultimately tied to the notion that he was responsible for making his family comfortable. He used this same approach in his work and products, striving at all times to make his customers both successful on the track and happy on the street.

Vic Jr. combined his father's ethics and experience with his own enthusiasm and education to keep the company high on the wave of change brought about by the 1960s, '70s, and beyond. Both men relied upon strong, capable wives who fulfilled multiple significant roles in the Edelbrock story. Overall, this is an American tale told well.

—Harold Osmer

Kidnap of the Flying Lady, How Germany Captured Both Rolls-Royce & Bentley, by Richard Feast, 2003, ISBN 0-76031-686-4. Hardcover, 224 pages, 50 color illustrations. Motorbooks International, 33 St Martin's Court, London WC2N 4AN England,

www.motorbooks.co £18,
www.motorbooks.com \$22.46

Richard Feast has been a staffer for *American Automotive News* and is editor of the English consumer magazine *What Car*. He has been called one of the sharpest writers in the motor industry with a noted and acerbic wit and the ability to look at a business story from a high level.

Former R-R managing director David Plastow describes Feast's research as "shatteringly good" and *Kidnap of the Flying Lady, How Germany Captured Both Rolls-Royce & Bentley* as "very readable."

This book is not for the Boy Scout/Union Jack types who would have avidly swallowed every word of Harold Nockold's pious and naive book *Magic of a Name* (now fortunately extinct). Feast is as candid as Robotham in *Silver Ghosts and Silver Dawn* (Constable 1970) and Peter Pugh in his three-volume trilogy *The Magic of a Name. Rape of the Dying Lady* could well have been an alternative title because that is what has really happened. As Feast points out, "The most archetypal uppercrust English car is now overwhelmingly German!"

Personally, of course, my interest lies in the comparisons with American rivals. R-R director Claude Johnson's idea for a merger with Pierce-Arrow—"one of the premier car makers, whose image fitted entirely with Rolls-Royce" is covered in some detail, although how Johnson hoped to take over a much bigger U.S. company is not explained.

Feast is also realistic about the Springfield failure, stating bluntly, "Rolls-Royce's unfortunate manufacturing adventure in the U.S.A. exposed it to the high quality with low costs achieved by U.S. carmakers. Cadillac, Lincoln, Packard and others achieved quality levels as good as R-R but with greater reliability at much lower prices. Why would an American want to buy a Rolls-Royce costing twice as much as a Cadillac and wait many months for the separate bodywork as well?"

The recent history and incredible events leading up to the present BMW/Rolls situation are of most contemporary interest and here Feast displays inside knowledge that makes the book so fascinating. The skullduggery and cloak-and-dagger machinations on both sides of the

continued on page 10

RICHARD P. SCHARCHBURG ARCHIVES

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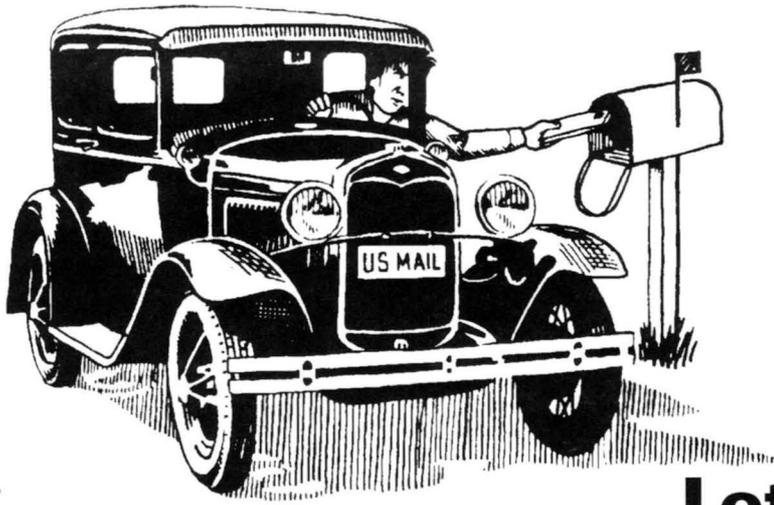
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Letters

Origin of “Rumble Seat”

The origin of the term “rumble seat” was encountered while researching the story of coachbuilder Daniel White. At an 1880 exhibition his Ladies Angular Phaeton was highly commended. Its description stated that it had “a Rumble for a Tiny Tiger.” This was a skimpy seat attached behind upon which the boy groom rode, his only security being afforded by hanging on to a stout strap. His task was to hold the horses’ heads while the ladies entered or alighted. His attire was in distinct livery, which was originally striped; thus giving rise to the “tiger” appellation.

References to the rumble, a luggage compartment at the rear of a passenger coach, and rumble seat both appear in the book *The Elegant Carriage*, by Marylian Watney (J. A. Allen, London 1961), which reviews several hundred years of horse-drawn vehicles. It would seem, therefore, that the term had its beginning in England. The “dickey seat” does not get a mention.

—Max Gregory

More Undesirables

I liked your comments on the book *Automotive Atrocities, The Cars We Love to Hate* (Editorial Comment, *Journal* 216). I thought readers would like to know we in England have books just like yours, and if you look around you can still find them in book shops, boot sales, auto jumbles and car shows: *The World’s Worst*

Cars, by Timothy Jacobs, 1991 and *Cars That Time Forgot*, by Giles Chapman, 1997. I have both of these books and can only say to readers happy hunting.

—Bob Neal

Editor’s Note: *The Cars That Time Forgot* is available on alibris.com

Browsing Through *The Shun Pao*

In the middle of April I spent a week in Shanghai, attending the Auto Show. Before I departed I had some correspondence with *Brooks Brierley*, whose article on foreign cars in China appeared in *Automobile Quarterly* not so long ago and who has helped me in locating information on Hungarian cars abroad so many times.

My intention was to visit the Shanghai Library, because back in 1924 a Hungarian car magazine reproduced an ad for the Hungarian MÁG car which reportedly appeared in a Chinese magazine.

When I got there, the library was quiet save for the row of riot police standing quietly in the garden! It may have been due to tense Japanese-Chinese relations. I had contacted the library beforehand, but the best advice is to be really, really patient (a must in China). I found a very helpful young lady who knew a bit of English. She led me to a reading room, where I was presented with two Chinese-language automobile history books.

Does Fengqinglu means anything to anyone? It was a book on Chinese automobile history. I spotted 1920s car ads and asked the lady to show me the

magazines in which these appeared. I was led to the magazine reading room. There it was, *The Shun Pao* daily.

Let me quote here from a report: “The most famous newspaper is *The Shun Pao* in Chinese language. The Newspaper was created in 1872 and stopped in 1949. *The Shun Pao* had been published for 77 years, a total of 25,600 issues. It’s a valuable research source being collected in many libraries, but only Shanghai Library holds its entirety (sic) issues. Now it’s most frequently used by both Chinese and foreigners.”

Well, I am happy to report that I am now one of those foreigners who browsed through the daily—at least the 1923–1924 editions. Each week there was a column “Shun Pao automobile edition, a weekly edition devoted to automobile interests in China.” It was only the title which was written in English. I have to admit that with my limited Kanji abilities I skipped the news and focused on ads. There were ads for Ford, Good-year, Austin, sometimes Austro-Daimler, Steyr, et. al.

And yes, I found the ad for MÁG and best of all, found another, yet unpublished, ad for MÁG which is now being translated. With the help of librarians I now know that the name of the company was Wild Trading Co., which also dealt with Italian Chiribiri cars (I found an ad for those as well)

—Pal Negyesi

Internet Research

Just thought I’d mention for any of our SAH members who do not already use ProQuest, that the indexed newspapers available on the internet are a marvelous source of historical data. They include *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times* and the *Boston Herald*, 1850–2001. I ran across them while doing genealogy but have found it almost impossible now to do book research without them. They have revealed information about Ab Jenkins’ early competitive history that even his son, Marvin, was not aware of.

I access ProQuest and several other indexed newspaper archives through the

Godfrey Library at www.godfrey.org, which offers a subscription at \$35 per year, which is a real bargain.

Godfrey also offers thousands of indexed local history books that you can read, page by page, on-line; most of the U.S. Census records, 1790–1920; and many other resources. Their prime interest is genealogy, but you can look up the history of many famous (or not so famous) individuals. I used Godfrey to do pieces on Vern Orenduff, Zeke Meyer and Gil Pirrung, all important to auto racing but maybe not household names.

I also use Ancestry.com, at \$295 per year, and the Mormons' Family History site, which is free. Ancestry.com offers the census years up to 1930 as well as other resources.

—Gordon E. White

Weather Conditioning

Concerning the first air-conditioned U.S. automobiles discussed most recently in *Journal* 216, Packard referred to it as Weather Conditioning in its February 1940 ad on a Packard 180 sedan. It also called it “mechanical refrigeration.” I recall in either a *Motor* or a *Chilton* repair manual phan-

tom drawings of the 1941 Cadillac and 1941 Chrysler, each showing how and where their major components, including A/C, were installed. This would imply that in 1941 they also had A/C available as a factory installed accessory (mechanical refrigeration).

The one basic drawback of those early units was that the overrunning clutch for the compressor had not yet been developed or, at least, perfected. The only control was a blower fan switch. This meant that the A/C was always either ON or OFF. The first balmy spring day the owner would have to take his car to a mechanic to have the compressor belt installed. Then, the first nippy autumn day the owner would have the mechanic remove the belt until next spring.

While the basic principle of the overrunning clutch had been known for a long time, e.g. the Bendix drive on the starter is a form of overrunning clutch, it wasn't until the early 1950s when the electrically operated overrunning clutch was developed for A/C compressors that A/C in automobiles became quite popular. Also, in the mid 50s all the A/C components were moved to under the hood

for more efficient operation.

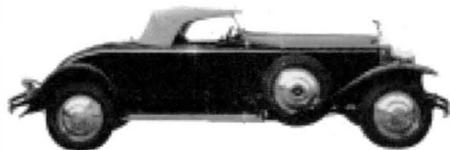
Concerning other automotive “firsts,” in late 1941 Packard advertised its Electromatic automatic transmission for the 1942 Packard Clipper. Studebaker also advertised its Turbo-Matic automatic transmission and Lincoln its Liqueumatic automatic transmission in late 1941 for their 1942 models. All were advertised as having no clutch pedal. Since auto production was cut short in 1942 I have no idea how many Packards or Studebakers or Lincolns were actually produced with their particular automatic transmissions.

Although Buick and Oldsmobile had an “Automatic Safety Transmission” available in 1937 and 1938 (and also 1939 for Oldsmobile), the Hydra-Matic for the 1940 Oldsmobile was quite different and much improved. It is ironic that by 1952 Ford-O-Matic was available for Fords and Merc-O-Matic for Mercurys, but the 1952 Lincoln was still advertised with GM's Hydra-Matic automatic transmission.

—Nelson Bolan

More on A/C in Autos

Among the letters in the May–June issue that responded to the question about the



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first air-conditioned automobile there was no mention of the 1935 Ford V-8 that was fitted with a mechanical air conditioner when it was new. Articles about this car appeared in *MoToR* Magazine for December 1935 and in *Ford Dealer & Service Field* for January 1936.

The *MoToR* article says the air conditioner was developed by the Carrier Engineering Corporation and would be put into production by the Houde Engineering Corporation of Buffalo, New York, for use in inter-city buses. It notes that "research on the new system ha(d) been in progress for more than a year," implying that work on the device began in 1934.

Walter Miller's question in the March–April issue that started all this can be read two ways. If asking about the first automobile with air conditioning means "what make of automobile was the first to offer air conditioning as an option," there would seem to be no question—it was Packard.

Automobiles of America, a compendium of automotive milestones published by the Automobile Manufacturers Association in 1962 says, "an air condition unit was offered by Packard" in 1939, but does not answer the question as to whether the device was used on 1939 models or the 1940 cars introduced in late 1939.

The *MoToR Annual Show Number* that introduced the 1940 cars says nothing about an air conditioner in Packards,

but the book for the 1941 cars, dated October 1940, tells of the Packard offering air conditioning. This is a good bit later than what the AMA book asserts, but even so, Packard is the only make said to offer air conditioning for 1941 in that October 1940 issue.

However, if Walter Miller's question is construed to mean "what individual car was the first one to have a mechanical air conditioner installed," it looks like it must have been this 1935 Ford V-8 sedan, unless somebody can find evidence of another even earlier.

—Dave Cole

Editor's Note: With his letter Dave provided copies of both articles. Each was accompanied by a photo of a 1935 Ford with a roof-mounted condenser. The *Ford Dealer* article mentioned that the refrigerant used, Carrene, was non-inflammable and non-poisonous and had natural fire extinguishing properties. It could be poured into the refrigerating system in the same way oil was added to the crankcase.

Book Reviews continued from page 7

English Channel during the Vickers/BMW/VW maneuverings and dirty negotiations are breathtaking. Feast concludes that what they were really after was the sheen and glamour of a name which VW and BMW could never boast of, and which even Mercedes admitted it could not equal. (Hence the grave robbing resurrection of long-dead Maybach—a proj-

ect which Feast says costs half a billion pounds and which shows no sign of recouping. It is a Frankenstein monster haunting its creator.)

Well worth its price. My copy courtesy Tech Books, Newmarket.

—Maurice Hendry

Meister des Sports, by Wolfgang Melenk, Edited by Frank Rönicke, 2004, ISBN 3–61302–441–1. Hardbound, 191 pages, about 200 illustrations b/w and color, German language. Motorbuchverlag, Stuttgart, Germany. \$38 plus postage.

After about twelve years of research the author presents for the first time a thorough history of automobile racing in the former German Democratic Republic. As the government owned automobile industry retired completely from motor sport the field was left to the drivers, enthusiasts and mechanics who developed an unexpected number of ideas, inventions and innovations.

With many details and mostly unpublished pictures the history of the often surprisingly ingenious racing and racing-sports cars is competently shown. The various cars were based on the available chassis and engines. Since the government did not promote the development of the sport and numerous difficulties in obtaining the necessary components and accessories had to be overcome, there was a great deal of improvisation. Motorcycle engines, tuned production engines of prewar, GDR and foreign origin had to be used to power the small racers.

Often missing material led to the construction of flimsy bodies, but then some have stunningly beautiful aerodynamic coachwork. The wide range of models over the years from 1950 onward had engines of 26 to 230 hp and the top speed varied from 60 to over 160 mph. The fact that some drivers, such as Heinz Melkus, could keep their own in international competition borders on a miracle.

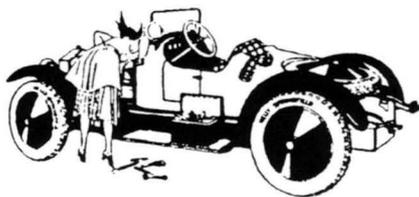
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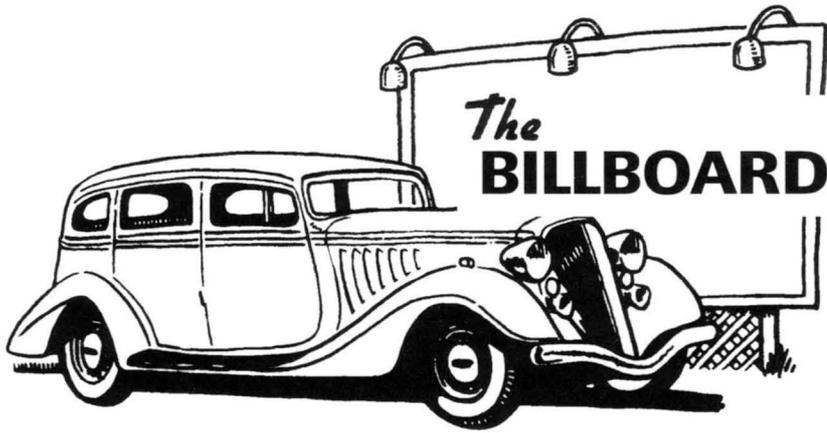
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Information Wanted I am writing a doctoral dissertation entitled "To Build a Safer Car: Automobile Safety Engineering, 1900–1960." My research is focused on the engineering of safety into American production automobiles during that period, e.g., hydraulic four-wheel brakes, safety glass, the "Safety Stutz" of the 1920s, Ford's 1956 initiative, etc. I would appreciate hearing from any SAH member who has historical materials or knowledge bearing on this subject. I will be happy to bear the expense of copying

and mailing any items you might have, but I will also be happy to receive "leads" for my own archival work. **Bill Shields, 311 Valeview Ct. NW, Vienna, VA 22180, highc.king@verizon.net, 703-938-0785**

Information Wanted Results for the Akron Airport races of 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957 and/or 1958. Also if you have photographs and/or racing stories from these events please call me. **Carl Goodwin 419-668-2563, atlstatt@frontier.net**

Magazines Wanted Upper Hudson Valley *Automobilist* before 1972. Will buy or trade. Have many to trade. **Warren Westerholm 3339 Santa Carlotta, La Crescenta, CA 91214, 818-248-1878 wwbiker@aol.com**

Brochures Wanted 1928–1933 Henney hearses, ambulances and limos as well as leads on these cars (any condition) for a registry. Also 1928–1933 Lycoming car, truck, boat and stationary motors, especially straight 8s. **George Albright, 209 SE 15th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34471, g-n-albright@worldnet.att.net 352-843-1624,**

Article Needed For an upcoming book of 100 photographs of American cars of the '60s. Specifically, a disquisition on that moment in automotive history. Extant or new material considered. **Marc Adams, m.adams@infinito.it**

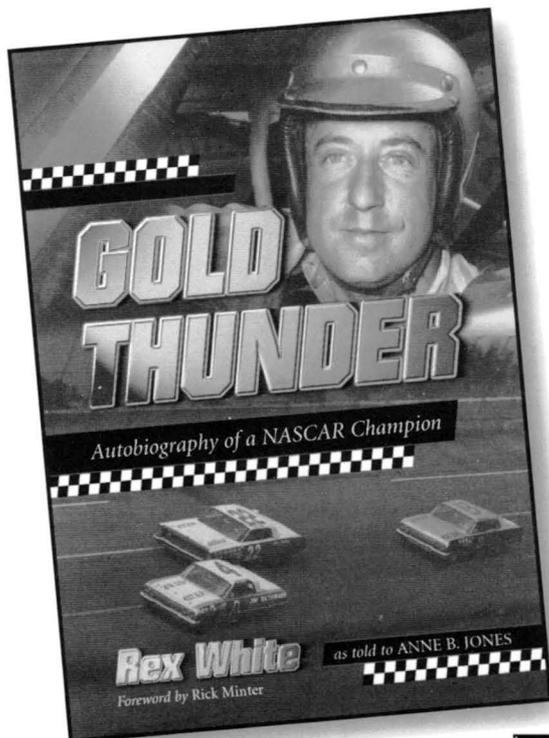
Book Reviews continued from page 10

Apart from lists of the most successful drivers and cars in the GDR-championships from 1950 until 1990, which had drawn tremendous crowds of visitors, the development of the various constructions is neatly described. Rather surprisingly we learn that a few dozen racing cars were even exported to the USSR, Hungary and the CSSR.

At the end of this interesting book, which gives unexpected insights into a nearly unknown part of the motorsport in Eastern Germany, the technical specifications of the most important models are listed. An index, which would have made use of the book easier, is missing, but there is a long list of acknowledgments, literature and picture sources.

The book is a fascinating collection of the ideas realized in the construction of these racing cars by enthusiastic drivers, do-it-yourself mechanics and designers. It is well illustrated, has a pleasant lay-out and is produced with excellent quality. Some knowledge of German is helpful, but for the seriously interested reader and historian it definitely closes a gap in the history of motorsport vehicles.

—Ferdinand Hediger



This memoir tells the story of Rex White's struggle to become a champion despite a poverty-ridden childhood and a devastating physical disability. A firsthand account of the early days of NASCAR and southern stock car racing, the text is based on extensive research and hundreds of hours of interviews with Rex White by writer Anne B. Jones. It includes tales by participants and fans and is peppered with anecdotes of a virtual who's who of NASCAR drivers, including Junior Johnson, Ned Jarrett, and a host of other drivers. The book is well illustrated, largely with photographs from Rex White's private collection.

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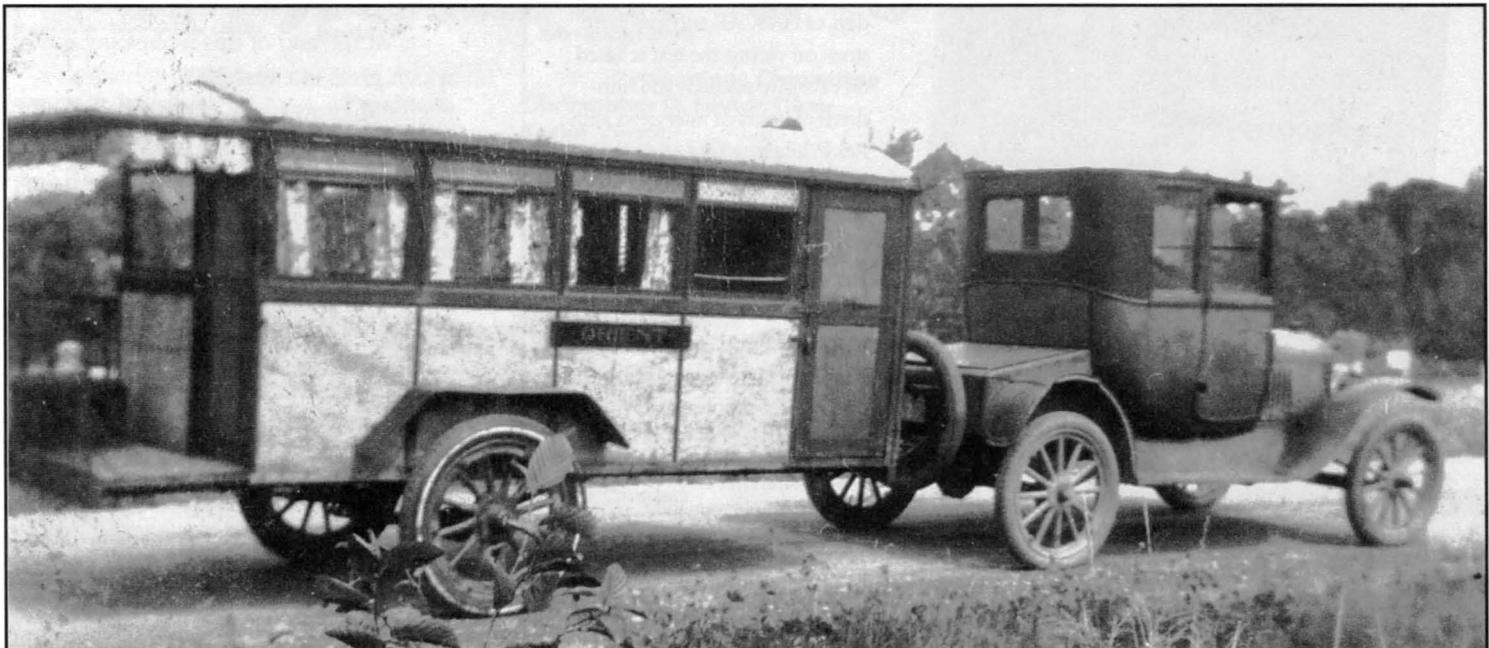
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Deadline for ballots is September 1st.

Registration for Annual Banquet at Hershey—**Deadline for reservations is September 30th.**



STORE BOUGHT OR HOMEMADE? This photo of a Model T and trailer was taken in 1924 by Whitman Daly, who worked in the paint shop of the Rickenbacker Motor Car Company. Can anyone provide information on the background of the trailer? *Beverly Rae Kimes collection*