

SAH Journal

The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
Issue 244 Electronic Edition March-April 2010



www.autohistory.org

Inside

SAH News	3
Letters	5
End of Checker Motors	6
Book Reviews	9
<i>Rolls-Royce Post-War Phantoms</i>	
<i>Breaking the Banks in Motor City</i>	
Editorial	11

Date Reminders

April 15, 2010

Award Nominations due:

Benz,

Don Keefe, donaldjkeefe@aol.com
Cugnot, English,

Doug Leighton, jleighto@uwo.ca
Cugnot, Non-English,

Bill Kreiner, bill.kreiner@gmail.com
Friend of Auto History,

Darwyn Lumley, DLumley942@aol.com
Ingersoll non-print,
Arthur Jones, nomecos@verizon.net

June 1, 2010

Brigham Award Nominations to
Jack Juratovic, 9501 Bearfoot Trail
Brooksville, FL 34613

June 15, 2010

Scharchburg Award Nominations to
Bob Ebert, rebert@bw.edu

June 27, 2010

SAH Literature Faire at Automobile
Driving Museum, El Segundo, CA

July 31, 2010

Bradley Award Nominations to
Judith Endelman
endelman@thehenryford.org

SAH in Paris 2010

The Society's 15th Annual European Meeting convened in Paris on January 21, as 34 members and guests met for dinner in the Salon De Dion of the Automobile Club de France. The date, two weeks earlier than customary, was selected to coincide with the opening of *Rétromobile*, Europe's largest indoor historic automobile event. Members were present from Finland, Spain, Britain, Belgium and the USA, as well as the host nation. Attendees were welcomed by *Kit Foster*, and *Malcolm Jeal*, Chairman of the Society of Automotive Historians in Britain, gave a brief tribute to the late *Taylor Vinson*, co-organizer and convener of the first 13 Paris meetings. Following dinner, several of the Society's annual awards were presented.

The Nicolas-Joseph Cugnot Award, for the best book in the field of automotive history in the English language, was presented to *Karl Ludvigsen* for *Ferdinand Porsche, Genesis of Genius: Road, Racing and Aviation Innovation, 1900 to 1933*. The book was published by Bentley Publishers of Cambridge, Massachusetts USA. The Cugnot Award for the best book in a language other than English was given to *Manuel Lage*, a Spanish member, for *1,000,000: Un Millón de Camiones y Buses Españoles*, a history of commercial vehicles in Spain. The publisher was IVECO España.

Two Awards of Distinction were presented for books in languages other than English. *Adrien Cahuzac*, of Paris, received an award for *SIMCA – l'aventure de l'hirondelle*, a history of Simca from 1934 to 1987, and *Bernard Vermeylen*, a Belgian citizen, accepted one for his book *Voitures des Pays de l'Est*, a postwar history of the cars of Eastern Europe. Both books were published by E.T.A.I. of Paris. All book awards were for works published in calendar year 2008.

Rétromobile XXXV

Occurring for the first time in January, the 35th *Rétromobile* was rescheduled this year as a result of conflicts at the Expo grounds at the Porte de

continued page 2



Above: Karl Ludvigsen (r) receives his Cugnot award.
Below: La Baleine, by designer Paul Arzens. Named for its whale-like shape and grille, it was built in 1938 on a 1926 Buick chassis. Photos from Kit Foster.





Award of Distinction winner Adrien Cahuzac, right.

Versailles. Some of the regular American attendees were not to be seen, as the new dates conflicted with the annual auction extravaganzas in Arizona. Many members assembled for the annual press conference of Fondation de la Automobile Marius Berliet the morning following the SAH dinner, and stayed on to enjoy the full range of exhibits.

The centerpiece of Rétromobile this year was "2 siècles de locomotion Urbaine" (two centuries of urban transport). Examples ranged from a horse-drawn omnibus, with statuary horses, to the modern Citroën Osmose concept. French



Award of Distinction winner Bernard Vermeulen, right.

manufacturers Peugeot and Citroën had large displays, each hosting a number of associated clubs, and Mercedes-Benz showed off gull wings old and new (under the heading "portes papillon," which I believe translates as "butterfly doors"). Missing were BMW and Mini, but in their place was Mazda, exhibiting some of their early small cars as well as the oft-forgotten Cosmo 110S sports model of 1970. Alfa Romeo, celebrating a centenary, had a large exhibit, too.

As always, there were plenty of vendors of restoration supplies, parts, literature and automobilia. My favorite



Cugnot award winner Manuel Lage, right.

was the stand of Motul lubricants, which exhibited La Baleine, French designer Paul Arzens' streamlined concept car. Named for its whale-like shape and grille, it was built in 1938, the same year as Harley Earl's Y-Job, and looks fully as modern. Only a look inside reveals its origins; the instruments and controls are those of the 1926 Buick that furnished the chassis.

Rétromobile continues for eleven days, including two weekends. It is not known at this time whether next year's show will again be in January or will revert to the traditional early February dates. —Kit Foster

SAH Journal

The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
Issue 244 March-April 2010



Officers

Susan S. Davis President
J. Douglas Leighton Vice President
Robert R. Ebert Secretary
Patrick D. Bisson Treasurer

Board of Directors

Through October 2010

Paul N. Lashbrook **Stanton A. Lyman**

Judith E. Endelman

Through October 2011

John A. Marino **John Heitmann**

David M. Woodhouse

Darwyn H. Lumley, ex-officio

Through October 2012

Steve Wilson **Leslie Kendall**

Thomas S. Jakups

SAH Journal

Allan G. Y. Meyer, Editor, Adv. Mgr.

P.O. Box 1948

Vashon, WA 98070-1948 USA

206-304-3872

journal@autohistory.org

editor.a.meyer@gmail.com

Publications Committee

Thomas S. Jakups, Chair
Christopher C. Foster
D. David Duricy
Donald J. Keefe
Steve Wilson
Allan Meyer

Past Editors

Richard B. Brigham
Issues 1–29 Sept. 1969–(undated) 1973

C. Marshall Naul
30–50 July 1973–Dec. 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

Christopher C. Foster
118–157 Jan./Feb. 1989–July/Aug. 1995

Samuel V. Fiorani
158–194 Sept./Oct. 1995–Sept./Oct. 2001

Thomas S. Jakups
195–236 Nov./Dec. 2001–Sept./Oct. 2008

SAH Journal (ISSN 1057-1973)

is published six times a year by the Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

Subscription is by membership in the Society.

Membership dues are \$40 per year. Send dues, membership inquiries and changes of address to

Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
178 Crescent Road
Fairport, NY 14450 USA

©2010

The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

Find the Society of Automotive Historians on the web at www.autohistory.org.

Copy Deadline for Journal 245
May 1, 2010


SAH News

SAH SoCal Chapter

The date for our annual Literature Faire remains the same (the last Sunday in June, this year the 27th) but the location is new. The Automobile Driving Museum in El Segundo is the chosen location, promising cooler temperatures and new automotive sights to enjoy.

One of the bonus features for our event is the promise of much cooler weather than we have experienced in the past at locations in the San Gabriel Valley. My guess is that we will experience temperatures about thirty degrees cooler.


The ADM is a short distance south of LAX, one block east of Sepulveda Boulevard. It is very close to the I-105 Freeway which intersects with all the north-south interstate and state routes west of the city of Norwalk. Once on the I-105 westbound and at the freeway ending take the Sepulveda, south exit and proceed south to the second traffic light (Maple Avenue) after Imperial Boulevard and turn east (left) one block to Lairport Street then south (right) to the museum located at 610 Lairport. Recently, my drive time on a light traffic Saturday morning from my home in Rosemead was forty minutes! —*Bob Falcon*



Join the Buick Club of America
and 9000 other members worldwide who love old Buicks.

72 BCA chapters - one may be near you!

With BCA membership, you'll receive our outstanding monthly magazine, *The Buick Bugle* — 48 pages, 36 in full color, free monthly classified ads for members
Pete Phillips, Editor (S.A.H. member)



\$40/year national dues, foreign higher
www.buickclub.org
(614) 472-3939 for information
Buick Club of America
PO Box 360775
Columbus, OH 43236-0775

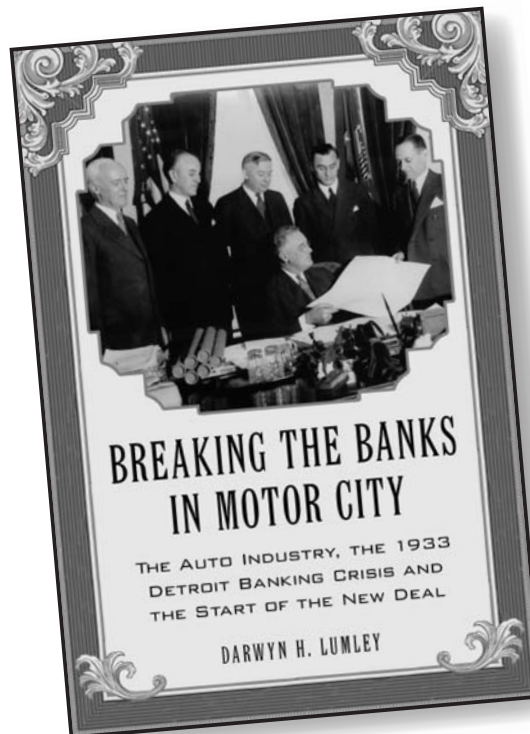
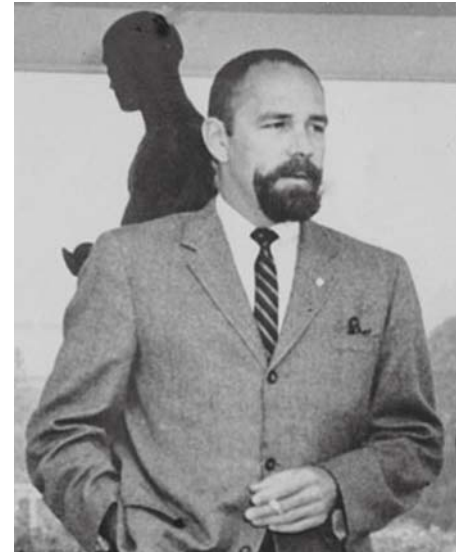
Jendza to head Leland Chapter

At a recent meeting held at the Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum and Miller Motors Hudson, the local Henry M. LeLand Chapter of the Society of Automotive Historians announced the newly-elected Director, John Jos. Jendza III (Top Hat John) of Mount Clemens, Michigan. He is joined by Jim Petersen of Kalamazoo, MI as Associate Director and Victoria Mobley of Harrison Twp, MI as Secretary/Treasurer. Mr. Jendza is also a member of the prestigious Detroit APA-Automotive Press Association, SEMA, Hall of Fame North-St. Ignace and NADA old car pricing advisory board member. Well known locally as well as nationally, Mr. Jendza is a long time Detroit area specialty vehicle appraiser, automotive writer/speaker and hosts/produces a specialty vehicle television show. Mr. Jendza's father, John Jos. Jendza Jr. is the retired former Art Director of the famed Fisher Body Craftsmen's Guild. Top Hat John credits his automotive interest to his father's 40-year involvement in the industry and General Motors.

—*Victoria Mobley*

Frederick A. Usher, Jr. 1923 -2009

Frederick Usher of Santa Barbara, CA passed away in April, 2009. He was an industrial designer, automotive history enthusiast, and lover of anthropology, art and music. A full obituary will be published in a subsequent issue of the *Journal*.



This history reveals the major role played by the automobile industry in the 1933 banking crisis and subsequent New Deal reforms. Spurred by failed decision making and conflicts of interest by auto industry leaders, Detroit banks experienced an emergency, precipitating the federal closure of banks on March 4, 1933, the first in a series of actions by which the federal government acquired power over economics previously held by states and private interests.

202 pages \$35 softcover
11 photos, chronology, notes, bibliography, index
ISBN 978-0-7864-4417-5 2009



McFarland

Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640 • Orders 800-253-2187 • FAX 336-246-4403 • www.mcfarlandpub.com

Friend of Automotive History Award

Nominations for the award of Friend of Automotive History are now being accepted. The timeline for submitting a nomination is April 15, 2010.

The Friend of Automotive History Award is presented in recognition of outstanding contributions to the Society and to the cause of automotive history. Contributions to automotive history may include collecting, preserving, writing, editing, and publishing, or any other automotive history-related activity

Nominations may be made by any SAH member in good standing. Nominees need not be members of the Society of Automotive Historians. Current SAH officers/directors are not eligible for nomination. Posthumous awards have not been made. Please submit nominations, in writing, to FOAH Chair Darwyn Lumley, Dlumley942@aol.com or, 1911 Goodwin Drive, Vista, CA 92084.

A nominating statement, supporting each nomination is required.

Friend of Automotive History Award Recipients:

Henry Austin Clark, Jr., Charles L. Betts, Jr., Dick and Grace Brigham, Beverly Rae Kimes, Peter Helck, Keith Marvin, Ralph Dunwoodie, Michael Lamm, David L. Lewis, John Conde, Frederick D. Roe, Walter O. MacIvaine, Chester L. Krause, L. Scott Bailey, Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, Michael Worthington-Williams, David Brownell, Paul Berliet, Thomas E. Warth, John Martin Smith, Richard M. Langworth, Karl Ludvigsen, Taylor Vinson, Maurice Hendry, Leroy D. Cole, Bobbie'dine Rodda, Malcolm Jeal, Thomas Brownell, and G. Marshall Naul. —Darwyn Lumley

James J. Bradley Distinguished Service Award

The Bradley Award honors the work of libraries and archives whose mission is to preserve motor vehicle resource materials. In 1982 the now-defunct Motor Vehicles Manufacturers Association of the United States, a resource library of the then "Big Three," received the very first Bradley Award. Since that time, the award has gone to collections in six different countries and eight states. As a former award winner, in 2008, I can tell you what a great feeling of accomplishment it is to receive this award. We toasted our success with an after-hours celebratory party and our award hangs proudly in our reading room.

I encourage you as historians and users of libraries, archives, and other collections, to recognize the repositories that you rely on and send in a nomination. Just send a brief essay to me explaining why you think the institution is worthy of the award. In order to qualify, the institution's collection must be available for public use. Private collections that do not open their doors to the public do not qualify.

Applications are due July 31 and the award will be presented at the SAH annual banquet in October. Committee members Jim Wagner, Mark Patrick and I will review the nominations and select this year's winner.

Nominations can be sent to

Judith Endelman
The Henry Ford
20900 Oakwood Blvd.
Dearborn, MI 48124

Email: Endelman@TheHenryFord.org
FAX: 313-982-6244

RICHARD P. SCHARCHBURG ARCHIVES

PRESERVING AUTOMOTIVE HISTORY FOR THE FUTURE



ENTRUST YOUR COLLECTIONS TO AN INSTITUTION THAT WILL PROTECT THEM FOR YEARS TO COME AND SHARE THEM WITH HISTORIANS AND RESEARCHERS ALWAYS. COLLECTIONS PRESERVED AS THEY WERE FORMULATED! NO COLLECTION TOO BIG OR TOO SMALL. ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

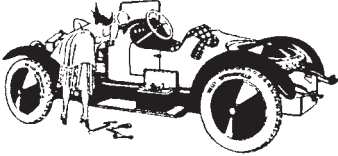
CONTACT US TODAY

DAVID C. WHITE, ARCHIVIST
RICHARD P. SCHARCHBURG ARCHIVES KETTERING UNIVERSITY | 700 W. THIRD AVE. FLINT, MI 48504
810.762.9661 | DWHITE@KETTERING.EDU

WANTED: AUTOMOBILE LITERATURE 1900-1975

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

Walter Miller
6710 Brooklawn Pkwy.
Syracuse, NY 13211 USA
315-432-8282 fax 315-432-8256
e-mail: info@autolit.com



Letters

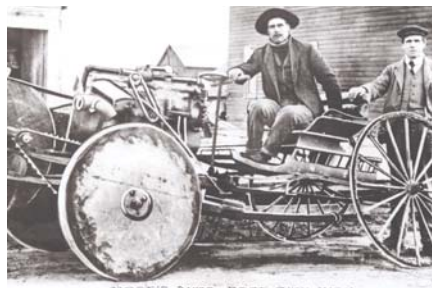
From *David Lyon, Lawton MI*

Regarding the photo on the front cover of *Journal 243*, Jan-Feb. 2010.

I purchased a copy of this photograph from the Internet as I believed that I had a purpose for it. My review of the photo when it arrived suggested otherwise, and I believe that the car is a figment of someone's imagination.

The reproduction in the *SAH Journal* looks much better than the copy that I received, because some of the detail is lost in the printing process.

1) Engine- The rear wheels suggest that this is an early car, but the engine appears to be a single block and not a set of jugs bolted to a crankcase as would be typical of an early car. Have you ever seen an engine that large in an early car of this type and size? Some of the items on the engine appear to have little function, e.g. the

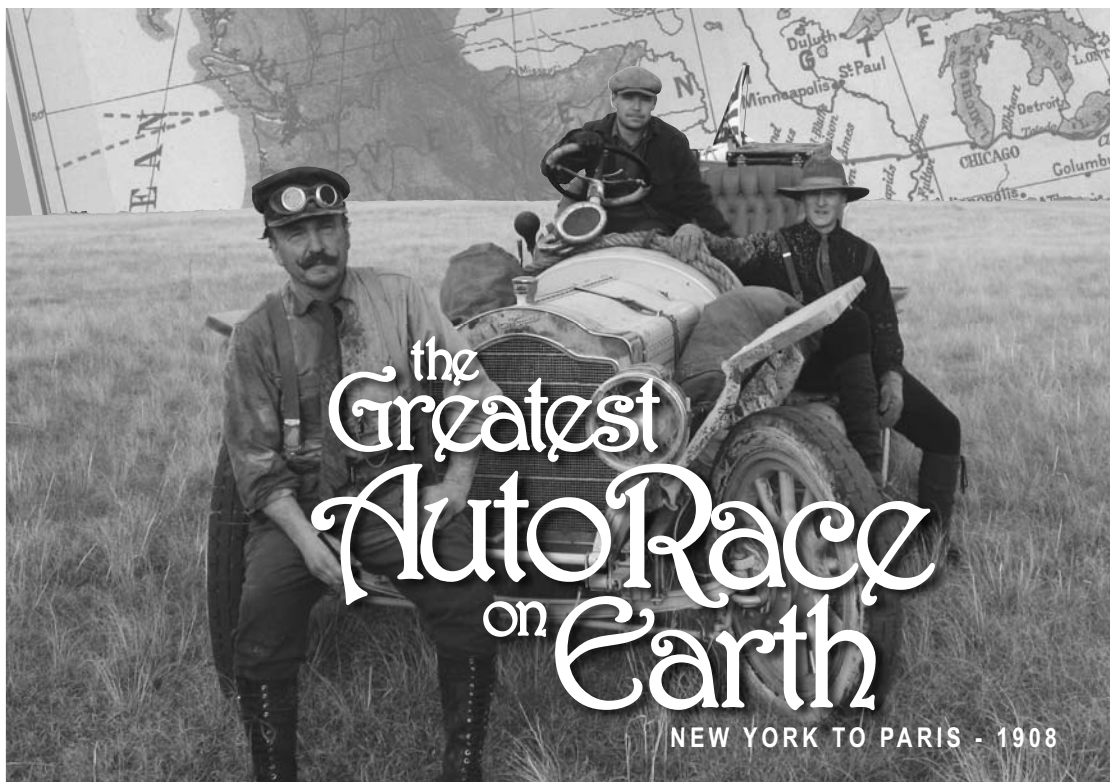


belt drive in the middle (an oiler?), the pipe in the front of the engine that is attached to nothing (carburetor intake?) and the belt drive behind the front wheel that does not appear to be heavy enough to drive a wheel of that size, but does seem to be designed to drive a circular saw (or whatever that non-automotive wheel would be at the very front).

2) Photo stitching- The man on the seat has his hand on what might have been the top of the dash on a horse-drawn vehicle. It in turn is under a steering wheel, and that arrangement does not look correct. Note that that steering column does not connect at the center of the steering wheel. Why would someone build that steering mechanism. The steering

column appears to be drawn into the photo and I question whether the mechanism as shown could actually turn those big solid front wheels. How would that work, given the arrangement in the photo of a small column that is not attached to anything except a gear (?) at the floor level?

3) Questionable areas- The ground beneath the "car" and behind the wheels does not look real, and the composition of that ground changes just in front of the buggy wheel. The area above the steering wheel does not show a continuation of the buildings as you would see in a real photo. There is a nondescript area behind the steering wheel where there should be something concrete related to one of the two buildings. My notion is that someone married the front piece of this car, motor and solid wheel, to the front of a horse-drawn vehicle to create an interesting high wheel motorcar. It is interesting and innovative, but I doubt that it is real.



Eight years in the making, **The Greatest Auto Race on Earth** is now available on DVD, telling the story of the 1908 New York to Paris auto race.

Through never before seen photos and exact running replicas of the Thomas Flyer, German Protos, and Züst, the story of these brave men and their machines is told as they travelled 22,000 miles in 169 days.

With stunning cinematography and cutting edge computer graphics, we look at the hardships and accomplishments of such heroes as George Schuster, Lt. Hans Koeppen, and the popular Italian, Antonio Scarfoglio. Mastered to HD, this 95 minute program has already garnered numerous awards.

Use PayPal and order online at www.thegreatestautorace.com or send your name and address with a cheque or Money Order for \$35.44 (\$29.99 + \$5.45 S/H) to **The 1908 Great Auto Race Film Company Ltd.**, #202, 10816A-82 Ave., Edmonton, Alberta. Canada. T6E 2B3

The End of Checker Motors

Among the little-noticed casualties of American automakers' financial woes in 2009 was the demise of Checker Motors of Kalamazoo, Michigan, which was most famous for producing the iconic Checker taxicab until 1982. Since then the company had survived by fabricating steel stampings and body panels for the Big Three automakers, in particular General Motors.

Morris Markin, a Russian immigrant, had established the Checker Cab Manufacturing Co. in Joliet, Illinois, in 1922 by merging struggling Commonwealth Motors with his own taxicab body manufacturing company. Commonwealth, in turn, traced its ancestry back through the Partin-Palmer, Palmer, Suburban, and Deschaum auto companies to William A. Schaum's high-wheeler of 1908. The Markin Auto Body Corp. had formerly been Lomberg Auto Body, but Markin took it over after its owner defaulted on a \$15,000 personal loan Markin had made.

In 1923 Checker relocated to former Dort and Handley-Knight facilities in Kalamazoo, Michigan, after outgrowing the old Joliet plant. Various series of purpose-built taxis followed, from the H-2 of 1923 through several lettered models in the 1930s, then the Model A just before World War II. Many of these cars had striking styling and numerous innovations; Checkers had already gained a reputation for quality and durability. Buda had originally supplied engines, but Lycoming took its place in 1933 and Continental followed a short time later.

During these years Markin bought several taxi companies, assuring continued business for Checker, which also built station wagon-like vehicles under the name Suburban (before Chevrolet's use of the name) and even a few trucks and buses. By decade's end Checker Cab was building commercial bodies for Hudson, Ford, and Dodge, as well as trailers for Sears, Roebuck and Co., starting a well-needed diversification that would keep the company going decades later.



E. L. Cord briefly bought control of Checker in 1933, but Markin had regained control by March 1936, just months before Cord's remaining automotive empire folded in 1937 and took such names as Auburn and Stutz with it. As a result, renowned chief Auburn engineer Herbert C. Snow, who had helped develop the Cord 810, went to similar work at Checker.

As the U.S. prepared for World War II, the company built prototypes of a small jeep, though these were possibly simply modifications of the original Bantam design; during the war came production of numerous trailers and vehicle bodies for the military. Such work would continue after the war ended. Taxi production resumed with the Model A-2 in 1947. Successor models were made available by special order as private cars. The company also briefly built Transit buses, which were cab-

forward models mainly for city use. At its peak Checker employed about 1,000 workers and built 5,000 vehicles a year.

The all-new A-8 appeared in 1956, using the same basic body that would endure until production ended. The closely related successor models, A-9 through A-12, included a station wagon and the famous stretched Aerobus for hotel and airport use. Checker Cab became Checker Motors Corporation in 1958, paving the way for private sales through a dealer network. These began in late 1959 as 1960 models with the A-10 Superba, later replaced by the A-12 Marathon that would be available until the end in 1982.

Because of fundamental changes in the taxi market that included relaxation of past city rules on what vehicles could be used as taxis,



Above: Checker Superba taxi in the Lake Tahoe, California region. Being in a state border area the vehicle carries both California and Nevada licenses. Image from editor's collection.



Marcia Koestner assured a reporter in July 2008: “Basically, the products we produce are not products that are in jeopardy. They’re not for SUVs... Our major lines are not going to be affected [by GM cuts], we hope.” But Checker’s sales to GM had already dropped significantly, and overall sales for 2009 were projected to drop by over 40 percent.

The federal government bailout of the banking system and the news that financier Bernard Madoff had defrauded investment clients of billions soon followed—which further rocked the ailing economy. One of Madoff’s victims was none other than David Markin. Another government bailout to keep GM and Chrysler afloat became necessary. And this led to bankruptcy proceedings for Checker, which filed on January 16, 2009, not long before GM and Chrysler themselves followed. It was the eighth largest American auto supplier to do so and had already laid off at least 90 workers. Ironically, in an echo of the controversy over bonuses for executives of bailed-out banks, bankruptcy judge James D. Gregg denied the company relief from collective bargaining agreements with the United Steel Workers the following month, citing executive retention bonuses totaling \$275,000 Checker had paid to Markin, Koestner, Markin’s son Christopher, and Mark Walburn in December 2008 amid all the layoffs. David Markin had received over \$241,000 in compensation in 2008.

In April 2009 Checker announced its intent to close by the end of June. During that month Judge Gregg approved the company’s sale to two Canadian auto suppliers for a total of \$1.6 million. This might seem like a low value for the assets, but much of Checker’s machinery could not

Checker began to have periodic financial difficulties even in the 1950s. Continental declined to provide engines after 1964, and after briefly using Chrysler engines, Checker adopted Chevrolet sixes and V-8s for use until Marathon and taxi production ended. (A few Perkins diesel engines found their way into the cars in 1968, making Checker possibly the first American manufacturer to offer a diesel-powered production car.) Morris Markin sold his taxi holdings after New York filed an antitrust lawsuit against him for forcing his taxi companies to buy his taxis, even as Checker lost an antitrust suit against Chrysler over related claims. Upon his death in July 1970 at age 76, his son David assumed control of the company amid building storm clouds.

The 1970s saw smaller auto manufacturers such as Checker buffeted by high inflation, energy crises, labor troubles, and federal safety and emissions mandates. The company adapted its products as well as it could, often using Chevrolet or other off-the-shelf components, but quality suffered. Proposals for a replacement for the venerable Marathon repeatedly went by the wayside as sales began to drop for the thirsty vehicles. Although fabrication for other automakers assumed increasing importance as the decade progressed, the company was regularly losing money on taxi production and temporarily shut down assembly lines a number of times due to excess inventory. Ed Cole, former head of GM, was hired to modernize Checker, but died in a plane crash in 1977 before effecting a proposal to adapt elongated diesel-powered Volkswagen Rabbits (Golf) to taxi production. Finally, the end came on July 12, 1982, when the

last new Marathon came off the line. Taxi production had ended after 60 years, 59 of them in Kalamazoo. In a testament to their famed durability, the last Checker still used as a taxi in New York City retired in 1999.

From then Checker soldiered on by stamping steel and building subassemblies for other automakers, and was also allied with trailer manufacturer Great Dane. Examples of its work included Chevrolet truck bed and tailgate assemblies, but this in turn showed the company’s dependence on GM’s business. Of the five original equipment manufacturers listed as “key customers” on Checker’s website, three were GM, Saturn (division of GM, now closing), and Shanghai GM (China). Nonetheless, the company continued to invest in new capabilities, adding a laser cutting system and new hemming (edge finishing) equipment as recently as 2008, joining existing capacities of stamping, welding, modular assembly, and structural and acoustical foam injection. In mid-2008 Checker had about 340 workers.

During that year, however, GM production cuts resulting from the harsh recession and high fuel prices called into question the future of its suppliers, including Checker, whose human resources vice-president



Above: Checker Aerobus in 8-door guise. A smaller 6-door version was available. Image from editor’s collection.

The End of Checker Motors

Checker Marathon Limousine



be sold because of a glut of such equipment on the market. The final day of production in Kalamazoo for some 125 remaining workers was June 25, and then production equipment was transferred to Canada. The nearby Gilmore Car Museum sent a crew into the empty plant in September to document and collect Checker artifacts; during that same month Gregg ordered that Checker send severance checks to those final workers. By December demolition of the plant was under way. In its final act, the company sold the 72-acre site to the Jones Group for "just under \$3 million" in January 2010, according to *The New York Times City Blog*. David Markin, by then age 78, said, "It's finished. Our family is very distressed about the closing of the company, but it became inevitable." A bizarre footnote is that Checker's factory website remains online as of this writing in February 2010.

John Weinhoft of the Checker Car Club of America echoed Markin in the blog story: "In some ways it's kind of sad; in other ways it was kind of inevitable. The company basically died in 1982 when they quit building the cars." Rest in peace, Checker.
—Edwin Krampitz, Jr.

Checker Taxicab



Below: Checker Superba in taxi livery, in the Lake Tahoe, California area. Images from the editor's collection.



“A cross-cultural tale of the little car that couldn’t . . . HILARIOUS!”

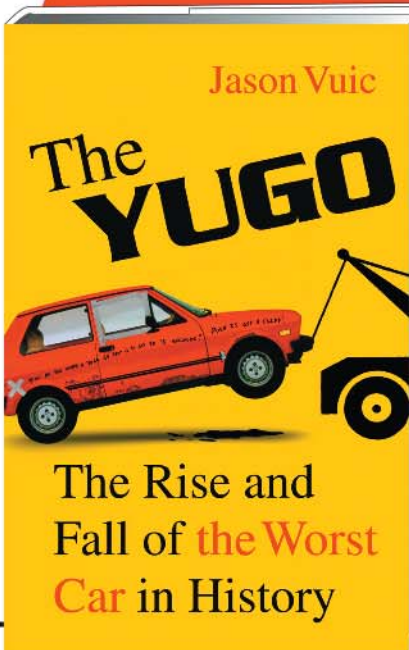
—PHIL PATTON,
author of *Bug: The Strange Mutations of the World’s Most Famous Automobile*

Q: What do you call a Yugo with a flat tire?
A: **TOTALED!!**

Q: What do you call a Yugo with brakes?
A: **CUSTOMIZED!!**

Q: What’s included in every Yugo owner’s manual?
A: **A BUS SCHEDULE!!**

Q: How do you make a Yugo go faster?
A: **USE A TOW TRUCK!!**



“Creating the Yugo required dozens of corporations, thousands of Yugoslavians, international diplomacy, a cold war, marketing genius, consumer idiocy, and major screwups from not just one political ideology but all of them. Any knucklehead with a lawn mower engine and a monkey wrench can build a bad car. It took communism, socialism, and capitalism to build a Yugo. And Jason Vuic has the story.”

—P. J. O’ROURKE



HILL and WANG

A division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux • www.fsgbooks.com

Book Reviews

Rolls-Royce:

The Post-War Phantoms IV/V/VI

By Martin Bennett

Tables by Bernard L. King.

Published 2008.

ISBN (casebound) 978-1-85443-220-9

ISBN (special bound) 978-1-85443-238-4

303 Pages, Illustrated 440 B/W and Color photos, line drawings, tables.

Dalton Watson Fine Books.

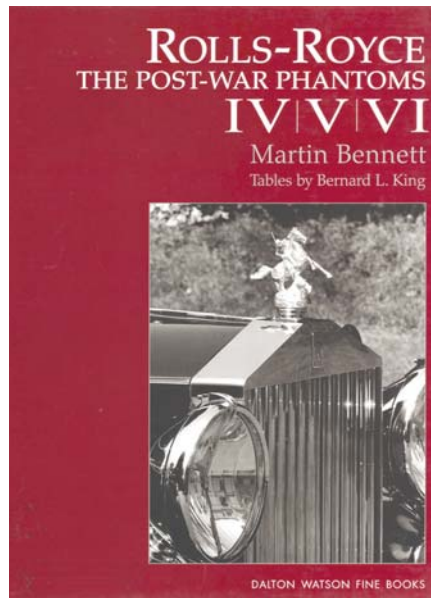
Price US\$115 UK £59

All Rolls-Royce automobiles are special, however, some are more special than others. This is especially true of the post World War II Phantoms, bespoke cars born into a world of mass-produced product sameness.

Of all the post-war Phantoms the Phantom IV is the rarest and most exclusive. Built, as it turns out, for royalty and heads of state, this was not the original aim of the factory, but became so by default. Concurrent with this model was the standard-bodied Silver Dawn, the Mark VI, and R type Bentleys and later the Silver Cloud I as well as the Silver Wraith, a slightly smaller car but nonetheless a truly bespoke motor of unimpeachable quality.

Phantom IV production was a mere 18 chassis, truly a small number for any manufacturer. The Phantom IV was powered with the new in-line 8-cylinder engine of the post-war rationalized range of chassis and engines introduced by Rolls-Royce. With a wheelbase of 145 inches it was capable of carrying large and impressive coachwork suitable for the most important of state occasions.

The successor of the Phantom IV was logically the Phantom V (1959-1967). Built on a 145-inch wheelbase, it was powered by the then newly-introduced V-8 engine also used in the Silver Cloud II. The



V-8 was paired with the four speed Hydramatic transmission which was also used in the Phantom IVs. The majority of the coachwork was done by Mulliner, Park Ward, and James Young, practically the only coachbuilders left in England at the time. A very few examples of the Phantom V were bodied by French firm Henri Chapron, one based on a design by Hooper, one a pure Chapron design. These cars were wonderfully unique as the factory would, for a price, build them to the special requirements of any customer who wished to buy one.

The last of the cars covered would be the Phantom VI, similar to the Phantom V but with enough differences to warrant a new classification. Italian coachbuilder Frua bodied a P VI. All the Phantoms, following Rolls-Royce policy, incorporated any improvements which had been introduced on the standard cars, such as the Silver Shadow I and II, and the Spirit-Spur range of cars until the last Phantom was built in 1990.

This extraordinary book covers all these models with a thoroughness which is a real pleasure to study and read. The illustrations are of superb quality. Wonderful photographs are paired with coachbuilders' line

drawings and specifications. The extraordinary depth of scholarship does not stop there. There is an entire chapter on owner's manuals. For these cars Rolls-Royce supplied two manuals for each car. A driver's manual, and a higher quality bound volume for the owner in the rear compartment.

Messieurs Bennett and King are known for their attention to detail and have outdone themselves in this volume. There are very complete chassis tables for each model giving wonderful information, and even, when possible, the status of the cars, and any modifications to each, as of the publication of this book in 2008.

This is, overall, one of the best treatments of a specialized series of models that I have ever had the pleasure of reading. —Greg Nolan

SAH members are invited to join
**the Classic Car Club of America
(CCCA)**

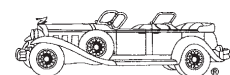
founded in 1952 to promote the
preservation and restoration of
distinctive motorcars built between
1925 and 1948.

The club publishes its *Bulletin* eight
times a year and the quarterly *Classic
Car* magazine.

The club maintains a museum and
research library on the grounds of
the Gilmore Car Museum in Hickory
Corners, Michigan.

For membership details contact the club
at either of the addresses below.

CLASSIC CAR CLUB OF AMERICA



1645 Des Plaines River Road, Suite 7
Des Plaines, IL 60018-2206
(847) 390-0443
www.ClassicCarClub.org

Book Reviews

Breaking the Banks in Motor City: The Auto Industry, the 1933 Detroit Banking Crisis and the Start of the New Deal.

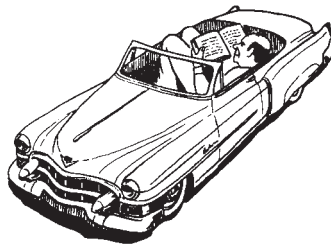
By Darwyn H. Lumley, 2009.

ISBN 978-0-7864-4417-5.

Softcover 195 pages, 11 b/w illustrations, chronology, bibliography and index. McFarland & Company, Inc., Jefferson, North Carolina 28640 \$35.00

It is not often that an automotive history title strikes a timely note, but Darwyn Lumley's *Breaking the Banks in Motor City* does just that. Its subject is the collapse of Guardian Detroit Union Group, a holding company formed in 1927 to acquire shares in Michigan banks through the exchange of stock. By 1929 it held control of 31 banks while its larger rival, the Detroit Bankers Company, owned 40. The two companies controlled 87 percent of the banking in Detroit. Guardian investors were primarily executives of the auto companies including Edsel Ford, Ernest Kanzler, Fred J. Fisher, Alvan Macauley, Roy Chapin and other well-known figures. Later, through their ownership of banks that were acquired, were added Charles Stewart Mott, James Couzens and Clifford Longley, counsel to the Ford Motor Company and the Ford family. The purpose of these combinations was to take over the banking business in the state which, with the growing dominance of the automobile industry, had become a major center of financial activity.

That in itself was a reasonable goal, but the banks were placed under increasing pressure by the collapsing economy after the market crash of 1929. As auto sales dropped and workers were laid off, they became unable to make payments and, by February 1933, 72 percent of Guardian's mortgages were in default. With their investments at stake, the stockholders acted to support the stock, forming pools that were quickly overcome by the decline of the market. Large dividends were



paid and directors were given loans with Guardian stock as security. Deposits were moved among banking units to conceal the financial condition of the group. Edsel Ford, with 50,000 shares, was the largest shareholder. He borrowed on his own account and from the Ford Motor Company, of which he was president, in attempts to support the stock as it sank to become worthless. When finally a creditor demanded payment he was threatened with personal bankruptcy.

Ford Motor Company and its executives had been Guardian's principal backers with loans and substantial deposits of operating funds. All investors were at risk, but Edsel Ford was in a special position. He would be able to protect his interests through the resources of his father who, when he learned of the straits in which his son found himself, gave orders that Ford Motor Company funds be taken to make up Edsel's losses. Other members of the Guardian group did not learn about this until after the bank had been closed down.

This extraordinary tale which Lumley has brought together throws light on the complex relationship between Henry Ford and his son. The elder Ford, always an opponent of banks, stood by while Edsel became involved, then stepped in to rescue him from what he no doubt considered the consequences of irresponsible actions. Those who have wondered that Edsel did not in later years take a stronger position in Ford policy might remember how he had been humiliated in the eyes of his father when in a role of nominal high authority.

There are, of course, many more aspects of the Detroit financial crisis

that put into high relief the close relations and often self-serving actions of the automotive elite. In an industry that was barely thirty years old and growing rapidly, the interlocking interests of competitors should not surprise us.

James Couzens seems to be the sole player who comes off with a record of ethical behavior. That is important because he was for many years given blame for the denial of a government loan that, it was claimed, would have bailed out Guardian and saved the day. *Breaking the Banks* shows this could not have been the outcome and that it would in any case have been in violation of federal regulations.

The principal facts of the crisis have been known for many years through the testimony of the Senate Banking and Currency Committee, 'the Pecora investigation', and from later scholarship. The author's focus is on the automobile men who at first profited from an insider's position in the financial transactions of the industry but then lost heavily when the economy turned down. Theirs were iconic names that enjoyed heroic reputations on the national scene, but, when they were shown to have acted no differently from others of the business community, lost that magic and became ordinary men.

—Arthur Jones

HORSELESS CARRIAGE GAZETTE

As you might expect from a club publication, the *Horseless Carriage Gazette* is chock full of exciting four-color photographs showing brass-era automobiles in action. First-generation cars don't get out often but, when they do, it is a real privilege to be along for the ride.

History buffs will enjoy a feature or two in each *Horseless Carriage Gazette* about marques both popular and obscure. In addition, more than 240 black & white images from the pre-1916 era were used as illustrations in the six 2007 issues.

Membership is \$45 (\$55 outside of the USA).

There is no better place to connect with nearly 5,000 enthusiasts who appreciate pioneer vehicles than in the Horseless Carriage Club. We'll be honored if you decide to join.

Horseless Carriage Club
PO Box 62, Bakersfield CA 93302
888/832-2374 or office@hcca.org

Editorial

Too Much Information

A recent question about technology in cars brought up a related point about information overload of the driver. How much information does a contemporary driver need? At the most essential, only two things, a view of the road and some notion of the speed of the vehicle. The status of the onboard fuel supply would be helpful as well, though the Volkswagen sedan and the Citroën 2 CV did without this information for years.

Today's roads tend to be fairly well paved, marked, and lit, depending on the country. In any case, on a dark, rutted dirt track, concentration on the road is more critical rather than less. We all know that a hundred years ago, a fortunate driver could complete a trip with only one flat tire or stop for mechanical adjustments.

Personal experience demonstrates that young drivers overestimate their ability to cope with the unexpected, while older drivers overestimate the quickness of their reflexes. One argument is that the driver needs more information to stay clear of risks, while an opposing view is that the driver needs less distraction.

Since World War II there has been an increasing cultural obsession with gadgets in the car. Not just fuzzy dice or Chrysler's Highway Hi-Fi record player, but with functional gadgets requiring the driver's attention. Anyone can add a J.C. Whitney tachometer to their

car, but what happens when the manufacturers themselves get in on the game?

Electronic digital gadgets, rather than mechanical, began to pop up in the 1980s and the trend has become more prevalent. These items may involve operation of the vehicle, entertainment, communication, or all three. The Cadillac V8-6-4 range featured a highly entertaining real time fuel mileage calculator, for example.

An obscure cultural twist in some traffic-choked cities has drivers savoring the hours spent in the car as their only private or personal time during a hectic day. Surely there are better uses for a person's time, but to each his own. I have not yet seen a bumper sticker reading "Hang up and sit in traffic." —A. Meyer



Above: With the 1986 generation IV Fleetwood, Cadillac offered a factory-installed cellular telephone with a handset concealed in the front seat center armrest. A hands-free microphone was part of the system along with an "exclusive radio mute module."

Left: circa 1995 Oldsmobile offered the Guidestar™ navigation system on the Eighty Eight with limited availability.

The display would tend to take the driver's eyes off the road, an ergonomic issue still not fully addressed with onboard navigation systems fifteen years later. Images from editor's collection.




Above: SAAB offered the Halda Speed Pilot on the Granturismo 750 as a factory-installed accessory, circa 1959. To be fair, this was mounted on the passenger side, as it would be used by a co-driver.



Above: The 1986 Buick Riviera featured a touch-screen display to control the radio and climate control system, seen at top right. This display was a cathode ray tube which presents some handling difficulties during repairs.

Below: For rear passengers, Oldsmobile offered a VHS video player with a fold-down color liquid crystal display in the 1999-model Silhouette Premier.





books4cars.com
Automotive Books & Manuals
4850 37th Ave S Seattle Wa 98118
Tel: 206.721.3077 Free: 888.380.9277
www.books4cars.com

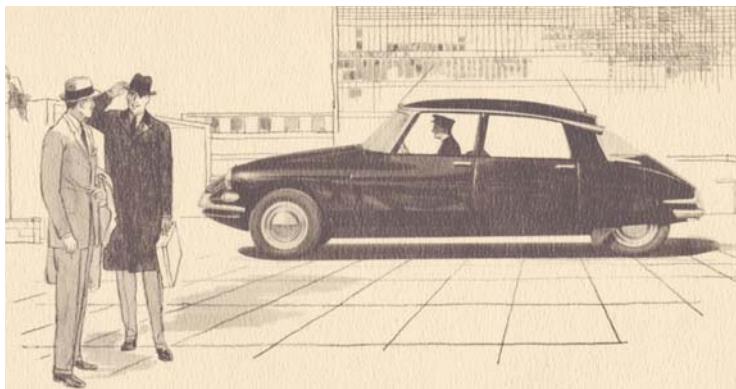


First Class
Presort
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #1
Whittier, CA

The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
P.O. Box 1948
Vashon, WA 98070-1948

Too Much Information.

See page 11.



1960 Citroën DS 19 Prestige. This all-black version of the DS 19 featured a division between the driver and rear passenger compartment. The car was meant to be a mobile office for CEOs and bureaucrats. Coachbuilder Henri Chapron completed the cars at Levallois, France.

In the front compartment, upholstery was black leather. The passenger compartment was upholstered in grey helanca cloth. The division featured a console with a lighter, ashtrays, radio controls, clock, reading lamp controls, optional telephone handset and intercom for communication with the driver.

The optional radio-telephone was available with the caveat that it only worked in Paris within 12 miles of Notre Dame. Unlike traditional mobile radio systems, this one allowed "duplex"

(simultaneous) communication like a real telephone. The car's trunk contained the amplifier, transmitter-receiver, and other supporting equipment. The system included a second aerial mounted at the rear edge of the roof. The DS Prestige electrical system ran 12 volts, compared to the 6-volt system of the standard cars. From editor's collection.