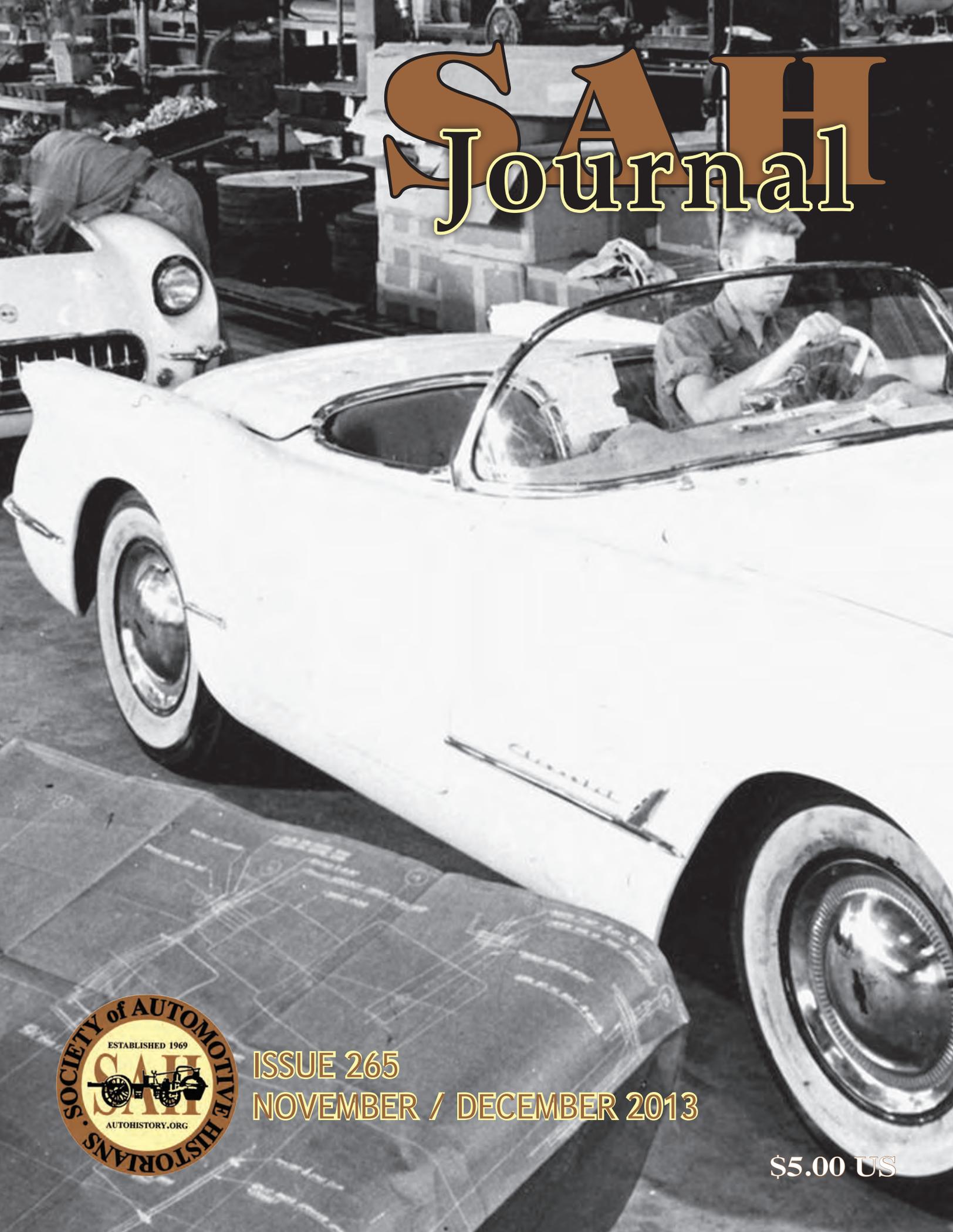


SAH Journal



ISSUE 265
NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2013

\$5.00 US

Society of Automotive Historians

2012-2013 Fiscal Year Summary

October 01, 2012 thru September 30, 2013

Checking Account Balance as of October 01, 2012: \$ 24,363

Summary of Financial Activity, 10/01/2012 thru 09/30/2013:

INCOME:		
Membership Dues		31,666
Annual Awards Banquet Receipts		2,500
Advertising Income		2,064
Member Contributions		1,545
Sale of Merchandise		185
TOTAL INCOME	\$	37,960

EXPENSES:		
Member Publications - SAH Journal (5)		14,834
- Automotive History Review (1)		4,669
Membership Services - Cornerstone Reg.		4,272
Ballot - Election of Officers and Directors		2,320
Website www.autohistory.org		1,716
Annual Awards - Hershey and Paris		2,909
Membership Promotions		230
Hershey Hospitality Tent		1,383
Insurance - Comp. General Liability		1,958
2014 (April) Automotive History Conference		1,112
Maintain Dunwoodie Archives at AACA		1,065
SAH Board of Directors Meetings		689
Banking Fees & Credit Card Discounts		1,100
Annual Awards Banquet at Hershey, PA		2,645
AACA Membership		35
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$	40,937

TOTAL INCOME VS. EXPENSES \$ (2,977)

End of Period Balances:

Checking Account Balance as of September 30, 2013:	\$	21,386
Vanguard Money Market Funds (prior fiscal year value @ \$56,559)		56,573
TOTAL ASSETS	\$	77,959
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$	None

1) The society has been operating in a deficit condition for the past three fiscal years. The treasurer's proposed budget for the 2013-2014 fiscal year projected another year of deficit spending. Thus, at the Board of Directors meeting on October 10, 2013, the directors approved a motion by treasurer *Pat Bisson* that the annual membership dues be increased from \$40/year to \$50/year. Therefore, with the dues increase, a *budget with a projected surplus of \$1,030 was approved* for the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

2) Note that the last dues increase to \$40/year was in 2001. In the ensuing 12 years, the "cost of doing business" for the society has increased, as you have all likely experienced in your respective endeavors. Also note that all officers, directors, and committee members of the society are volunteers, with absolutely no reimbursement for any expenses they may incur in carrying out their responsibilities to the society. Cornerstone Registration Ltd, and our webmaster are the only paid manpower providers to the society.

3) Current "Active" membership in the Society of Automotive Historians is 937 worldwide.

Submitted by *Patrick D. Bisson*, Treasurer
The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

Dates

April 10-14, 2014: the Tenth Biennial Automotive History Conference at the Vail Automotive Innovation Facility, Palo Alto, CA. For additional information visit the SAH website (autohistory.org) or call Arthur Jones, Conference Chair, at +1.215.985.4714 or email: nomecos@verizon.net.

SAH Journal

SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS

ISSUE 265

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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 \$50 per year.

Dues and changes of address go to:

Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
c/o Cornerstone Registration Ltd.
P.O. Box 1715
Maple Grove, MN 55311-6715 USA

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Courtesy BRE / © General Motors



Courtesy The REVS Institute for Automotive Research

Stylist Ned Nickles, whose name later became associated with Buick as creator of its “portholes” more properly called ventiports, was lead exterior designer in the mid-1940s of the Chevrolet Cadet.

Brock's Cadet shown in its prototype form circa 1957 parked in the hallway of GM's Tech Center in Warren, Michigan. As Brock conceived it, it was mechanically simple and could be serviced or repaired by a novice.

A few statistics of the various Cadet/Kadett models by way of comparison show:

	Brock's Cadet	Chevy Cadet	Opel Kadett '60s
Wheelbase	67"	108"	95.1"
Seating	2	4	5
Power	2cyl 700cc	OHV inline 6 cyl 132 cu in	OHV inline 4cyl 65.8 cu in

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The closing chapter of his newest book (see sidebar) Peter Brock calls the “Epilogue” because it isn't about the Corvette Sting Ray. It is, however, another of his design experiences during that albeit brief time he spent as a very junior member of General Motors' design staff during the latter part of the 1950s. And it is a design project he undertook at the direct and personal request of Harley Earl.

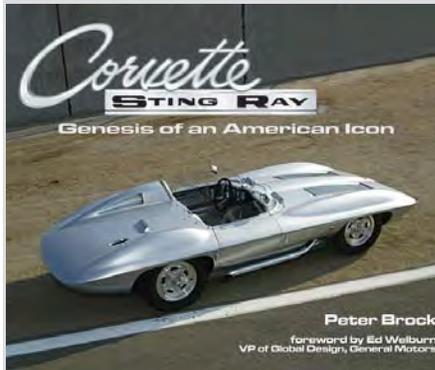
Earl had a habit of wandering the various studios after normal working hours looking at work currently underway. After all, he was the only one with keys to every studio. One night he encountered a young designer who had become so involved in the project in his own studio that he was still sketching long after everyone else had gone home.

During the workday Earl would have been accompanied by an entourage and always remained very much “in character,” never speaking directly to any staff designer and most certainly never to anyone as junior as Brock. But on these late night forays he was alone and bade Peter Brock a good evening and proceeded to engage him in conversation. One thing led to another and Brock ended up describing to Earl a car he thought GM should be designing, a car that was in every way the antithesis of the current late-50s products.

Earl asked to see more so in his spare time Brock fleshed out his idea. Earl authorized clays, engineering studies, and the construction of an open buck (one with door openings, seating, pedals and instrument panel). Earl himself gave Brock's concept its

Corvette Sting Ray: Genesis of an American Icon

by Peter Brock
Brock Racing Enterprises LLC (BRE)
144 pages, 11.25" x 8.75" hardcover, landscape format, 70 color and 90 b/w illustrations
Price: \$69.95
ISBN-10: 098953720X
ISBN-13: 978-0989537209



This book is one of those rare gems, although not because of the topic indicated by its title.

Central to its “specialness” is that it is a first-person illustrated account. Peter Brock was there. He was part of the GM team, virtually all of them very junior members of design staff at that, assigned by Bill Mitchell—personally—to conceptualize and design the car that we would come to know as the Corvette Sting Ray. And Brock is both the “teller” and for the most part the “illustrator” as some of his design sketches, most of which have never been published anywhere, decorate the book's pages. Another plus, the captions for his drawings

aren't merely words pulled from the text but contain additional information, are observations he wrote specifically to enhance the reader's overall comprehension of each of them.

It would be surprising if Corvette cognoscenti weren't enthusiastic, but they are. Yet, as said, it isn't the Corvette-ness that makes his book special: rather it is Brock's remembering and putting words to those memories. Among the recollections that give this book its *gravitas* are Brock's personal late night conversations with Harley Earl (see accompanying article) or those with Bill Mitchell. They are all the more remarkable since Brock's time at GM can only be described as brief.

Brock does stumble a couple of times when relating bits of history outside of his own experiences but once he embarks on sharing what he personally saw and did, he shines—not unlike the shimmering silver cloth that wraps the deeply embossed hard-board covers of his book.

The general reader will be engaged, and scholars, especially of this era of automotive history, should be nothing less than rapt, for the only real mention of Brock's role in the Sting Ray's creation prior to this was in Randy Leffingwell's 1997-published *Corvette, America's SportCar* and Brock's drawings were not on those pages. One has to go back to magazines such as the January 1960 issue of *Motor Trend* (which your reviewer was pleased to discover in her files), to see even one of them—and there are nearly two dozen of them in this book!

—hvh

name, the Cadet.

Therein is the inspiration behind this short retrospective, while also providing another example of the “worth” of Brock’s new book; his real, first person, previously unpublished remembrances of historical, thus significant, note. As Brock mentions, there had been an earlier GM concept named Cadet. And not only had it been even further along in the process of becoming a production car, it had been developed by the Earl-led design staff, though well before Brock’s time there. Given the fate of that earlier GM Cadet, Earl’s choice of a name for Brock’s concept is all the more curious.

That earlier Cadet was chronicled in the January-February 1974 issue of *Special*

Interest Autos. Karl Ludvigsen told “the truth about Chevy’s Cashiered Cadet” as it unfolded during the time immediately postwar when GM was getting fully back into car production.

Even earlier, there had been those Kadetts from Opel, made 1937-1940 and sold in Europe, primarily Germany, before being discontinued. Those Kadetts were in the main full-sized vehicles, but one version of Kadett was a small and unpretentious two-door sedan, in appearance a miniature of the larger Opel Olympia of the time.

Then Opel revived the nameplate in 1962. Those were made and marketed through 1991. Between 1964 and 1972 they were also exported to North America and sold through Buick dealerships.

Historically GM has been “challenged” when it came to small cars and such proved the case with Brock’s proposal. Earl had been so pleased with the buck that he authorized funds to build a rolling prototype, as shown. He even presented it during a review of designs to top level management. And there the concept died—again.

So now in a year when GM is finally experiencing success with a small car, the Chevy Cruze (5-passenger, 105.7” wheelbase, base power 4-cyl approx 100 cu in), one can only wonder if some future historian might one day be writing of another as yet unconceived small car named Cadet finally making it to full production.

—Helen V Hutchings



The Crew Chief’s Son: A Trackside Memoir of Early NASCAR

by Michael L. Clements

McFarland & Company, Inc. (2011)

www.mcfarlandpub.com (800-253-2187)

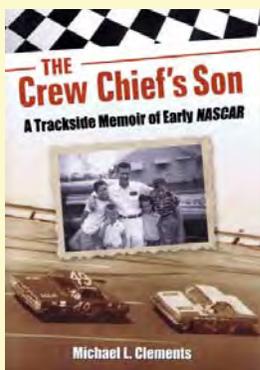
304 pages, Size 7” X 10”, softcover

169 b/w photographs

Price \$35

ISBN-10: 0786449543

ISBN-13: 978-078644954-5



Anyone attending a stock car race today is mightily impressed with the sheer size and expense of the whole operation. The tracks are vast high-banked ovals with grandstands seating tens of thousands. Race cars arrive in huge trailers

that double as shops. Drivers have their own motor homes. Fans with trailers and motor homes create instant cities for race weekend. And everywhere are the logos of major corporations whose sponsorship money finances it all.

Michael Clements writes of a different NASCAR, a hard scrabble, rough and tumble world where mechanics flat-towed race cars behind family station wagons filled with the wife and kids; where victory in a 200-lap race around a half-mile dirt oval might pay \$800, but finishing ninth paid \$140; and where a major sponsor was a auto dealer who gave you a new car to turn into a race car.

Michael Clements’ father Louie Clements and his uncle Crawford Clements were successful mechanics during NASCAR’s adolescence in the 1950s and 1960s. Louie began traveling with the NASCAR circus in 1957, teaming most often with driver Rex White. Although not one of the “name” teams, White and Clements were quite successful. White’s 1960 Grand National championship and his 1961 runner-up finish are testimony to his skill as a driver and Clements’ skill as a mechanic. Louie’s family traveled with him, from the quarter-mile track around the football field at Winston-Salem’s Bowman Gray Stadium to the high-banked speed palaces at Daytona Beach and Atlanta that presaged NASCAR’s future. From the time he was six years old until he was sixteen Michael Clements watched most races standing on the top of his dad’s car in the infield, sharing Pepsis and fried chicken with the families of other mechan-

ics and drivers. It was a childhood he cherished and clearly would never trade for one that was less noisy, less mobile, and more normal.

Despite the extreme demands placed on a racing mechanic’s time, Louie did his best to spend time with his family. Thus they traveled with him whenever possible and always tried to attend Mass on Sunday mornings. In 1964 Louie even gave up a good job with Ray Nichels’ Indiana-based team to work closer to home for Cotton Owens in South Carolina.

For all the charm of Clements’ stories, his book needs a good editor. The narrative is often disjointed and repetitive. Perhaps the biggest problem is the decision to structure the narrative around the NASCAR schedule. Each race gets a paragraph or more. With over 50 races per season during these years, this approach gets old quickly. Clements even includes descriptions of races in which his father’s team was not involved.

I had hoped to get more “inside baseball” about the tricks of a racing mechanic’s trade. There is some discussion of things like adjusting carburetor floats to compensate for the fact that a track’s backstretch was uphill while the main straight was downhill, or setting caster differently on right and left front wheels. But by and large Michael Clements writes about what happened, not why or how.

Despite its flaws, *The Crew Chief’s Son* is a worthwhile look into a vanished world and a description of a childhood most of us would have loved to have.

—Robert Casey