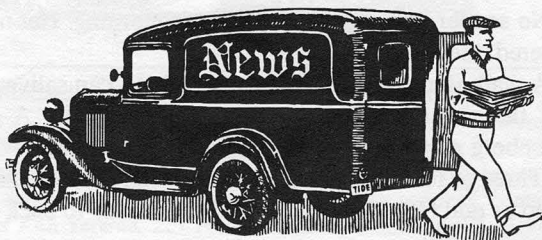


SAH JOURNAL

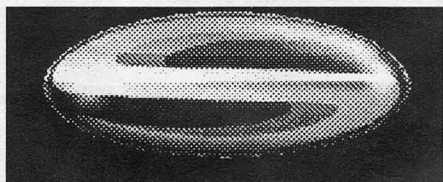
The Newsletter of the Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

November-December 1997

Issue Number 171



STERLING TRUCK IS REBORN



Since Freightliner purchased Ford's heavy truck division earlier this year, the trucking industry has been waiting to hear what would become of this new subsidiary. On October 20, Freightliner tipped their hand.

At the annual gathering of the American Trucking Associations, the Portland, Ore. company announced that Ford Heavy Trucks would now be known as Sterling Truck Corporation. This fully-owned division of Freightliner is based in Willoughby, Ohio, some 20 miles outside of Cleveland.

Sterling Truck is considered to be the vocational heavy truck sibling to Freightliner, the best-selling Class 8 trucks in the United States. The initial products carried by Sterling Truck and its dealers will be the former Ford Louisville and Aeromax (HN80) models as well as the cab-over Ford Cargo model. Beginning in late December, production for the new Louisville and Aeromax models will be centered in the newly renovated St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada facility where at least 80 trucks a day will be produced. The Cargo will begin production early in 1998 at Freightliner's Mt. Holly, N.C. plant.

"We intend to service and support the existing Ford customer base, which represents sales of some 20,000 units annually, and expand from there," Freightliner Corporation President and CEO Jim Hebe said in a press release.

The former Ford Heavy Truck dealerships will become Sterling Truck retailers. "Our dealers are quite excited about being associated with such an aggressive and well-respected organization as Freightliner Corporation," said John Merrifield, Sterling Truck's newly-appointed senior vice president of sales and marketing, and a former Ford Heavy Truck general sales and marketing manager. "The change will be seamless to the customer in terms of the product and service points."

The transition between Ford and Sterling is expected to be completed by March 1998.

ENGLISH MOTORING HISTORY CONFERENCE TO BE HELD

Hosted by the Public Record Office, the national archives of the United Kingdom, England and Wales, a motoring history conference will be held in PRO headquarters in Kew. To be held on January 24, 1998, the conference plans to look at the impact the automobile has had on society as well as the histories of individual cars. Among the speakers who are expected to present their papers are the National Motoring Museum of Beaulieu's curator *Michael Ware*, historian and writer *Malcolm Jeal*, Royal Automobile Club historian *Piers Brendon*, and Ludvigsen Library director *Karl Ludvigsen*.

In addition to the presentation of papers, the Public Records Office will be exhibiting some of its motoring records and the Veteran Car Club will be displaying a few cars.

The conference will begin at 10:30am and run until 4:00pm. The cost for delegates to the English conference are listed as £20 "waged" and £10 "unwaged, students and pensioners," which includes lunch, tea and coffee. Parties interested in the conference should contact Simon Fowler, Publicity and Exhibitions Manager for the Public Record Office, at 0181-392 5279, or fax at 0181-392 5295, or email to presspub.pro.kew@gtnet.gov.uk.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT:

OH! TO BE IN HERSHEY IN THE AUTUMN!

I love going to Hershey in the fall. Walking miles upon miles in search of that elusive...something. I may never find it, but no matter what, I'll be back the next year looking for it.

I was working for a British repair shop on Harrisburg's West Shore in the fall of 1991 when I made my first trip to the fall Hershey flea market. My boss, Kelby Steele, asked me to drive one of his three cars to be sold at the Car Corral. Little did I know that my twenty minute drive in a yellow-green 1976 MGB would change my life.

Every year seems to creep for the first nine months. But patiently, I wait. There are other Hershey flea markets, but Spring and Summer cannot hold a candle to the Fall show. Then it gets here—the second weekend in October!

I make the pilgrimage to Harrisburg on Wednesday night. Like a kid on Christmas Eve, I get to bed early because Santa won't come until I'm sound asleep. But just like the 24th of December, I can't fall asleep. It doesn't work like that.

No sooner have I fallen asleep, it's morning. Get up! Get showered! Get dressed! Get to Hershey!

A walk through the Car Corral so that I can salivate over all of the cars that I've ever dreamed of owning. A classic Duesenberg or Cord. A wonderful Mercedes-Benz 300SL or two. Three or four Morgans, ash frames and all. The rare Alfa Romeo or odd Holden. If only I had the money to back up my dreams...oh well.

My sense of adventure leads on, past the cars to the field. My project car needs plenty of things, but my wallet points toward other buys. Books, magazines and scale models have become the treasure of the day. And rarely is there a specific item on the shopping list. Whatever gets purchased, it just has to appeal to me that day.

One year it was a book published by Crestline on *Ambulances and Funeral Cars*. Another year, my treasure was a 1/43 scale model of the dual cowl 1941 Chrysler Newport Indianapolis Pace Car. Most years, it's just filling the gaping holes in my *Automobile Quarterly* collection.

This year, the treat of Hershey was sitting in the SAH hospitality tent or at the board meeting or at the SAH banquet and talking to people. SAH must have the greatest group of people ever assembled for any organization. They are so full of information and stories and good cheer.

Sitting in the hospitality tent on Friday afternoon, six or seven people were discussing cars that have been lost. The Chrysler Norseman sinking with the Andrea Doria and the possibility of cars having been lost on the Titanic were part of this long discussion. After talking about the recalled 1923 Chevrolet Copper-cooled models, one of the gentlemen said, "isn't it great to talk about these things where everyone understands what you're talking about?" Yes it is.

I've met many great people through SAH. I've been to the SAH banquet in Hershey a few times now and each time it gets better. Seated at my table were some great men and one patient woman, my wife. She and I talked about how much we enjoyed our company at dinner. But as Kit Foster told me, "there just isn't enough time to see everyone."

I'm always trying to meet more SAH members. After you read this *Journal*, drop me a note. Write down your thoughts on anything automotive. Present a story or observation of something historical. Share your experiences at Hershey or Rétromobile or Meadowbrook or the Paris Salon or anywhere.

A number of people said to me, "I've got something to send to you," or "I've been meaning to send something to you for the *Journal*." I'm here, drop me a note, anytime. P.O. Box 432, Bedford, Mass. 01730. I'd love to hear from you.

- Sam Fiorani, Editor

Your new president takes the reins of office at what clearly is a highpoint in the history of our organization. The numerous accomplishments of the past year or more testify to the solid leadership (and hard work) contributed by our retiring chief executive, *Kit Foster* (who, as you know, will be exchanging one important function for another, that of SAH treasurer).

The annual meeting and banquet, held at the Hershey Country Club on the evening of Friday, October 10, 1997, was, in the opinion of those attending, an outstanding event. The proceedings went smoothly, the food and service were good, and people generally mixed well and seemed to enjoy themselves. A number of awards were presented for outstanding achievement in automotive history, with others to be possibly bestowed at overseas events (see separate article for details).

We appear to be living in an era in which interest in automotive history has indeed reached a very high level. A steadily increasing number of books and magazine articles deal directly or indirectly with the subject, and more and more museums have auto-related displays. Here in southeastern Michigan, the opening of the new, Dearborn-based Automotive Hall of Fame facility (located adjacent to the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village) constituted a milestone for that organization. Several of us from SAH had the pleasure of attending the opening ceremonies and were strongly impressed with the interactive exhibits which presented, in a very understandable manner, the lives and accomplishments of numerous automotive "greats."

Our own organization now expects to play a direct role in making possible the publication of worthwhile books on various aspects of automotive history. The SAH Press has been established and anticipates moving ahead with an initial project in the very near future.

To avoid any possible misunderstanding, it may well be desirable to outline specifically the purpose of this new SAH unit. In no way is it intended that our press will enter into competition with established commercial publishing houses. What the SAH Press will do is seek manuscripts in the field of automotive history deemed worthy of publication but unlikely to appeal to commercial publishers because of the economics of the publishing industry. Our new division intends to operate on a very low-cost basis in its publication efforts with the goal of at least breaking even on small printing runs of each book published. In effect, the initial SAH investment thus will become a revolving fund, with proceeds from the sale of one book used to finance the printing of another. The fiscal status of the SAH Press will be carefully monitored at all times.

Following the second successful SAH meeting and dinner held in Paris this past February (organized by *Laurent Friry* in France with the aid of *Taylor Vinson* in the United States), a third event is planned for the coming year. The next function will be held on February 5, 1998, on the eve of the opening of the Rétromobile Show. I know that those of us in attendance thoroughly enjoyed the last dinner meeting. Society members are urged to consider taking in this upcoming function, which appears likely to become a permanent fixture on SAH's international calendar.

In America, a key Society event will be the second automotive history conference, to be held under the joint sponsorship of SAH and the National Association of Automobile Museums in conjunction with the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village. The conference will run from September 9-12, 1998, and be held at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. The topic will be "Interpreting the Automobile," an exploration of the impact and meaning of the automobile in America. More details will be set forth in later issues of the *Journal*. Mark your calendar and plan to attend.

Your president has inherited a very stable organization, thus he anticipates few changes in committee structure and membership. It is expected that a new committee will be established to evaluate the possibility of SAH sponsoring an annual award for an outstanding student paper in the field of automotive history. Details on committees will be given in the next issue of the *Journal*.

Finally, I am looking forward to serving all of you as SAH president during the next two years. I do want to hear your comments, concerns and recommendations relating to the society at all times, so do not hesitate to get in touch with me. I will make every effort to attend a number of SAH chapter meetings, and schedule informal luncheon sessions with members, in the United States, Canada and abroad, during my term of office. Best wishes to everyone.

- Sinclair Powell

25 YEARS AGO AT SAH

Issues no. 27 and 28 of the *Newsletter* came out before the end of the year 1972. Both were eight pages and both were edited by the late Dick Brigham.

No. 27 reviewed the fourth annual meeting held on October 6, 1972, in the Mosaic Room of the Hotel Hershey. The meeting was moved to Friday evening instead of the previous Saturday afternoon venue. This proved to be very popular as a record 37 people ("the accuracy of which is not guaranteed") attended including special guest Gordon Buehrig.

The minutes from the meeting were featured on the front page. Highlights include, "Minutes of the last Annual Meeting were called for, but Secretary *Perry Zavitz* had left them in his car and didn't have the keys. Nevertheless the minutes were adopted and approved." Additionally, the balance was recorded as \$239.43.

Donald J. Summar wrote about "Some Surviving Pennsylvania Auto Plants" and included photographs of the Chalfant, Brinton and Rowe plants. *Dave Brownell* included a piece on "The Irrepressible Charles E. Duryea." A reprint of *Bill Jackson's* tribute to the late Grace L. Duryea, daughter of Charles E. and perhaps the first woman driver, was thoughtfully included.

No. 28 continued the story of the Red Bug from the previous issue and reported the merger of the United States Truck Historical Society into the American Truck Historical Society.

New members included *George Dammann* of Crestline Publishing Company and *Nathaniel Dawes*.

- Sam Fiorani

PAUL FARAGO (1912-1997)

One of America's behind-the-scenes contributors to America's car culture of the 50s and 60s, died July 15, 1997 in Grosse Pointe Woods, Michigan at the age of 85.

Paul Farago was born in Italy to American parents and worked at his father's truck and bus fabrication shop during his early years. He moved to Detroit in 1930 and opened up an automotive repair garage with his father.

In the late 40s, he began specializing in the repair of foreign cars and was an early supporter of the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) during that time. He exercised his design and engineering skills by creating his own sports car, which ended up winning at the Watkins Glen Concours d'Elegance show one day then the next day winning the Grand Prix race event.

Paul's talent caught the automotive industry's attention, especially a number of Chrysler executives who knew of his ability with foreign cars. His mechanical, engineering, and design skills as well as his command of the Italian language resulted in him being asked to serve as an interpreter to representatives of the Italian design house Ghia when they visited America to talk to Chrysler about building prototypes and futuristic show cars. This association with Ghia grew immediately and Paul became the American representative for Ghia and was instrumental with most all of the Chrysler Dream Cars of that era.

One such car—the Fire Arrow—caught the attention of a wealthy Detroit industrialist, who, with Chrysler's permission, purchased the rights to the car and decided to build a new luxury American car to be called the Dual Ghia. Mr. Farago was hired as Vice President and Manager. Working with Ghia, he manufactured between 1956-57 about 100 cars. The Dual Ghia became known as the "cars of the stars," with celebrities as Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Lucille Ball, Hoagy Carmichael buying them. Today approximately 50 still exist, with prices well over \$125,000. In 1962, the car was redesigned and became known as the Ghia L-64, with production ceasing in 1963 with only 26 cars built.

In the mid to late 60s, Paul was involved in a number of special projects for Chrysler, including the Chrysler turbine car. He also holds a number of automotive engineering patents.

In his retirement years, Mr. Farago worked on special projects with the automobile industry as well as with individuals such as Virgil Exner in building a number of re-introduction vehicles as the Duesenberg II and the Stutz II.

Many automotive publications and automotive historical books made mention of his name and contributions.

- Dr. Paul F. Sable

LUDWIG KRAUS (1911-1997)

Ludwig Kraus was the man who turned Volkswagen away from rear-mounted air-cooled engines and created a coherent modular-concept range of front-wheel-drive cars, after others (including the Porsche organization) had tried in vain for ten years to invent a replacement for the VW Beetle. The Passat came first, in 1973, sharing the Audi 80 platform. The following year came the Scirocco, immediately pursued by the Golf (Rabbit in the U.S.) and the Audi 50/VW Polo.

Born at Hetteshausen near Ingolstadt in lower Bavaria on December 26, 1911, he studied mechanical engineering at the universities of Munich, Stuttgart and Hanover before joining Mercedes-Benz in 1937 as an engine designer. He lost several years of his career to military service in World War II, and returning to Mercedes-Benz in 1945, He was assigned to the truck-diesel programs. In 1952, he was put in charge of the 8-cylinder fuel-injected M-196 engine for the "Silver Arrow" racing cars. Their success earned him the title of chief engineer, engine design and development.

In 1963, he took charge of product development for Auto-Union, then a 50-50 joint-venture between Mercedes-Benz and VW, and created a succession of Audi models. He stayed on with Audi when VW took over the Mercedes-Benz shares, becoming vice chairman of Audi-NSU in 1972. Having retired in August 1974, he died on September 19, 1997.

- Jan P. Norbye

LARRY SHINODA (1930-1997)

To have worked on the design of one of America's great post-war models would be a feat in itself. To have worked on three, from two different manufacturers, is outstanding.

Raised in California, Larry Shinoda hot-rodged and drag-raced cars in his youth. This kind of background lead him to leave his indelible fingerprint in the history of American automotive design.

After being kicked out of the Art Center College of Design in 1955, Larry was hired by Ford Motor Company. He was then enticed to move over to Packard in January of 1956. Sensing that Packard was on shaky ground, Larry went to Indianapolis to style the 1956 Indy 500 race winner.

By September of 1956, he had been hired on by General Motors. Bill Mitchell took Larry aside and put him to work on what would be come the 1959 Sting Ray racer. That design would eventually lead to the 1963 Corvette Sting Ray.

His best-known effort, the "split-window" design of the '63 Corvette, has been called one of the most beautiful and distinctive designs in American motoring history.

He also left his mark on the Camaro Z28 and the Boss 302 Mustang. He was actively working on styling enhancements for fourth and fifth generation Corvettes right up until his death.

Larry Shinoda was suffering from kidney failure when he died of a heart attack on November 13, 1997. He will be sorely missed.

ADDITIONAL NEWS

SAH IN PARIS FEBRUARY 1998

Rétromobile, France's annual indoor antique car exhibit and flea market, will be held in Paris, February 6-15, 1998 at the Exhibition Grounds at the Porte de Versailles. The show returns to Hall 2/1 after a year's absence.

For the third year, SAH plans a reception and dinner for members and friends at the Automobile Club de France. Last year there were 32 in attendance. Once again, the Club's Salon Bugatti has been reserved for SAH, this year for Friday evening, February 6, 1998 (please note the change from the Thursday of the past two years). The address of the ACF is 6 Place de la Concorde, above the Concorde Metro stop. Cocktails will begin at 7:30 with dinner at 8:15.

Please make reservations as soon as feasible, sending a check to *Laurent Friry* as payee for 455FF per person. ACF has asked for a preliminary head count by January 22 with the final number by February 3. Send your reservations and check in French Francs only to Laurent at 2 rue de la Guerinière, F-91390 Morsang sur Orge, France. Fax (from the US) at 011-33 1 64 47 50 95.

SOUND BARRIER BROKEN ON LAND

In the fierce competition between American Craig Breedlove and his Spirit of America team and British Richard Nobel and the Thrust SSC team, there was bound to be only one winner breaking the sound barrier. That winner was decided on Wednesday, October 15.

Royal Air Force pilot Andy Green drove the Thrust SSC to a record 714.144 mph on September 25 making him the fastest man on earth. This speed wasn't the goal of the Thrust SSC team. Since, the Thrust SSC (Super Sonic Car) was designed and built for the exclusive purpose of traveling faster than the speed of sound on land, the team pressed on.

On the morning of October 14, the 50th anniversary of Chuck Yeager becoming the first person to travel through the sound barrier, Green became the first person to accomplish this feat on the ground. The attempt remained as an unofficial time because the rules for such an endeavor call for an average speed for a two-way pass timed within an hour. Green's second pass was 61 minutes after the first one.

The Black Rock Desert at Gerlach, Nevada became the site for another attempt on the morning of October 15. The weather was cool and clear and much more cooperative than the weather on the previous day.

Green drove the Thrust SSC to 759.333 mph on the first run. The second run measured 766.109 mph 55 minutes later for an average two-way speed of 763.035 mph. The speed of sound varies depending on weather and altitude. Measured on the desert floor that morning Mach 1 was calculated to be 748.111 mph making Green's speed the first official record of a land vehicle breaking the sound barrier.

Photographs of the event were spectacular. A visible wave in the dust clouds around the vehicle could be seen on pictures taken just prior to reaching the speed of sound.

The Thrust SSC ranks as the largest and most powerful land speed record car ever built. Built with aluminum, carbon fiber and titanium, the car measures 54 feet long and weighs 10.2 tons. This behemoth was propelled through the sound barrier by two Rolls Royce Spey 202 turbojet engines. Each engine produces 25,000 pounds of thrust for an equivalent of 100,000 horsepower at Mach 1.

A Brief History of the Land Speed Record

Nov. 13, 1904: Paul Baras, officially became the first person to travel more than 100 mph with a timed speed of 104.52 mph in a Darracq.

March 29, 1927: Henry Segrave surpassed 200 mph at Daytona with a speed of 203.792 mph.

Sept. 3, 1935: Sir Malcolm Campbell drove his Bluebird to a speed of 301.129 mph on the Bonneville Salt Flats.

Aug. 5, 1963: Also on the Bonneville Salt Flats, Craig Breedlove drove his jet-powered Spirit of America to 407.45 mph.

July 17, 1964: Donald Campbell, son of Sir Malcolm Campbell, drives his Bluebird Proteus CN7 to 403.10 mph at Lake Eyre, Australia.

Oct. 15, 1964: Craig Breedlove takes the Spirit of America beyond the 500 mph barrier at 526.28 mph.

Nov. 15, 1965: Craig Breedlove became the first man to travel at more than 600 mph with the Sonic 1 measured at 600.601 mph.

Sept. 25, 1997: Andy Green drove Richard Nobel's Thrust SSC to 714.144 mph on the Black Rock Desert.



ROLLS-ROYCE UP FOR SALE

The largest of England's independent automobile manufacturers is for sale. After eighteen years of ownership, the British engineering group Vickers has decided to let Rolls-Royce Motor Cars go. Since rumors of this move began swirling around the Spirit of Ecstasy's head more than five years ago, all that was needed was an official announcement from Vickers.

The *Financial Times* quoted Vickers chairman, Sir Colin Chandler, that there are "a growing number of companies expressing interest in Rolls-Royce".

Among the rumored companies looking into the 93-year old marque are Germany's BMW and Mercedes-Benz, Japan's Toyota, and South Korea's Daewoo. Other rumored prospective buyers Ford and Fiat were ruled out. BMW seems to be the front-runner.

BMW currently has a deal with Rolls-Royce to supply V8 and V12 engines for the upcoming 1999 replacement sedans. BMW also has close ties with Rolls-Royce PLC, a separate company which produces jet engines and owns the Rolls-Royce name, logo and icons, all very important in this deal.

According to the *Financial Times*, the sale of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars is expected to be worth around £400 million (\$660 million).



SOCIETY BESTOWS AWARDS

At its annual banquet October 10, 1997, the Society of Automotive Historians praised excellence in spreading automotive history. Literally, dozens of people contributed to the writing of this year's award winners.

The E.P. Ingersoll Award is given for the best presentation of automotive history in forms other than print media. This year's award was given to the History Channel's television series *Automobiles*, produced, directed and written by Michael Rose.

The Richard and Grace Brigham Award showcases the best overall treatment of automotive history by a periodical throughout all issues. Published by Enthusiast Publishing and edited by Brian Heath, *The Automobile* was this year's awardee.

For the most outstanding writing and research in book form, the Nicholas Cugnot Award is given. This year, *The Splendid Stutz*, edited by Raymond A. Katzell and published by The Stutz Club, Inc. was given the award.

A Cugnot Award of Distinction was given to *A Century of Automotive Style*, written by Michael Lamm and Dave Hollis and published by Lamm-Morada Publishing, for exceptional merit in the field of writing and research.

Outstanding periodical articles are awarded the Carl Benz Award. This year, the award was given to Patrick R. Foster for "George Romney—On the Path of Persistence," published in *Automobile Quarterly*.

For exceptional merit in the field of periodical articles, Benz Awards of Distinction were given to Karla A. Rosenbusch for "Climbing his Own Ladder—The Elevation of Charles Nash" and Jonathan A. Stein for "Jomar—The British Sports Car from New Hampshire," both published in *Automobile Quarterly*.

For contributing to the preservation of historic materials relating to motor vehicles, the James J. Bradley Distinguished Service Award will be presented to The National Motor Museum of Australia in Birdwood, South Australia.

The Friend of Automotive History Award is given to a person who exhibits outstanding service in, and makes outstanding contributions to, the field of automotive history. This year, Lord Montagu of Beaulieu was chosen to receive this prestigious award. Unfortunately, Lord Montagu was unable to accept due to the fact that he was in the middle of the Peking-to-Paris race and will be given the award at a ceremony in England at a later date.

MAYBACH TO MAKE A RETURN

At October's Tokyo Motor Show, Mercedes-Benz displayed the concept of the long-rumored return of Maybach. The new model marks the company's attempt to take on the chauffeur-driven market now dominated by Rolls-Royce.

The Maybach is named for Willhem Maybach who designed early Daimler cars and whose own name graced some of the finest German luxury cars until Daimler-Benz purchased the classic marque in 1960. The concept Maybach exhibits Mercedes-Benz' idea of the world's finest car. A production version of this 19-foot behemoth is expected within three years.

This hand-built model is not expected to sell in great volumes. Designed in Japan, the Maybach is powered by the upcoming Mercedes-Benz 5.8L V12 engine and tops the S-Class sedan in luxury touches.

Juergen Schrempp, Daimler-Benz chairman, said to Reuters news, "with the S-Class, we have the best car in the world. Now, this is the ultimate. The ultimate in design, the ultimate in engineering, the ultimate in innovation, technology, communication systems, electronics, everything."

When compared to the sizable S-Class long-wheelbase model, the Maybach is 22 inches (56 centimeters) longer and rides on a 16-inch (40-centimeter) longer wheelbase. As for features, the car includes a built-in bar that can cool or heat drinks, a built-in cigar humidor and a champagne cooler. Also included are three telephone systems, and a 20-inch liquid crystal video screen for television, video games and other entertainment.

Mercedes-Benz chose Tokyo for the debut of this car because Japan is one of the world's largest markets for chauffeur-driven cars.

While no sales numbers were projected, the super-luxury sedan market totals only about 2,000 units annually. And at an estimated price of around \$300,000, the Maybach will be in a very rarified level indeed.

CAR OF THE YEAR

by Pete Whittier

History doesn't always repeat itself, but in the world of automotive journalism, the close passes are often interesting enough.

With all the usual hoopla that attends such awards, the latest Chevrolet Malibu (a.k.a. 1997 Citation) was named *Motor Trend's* Car of the Year, an honor some have associated with particularly outstanding achievements in auto making. But the current Malibu hardly aimed at buyers who'd recognize such an achievement if they saw it. At least that's what could be inferred from the musing of Chevy Malibu chief engineer Bruce Seagar, in the November 18-24, 1996 *AutoWeek*. "Doing the clinics for this car was interesting," he said. "These are not car people."

Thirty-seven years ago, another Chevrolet, the Corvair, was also named Car of the Year, but back then the divergence in perception was much greater. The great Ray Brock, writing in the February 1960 *Hot Rod*, had this to say about Ed Cole's pride and joy: "Handling the Corvair is entirely different than any other American car you have ever driven...the Corvair has a strong tendency to oversteer...this is not noticed so much where the car has several passengers, but with one or two passengers it is an easy matter to get the Corvair 'way out of shape' as the saying goes."

He added, "if you try to act like a frustrated Fangio on the tight stuff, you will spend most of the time looking out the side windows to see where you are going. The outside rear wheel slides out and the swing axle seems to fold under a little so that the inside rear wheel loses traction completely and hops sideways across the road."

Alluding to more favorable comments elsewhere in the motoring press he said, "we have read many rave notices written by our colleagues...on the superb handling of Corvair, but we

will take issue with them all on this matter. The Corvair is very able when driven as an economy car but completely out of step when trying to act like a race car."

Ray wasn't thrilled with the car in other areas, either. "Corvair's fuel economy although not bad, is not as good as Falcon, premium grade fuel is required and the fuel tank is just about half as large as it should be. The seats are much too low for comfortable driving...interior finish and quality is only fair, the floor mounted shift lever is awkward...and the turning circle is too large."

With an honest friend like Ray Brock, the Corvair hardly needed Ralph Nader for an enemy, did it?

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF MINERVAS

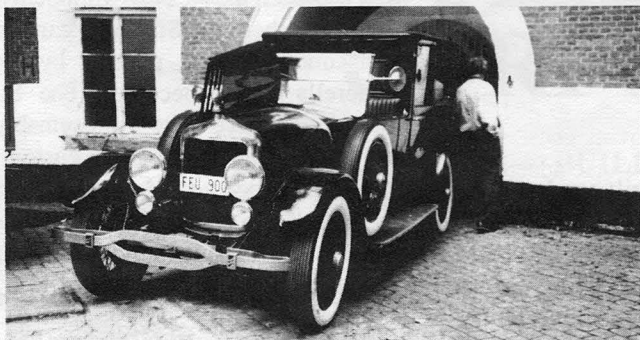
by Raymond Vaes

The Dutchman Sylvain de Jong started a factory in Antwerp, Belgium on the 15th of October 1897, and built bicycles under the name Minerva. In 1899, the decision was made to also make motorbikes and light motorcars. During 1913, Minerva started building commercial vehicles, the first ambulances were soon followed by two- and three-ton trucks.

The most well known cars were made between 1919 and 1934. The ultimate luxury Minerva was made from 1930 until 1933. This model 40HP Type AL was powered by an eight-cylinder engine displacing 6616cc.

The Antwerp factory was later enlarged to new premises in Mortsel and Edegem, just outside of Antwerp. The Minerva factory went broke in 1934 and was taken over by another Belgium marque, Imperia. From existing parts, Minervas were built until 1938. In 1945, after the war, all that remained of Minerva was transferred to an old army fort in Edegem where light trucks were produced. In 1947, the factory in Mortsel was used again and from 1951 until 1956, Minerva produced Land Rovers under license. In 1958, the factory was closed permanently.

To commemorate this 100th anniversary of the foundation of Minerva, a rally was held on September 14, 1997. This rally started near the town hall of Antwerp and ended in the ex-fort of Edegem, passing all of the factories where Minervas had been built. Between September 20 and 28, an exhibition of Minerva cars and trucks was held in the fort.



1927 Minerva Town Car Model 30hp Type AF
- photograph by Raymond Vaes

1996-1997 BUDGET

THE SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS FINANCIAL REPORT

October 1996-September 1997

INCOME	
Membership dues	\$ 15,590.00
Auction sales	4,692.36
Bank card deposit	2,835.95
Banquet	2,768.00
Donation	905.00
<i>Automotive History Review</i> sales	736.30
Merchandise	357.00
Advertising	189.80
Contributions	25.00
Bank charge reimbursement	5.00
Reimbursement bank charge	5.00
Uncategorized income	28.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 28,138.41

EXPENSES	
<i>Automotive History Review</i> printing	5,122.78
Banquet dinners	2,680.60
<i>SAH Journal</i> printing	2,081.75
<i>SAH Journal</i> postage	1,686.86
Awards	983.55
Membership printing	829.16
Insurance	692.00
Banquet deposit	500.00
Membership hospitality	425.30
Printing	396.68
Membership other	368.20
Board meeting	321.16
Banquet guests	306.90
Equipment	300.00
Membership postage	216.84
<i>Automotive History Review</i> postage	204.23
Bank card discount	137.21
Return check	135.54
<i>SAH Journal</i> supplies	122.10
Back issue postage	29.80
Bank charge	25.00
Refund	4.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 17,589.89

Checkbook balance as of 9/30/97	
Jefferson Bank Florida	\$ 28,458.48
Money Market Accounts as of 9/30/97	
Vanguard Prime portfolio	34,961.95
Vanguard Federal portfolio	18,554.28
TOTAL OF ALL ACCOUNTS	\$ 81,974.71

A LITTLE HUMOR

A Harley rider is broken down by the side of the road. A BMW rider stops to help.

"You need any help?"

"Yeah, have you got a wrench?"

"Sure, what size?"

"A big one. I want to use it for a hammer."

STUNNING, COSTLY AND TAILORED-TO-ORDER...BUT?

by Keith Marvin

What happens when an automobile company finds itself thousands of dollars in the hole and with liquid assets of \$2.85? It goes out of business, that's what. This is exactly what the Neskov-Mumperow Company was forced to do...but not until it put its name on the roster of curious automotive history. I'll have to take it more-or-less chronologically as I'm still searching for a picture of the luxury car or cars it built in the early 1920s. We know they were built. But what happened to them? They appeared on no automotive rosters but they must have been impressive cars from any and every angle.

These were the "St. Louis" cars of 1921-1923, which had no relationship to the earlier car of that same name which would eventually become the Dorris and survive into the mid-1920s.

The company in question was both a dealer and distributorship for Anderson and Dort cars respectively and in 1919 was located at 3116 Locust Street in St. Louis. Joseph M. Neskov has been associated with the automobile business in St. Louis previously, but I cannot trace who Adolphus Mumperow might have been. My guess? One who put some money into a venture but of whom little else is known.

The Anderson car of Rock Hill, South Carolina, was producing around a thousand cars annually and Neskov-Mumperow also had that agency so presumably it was doing well. It must have been for, in 1920, it moved to expanded quarters at 3525-27 Locust Street, just down the road apiece!

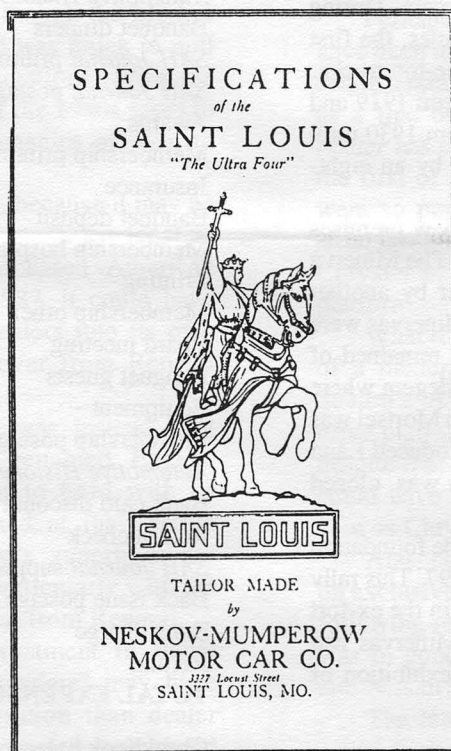
Things moved rapidly from this point on for a time. In September 1921, it was announced that Neskov was designing a new car, but with no further details.¹ An automotive trade paper quickly followed by noting that Neskov had begun work on the "St. Louis" automobile.² A report six days later, noted that production had begun. Nothing slow about Neskov.³ The car was formally announced to the motoring public within a day later.⁴ Shortly thereafter, the public was informed that the new car would have four cylinders.⁵ Hardly amazing, this. So did the Model T Ford as well as the high-stroke fours using Rochester-Duesenberg engines which were used to power some of the most prestigious sporting cars at the time.

In October 1921, a brochure on the new car appeared which told a great deal to the public. The car would be "Tailor made" to the owners' specifications, but it was noted that the basic setup itself would make it an "assembled car," that is, using high quality standard parts from manufacturers highly specializing in a given field. A few of the St. Louis' components? Weidely four-cylinder engine; 3 3/4" bore and 5 1/2" stroke; Stromberg carburetor, Bosch starter with Bendix drive; Bosch 6-volt generator; Muncie 13" disc dry plate clutch; Muncie transmission; Columbia axles; Hotchkiss final drive; Wohlrab steering-gear; Houk wire or Forsyth disc wheels; etc. Assembled, perhaps, but of the best. The car was available as a speedster in "St. Louis Red" with red upholstery or a phaeton in "St. Louis Gray" with red upholstery and red wheels. But this, of course, was optional. Almost everything else was standard including bumpers, six wheels, aluminum door steps, etc. Some of the dash instruments were also added to the rear of the front seat for the enlightenment of the rear-seat passengers.

The St. Louis had reserved space at the St. Louis Auto Show of 1922. The City Directory for 1922 listed the company as "St. Louis Automotive Corp., builders of St. Louis automobiles. J.M. Neskov, president; M. Vaskoc, vice president; Mrs. W.E. Gilham, treasurer and E.F. Goldstein, secretary. Mr. Neskov residing at Rosell Hotel." There was no mention of Adolphus Mumperow.⁶ In the same directory, the car's engine was listed as a Rochester-Duesenberg. This was a long-stroke four and wasn't the only incidence where both engines were used for the same car.⁷

Assuming that Anderson-Dort sales were moving along, it is interesting to find that (in addition to dealers in automobiles), the firm was manufacturing batteries under the name "Hi-Volt."⁸

It is also interesting to note that what had been the Neskov-Mumperow Company where the St. Louis car had been concerned had, perhaps by the Cinderella Fairy, become "The St. Louis Automotive Corp.," presumably to divorce the agency with the custom-built car. In February 1922, a half-page ad showing the logo of the car's radiator badge had this to say about what it was terming its "Ultra Four": "Painted to suit individual tastes with colors to match upholstery." This ad was placed to by the "Saint Louis Automotive Corp., of 3327 Locust St., formerly Neskov-Mumperow Motor Car Co.," adding "four-passenger sport model and two-passenger speedster being exhibited at St. Louis Auto Show."⁹



The same ad was repeated a month later, presumably for the final time.¹⁰ As far as this writer is concerned, no price was ever attached to the St. Louis.

I think I can safely say that although the cars may have been driven and/or demonstrated throughout 1922, they didn't find buyers and further production had ceased.

The name resurfaced in February 1923 when the car(s) was or were exhibited at the 16th St. Louis Auto Show. And, in a sense, this was probably the death knell for the St. Louis.

And then in September, what still technically was or had been the Neskov-Mumperow Company had gotten itself into financial difficulties beyond retrieval.

In a short magazine squib under the headline, "St. Louis Company Sues," the automotive reading public was treated to the following. Under a St. Louis dateline of September 14, the item stated that depositions taken from Mrs. Kathryn Gerdes in the suit against the St. Louis Automotive Corporation disclosed that the company had \$2.85 in the bank and debts of several thousand dollars. John Neskov, president of the company, said the assets of the firm had gone in salaries and the building of five automobiles which are in storage, against which there are mortgages.¹¹ Five automobiles? Doubtful. Very doubtful.

I don't suppose we'll ever have the answer. Mr. Mumperow seems to have disappeared into the woodwork. Mr. Vaskov, Mr. Goldstein and Mrs. Gilham, one-time officers in the establishment, are also among the missing.

We can trace Mr. Neskov, but only briefly. The Neskov-Mumperow Company, still using that name, was dropped from the St. Louis City Directory in 1924. Mr. Neskov cropped up as a garage proprietor a year later; then an automobile salesman by 1926 and in 1927 as a realtor. His final listing appeared in 1928 as a member of St. Louis' Bankers Life and after that he was no longer listed.

There are many unanswered questions here. Who was Mrs. Gerdes who blew the final whistle? As to the five cars with mortgages on them in storage on Locust Street—what were they? Mr. Neskov claimed that the assets of the company had been spent on in the "construction of five automobiles." But had they? Counting the known unsold St. Louis cars, the other three might have been leftover Andersons, Dorts, or cars taken in trade.

I assume that the law moved in, dissolved the company and sold the five cars for what they could bring.

But we know that at least one and probably two St. Louis sporting cars were completed. Does anyone have any photographs of them today or any further information?

¹ *Motor Age*, September 29, 1921.

² *Motor World*, October 5, 1921.

³ *Motor Age*, October 6, 1921.

⁴ *Motor World*, October 12, 1921.

⁵ *Automotive Trade Journal*, October 21, 1921.

⁶ The author's guess is that Mr. Mumperow was a man with some money to invest and investing in automobiles was a going thing. Examples include men like Hudson and Ruxton who weren't especially interested in automobiles but who helped back ventures financially and were rewarded by having their names carried on radiator badge bars. Hudson was successful. Ruxton wasn't.

⁷ Rochester-Duesenberg and Weidely engines were both used in the Show or Ambassador and Vaughan cars among others.

⁸ *Auto Review*, January 1922.

⁹ *Auto Review*, February 1922. For some reason, the Neskov-Mumperow Company formed the Saint Louis Automotive Company to keep its Anderson/Dort operations clear of their new St. Louis car.

¹⁰ *Auto Review*, March 1922.

¹¹ *Motor Age*, September 20, 1923.

The author would like to acknowledge the help of Edward W. Amman of the Saint Louis Globe-Democrat; Ralph Dunwoodie; Louis Helverson; the St. Louis Public Library; St. Louis Society of Automotive Pioneers (booklet, 1930); Miss Elizabeth Tindall and the St. Louis Historical Society; Specifications of U.S. Cars 1920-1929 by G. Marshall Naul, Keith Marvin and Stanley K. Yost (1978); and contemporary issues of the Automobile Trade Journal, Auto Review, Motor Age, Motor World, and St. Louis Directories.

ST. LOUIS AUTOMOTIVE CORPORATION

BUILDERS OF THE
"SAINT LOUIS" AUTOMOBILE

MOTOR: Dusenbergl, G4, 4¼ bore
6-inch stroke, developing a minimum of 80 H.P. at 2450 R.P.M.

3327 LOCUST
ST. LOUIS, MO.
BOMONT 2630

ARE CAR BRANDS BECOMING MORE DISPOSABLE?

by Steve Salmi

With the recently announced demise of the Eagle and Geo, all but one of the four brands introduced by U.S. auto makers since the mid-1980s have died. And even though Saturn looks solid, General Motors' forthcoming small-car platform consolidation (and a rumored Saturn-Oldsmobile merger) have the potential to undercut the fledgling brand's viability.

The lack of staying power of this recent burst of Big Three brand launchings—the most since the early '30s—isn't surprising. New brands have historically had a high death rate. Even so, Eagle, Geo and Merkur did not receive anywhere near the resources bestowed upon ill-fated new brands from past eras, e.g., Edsel, Imperial and LaSalle.

Most Eagles and Geos were badge-engineered, so these brands never developed the product distinctiveness necessary to build a loyal following. Although the Merkur platforms were unique to the U.S., Ford was quick to pull the plug when sales didn't meet expectations. With the exception of Saturn, the "neo-brands" of the 1980s seem to have been viewed by their parent companies as akin to disposable diapers.

The Eagle is particularly interesting, because it may be the first major U.S. brand launched as much for legal as marketing reasons. After Chrysler purchased American Motors Corporation from Renault in 1987, it could have attempted to quickly integrate AMC dealers into its own network. Any passenger cars carried over from Renault could have been rebadged as Chryslers.

The former AMC dealer network was instead kept separate and passenger cars were renamed Eagles. Chrysler's announced goal was similar to Ford with its Merkur: to create a new brand targeted at the upscale import market. It was assumed Jeep's superb owner demographics would rub off on Eagle, particularly with the Premier, a new mid-sized sedan inherited from Renault.

Chrysler's subsequent lack of investment in Eagle suggests that marketing to "import intenders" may have been less important to the brand's creation than dealer franchise laws. Corporate officials apparently calculated that it would cost less to gradually absorb the AMC dealer network than to do it quickly. In the meantime, Chrysler had to provide former AMC dealers with passenger cars. The new Premier also had to sell well enough to meet component purchase agreements with Renault. To accomplish these goals, Chrysler opted to launch a new brand rather than revive the moribund AMC name.

The Eagle was a failure in the marketplace—its annual sales were never much higher than the Edsel's—but that weakness allowed Chrysler to spur dealer integration without provoking lawsuits. Is it mere coincidence the Eagle is being laid to rest now that 80 percent of its dealers are dualed with Chrysler-Plymouth's?

Over Eagle's 10-year life as a brand name, Chrysler officials occasionally attempted to lift dealer spirits with talk of expansion, such as launching a rear-wheel drive luxury model. But once the Renault carry-overs were retired, Eagle's product line consisted of modest variations on Chrysler and Mitsubishi offerings. Eagle was thus in the same league as Plymouth, which also had been a candidate for elimination. Until Plymouth recently received the limited-production Prowler, exclusive products were reserved for Dodge, Chrysler and Jeep.

A historical quirk of the Eagle brand is that it might not have been created if AMC's on-again, off-again purchase had occurred only a few years earlier, when it was still possible to shelve the Premier. Chrysler would likely have killed that car, just as it did a coupe derivative called the Allure. After all, the Premier was expensive to produce and competed with a new K-car based mid-sized platform. The money saved by aborting the Premier could have made the quick consolidation of AMC's dealer network with Chrysler's more financially attractive. No need, then, for a new brand.

Perhaps the greatest irony of the Eagle is that it may have been more successful if Chrysler had carried on AMC's original strategy. The Eagle nameplate was launched in 1980 as a line of four-wheel drive passenger cars. As *Patrick Foster* has noted in his excellent history of AMC, these were the first of their kind by an American auto maker. Eagles were so popular they outlasted the rest of the AMC line, although sales had slowed to a trickle by the time of Chrysler's arrival because of an obsolete 17-year old platform.

What if Eagle had been given an all-wheel drive version of a modern Chrysler body, in much the same way that Subaru's AWDs are spun off what began as front-wheel drive platforms? Given the hot sales of the Subaru Outback despite that import's limited dealer network, an AWD Eagle could have become a profitable niche product in the same vein as Chrysler's venerable convertibles.

Alas, corporate leadership didn't want to spend money on exclusive products for Eagle—and was more interested in following in the footsteps of Ford with its Merkur. Chrysler was in good company. Within a few years Honda, Toyota and Nissan would all introduce new luxury brands.

The late 1980s seem like such a long time ago. Now some analysts question whether the foreign "Big Three" would have been better off investing in SUVs and minivans than saddling themselves with the high fixed costs of supporting luxury brands. A recent *Automotive News* editorial endorsing the Eagle's demise stated that auto makers would do well to get rid of their "deadwood" brands.

Is killing brands about to become as popular as launching them once was? Will slow-selling Infiniti go the way of Imperial? Will the Saturnization of GM become so complete that the brand itself fades into oblivion like LaSalle? Indeed, in an era where the franchise system is eroding in the face of superstores and Internet sales, is it long before struggling senior brands such as Plymouth and Oldsmobile become disposable too?

One-hundred and forty-five years ago...

1852 - Henry and Clem Studebaker opened a wagon repair shop in South Bend, Indiana.

One-hundred and forty years ago...

1857 - Studebaker Brothers built their first wagon.

One-hundred years ago...

1897 - Peter Studebaker died.

One-hundred and ten years ago...

1887 - Jacob F. Studebaker died.

Ninety-five years ago...

November 4, 1902 - A patent was granted to Packard for the "H" slot gearshift.

Ninety years ago...

1907 - Hewitt introduced the first American eight cylinder engine.

Eighty-five years ago...

1912 - Vanden Plas opened an English branch of the coachbuilding firm.

Eighty years ago...

1917 - J.M. Studebaker died.

Seventy years ago...

December 2, 1927 - The Model A was introduced by the Ford Motor Company.

Fifty-five years ago...

December 1, 1942 - Gasoline and tire rationing began in the United States.

Forty years ago...

November 1957 - Michigan opened the Mackinac Bridge linking the upper and lower Michigan peninsulas.

Thirty-five years ago...

1962 - General Motors produced its 75,000,000th car.

1962 - Studebaker-Packard became the Studebaker Corporation.

Thirty years ago...

November 22, 1967 - Saab introduced the 99, its first all-new model since the company was formed, to the press in Stockholm, Sweden.

November 27, 1967 - The Hyundai Motor Company was founded.

November 29, 1967 - The first Polski Fiat 125p was made in Poland.

Twenty-five years ago...

November 1972 - Pontiac built its 16,000,000th car.

Fifteen years ago...

November 1, 1982 - Honda began production of Accords at the Marysville, Ohio assembly plant.

Five years ago...

December 31, 1992 - Lee Iacocca retired as Chairman from the Chrysler Corporation.

Editor's Note: Thanks go out to Robert Przybylski for Polish his additions and Fred Roe for his corrections to the timeline. If anyone else has additions or corrections to be made, please put them in a letter or email or fax or phone call and get them to me.



Corvette: American Legend, The Beginning by Noland Adams, 1996. Hardcover, 261 pages with more than 200 photos, 8 1/4" x 10 3/4". ISBN 1-880524-20-1. Published by Cars and Parts Magazine. Price: \$24.95.

If you want an answer to a Corvette question, there is one person to ask. So when an accurate history of the Corvette is to be written, there is one person to write it.

Ask and ye shall receive.

Noland Adams' previous books include *Corvette Restoration & Technical Guide, Volume I, 1953-62* and *Corvette Restoration & Technical Guide, Volume II, 1963-1967*. These detailed publications have become necessary reading for anyone restoring a first or second generation Corvette. Now he is catering to the non-technical Corvette enthusiast.

Timed perfectly to coincide with the introduction of the fifth generation edition of the two-seat fibreglass coupe, *Corvette: American Legend* just scratches the surface of this 45 year old icon. So detailed is this book that the tenth chapter is called "The Corvette becomes a Reality" and it takes another three chapters to get to "Job 1 rolls of the Line."

Steps leading to the "Reality" chapter outline the development of the program. From the earliest inspirations of the Corvette through the "Opel" project, *Corvette: American Legend* gives insight into the initial sketches and preliminary drawings.

This book is generously littered with photographs of every stage of bringing this car to production. Prototypes like the 1952 Chevrolet convertible club coupe bodied in plastic are shown from corporate photos to explain the process of developing this revolutionary car. Motorama pictures display the Corvette's introduction and many factory photos do much to explain every step of the production process.

Of all the great things in this book from the great photographs to Noland Adams' text, the best thing about this book can be found on the spine. The title *Corvette: American Legend* is accompanied by the subtitle *The Beginning* and the volume number 1. This encourages the reader that more of these beautiful books will follow. *The Beginning* is truly that, only the beginning since it only covers the Corvette through the 1953 calendar year. Only 300 Corvettes were built as 1953 model year vehicles and with more than one million to follow, we can only enjoy this volume and anxiously wait for the future installments.

Keep up the great work, Noland.

- Sam Fiorani

Vanderbilt Cup Race by Brock Yates, 1997. Hardcover, 125 pages with 119 photos, 9"x11". ISBN 1-882256-66-2. Published by Iconografix. Available from Iconografix, P.O. Box 609, Osceola, WI 54020, (800)289-3504. Price: \$45.

The old saying, "a picture is worth a thousand words," is indeed appropriate to describe this wonderful book depicting the Vanderbilt Cup Race, scheduled to be contested for 300 miles on Columbus Day, October 12, 1936.

This photographic record of the event is filled with unique shots of the cars and participants at rest and at speed to totally familiarize the reader with a race format pitting the best of the Europeans against the top Americans.

Unfortunately, this dream of the Roosevelt Raceway management to create such a competition failed miserably due to the vast differences in the racing cars fielded by these two groups of Champions.

The Europeans instituted a "750 kg formula" in 1934 to limit speeds, but, in effect, the exact opposite results were realized. The cars regulated to a weight of 1,650 pounds void of the driver, liquids and tires were presumed to be limited to two or three liter engines in order to fit this size chassis package and thereby reduce top speeds and overall performance.

Wrong. By early 1936, the German teams of Auto Union and Mercedes-Benz, heavily subsidized by the war-driven Nazi government, had advanced the technology to the point whereby their five-to-six liter, supercharged engines, produced some 500 hundred plus horsepower, and when installed in the lightweight chassis, racing records were ripe to be rewritten.

The American racing cars of the mid-1930s were held to a minimum weight of 1,750 pounds and the chassis were built around the two-man bodies then popular at Indianapolis. Engines were normally aspirated and limited to 366-cubic inches, and the cars were equipped with gear boxes and brakes designed to compete on oval-tracks. Despite the liberalized rules invoked for this particular race these cars were overwhelmingly disadvantaged.

Conversely, the American drivers quickly adapted to the road-course format and one in particular, Bob Swanson, driving a sister car to Louis Tomei's Rastelli "Junior Offenhauser," drove his stretched midget into fifth place before running out of fuel.

During this remarkable run by Swanson, his performance was limited by the unblown four-cylinder "Offy" engine, developing just a little more than one-hundred horsepower. Still, he managed to hound the eventual winner, Tazio Nuvolari, driving a Ferrari, lap after lap prompting Nuvolari to compliment Swanson afterwards by exclaiming, "your driving is the finest I have ever seen, without exception. I am thankful that your car lacks higher speed, as you'd be unbeatable."

The excellent captions accompanying the photographs are very entertaining and the tension reflected in the pages of black and white photos is impressive, yet, it seems to this reviewer, the overall look of the book would have been enhanced by using the sepia process for the photos. In any event, you and your library deserve a copy of this fine book!

- Jack L. Martin

Roads to Oblivion: Triumphs & Tragedies of British Car Makers, 1946-56 by Christopher Balfour, 1996. Harbound, 208 pages with several hundred illustrations, 10 1/2" x 7 1/2". ISBN 1-870979-82-6. Published by Bay View Books, Ltd., Bideford, Devon, England. Price: £24.95.

The time was the period immediately following the conclusion of World War II. The nation was Great Britain, one of the victors in this titanic six-year struggle. The industry was the automobile manufacturing establishment of the British Isles, looking toward regaining its prewar strength.

At first glance, the British motor car industry appeared to be in an enviable position. As an entity which, despite the ravages of war, possessed the ability to produce considerable numbers of vehicles, it could look forward to furnishing pleasure cars to automobile-starved markets both domestically and abroad. Its international competitors were few, with its principal one, the huge American automobile enterprise, primarily concerned at the time with supplying the needs of its own population.

Despite these apparent advantages, however, many companies which collectively made up this important British-based industry were to encounter severe problems in the next decade, which would result in their ultimate demise. How and why this occurred is an interesting story, deftly related by British author Christopher Balfour in his book, *Roads to Oblivion: Triumphs & Tragedies of British Car Makers, 1946-56*.

The author skillfully sets the stage for his story by describing initially the climate for automobile manufacturing in Great Britain in 1946 and succeeding years. The new Labor Government, headed by Prime Minister Clement Atlee, was oriented toward establishment of social welfare programs designed to ameliorate life for the typical British citizen. Little or no attention was paid to development of an industrial policy which in the long-term might have strengthened auto manufacturing operations. Instead, the fledgling government sought to use the industry for maximum immediate benefit, by compelling it to export the bulk of its production and thus earn for Great Britain desperately-needed foreign currency. At the same time a punitive system of domestic taxation, including an outdated annual motor vehicle fee based on the bore of the engine's cylinders, inhibited vehicle development of more modern power plants. Efforts to change this antiquated tax finally were successful, but a whopping double purchase levy of 66 2/3% was for several years imposed on vehicles selling in the home market for more than one thousand pounds. Gas rationing, mandated at various times, further added to the burden of the domestic motor car owner. The end result of all this was that domestic sales suffered, and while the British auto industry for a time became the world's largest exporter of motorcars, it could not easily maintain this lead, and by 1955-56 was sharply challenged by nations such as Germany, France and Italy, which produced cars of more advanced design. The American market also proved tough for British motor car builders to crack.

While noting that national policies placed severe pressures overall on British motor car manufacturing, the author, turning next to individual automobile companies, analyzes carefully what might be termed the internal decisions which helped bring so many of them to their knees. The twenty-four firms described, from Allard and Alvis to Triumph and Wolseley, are all shown to have had combinations of strengths and weaknesses. Two, Fedden and Murad, never advanced beyond the single prototype stage. Others were modest entities to begin with, thus a few mistakes in technical development or an unpopular design quickly did them in. The larger and more well-known marques which ultimately vanished (often through merger) required detailed explanations for their demise, which the author sets forth in a succinct and yet understandable fashion.

This, of course, is a book which concentrates essentially on British vehicles (although the Nash-Healey and Metropolitan were combined British-American products). However, the histories of the twenty-four marques will be of interest to many motorcar-oriented persons in America, Canada and other nations. Americans will be interested to learn that Wilbur Gunn, from Springfield, Ohio, founded the Lagonda firm, and that the redoubtable Delmar G. (Barney) Roos, distinguished chief engineer of nearly half-a-dozen U.S. auto companies, served a tour of duty in the mid-1930s with the British Rootes organization, where he advised on front-end suspension and related problems. The similarities between the demise of numerous fine British firms, and the disappearance from the American marketplace in the 1920s and 1930s of so many independent builders of high-quality motorcars, will be noted by many readers.

In summary, this is an eminently readable and informative book, which will be appreciated by both British and overseas students of automotive history. The illustrations are well-done and the quality of printing excellent. Settle down in your easy chair (with your glass of sherry and slice of Stilton if so inclined) and enjoy it!

- Sinclair Powell

Where They Raced by Harold L. Osmer, 1996. Softcover, 64 pages with more than 80 photos, 9"x11". Published and sold by Harold L. Osmer/Where They Raced, P.O. Box 4741, Chatworth, CA 91313. Price: \$25.

The *Oxford American Dictionary* defines "curiosity" as: 1) a desire to find out and know things. 2) something that is of interest because it is rare or unusual. *Where They Raced* is certainly a product of the preceding.

A project that was conceived to fulfill requirements for a graduate thesis turned out to be the premise for this interesting history of automotive race courses located in the greater Los Angeles area. Osmer briefly describes the development and construction of automobile road racing courses from 1906-1919, board tracks from 1910-1927, and small oval tracks, 1908-1990.

Osmer originally thought there would only be about a dozen or so tracks to research; however, to his amazement he soon became aware that there would be over one hundred

tracks to consider. The author has included information pertaining to the racing events, detailed maps noting the location of the track and some very impressive aerial photos for many of the tracks featured in this publication. In addition, the reader will find many photographic samplings of the cars of the era, both static and at racing speed.

For instance, the September 9, 1913 race at Corona, California. Earl Cooper, driving his famous number 8 white Stutz won the 109 lap event on the 2.79 mile course. During the post race interview, Cooper explained how he won: "I went into the race expecting to be compelled to keep up an average speed that would smash the world's record. I didn't have to...(by the third lap) I knew that all I had to do was tease the others on to their own defeat—playing this man against his tires, that man against his engine, the other fellow against something else. So far as I was concerned, the race was won by elimination...How did I win the races? By teasing—that's the answer."

Roads once used for racing in Los Angeles are still in public use today and can be driven on at any time. When driving a course today it is difficult to imagine the street as a wide dirt road with roaring racing cars and thousands of cheering spectators lining the route. When motoring in the Los Angeles area all you need do is refer to this book and the many maps to locate the courses and tracks you are interested in visiting. Unfortunately, few of these former auto racing venues have historical markers placed for your pleasure. However, it is a nice challenge to see the location and compare them with the maps...enjoy!

- Jack L. Martin

The Stutz Club is proud that its book

THE SPLENDID STUTZ: Its Cars, Companies, People, and Races

has been awarded the

1997 Cugnot Award

as the best automotive history book in the past year

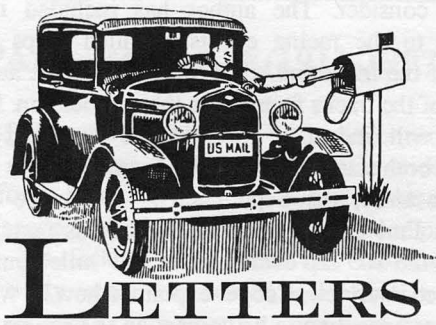
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MYSTERY CAR IDENTIFIED

In response to the question posed in the caption under the picture on page 15 of the *SAH Journal* for September-October, I can tell you that the guess is correct—that's a Lincoln-Zephyr sedan all right, but much modified. Enclosed are a couple of copies made from clippings in my files that tell more about the car.

One of them, from *Motor Age* magazine, January 1939, shows a detail of the car as it was being modified by Bohman and Schwartz, the custom body builders in Pasadena, California. It shows the Zephyr fitted with the wooden jigs for building the hood and fenders.

The other copy enclosed is from an unidentified issue of the British car magazine *Autocar*, dated sometime in 1938. It tells more about the car, as you can read in the caption. Somewhere I have, or have at least seen, another picture of this car with the Marquis Hachisuka standing beside it, but I can't remember where it is.

You will notice in the side view of the car that the rear quarter windows have been blanked out, yielding a very classy look and a very secluded rear seat compartment. At least one other Zephyr sedan, possibly the first limousine built, received that treatment. The blanked out window would be quite appropriate for a limousine, but most Zephyr limos did not have that feature. **David L. Cole, 1119 South Speed Street, Santa Maria, CA 93454.**

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SEEKING HORSTMAN INFORMATION

I am writing on the recommendation of Mr. Konrad Schreier in the hope that you will be able to give me some information into the history of what is now Horstman Defence Systems Limited and one area of particular interest is the Horstman car.

The founder of our company, Sydney Horstman, began manufacturing light sports cars from 1911/12 until 1929. It is estimated that between 3,000-4,000 were produced. I understand from a relative of Sydney Horstman that many of the cars ended up in the USA. I would be very interested to know whether you have any references to any of the cars in your archives or from your readers.

Any information or suggestions for research would be gratefully received. **Katie McGregor, Horstman Defence Systems Limited, Locksbrook Road, Bath, Avon BA1 3EX, England. Phone: 01225 423111. Fax: 01225 447357**

FREEWAY POWER

Elliott Kahn's photo of the H-M Vehicles Freeway trike in *SAH Journal* No. 167 struck a chord: I happened across one myself last summer. If the caption is correct, and the Freeway Elliott snapped really had a three-cylinder two-stroke engine, I wonder whose it was (perhaps of motorcycle extraction), and whether it was original. The Freeway I saw was powered by Tecumseh, a twelve-horse, air-cooled single driving through a vee-belt continuously variable transmission. The owner said it was a 1981 model, and claimed 105 mpg on the highway.

I can't find a contemporary press reference to the gasoline-powered Freeway, but just the other day in the June 1981 issue of *Car and Driver* I stumbled on an item which credits H-M Vehicles of Burnsville, Minnesota, with building fifteen *electric* Freeways in 1980. **Kit Foster, 1102 Long Cove Rd., Gales Ferry, CT 06335-1812, email foster@netbox.com**

Editor's note: The Autocar caption reads, "This severe but striking design is a Lincoln Zephyr with a special body planned by the owner, the Marquis Hachisuka, a Japanese airman and ornithologist, at present in California. It was built by Bohman and Schwartz, of Pasadena. A special radiator is fitted, from wings flare into the doors and the entire inside of the metal shell is sprayed with a rubber-cork mixture to a depth of 2 in. to deaden sound."

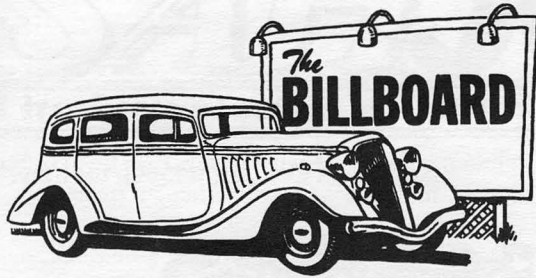
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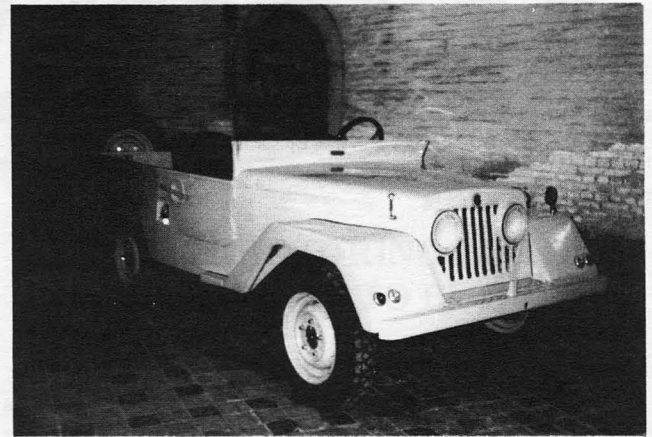
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WANTED: Complete results of endurance racing, particularly European sedan races, 24-hour Spa race, 24-hour at Nurburgring, etc. 1990 to date. **G.M. Naul, 534 Stublyn Road, Granville, OH 43023.**

WANTED: Issues of *Owner Operator* magazine featuring Patty Koteror or Vanna White, May-June 1971 issue of *The Bulb Horn*, June 1952 issue of *Antique Automobile*, issue of *TV Guide* featuring the "Hawk" from the TV movie "Wheels" (late 1970s) and issues of *Playboy* and *Town and Country* featuring the Vector automobile (probably around 1980). **Sam Fiorani, P.O. Box 432, Bedford, MA 01730. Phone: (978)562-1090.**



This is a 1956 Minerva. Land Rovers were built under license by Minerva and powered by Continental gas or Jenbach diesel four-cylinder engines.
- photo by Raymond Vaes

WANTED: Original or photocopy of Mr. Jacques Rousaleu's articles on the Mercedes 540K vs. 851 Auburn as presented in Oct/Nov 1982 issues of *Le Fanatique de l'Automobile* (French) 16 pages. Please contact, **F.D. Wilson 4576 Winding Way, San Jose, CA 95129.**

NEEDED: Good home for auto magazines: *Antique Automobile*, *Bulb Horn*, *Automotive News*, etc. No charge; you pay the shipping. List available. **G.M. Naul, 534 Stublyn Road, Granville, OH 43023.**



1910 SEARS

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ALL MODELS WERE 2 CYL., AIR COOLED, STEERING BY TILLER, & SOLID TIRES.

While walking around Hershey, I met a wonderful artist, named John Satterthwaite, who specialized in historical automotive pieces. While many of his renderings are highlighted with color, he was gracious enough to contribute a few piece for publication in the Journal. This drawing is of the 1910 Sears.

- artwork courtesy of John B. Satterthwaite



1896

Believed to be the FIRST MASCOT used on any automobile.

As a fan of classic mascots, I found this drawing by John Satterthwaite very interesting. I offer this as a holiday greeting. May St. Christopher look upon your travels this season and always with favor. Have a happy holiday season and I look forward to corresponding with you in the new year.

- art submitted by John Satterthwaite