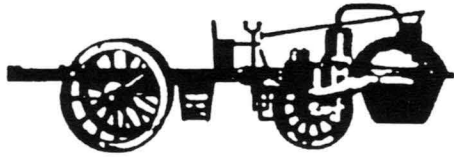


SAH Journal

The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
Issue 218
September–October 2005



www.autohistory.org

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Writing the History of Our Hobby

By Jim Crabtree

The job of a historian is twofold. The first is to document facts: names, dates, places, etc. The second and perhaps more important job is to interpret those facts. A transcription of history really doesn't do anybody any good. The real value of history is the lessons that it can teach to future generations. To not study history is to be condemned to repeat the same failures and to be unable to replicate the recognized successes. Good history is written from a distance in time because it is only from that perspective that the lessons become clear and an interpretation of the facts becomes possible. Great men throughout the ages have all understood that their true legacy could not be written until long after their deaths. The Society of Automotive Historians is supposed to be populated by historians, but are we fulfilling our duties and responsibilities to the present age and to those not yet born?

Reviewing the written works of automotive historians I would conclude that, yes, the first responsibility of an historian has been fulfilled admirably. I have yet to meet an automotive historian who was not a collector, carefully buying, cataloging and reviewing brochures, dealer albums, advertisements and the like. Automotive historians have written many excellent books that very skillfully document numbers, codes and model identification. In fact documenting these isolated facts seem to be our strongest trait, but is it our best?

As much as I love cars I actually have become tired of reading carefully researched historical reviews about an automobile that was produced in the early 1900s by an undercapitalized manufacturer who was only able to turn out one prototype and four production models of which none are known to exist today. Yes, this is history, but writing this does not fulfill our real role as historians. It is time that the work of automotive historians rises to the next academic level and makes comments about the facts, distills the lessons learned and concludes our writings with historical morals that are applicable to the future.

Historical hobbyists?

This historical writing that does seek to extrapolate lessons has appeared in some well-written books and articles. Most especially it is those that cover the saga of the American automotive industry as the tide of imports engulfed it in the 1970s. But this critique of historical events does not appear in most other works. Perhaps the reason that we are not as critical of people and events as we should be during our research is that we are really just historical hobbyists and not academes. We seem to be just too emotionally attached to our cars and our collections, and perhaps it is too painful to conclude through historical study that the cars we love the best are the ones that should never have been produced. Every SAH member is thoroughly familiar with the stories about gas guzzling, over-chromed, over-powered, wooden bodied, two passenger, impractical examples of road art that constantly fill our hobby publications. These articles are not real historical study.

Had the lessons of history related to automotive design and development been

continued on page 6



Thomas S. Jakups, Editor

I'm Lovin' the Buzz

And speaking of letters, I am always gratified to hear from you. It shows you are reading the *Journal* and you find it worth your while to add your knowledge to the mix. This issue's mail-bag contains more on a/c in cars, an admonition to never stop asking questions and a lengthy "setting the record straight" that should provoke a few comments. All in all, an issue with a certain buzz. Thank you, members.

I am also happy to announce that my call for articles in the last *Journal* did not go unheeded. I have already heard from several members and their works will grace the front pages of upcoming issues. I still need book reviews.

As the summer winds down I start to reflect on the latest car show season. At show after show I have witnessed what Jim Crabtree calls that "phenomena of being interested in only the cars of your youth." I see people taking it further by zeroing in and identifying with

particular brands to the exclusion of everything else. In their "not seeing the forest for the trees" they are cheating themselves out of the rich heritage of the automobile, in Detroit and throughout the world.

I wonder if there is a corresponding myopia when it comes to automotive history: an interest in only certain periods of history—"the history of your youth"? That, too, would be very limiting.

I just want to take a moment to say a few words about my colleague on the facing page. For the past two years I have had the pleasure of talking to and listening to *Joe Freeman* at Board meetings and history conferences and have always come away impressed with the depth of his knowledge about cars and his exuberant love for the Society. Thank you, Joe, for your contributions to these pages. Don't be a stranger.

—Tom Jakups

This issue was fun for me to put together. It is chock full of good stuff—Hershey and next spring's History Conference, the upcoming World Forum, chapter news, a member advancing in his career and another completing a most worthwhile project.

And that's just the "SAH News." *Jim Crabtree* makes some excellent points in his front-page article "Writing the History of Our Hobby." I look forward to a continuing discussion of our role as automotive historians in upcoming issues. I can see the letters being written now.

SAH Journal

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SAH Journal

Thomas S. Jakups

Editor, Advertising Manager
37 Wyndwood Road

West Hartford, CT 06107 USA
860-236-0125 Fax 860-232-0468

email: journal@autohistory.org
tjakups@comcast.net

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**Copy Deadline for *Journal* 219
October 31st**



Joseph S. Freeman, President

I can hardly believe that two years have passed so quickly as your President, and that this will be my last leader's message for our *Journal*.

My first order of business is to thank you for allowing me to serve at the head of such an interesting, diverse and dedicated group of people. It has been a privilege and an honor, as well as extremely rewarding. I have sincerely enjoyed meeting many of you and sharing your intense enthusiasm for the automobile, its history and the people who made the industry. It has also been wonderfully educational for me because if I began with my own particular passions, I have certainly been challenged to broaden my own definition of automotive history and "world view" of motorized vehicular transportation. On this note, I would be doing our Society a disservice if I did not try to sum up a little of what I have learned or come to value most in our association. You certainly know by now that I am a bit preachy, but if you will bear with me for just one more time, you can get out the tar and feathers when I leave office.

First and foremost, I value the significance of what we as historians do. Academicians and professional historians are only just now beginning to recognize that the field of "automotive history" is not just some asterisk to the study of the wars, politics and scientific advancements which have marked the latter part of the 19th and most of the 20th centuries. The social, economic and artistic importance of the automobile in modern

Swan Song

life can no longer be ignored, and I am proud to be part of a group of folks, both amateur and professional, who understand that fact and take its promotion very seriously.

Second on the list is our dedication to quality. In earlier messages I have noted that as our field grows and matures we have been exposed to more and more well-written, superbly documented and beautifully illustrated works, including films, television productions and museum exhibits. I would like to believe that in our own way SAH has played a significant role in this movement, not only through our awards and assistance to one another, but also through our collective buying power and, at least in one instance, our efforts to publish a neglected but valuable work. This quality and a commitment to truth based on solid evidence are at the heart of what we stand for and allow us to hold our heads high in any gathering of historians.

Third is the great diversity we represent. "Never was a car somebody didn't love" is a quote I often hear at shows and flea markets, and it really is true. From Duesenbergs to dump trucks, limos to lemons, Templars to Trabants and ACs to ZILs, someone among us has doubtless dug up significant facts about the development, design and production of these vehicles, not to mention the geniuses or charlatans present at their creation. As I mentioned in another earlier piece, there are also lots of different sorts of "automotive history." An enthusiast who cranks a wrench may know just as much or more than the fellow who collects literature or who has a shelf full of books on a particular subject. Nor do automotive archaeologists and academicians have to disagree. It's all "neat stuff," and I revel in the extraordinary breadth of our interests and activities.

Fourth, the opportunities we as a Society offer for communication and

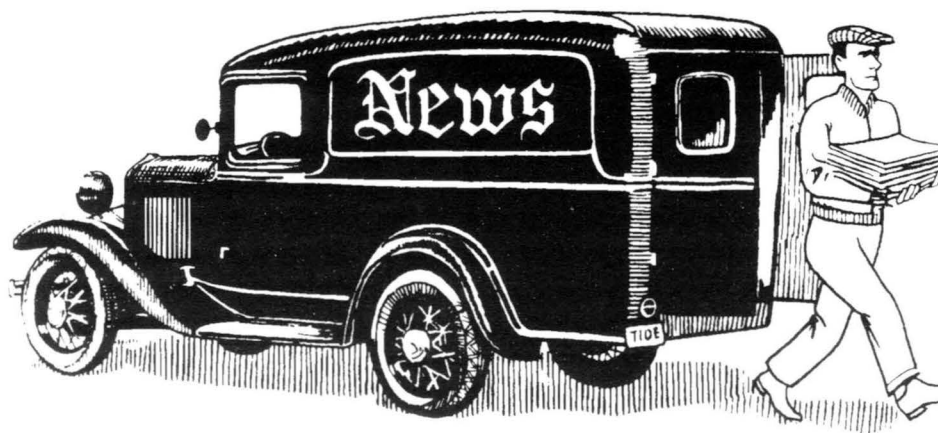
cooperation lie at the heart of our work. From our magnificent members' list and resource directory to our semi-annual conferences and gatherings both in the United States and abroad, we exist to unite interested parties. I sense that some years ago the field of automotive history was a somewhat fragmented activity with a few well-known authors publishing recognized works and most everyone else either toiling in obscurity or collecting material without much knowledge of others sharing their passion. I feel that has definitely changed, witnessed by dozens of specialty publications, periodicals and the steady growth in our own membership. Another example might be our tent at Hershey, the excitement of which you have to witness to believe.

In sum, I carry a very strong sense of pride in being a part of the Society. We have strong traditions of open communication, inclusiveness, recognition of excellence and encouragement in furthering and improving our fields of endeavor. With more than thirty-five years of our own history to look back on, I feel we are poised for a fine future, with many exciting new associations, discoveries and much increased recognition ahead of us.

I can also assure you that I will be part of that future, if not as your President. I eagerly anticipate taking on some of the tasks that I have not gotten to in the last two years. The expansion of SAH outside the United States as well as the creation of a section or chapter dedicated to automobile racing history are high on my list. So too are our continued efforts to reach out to the world of academic historians.

Once again, I want to sincerely thank you for allowing me to be a part of all this. It is a high honor to be "educated by the experts." See you all at Hershey!

—Joe Freeman



SAH Election Results

The results of the SAH election of officers and Board members is in from Election Central in Goodrich, Michigan. The following officers were elected to serve until October 2007: President *Michael Berger*, Vice President *Darwyn Lumley*, Treasurer *Christopher Foster* and Secretary *Susan S. Davis*.

Elected to the Board of Directors to serve through October 2008 were *Arthur Jones*, *John Marino* and *Joe Malaney*.

Annual Meeting and Banquet October 7th

The 37th SAH Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet will be held on the Friday evening of Hershey weekend, October 7th, 2005, at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, West Chocolate Avenue and University Drive, Hershey, Pennsylvania. This is a new location, occasioned by construction at the Hershey Country Club, our long-time dinner venue.

Members and guests will gather for the Startix social hour at 6:30 PM and dine at 7:15. The Society's annual publication and service awards will be presented after dinner.

Menu for the evening will be the traditional three-entrée Great Eight Buffet, with beef, chicken and flounder entrées and all the fixings at the all-in-one price of \$44.00 per person.

Reservations with payment should be made by September 30th to

SAH Banquet

Attn: **Kit Foster**

1102 Long Cove Road

Gales Ferry, CT 06335-1812 USA

Banquet hot line (860)464-6466

(until October 3rd)

To reach the Hershey Lodge from downtown Hershey, take West Chocolate Avenue (US 422) west to University Drive (near the Medical Center). The Hershey Lodge is at the corner of West Chocolate and University.

The History Tent Grows Up Meet and Greet at Hershey—WAY 11-12

A common lament at Hershey is lack of room in the History Tent, no matter whether the sun shines or rain cascades. With the availability of two adjoining spaces this year we've been able to order a larger tent—over twice as large, in fact. History Tent committee *Paul Lashbrook* and *Stanton Lyman* are planning to have this spacious home furnished and decorated to suit our mission. They need your help, however, to keep it staffed and serving members and visitors throughout the weekend.

While at Hershey, make it a point to stop by WAY 11-12, for your own respite and refreshment and to help the Society greet the public. Please contact Hospitality Chair *Paul Lashbrook* at lashbrook@mindspring.com or (954) 587-5785 to sign up for a two-hour shift.

—Kit Foster

Bring Some History to Hershey

The new expanded History Tent at Hershey gives us an opportunity to showcase what we do best, researching and interpreting automotive history. *Stan Lyman* has had some *Automotive History Review* covers enlarged to poster size in order to display the Society's publishing prowess, but we'd like to trumpet what our members have been up to.

If you've had a book published lately, whether by a commercial publisher or a private venture of your own, bring a copy for display. Having brochures or order forms on hand may generate business. Artwork, too, is welcome, or samples of magazine articles you've had published. We'd like to celebrate our role as interpreters and broadcasters of history, not just consumers of curious and arcane facts.

The History Tent will be open from Thursday morning until Saturday afternoon. Come on by, and don't come empty-handed.

—Kit Foster

Papers Sought for Sixth History Conference Deadline Extended to October 31st

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

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

Other potential topics of interest could include automobile manufacturing, directed marketing, design evolution, motor sports or the future of the self-propelled vehicle. Proposals are invited on all these topics. Proposals should include the title of the submission, names and affiliations of presenters, chairs, participants etc., together with addresses, phone/fax numbers, e-mail addresses of contact personnel, proposed format (paper, panel, workshop, etc.) and a one-page abstract describing the content of the presentation. The extended deadline for proposals is October 31, 2005; notification of preliminary acceptance is anticipated by November 15th. **Proposals should be submitted to**

Christopher G. Foster, Program Chair
1102 Long Cove Road
Gales Ferry, CT 06335-1812 USA
Telephone +1 (860)464-6466
Fax +1 (860)464-2614
email <treasurer@autohistory.org>

SoCal Chapter Names 2005 Valentine Award Winners

On July 23rd the Southern California chapter of the Society of Automotive Historians presented its annual James Valentine Memorial Award to Bill Pollack and *Louise Ann Noeth*. This was the seventh year that the chapter presented the award, named for a founding member who was an authority on the Tourist automobile produced in Southern California.

Bill Pollack, an outstanding sports car driver in California during the 1950s, was honored for his book *Red Wheels and White Sidewalls: Confessions of an Allard Racer*, published by Brown Fox Books. In accepting his award Bill said he "never intended to write a book. I just wanted to collect some memories for my grandchildren."

The book recounts Bill's childhood in Southern California, his experiences in World War II, the birth of the California Sports Car Club and his design of Willow Springs International Raceway in the desert north of Los Angeles. Bill recounts his near fatal accident with the Allard after the Pebble Beach races near

Monterey in 1953. Bill went on to compete in many races through 1958, and in 2002 he was reunited with the restored Allard at the Monterey Historics.

Louise Ann Noeth had been honored before by her fellow SAH SoCal members when she was awarded the Valentine for her book on the Bonneville Salt Flats in 2002. Known to her readers as "Landspeed Louise," she became the first recipient of the award to be honored for both a book and an article in a periodical. "What's an FIA World Land Speed Record Worth?", which appeared in the *Goodguys Goodtimes Gazette* in October 2004, recounts her efforts to spur the FIA, which is nominally responsible for land speed record keeping as well as other aspects of motor sports, to officially recognize the efforts of competitors before they passed away.

She was particularly interested in the cases of Don Vesco and Nolan White, two Californians whose lives were cut short before the bureaucrats of the FIA would provide official recognition of their achievements. Starting in 2002, and aided in her research by USAC timer Dave Petrali, she began a one-woman crusade to have the records updated and official recognition bestowed on these competitors. Her research involved contacts with drivers, ACCUS (which controls all motor sports competition in the United States), as well as sources in books and news accounts. Data was only submitted to the FIA when three independent sources agreed.

One major finding reported in her story was that the FIA appears to have a total lack of interest in good record keeping while gladly accepting the fees racers must pay to contest for a land speed record. Louise concluded in her acceptance of the Valentine Award that the battle to have competitors for speed records properly recognized would be an ongoing struggle.

Nominations for the 2006 Valentine Award should be submitted by the end of May, 2006. Entries are limited to books and articles published in 2005

with a major focus on people, products or events in California.

—Bob Ewing

Director, SAH Southern California

You "Auto" Be in Detroit for 2005 World Forum

The 2005 World Forum is coming to Detroit Sunday, October 9th to Friday October 14th.

More than 20 session speakers from Australia, Brazil, England, Germany, Japan and throughout the United States will be on hand.

We'll visit more than a dozen auto museums and heritage sites including the new GM Heritage Center, Henry Ford Museum and Walter P. Chrysler Museum.

World Forum delegates will get to see first hand a collection of hot rods, rat rods, customs, resto-rods, tuners and blinged vehicles. It's a new exhibit called "Hot Rods & Cool Mods" opening in October at the Walter P. Chrysler Museum.

Robert A. Lutz, GM Vice Chairman of Global Product Development and an avid car collector, is the opening keynote speaker on Monday morning.

Delegates are invited to the Automotive Hall of Fame Induction Night Ceremonies. Inductees include Mario Andretti; John Dunlap, inventor of the pneumatic tire; Sir William Lyons, the founder of Jaguar; Jim Moran, pioneering Chicago auto dealer and Southeast Toyota distributor; Shirley Muldowney, champion NHRA drag racer; Jack Smith, former chairman of General Motors; John M. Studebaker, who took Studebaker from carriages to automobiles; and Alexander Winton, early auto pioneer.

And the conference now has a French connection. The Thursday lunch, at the birthplace of the Model T, is being sponsored by the French American Automobile Business Association (FAABA). And *voila*, French wines will be sampled as part of the strolling luncheon through the plant. FAABA was founded in 1989 in Detroit for the purpose of fostering automotive trade relations between France and the United States.

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Writing History *continued from page 1*

identified, taught and implemented earlier, perhaps the corporate paradigm shifts of the 1970s and 1980s to catch up with Toyota could have been avoided. But this is really just water under the bridge as those historical lessons have already gone unlearned.

As an example of how historical texts can influence corporate behaviors consider what happened at Saturn. Gayle Warnock was head of Public Relations for the introduction of the Edsel. He authored a book entitled *The Edsel Affair*. Written for nothing more than the purpose of telling the Edsel story, Gayle's book identified everything that went wrong with introducing a new make of car. When GM introduced Saturn as a new marque, copies of *The Edsel Affair* were distributed to all the top Saturn executives. They were told to read the book, learn its lessons and ensure that history was not repeated.

Needed: a review of our hobby

But there is another place that is begging for us historians to focus our talents; another place where we need to interpret the past and prepare for the future. I am talking about our own automotive hobby. I know of no written comprehensive historical review of the car collecting hobby. Oh sure there have been reminiscences and fact reviews published about the history of major events (such as Pebble Beach) and major collectors (such as Bill Harrah), but perhaps it is time to review and interpret what has happened within the car hobby so that we may help ourselves to prepare for the future. I believe that it is time for historians to extract some lessons so that history will not be repeated.

What lessons need reviewing? How about an historical evaluation of the life of a large automobile collection? Bill Harrah and Harold Lemay both assembled extremely large automobile accumulations. But upon their deaths there was no provision made by either collector for supporting his handiwork. Harrah had not mentioned the vehicles as a separate entity in his estate and Lemay had never

even begun to provide an appropriate building for their display. How did this happen and what are the implications and lessons here for even smaller collectors?

Here is a lesson from collecting history, Isabella Stewart Gardner was a major art collector in Boston. Upon her death in 1924 she deeded to a foundation the collection, the building she erected in 1903 to house it all and an appropriate amount of cash to support it. Today her collection remains intact and on public display. In her bequest she even demanded that the art displays not be changed from how she arranged the pieces and hung the paintings on the wall during her lifetime. This is certainly the type of planning that neither Harrah nor Lemay ever considered. Perhaps if they had learned from Gardner how to properly provide for a collection, the history of what has happened to their collections would have been different.

Many times a significant collection ends up on the auction block, either sold by the heirs or by the collectors themselves just to pay bills. During these transactions history always takes a backseat to money. While there are many examples of collectors privately choosing new, caring homes for their automobiles irrespective of money, this never happens in an auction. At the time of an auction the high bidder always wins and many times the cars themselves lose. The new owner of a particular car is not really the best one and history in the form of a preserved artifact is forever lost. Perhaps digging out and airing the stories about what has happened to cars after a disposition sale could provoke an awareness of the responsibilities that come with owning a large number of cultural treasures as compared to dispersing sterile investment portfolios. Our job is to promote the history of the automobile. We should leave the investment aspects of cars to the value guide people.

Breaking up can be hard to do

Harrah's and Lemay's collections have managed to remain at least partially together and in a museum type format.

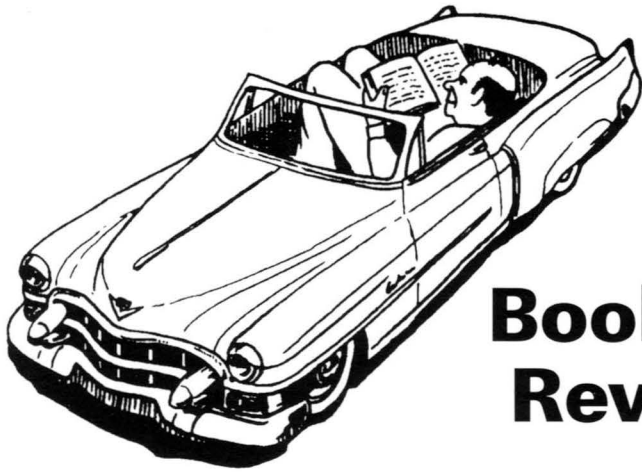
This brings up another lesson: What can be learned about how to properly break up a museum? There have been many marvelous auto museums over the years such as Henry Austin Clark's Long Island Auto Museum and Cars of the Stars and Pioneers of the Road in California. When museums like these close, not only are the cars dispersed but many times their research libraries are dispersed, too. From the perspective of 30 or 40 years what can we learn about the historical, educational and cultural value of an automotive museum? Could a well-written historical discussion about the history of car museums influence somebody in the future who just wants to "buy a bunch of cars and open a museum"?

Barney Pollard was probably this nation's first car collector. (If he wasn't then who was?) He amassed a tremendous number of very early horseless carriage type cars. Even he never really knew how many he had. He had them hanging from their bumpers in three big sheds. He started collecting in 1939. In what was an overtly unpatriotic act, he squirreled away cars and cheated the World War II scrap drives of a lot of badly needed metal. But he also saved from destruction a lot of artifacts related to United States industrial history that today might be called national treasures. From the historical perspective of the 21st century was his car sequestering appropriate? An article about how his car hoarding possibly affected wartime production could address the issue of how the needs of the present conflict with the needs of the future. Another issue in this story is how a government could possibly take collector cars away from a private owner for a perceived public good.

The future of the hobby

What about the future of the car hobby itself? Where will our hobby institutions be in 40 or 50 years? Are there lessons residing in the past that should be extracted as morals for the future? The subscriber numbers for *Hemmings Motor News* have decreased significantly from

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Book Reviews

Karosserien nach Mass—Wendler—1923–1963, by Ralf J.F. Kieselbach, 2nd Edition 2001, no ISBN number. Hardcover, 172 pages, 226 black/white illustrations, text in German and English. Published by Pgam High Performance Products GmbH, Am Heilbrunnen 135, D-72766 Reutlingen, Germany. Price in Germany approx. \$45 plus postage/packing.

Every enthusiast interested in coachbuilding in Europe will be delighted to have this new edition of the famous *Wendler* book. Contrary to most other books on European coachwork, its great advantage is that the text is also in English.

The company originated in 1840 when Erhard Wendler founded a coachbuilding enterprise in Reutlingen in Southern Germany. After World War I a talented young man, Helmut Schwandner, was hired by Adolf Wendler, then boss of the company. He would remain responsible for the automobile body designs for many years. It was Schwandner himself who provided the author with much of the inside information on the development and construction of Wendler car bodies.

Every known car is illustrated and the short text informs the reader about the specifications of the chassis and details of the body construction. Whenever possible the customer is also mentioned.

The book is sectioned into various chapters. Thirteen pages tell the history of the Wendler company. The early models of the years 1923 until 1930 are shown in very good period black/white

photographs. There are high-class cars, like Adler, Benz, Bugatti, various Horch and Maybach but also many lesser marques such as Ford, Opel, NSU, Fiat, Steyr, small Mercedes-Benz, Hansa and Brennabor. Open tourers and still very box-like sedans and limousines are followed by the first convertibles with smoother lines.

The classics of 1931–1939 on a large variety of chassis were mostly pleasant and sometimes very beautiful convertibles with a sprinkling of noble limousines and coupés on the big German models by Maybach and Horch. A substantial number of BMWs, including the sporty Type 328, obtained Wendler bodies. Several Mercedes-Benz 170, 230 and 320, and at least one Wanderer W25, were delivered to a sophisticated clientele in convertible and coupé form. In the 1930s Wendler began using aluminum for the bodies.

The next chapter is most important as it deals with the development between 1937 and 1944 of various aerodynamic bodies especially on the BMW 328 chassis. The world-record diesel racer by Hanomag and the experimental cars by Professor Kamm were also bodied by Wendler. The designs were by Schwandner, who is pictured together with the aerodynamic specialist Freiherr Koenig-Fachsenfeld.

The Wendler bodies made from 1945 until 1963 are shown in the chapter "Pontoon Era." Not less than three of the rare BMW 335 chassis of pre-war days were fitted with two coupé and one convertible body. Again various Mer-

cedes-Benz, mainly on the 220 chassis, received custom-built Wendler bodies of pleasing design.

For several companies, such as VW, Porsche, Gutbrod and Brüttsch, Wendler produced prototype bodies. Small series, sometimes up to 25 cars, were made on Fiat 1100, VW, MG, and Panhard frames. Perhaps the most famous Wendler bodies of the period were fitted to the Porsche RS 550 Spyder. Later on and up until the present day Wendler has specialized in armored bodies for various heavy limousines.

With short, illustrated chapters on commercial vehicles and cars, which were found by collectors and restored, a useful time schedule, a bibliography, acknowledgments and a portrait of the author the book closes.

Ralf J.F. Kieselbach is a well-known author, having published various books and articles on streamlined cars and buses as well as car design.

The book is very neatly produced with a modern lay-out, high-quality paper and solid binding. With the wealth of hitherto mostly unknown pictures it will be a treasure for any historian and enthusiast of automobile design and coachbuilding.

—Ferdinand Hediger

Vintage American Road Racing Cars 1950–1970, by Harold W. Pace and Mark R. Brinker, 2004 ISBN 0-7603-1783-6 Hardcover, 304 pages. Motorbooks International, St. Paul, MN \$60

It's exceedingly difficult for me to understand how a book so wonderfully comprehensive can be so very entertaining. How could such a book crammed with hard facts and cold figures and exact measurements be such a magic carpet ride back to the halcyon days of American road racing? I'll just answer my own question if you don't mind: "Let Harold Pace and Mark Brinker loose to research and write *Vintage American Road Racing Cars 1950–1970* and you have a real masterwork."

This great new book, which took

this pair just over a year to write, is just a sheer joy to leaf through. Within its 304 pages the reader will be reminded of (or introduced to) the days of American racing when average people (all with their passion gauges pegged) dreamed, designed, engineered, scrounged, built and raced their own creations.

You've heard of many of the protagonists the likes of Shelby, Gurney, Kurtis, Arciero, Reventlow, Penske and Hall—they're all here—but there are over 500 more in here! Names and machines, each with a story, each with a reason, each a part of the grand tapestry. Read it straight through (one guess on who did that), or pick it up a page at a time; either way you'll never cease to be spellbound by the facts of the matter.

Brightly written, accurate, articulate, this large-scale book is totally unstuffy and (as you must have gathered by now) eminently readable. To say the book is "well illustrated" might be a click or two too weak. This book is chock-full of great photos that put flesh and bones on the memories of a wonderfully diverse group of North American road racing cars.

These are the true tales of machines that were mostly hand made because their makers had a better idea of how it should be done. Of particular interest are the mini-interviews that this book is seasoned with. The authors tracked down many of the men who built the cars and asked them some of the questions that we all would like to know. The results are insightful and now (thanks to Hal P. and Doc B.) part of the permanent record. These notes personalize and humanize the book and it's heroes all that much more.

As for the photos that we mentioned earlier, these are the shots of the greats: Kuhn, Friedman, Lyons (both Pete and father, Ozzie), Batchelor, Tronlone and other shooters of the day, all carefully chosen and crisply presented on page after page. Augmenting those acknowledged masters' lenswork is the modern day photography of author Harold Pace, whose work is very much in keeping with the standards set by the

above names.

Adding to the flavor of this multi-layered text are a number of period advertisements clipped from the magazines and brochures of the day. Each recalls those wonderfully innocent yesterdays when a young fellow could dream about finding a wrecked TR-4 for peanuts, strip the coachwork off and strap a \$295 Devin body on it to come up with his own homebuilt Ferrari Mondial. Or perhaps bolt a Judson or Shorrock supercharger on his MGA to give it wings. The ads are more than nostalgic; they add to the ambiance and reflect the sense of the era when average people could build their own racing cars.

From an SAH member's point of view, the indexes may well be the most valuable part of this book. In fact, I foresee many of our more studious members reading this book back-to-front because of the way that these authors have cataloged the rosters of these machines by year of construction, constructor, body builder, power plant and racing class. While we're at it, the bibliography in and of itself is something of a treasure trove for SAH members who are interested in this era. It exposes the strong underpinnings of this work and offers a multitude of jumping-off points for further individual research and study.

This book is an exceedingly accurate "reverse roadmap" to a time when so many of us were simply having far too much fun to pay really close attention. How would I know that the clapped-out Dane Formula 3 car that I bought for \$650 was the ONLY one that Stu Dane ever built. (It's now on a wall in a paint store in Arizona, Hal).

From Aardvark to Zink, with Scarab, McKee, Beach, Morgensen, LeGrand, Pink Elephant, Chapparal, Eisert, Reynolds Wrap-Zerex-Paper Mache Specials, Zeitler, Genie, Begra, Devin, Dane, Dolphin, Eagle, Kellison, Tatum, Turner, Echidna, Monsterati, Platypus, Thundermug, Jomar, Bangert and Bobsy in between; this is truly a work of love, great effort and amazing scholarship.

—Doug Stokes

Bentley: Fifty Years of the Marque, by Johnnie Green, Third Edition 2003 ISBN 1-85443-135-8, Hardbound, 321 pages, 600 photographs. Dalton Watson Fine Books, Deerfield, IL and Sussex, England. \$92/£55

When originally published back in 1969, this book instantly became the standard pictorial reference work on the Bentley marque—and has remained so ever since, through two reprints and three editions (the latest the subject of this review).

If the original could be criticized in any way at all, it was that by covering fifty years worth of production, from three different factories, ranging from the two-wheel-braked three-liter of 1919 to the independently-sprung monocoque T-series of 1969, the author was, perhaps, spreading himself too thin.

The new edition of the book has addressed this particular quibble by employing specialists on the three factories' products to re-edit the work, revising and updating the original captions in the light of modern historical knowledge. These are, for the "Vintage" (Cricklewood) cars, Peter Hageman, a former chairman of the North-West U.S.A. region of the Bentley Drivers Club; for the 1930s (Derby) cars, Bernard King, U.K. author of several Rolls-Royce and Bentley books in the *Complete Classics* series, including the *Derby Built Bentleys*; and for the 1946–1969 (Crewe) cars, Martin Bennett, editor of the Rolls-Royce Club of Australia's journal *Praeclarum* and author of *Rolls-Royce and Bentley—the Crewe Years* inter alia.

Moreover, expert consultants in the U.S.A and the U.K.—one of them a former archivist of Rolls-Royce Motors, Crewe—have reviewed the drafts and made a number of important contributions to them. In addition, the rather confusing single index of the original has given way to four new indices which cover photographs used in the book, chassis numbers, registration numbers and proper names (all of which make the latest edition very much more user friendly as a historical reference.

Although somewhat constrained by

layout and space considerations, the new editors have added considerably to the interest and appeal of this edition. Here is but one small example. In the section discussing the 3-1/2 liter delivered in 1934 to the Duke of Kent (fourth son of King George V), we are *now* told that although the car was fitted with a division, the duke often drove himself to functions. Often was the time that when the rear door was opened for him to alight the duke would appear from the driver's seat to the astonishment of those there to welcome him.

• While the gain in the quality of some of the captions is absolutely beyond doubt, it is this reviewer's opinion that the same cannot quite be said for the quality of all the photographic reproductions. The original plates having been discarded or lost, the new reproductions have had to be based upon scanned versions of the reproductions contained in earlier editions of the book. The printers admit, in the book, to having encountered enormous difficulties in this, which is perfectly understandable, but their claim to have improved upon the reproduction quality of the earlier editions is a little excessive. Some of the illustrations have that slightly "smudgy" quality that is so often apparent when modern scanning processes have been employed. In making this point, however, the reviewer hopes that he will not be regarded as an incorrigible technophobe.

To anyone interested in the Bentley marque but already in possession of an earlier edition of the book, this revised third edition is still worthy of consideration. To anyone with similar interests who does not already own a copy, the six hundred illustrations and erudite captions of this new edition surely constitute a "must have" opportunity.

—James Fack

Writing History *continued from page 6*
their peak about five to seven years ago. Other hobby publications have seen similar declines. These businesses are trying many different promotions to ensure

their survival. Perhaps an evaluation and study of the car hobby and hobbyists through the eyes of an automotive historian instead of a businessman would provide valuable lessons to the business members of our hobby that would ensure a healthy future for all of us.

Lessons for car clubs

Can car clubs build a better future by studying the past? Barney Pollard bought the cars he grew up with as a child. He knew all the various makes, models and equipment. He would have called the '50s cars that I am most interested in merely transportation and would have had no interest in them. I have no interest in '70s Trans Ams or '80s Mustangs. The phenomena of being interested only in the cars of your youth has long been observed in the car hobby.

A big topic of discussion today in the Classic Car Club of America is how to attract younger members. An historical study of the membership cycles of clubs that cater to the early horseless carriage type of cars would be of value. To learn how they have survived the death of many older, supportive members while attracting new, younger members would have major implications to the leaders of clubs that celebrate newer models and are concerned about how best to plan for their future.

Other historical research related to car clubs is also waiting to be written. The darker sides of car clubs would be a marvelous topic with a lot of lessons to be shared. There are instances where because of mismanagement treasuries have been stolen, IRS tax bills have become due and even lawsuits have been filed. We tend to think of the car hobby as a place where everybody gets along, and the relationships between the people involved is seldom explored. Consider the fact that in the car hobby there is essentially one club for each major generation of Ford cars: Model T, Model A and Early V-8 but when you come to the 1950s there are many different clubs: Crown Victoria Association, The Retractable Club and even one that focuses on a single year model, 1954 Ford Club of

America! How did this happen in our hobby? Is it better to unite as a larger group under a single era or have a smaller more focused organization? What lessons (waiting to be written by an automotive historian) could a new club learn from past mistakes?

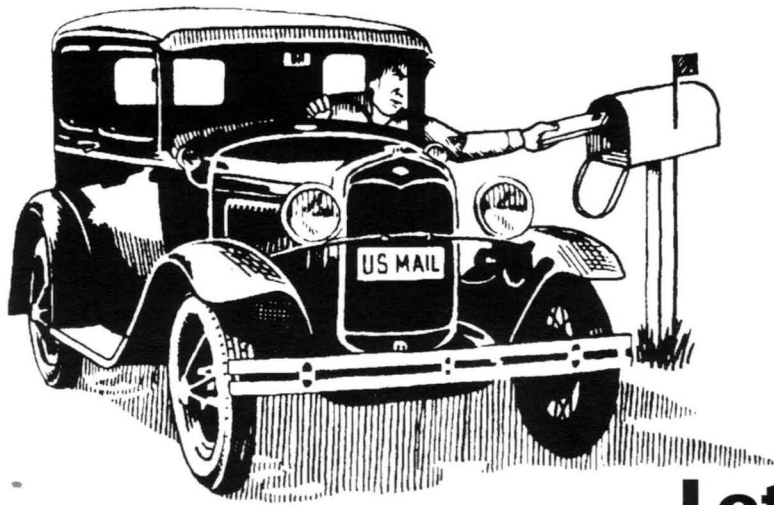
Restoring or destroying original cars

Another major under-appreciated change occurred in the car collecting hobby courtesy of Bill Harrah, and the implications of it I have yet to see explored from an historical perspective. I am referring to the friendly competition that occurred between Bill Harrah, J.B. Nethercutt and other Pebble Beach exhibitors in the '50s and '60s to restore cars to what today are referred to as 100- point quality. The people who do major rotisserie restorations on 1970 Plymouths have Bill Harrah to thank for showing what was possible.

These standards of perfection have given the hobby some marvelous examples of the art of a craftsman. However it has also elevated the hobby above what many traditional car collectors could ever afford. I suspect that there exist many enthusiastic people who could no longer compete and they just dropped out. But can this theory be proven through historical study?

The elevated standards of perfection also saw many very original cars restored (destroyed?) for the sole purpose of winning a trophy. Many clubs have only recently realized that the emphasis that they previously placed on restoration has instead wound up illustrating that they shamefully abdicated their responsibility as protectors of historical artifacts. Many clubs are now changing their rules to favor well preserved original cars. Could this lesson have been learned sooner and saved some original cars if historians were doing their job?

It is my belief that SAH as a professional organization needs to give more leadership and direction to the endeavors of our members as they explore their historical interests based on the important responsibility that historians have in society. ■



Letters

Packard's Electromatic Drive

I just received the July–August *Journal* and I have to make a quick comment concerning *Nelson Bolan's* letter about Packard's Electromatic Drive. This did not eliminate the clutch. It was still there. What it did was “eliminate clutch pedal operation” (Packard's words). Another ad states, “Automatic clutch cuts footwork.” In fact Packards that had the Electromatic Clutch actually had a red clutch pedal. Packard did not have a fully automatic transmission that eliminated the clutch pedal until 1949. It was called Ultramatic. I can't say for Studebaker or Lincoln.

—Bob Zimmerman

A/C Still a Hot Topic

There was apparently an even earlier example of an air-conditioned automobile than the 1935 Ford described by *Dave Cole* in his *Journal* 217 letter. A photo and description of a 1930 Cadillac equipped when new with a “C&C Kelvinator” air conditioning unit may be found in an excellent treatise on the subject I found on the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) website.

According to the ASHRAE report, the system was installed on a custom Cadillac built for John Hamman, Jr., of Houston. The paper, the first of a two-part history of air conditioning and heating in automobiles, is entitled “Evolution of Automotive Heating—Riding in Com-

fort: Part II,” by By Mohinder S. Bhatti, Ph.D. The history was part of a series of articles written for the *ASHRAE Journal* in observation of the first century of air conditioning. The article also includes a photo of the 1935 Ford with the Houde-Carrier air conditioning test unit and several other illustrations of interest. Although Dr. Bhatti writes that the Ford test was carried out in 1934, the car is a 1935 model.

Dr. Bhatti is listed on the ASHRAE website as a senior staff research engineer at Delphi Harrison Thermal Systems, Lockport, New York. The paper can be viewed and downloaded in pdf format at <http://www.ashrae.org/template/AboutLinkLanding/category/1474>.

— Terry Boyce

Nash an A/C Pioneer

Concerning the first automobile air conditioning units discussed in *Journals* 216 and 217, I was taught in my college A/C engineering classes (1950s) that Packard was the first to offer this feature on production automobiles. As a mechanical engineer I concur with the letter from *Nelson Bolan* concerning the importance of the electrically overrunning clutch in improving and making popular air conditioning in cars.

I think the issue of who developed the first car A/C units should be explored. The letter from *Dave Cole* states Carrier developed an air conditioning unit for inter-city buses in 1934. I do not

know if these units were ever scaled down in size to fit automobiles. I do know that at least some if not all of the first A/C units tested and used by Packard in the 1930s were designed and built by Kelvinator which by the late 1930s was a division of Nash.

Nash was considered the pioneer of modern car A/C units in the 1950s. They were the first to offer a complete A/C system with all of the components installed under the hood. Living in Texas in the 1950s we were willing to sacrifice some comforts for cool air. However riding in a Nash Ambassador was definitely a step above GM or Chrysler products equipped with A/C. Nash's competitors had most of the equipment mounted inside the trunk. There were air scoops on the sides of the car to supply air into these units. There were two large ugly plastic ducts protruding from the shelf behind the rear seat to blow cold air to the front of the cabin. All of this resulted in noise, impaired rear-view vision, lost trunk space and front-seat passengers being blasted in the back of the head with cold air.

So superior was the Nash system that Cadillac traded two of their automatic transmissions for each A/C system Nash would provide them until the GM transmission plant was destroyed by fire in 1954. The trunk mounted A/C units lasted until about 1957 when other manufacturers were allowed to copy the Nash system.

They may have offered it, but I don't remember A/C in low-priced cars (Chevrolet, Ford, Plymouth or Studebaker) before the late 1950s. Nash Ramblers were the only low-price cars I remember offering A/C before 1955. The first after-market A/C unit that I experienced was in a 1956 Dodge and that was about 1960. The 1971 AMC Ambassador was the first American car to offer A/C as standard equipment, even before luxury makes like Cadillac, Imperial or Lincoln. I would welcome comments/information on which companies (not necessarily auto manufacturers) were early pioneers of A/C units for cars.

—Ed Hanna

A Few Points About J217

Three items in *Journal* 217 really stood out for me. The first one is the Beirut to Bagdad ad sent to you by *Keith Marvin* that appeared on the front cover. I, too, have a copy of that *National Geographic* ad. Note that there is no “h” in the 1925 spelling of Bagdad. A much more extensive treatment of the convoys appears in chapter 8 of *Maurice Hendry’s Cadillac, The Complete Seventy Year History*, ©1973. It is a truly delightful reading of 1920s adventures in the Middle East with over a dozen photos. It has always surprised me that someone has not made a movie or television series about this. I seem to recall that M*A*S*H ran about twice as long as the Korean War.

Concerning the 1935 Ford equipped with air conditioning information sent in by *David Cole*, I can’t help wondering if this was an experimental car or possibly something that was never put into mass production because of mechanical, production or servicing problems. I can recall hearing about several ideas, not air conditioning, that were planned and introduced but withdrawn almost immediately, namely c. 1919 Studebaker with a fluid flywheel, 1918 Willys-Knight with a V-8 engine and 1923 Chevrolet with the “Copper Cooled” (air cooled) engine. All the above had some major flaw or drawback. One could also add the 1953–54 Chrysler eight-passenger sedan with disc brakes. I am sure the list could go on and on.

With regard to the trailer hooked onto the Model T coupe on the back cover two things stand out: both vehicles appear to have 30x30-1/2 Model T-size tires and the trailer will have to be unhooked to remove the spare tire on the coupe. With the back porch on the trailer and the fancy drapes at the windows my guess would be that this trailer was store bought. Unless some sort of ladder was furnished the step down from the trailer to the ground was very high, much higher than from the Model T running board.

—*Nelson Bolan*

Origin of “Dickey”

Curiosity about the mention of dickey-

seats in the May–June *SAH Journal* drove me to the full version of the Oxford English Dictionary. Volume IV, page 622 lists the following (among many other uses): a driver’s seat; a rear seat for servants or guards. These uses date from 1801 and 1803. The *London Times* of January 17, 1803 writes that the “dickey-box is now out of date.” A motor manual of 1912 describes the dicky (both spellings are used) as an extra seat in a two-seater car which can be closed down.

Another meaning which might be partly incorporated is the idea of “false” or “for show” as in the dicky being a formal shirt-front or a clerical rabat-vest. So, a small seat or temporary seat, with usages in the English carriage business dating back to the very early 19th century.

—*Doug Leighton*

Name That Car a Lost Art?

I read with interest the Editorial Comment regarding GM’s efforts to increase brand identification (*Journal* 217). Every term that I teach a Sociology Introduction class I use a video that Bill Moyers did call “America on the Road,” which was part of the PBS series called *A Walk Through the Twentieth Century*. This series aired in the mid 1980s, but it is the best simplified overview of America and the automobile I have been able to locate despite its many errors.

Often in our class discussion of the film I will ask who knows what company produces/produced what. Students are usually way off base, and very few of them can identify all GM cars or all Ford and DaimlerChrysler cars, much less international variations and products. I think the game my generation’s kids played of “name that car” has been lost on the last generation or two. Food for thought.

—*Phil Campbell*

What’s in a Name?

In *SAH Journal* 217 our editor ponders the emergence of a “General Motors” brand in advertising for all GM vehicles in North America. Speculation is building that this portends the phasing-out of

nameplates Chevrolet, Pontiac, Buick, Cadillac, GMC and Saturn. We’ve seen the demise of Oldsmobile already. If the range has been rationalized into one common nameplate, will the disappearance of, say, Buick seem any less like filicide?

Brand-letting has been happening in the industry for years. The Depression was rife with it, of course, but that involved mostly the failure of whole companies rather than corporate consolidation. Perhaps the metamorphosis of LaSalle into the Series 61 Cadillac was the closest prewar manifestation of the phenomenon. It was repeated at Chrysler in the autumn of 1960, of course, when DeSoto was made redundant by the Chrysler Newport. When the PT Cruiser appeared with the Chrysler name, rather than the heritage Plymouth it resembled, it was pretty clear that the corporate killers were again at work.

Furthermore, GM cars are sold in other countries under a single badge: Vauxhall in Britain, Opel in Germany, and Holden in Australia, although Vauxhall has been battered lately. Their cars are now built in Germany; will it be long before they bear the name of a German sewing machine manufacturer?

If GM’s North American cars are swept into a one-badge bin, what name will they bear? “GM” seems unwieldy and confusing. “Come see my new GM?” It doesn’t roll off the tongue. It’s also hard to distinguish from the well-established GMC brand. Should they be called “Generals”? That brings to mind a taxicab from the 1930s or a kind of tire: “Sooner or later, you’ll drive Generals”?

I think a new GM brand deserves to honor a person, someone with impeccable provenance. That leaves out “Durant,” which brings baggage from a failed post-GM empire. With tongue in cheek one could suggest “Zarella,” after the man who brought us all this excess of brand management, but he, too, has been given a failing grade.

I propose that all GM cars henceforth bear the “Sloan” badge. No one,

not Louis Chevrolet, Chief Pontiac, David Buick nor Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac (not to mention the planet Saturn), has done more to influence the way GM builds and sells cars, even today. Moreover, there's a slogan for it: "A Sloan for every segment and social stratum."

—Kit Foster

Asking Questions

It's too late to interview John Z. DeLorean now. But if it was possible, wouldn't you like to have his reaction to David E. Davis's acid dissection of him in *Automobile* magazine? Joe Freeman in *SAH Journal* 217 lamented "the ones that got away." Ol' John Z. got away, surely, before all the interesting questions had been asked. That's often unavoidable, of course, because inquiries, however politely put, will often go unanswered.

But it is rarely too late to ask. A few years ago I finally got up the nerve to write to one of my boyhood heroes, retired Captain Edward L. Beach, author of the 1955 novel of submarine warfare in World War II, *Run Silent, Run Deep*.

I asked questions I had long ago jotted down in my readings of *Run Silent* and his other books, and somewhat to my surprise—I didn't think he'd respond to an amateur historian—he graciously answered all but one.

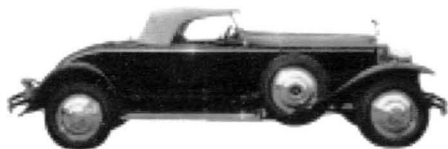
Not all history will rise to the level of the events experienced by Captain Beach, but that should be no barrier to inquiry. I'm a car styling buff and I've always been fascinated by the extent to which stylists seemed to "borrow" from each other. Tom McCahill noted this years ago, commenting on the similarity of the nose of the '50 Studebaker to the '48 Tucker's. When I bought a new Pontiac Catalina in 1968, I was struck by the similarities, front and rear, to the Edsel, with the Edsel's boomerang tail-lights being reversed on the Cat and its infamous horse collar grille filled in with a chrome bar on the Pontiac, all to excellent stylistic effect, I thought. Were the similarities coincidental? I asked a GM vet about this but got no response. Does any SAH member know any more?

Some history is, if not trivial, downright silly and outright fun. My favorite example is from Ingrassia and

White's book on the American automobile industry, *Comeback*, and recounts the process by which the Ford Fairmont got its name. The fun comes from an alternate name that was suggested to Henry Ford II; I've always wondered how the perpetrator's career was affected by his suggestion.

A name that got away from Ford was Futura, first used on a production car on the Falcon and now used on Pep Boys tires. But from his perch in heaven, HFII must be amused by Chevrolet's hyperbolic misuse of the heading of the first chapter of Ford's fiftieth anniversary memoir, *Ford at Fifty*. The chapter head? "An American Revolution."

Gently turning the pages of that 1953 book brought much history back into focus, with reminders of more questions asked. In a late '90s letter to the editor of *Automotive News* I wondered if any of the young men pictured in the book were still with us. No word was heard back. The photo of Ford's new-in-1948 Metuchen, New Jersey, assembly plant reminded me of the sweaty hours I worked there in the summer of 1962. I wonder whatever happened to Red West, the genial and helpful



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foreman I worked for?

Fast forward to the August 2, 2005 *Wall Street Journal's* page one article, and take a quick ride up Route 1 from Metuchen to GM's Linden assembly plant. The article describes Chrysler's current efforts "to build three or more completely different models of cars in a single plant." How new is this effort? In the '50s, GM Linden was known as the "BOP plant." To GM veterans who might have worked there: Were Buicks, Oldsmobiles and Pontiacs ever made in that factory at the same time? If they were, what models and in what years?

This kind of history never gets old and never ceases to be instructive, as long as we don't stop asking.

—Pete Whittier

Magic of a Name— Fact and Fiction

In my review of *Kidnap of the Flying Lady* (*Journal* 217) my comments concerning Harold Nockolds' book *Magic of a Name*, resulted in a number of people asking me to expand on those comments.

Magic of a Name was written in 1938 under Rolls-Royce auspices. Many reprints and subsequent editions followed—my own copy used for reference is dated 1957, the ninth reprint. While it is very smoothly written—Nockolds was a professional journalist—and a handy chronicle of R-R achievements, it is not proper history in the sense accepted by professional historians. It is really a company handout—a copy was placed on the front seat of every Rolls-Royce car sold from then on—and many claims made in almost every chapter have to be treated with the greatest skepticism. There are evasions and coverups of unpleasant facts, many falsifications, continual special pleading and even outright lies! Strong stuff, I admit, but bear with me as I note them. Even the illustrations (expertly drawn by the author's brother Roy Nockolds) are in several instances wrongly captioned.

1. Examples of incorrect captions can be found facing pages 34, 102 and 128. The "original" Royce car on page 34 was not the one shown featuring the R-R

radiator and registered number AX 148. The first car was registered N-MR-6, the local Manchester registration, later superseded by M612. It had a flat-top radiator bearing no resemblance to the later famous R-R one, as did Royce's following two cars.

General Sir John French did not "start at dawn," in the car shown on page 102; he sent his subordinate Colonel Bridges, as contradicted in the text!

The Vickers Vimy bomber on page 128 was not "first across the Atlantic!" as claimed here (and monotonously in British literature). That honor belongs to the U.S. Navy Curtiss flying boat NC4 which made the trip the previous month. Incidentally, it was powered by Packard-designed Liberty engines built by either Ford or the fledgling Lincoln company. Both claims are made. Can any reader verify?

2. The odds faced by Battle of Britain fighter pilots did not even remotely approach those claimed on page 12. In fact, there were some occasions where the Luftwaffe fighter pilots were the ones outnumbered.

3. R-R director Claude Johnson's battle with Charles Y. Knight of sleeve-valve fame is quickly passed over as briefly as possible in the text (page 81). Not mentioned is that the encounter, in the pages of *Autocar*, was absolutely disastrous for Johnson. Knight made a complete fool of him. I covered this in *Automobile Quarterly*, volume X, number 4.

4. A similar incident involving C.S. Rolls and E.R. Thomas of Thomas Flyer fame appears on page 60. Nockolds misrepresents what happened and pretends that Rolls scored over Thomas in the dispute. I have the actual correspondence in hand and it is obvious that Thomas was the moral victor. Nockolds denigrates both Thomas and his car but carefully avoids any mention of the Thomas triumph in the New York-Paris race the following year. (I covered this in *Automobile Quarterly*, volume VIII, number 4.)

5. On page 86 it is claimed that the 1912 R-R Alpine team of Silver Ghosts in

Austria were "using scarcely more than half-throttle." But Edward Eves, in his book *Rolls-Royce—75 Years of Excellence*, states on page 60 that it was later agreed at Derby that "the cars were actually working close to their limits."

6. In the material on aero engines neither Mercedes nor Curtiss is ever mentioned despite their designs having fundamentally influenced the two major series of R-R piston aero engines.

7. On page 176 the claimed 1928 incident at General Motors Milford Proving Grounds in which a Phantom I allegedly embarrassed every American make of car has been fictionalized. This story is attributed to Maurice Olley, a former R-R of America engineer, later employed by General Motors. I knew Olley personally over a number of years until his death. On more than one occasion I raised this very subject with him and he refused to verify it. On the first occasion he replied, "I cannot speak firsthand as I was not there and did not join General Motors until two years later." The second time I asked him about it at his home in Detroit he dodged the matter completely. He was embarrassed to be associated with the story, and no wonder!

Let me explain. It is claimed that no American car—GM or otherwise—was capable of covering more than two laps of the hi-speed test track at full throttle without ruining its big-end bearings. But when Sam McLaughlin (GM director of Canadian Buick) arrived with his new Rolls-Royce Phantom I (bodied by Barker and therefore an English-built Rolls), it was capable of lapping at a steady 80 mph indefinitely. Possibly, much to McLaughlin's chagrin, after this alleged triumph the engine was (supposedly) dismantled to find the "Derby know-how" with the result that within two years every American car had durable big-ends.

I am quoting almost verbatim from Nockolds' book. At first sight it looks highly authoritative—the date, place, individuals and cars are named as would be required in any court of law. But consider that at the same track, the previous

year, a stripped but basically stock LaSalle roadster driven by Cadillac testers Gus Bell and Bill Rader had circled the track at a far higher speed for ten hours on end, witnessed by a squad of automotive journalists invited by GM to report the achievement. The LaSalle averaged 95 mph for ten hours. No repairs were required until a fractured oil line terminated the targeted 1,000-mile run just short of the target set, as told me by Ernest Seaholm.

This is far from the end of the matter. There was a similar but much earlier performance at the Chicago Speedway back in 1915. This time it was to emphasize the outstanding endurance of the new Cadillac V-8. Two standard models, one a "mule" that had been used for extended test purposes, the other a new Cadillac V-8 just off the production line whose mileage was only that between Detroit and Chicago, were driven at full throttle around the track for 100 miles in less than one and one-half hours, one car averaging 71.19 mph, the other 72.49 mph. No repairs were made to either car. The event was witnessed and certified by the Technical Committee of the Automobile Club of America, who confirmed the cars were fully standard in all respects.

Also consider the splendid record of General Motors Buicks and Cadillacs in the hands of my countrymen the Nairn brothers who regularly covered the 600 miles of the Syrian desert every week with their famous commercial service between Beirut and Baghdad, this for hour after hour at "racing speed" (up to a constant 70 mph) as shown in the advertisement reproduced on the cover of *Journal* 217. Many more American cars other than GM makes put up similar performances at this time—Stutz with its 24-hour Stevens Trophy run at Indy in 1927, Stutz and Chrysler at Le Mans in 1928, Studebaker and Auburn at Atlantic City the same year (both makes certified by the AAA). Henry LeLand boasted of the new Lincoln V-8, "You can drive it wide open the first mile." This was echoed in Hudson advertising, "70 miles an hour all day."

These were claims never challenged by Rolls-Royce on road or track. Then what really happened? I think McLaughlin went to see the newly opened high-speed loop for himself, as many of his fellow executives would have done, and arrived at a time when such cars as Essex, Erskine and others not noted for their high speed stamina (maybe even Chevys) were blowing up after a few hot laps, while his Phantom I took things in its stride. It's easy to see how such a story got manhandled with every retelling until it reached someone like Maurice Olley who was a thousand miles away in Springfield.

Furthermore, there was absolutely no need for GM men to check out the engine bearings on the Rolls. They were still being hand scraped to fit at this time, whereas all top American cars had diamond-bored bearings which were far superior. (Packard actually covered this aspect in its "Precision" advertisement that ran in several publications in 1927. The ad is reproduced by *Dick Langworth* in *Packard Cormorant*, Spring 1988.

8. Setting Nockolds straight regarding the manufacture of the wartime Merlin aero engine by Packard and (English) Ford and its use in the P-51 Mustang fighter plane would require a full-length article by itself. Contrary to the impression he gives, both Ford and Packard manufacture of the engine were superior to that of the British makers, including even Rolls-Royce.

The U.S. makers actually improved the Merlin design and performance, but no credit is given to them here. General Motors Allison steel-backed bearings were used in all Packard-built Merlins and under license also by Rolls-Royce. All Packard Merlins used the Stromberg injection, anti-G carburetor (standard on the Allison V-1710), which eliminated the R-R Merlin's fatal habit of cutting dead in aerobatics. It was later adopted by R-R. And Packard designed a whole new supercharger drive far superior to the R-R one as yet another example. None of this is properly discussed.

Returning to the automobile side, no mention is made of the massive tech-

nical assistance given by General Motors to Rolls-Royce behind the scenes between the world wars which subsequently, in the words of R-R chief engineer Robotham, "enabled us to build much better Rolls-Royce cars."

A hint of this can be found in a Buick advertisement from a 1940 *National Geographic* which refers to the longstanding R-R practice of buying a Buick every year for technical evaluation. This originally arose from Royce himself purchasing a Buick just after World War I to base his all-new 20-hp designs on. This included abandoning magneto ignition and adopting the Delco system. Even though the great W. O. Bentley clearly states in his memoirs that the new postwar 20-hp Rolls was "essentially a Buick," no mention of this appears in Nockolds' book

I leave readers to judge for themselves.

—Maurice Hendry

SAH News continued from page 5

Spouses are invited too. There's plenty for them to do if they don't want to attend all sessions. The \$395 registration fee applies for delegates and spouses.

Check the forum's website www.ExperienceEverythingAutomotive.org for all the latest news and the current schedule. You can also register online at this site.

Luiz Cezar Thomaz Fanfa has left Canoas, Brazil on his two-month driving odyssey to Detroit in time for World Forum. You may remember he is making the journey in a 1960 Brazilian-made Chevrolet pick-up. His goal: donate the truck to the GM Heritage Center. We plan to keep you informed of his progress!

—Bill Chapin
313-885-7341
chapinco1@aol.com

SAH at AHA Convention

SAH will sponsor a session on automotive history at the American Historical Association's convention in Philadelphia,

January 5–8, 2006. SAH's session will take place on Saturday, Jan. 7th, and is entitled, "Making Cars, Making History: The Automobile's Impact on U.S. National Identity."

The session's chair will be *Michael Berger*, and presentations will be as follows: *David L. Lewis*, "The Public Image of Henry Ford: A Twenty-First Century Perspective"; *Michael L. Bromley*, "The Socialization of the Automobile in Satire in the Early Motor Age"; *Craig Pascoe*, "The Small Automobile Manufacturer and the National Marketplace: The Anderson Motor Company, 1915–24"; and *Deborah Clarke*, "Automotive Citizenship: Gender, Ethnicity, and American Identity."

—*Michael Bromley*

Member in the News

On August 19th Irwindale Speedway announced that the track's director of communications, *Doug Stokes*, would be joining the staff of the Autobooks-Aerobooks bookstore in Burbank, California. Doug would become general manager as

well as a partner (vice president) in the privately-held company which owns and operates the 54 year-old California motoring landmark.

Irwindale Speedway VP/General Manager Bob DeFazio said, "Doug's our first, best, and only PR-Guy at Irwindale. He's been here since day one and we're very pleased that this new position will allow him to continue a close association with the Speedway. He's going to continue to interface regularly with me and the Speedway staff as well as being onsite at all of our upcoming national events."

Just Out

Bud Gardner's CD titled *Encyclopedia of Eights* is finished and available. It provides an introductory discussion of the evolution of eight-cylinder automobile engines and provides 65 pages of charts listing and describing "all" V-8 and straight eight engines and the models powered by them from 1903 to 1955. There are over 300 entries!

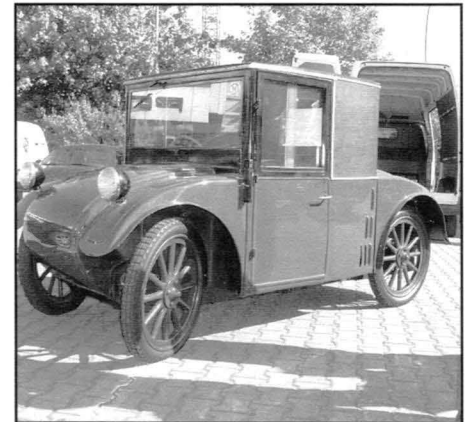
E-mail questions about the CD to

budgard@bellsouth.net. If you want to order a CD, please send \$10 (no shipping charge) and your mailing address to Bud Gardner, 112 Club Drive, Fairhope AL 36532

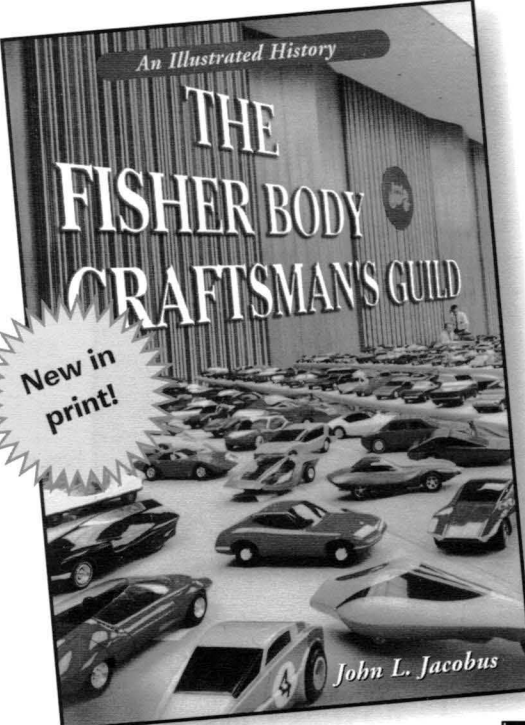
New Museum Exhibit

Alain Cerfs's Tampa Bay Automobile Museum has a new addition, a 1926 Hanomag 2/10PS coupe, a car which earned the nickname "Kommissbrot" (army loaf). As reported in *Journal 214* the museum contains more than two dozen cars which exhibit advanced engineering from the 1920s and '30s, most being front-wheel-drive or rear-engine designs. The collection includes such makes as Tatra, Citroën, Mercedes, Aero, Adler, Tracta and Ruxton.

For information about the museum, visit www.voitures-d-ingenieurs.com or telephone (727)578-5000.



1926 Hanomag 2/10PS




THE FISHER BODY CRAFTSMAN'S GUILD

John L. Jacobus

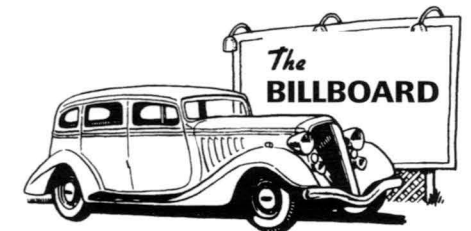
This richly illustrated book presents the history of the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild, from its inception as a philanthropic project by the Fisher family during the Great Depression, to its expansion overseas, and finally to its end in 1968. Many former participants in this famous model building and design competition share their memories and photographs of their models, some of which are startlingly inventive even when viewed today.

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The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
37 Wyndwood Road
West Hartford, CT 06107



The exact date on this photo is not known. Lawrence Levering Beckel, who is behind the tiller, died March 3, 1909. He was a machinist at the family business: Beckel Foundry, Bicycle & General Repair Shop in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Notes on the back of the photo indicate that the Beckels had the first “regular repair shop” for horseless carriages in the city and that this classy motorized buckboard, which one suspects Lawrence made himself, was also Bethlehem’s first. The photo was taken at his home on Church Street between High and Linden. It was sent to Beverly Rae Kimes by antique car modeler Hank Lafferty of Bethlehem, who received it from a neighbor who is a descendant of Lawrence Beckel. *Beverly Rae Kimes collection*