

SAH Journal

The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
 Issue 241 Electronic Edition September-October 2009



www.autohistory.org

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Election Results Announced Davis to Head Society

Susan S. Davis, of Portland, Maine, has been elected president of the Society of Automotive Historians, it was announced by *Leroy Cole*, chair of the Nominations Committee. Also elected were *J. Douglas Leighton*, of London, Ontario, Canada, Vice President; *Robert R. Ebert* of North Ridgeville, Ohio, Secretary; and *Patrick Bisson* of Flushing, Michigan, Treasurer. All will serve two-year terms.

Elected as directors for three-year terms were *Thomas Jakups* of West Hartford, Connecticut, and *Leslie Kendall* of Los Angeles, California. Incumbent director *Steve Wilson* of Jefferson, North Carolina, was re-elected. Named to the director position being vacated by Pat Bisson was *John Heitmann* of Dayton, Ohio. All newly-elected officials will take their seats at the end of the annual meeting at Hershey on October 9th.

A native of Maine, Susan Davis is currently executive director of the Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad Co. and Museum in Portland. From 1986 to 2006 she was the founding director, president and chief executive officer of the Stanley Museum of Kingfield, Maine. She brings to SAH a wealth of experience in leading preservation organizations and sustaining associations and non-profit institutions.

Keith Marvin (1924-2009)

Keith Marvin, SAH member #0007HF, died Monday, June 22, 2009, in Larkspur, California, after a brief illness. He would have turned 85 on July 1st. A founding member of the Society, he served as president in 1986 and 1987. He received the Society's Carl Benz Award for the article "The American Chauffeur: A Sociologic Appraisal" in 1985. In 1988 he was named a Friend of Automotive History by the Society, in recognition of his lifetime devotion to the field. In his presentation speech, award chair *David Lewis* described Keith as a "man of letters," for he corresponded avidly with all who wrote to him, on any subject. Indeed, over the course of a 25-year friendship, he exchanged more than 1,000 letters with British historian *Michael Sedgwick*, a correspondence that ended only because Sedgwick died in 1983. The two had never met.

A champion of the obscure makes of American cars of the 1920s, he researched and wrote about them avidly. His work comprises in many cases the only written record of a forgotten period when an aspiring automaker could come into town, sell some stock, rent a factory, display a hastily-built car and then vanish within weeks. Nearly all such entries in *Nick Georgano's* encyclopedias bear Keith's byline, and those in *Bev Kimes's* mammoth *Standard Catalog of American Cars 1805-1942* are based largely on his research.

Born July 1, 1924 in Troy, New York, Keith graduated from the Hoosick School in Hoosick, New York, in 1943 and entered the U.S. Army, serving in Anti-Aircraft Artillery. He began his freelance writing career in 1945, and served as a reporter and music critic for the *Record* newspapers in Troy from 1948-1975. In 1950, with the late John English, a fellow automobile enthusiast, he

continued page 2

-Keith Marvin from page 1

founded the Automobilitists of the Upper Hudson Valley, an independent club in the Albany-Troy area. Marvin instigated a club magazine, the *Upper Hudson Valley Automobilitist*, which he edited, except for a few brief sabbaticals, until its demise in 1993. The *Automobilitist* became Keith's showcase for the obscure, chronicling such oddities as the Texmobile, the Masterbilt Six and the Harrigan. Although a local publication, the *Automobilitist* attracted a number of internationally-known writers, such as Nick Georgano, *Lord Montagu of Beaulieu*, *Mike Worthington-Williams* and Michael Sedgwick, largely on the strength of Keith's friendship. He received AUHV's Frank Lescault Cup for Meritorious Service in 1956.

His byline appeared regularly in *SAH Journal* and *Automotive History Review*, often in conjunction with his favorite obscure makes, and frequently on book reviews. He read voraciously, and reviewed the newest automotive books for a number of publications, including *Old Cars Weekly* and *Car*



Collector. In all, he authored some 3,000 articles on automotive history, including feature articles, news items, obituaries, and book reviews, for more than 70 publications. In addition, he wrote or co-wrote seven books.

Another of his passions involved license plates. In 1963, he instituted the first registration system for automobiles on the Netherlands Antilles island of Saba, devising the system, designing the plates, and furnishing them to the island government. A long-time member of the Automobile License Plate Collectors Association, he wrote often on the subject of plates and at one

time had an extensive collection. In his later years he downsized his holdings, but maintained a "wall of plates" comprising his favorites in the library of his apartment. His self-published book *License Plates of the World* was a first on that topic, in 1963.

In addition to SAH, AUHV and ALPCA, he was a member of the Classic Car Club of America, the Rolls-Royce Owners Club, Veteran Motor Car Club of America, from which he received the Byron C. Hull Award for Automotive History in 1962, the Horseless Carriage Foundation, Europlate, Voitures Anciennes du Québec, and the Willys-Overland-Knight Register. He was also an honorary member of The Stutz Club and 2003 recipient of the Peter Helck Memorial Trophy, as well as of the Antique Automobile Club of America, from which he received several awards for research and writing.

I became acquainted with Keith the way most people did: I wrote to him about one of his articles. He replied the same day, answering all my questions and mentioned that his mother-in-law had lived in a town

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**Copy Deadline for Journal 242
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SAH News

adjacent to that where I had grown up. Our ongoing correspondence revealed that our lives were so intertwined that our friendship was almost preordained. His prep school roommate was our local pharmacist, and in fact our parents had known one another some years before. His mother had written an article for the small horticultural magazine that my parents published. And he became a mentor and champion of my own automotive history curiosity, publishing a number of my early articles in the *Automobilist*. When he moved from the Albany area to Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1997, and began to lose touch with his hometown friends, I began a long tradition of lunching with him at the pub that had been my campus watering hole during my undergraduate days at Worcester Tech. After he moved to California to be with his children, I very much missed our regular *tête à tête*.

His life did not revolve solely around cars and license plates. He read five newspapers daily, keeping track of the latest happenings in local




and world affairs, politics and religion. He had a keen interest in music, and an encyclopedic memory of royalty and failed political candidates. It is almost trite to say that someone was "larger than life," but Keith probably saw himself that way. He liked to be noticed, whether it was wearing his signature beret or gray safari suit, holding forth in a gathering of people, or simply having his byline in print. That contributed to his prolific output, much of which was pro bono, but it was not his sole motivation. Many of us are willing to answer questions when asked. All too often the rest of us leave those questions unasked until it's too late. Keith, to his credit and our benefit, thought he should pass along his knowledge during his lifetime, and he did, many times over.

He is survived by his sons Dwight Marvin II of Independence, Kentucky, and William H. Marvin of

Richmond, California, and a daughter, India Dobson, also of Richmond. He is also survived by two stepsons, Peyton Anness of Miami, Florida, and Frederick Anness of Jupiter, Florida, and his former wife, Beverley Lavin of Vero Beach, Florida. His first wife, Dorothy Knippel Marvin, predeceased him in 1961. A memorial service is planned by the family at a later date.


—Kit Foster



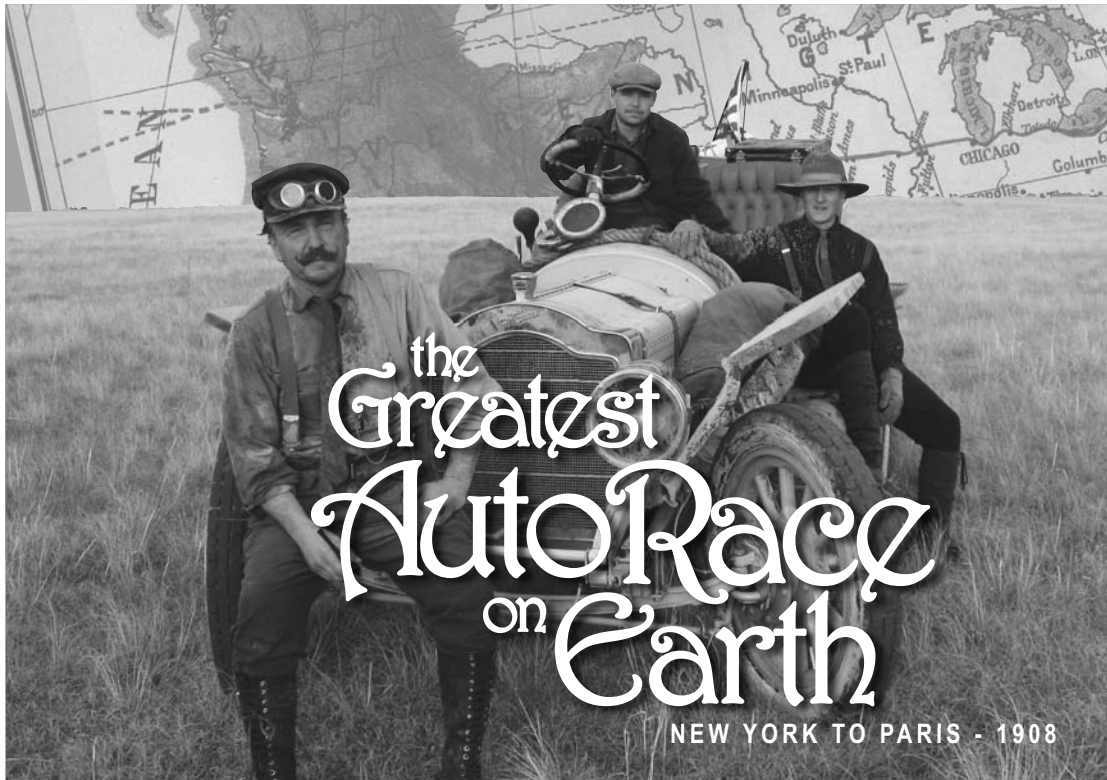
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Letters

Dear Sir,

As a member of SAH, I enjoy receiving the newsletter but have to comment on the short letter & photos from *Nelson Bolan* in the Summer 2009 *SAH Journal*. Indeed, the DeSoto Diplomats were Plymouth-based but not “Canadian” cars. DeSotos sold/built in Canada were virtually identical to US models except for some slight engine differences in their last years.

The cars that are pictured are “Export” DeSotos that were sold virtually everywhere else *but* US and Canada, i.e. Europe, Cuba, etc. Mr. Bolan might be thinking of Canadian Dodges that were similarly Plymouth-bodied. The export Dodges were called Kingsways but Canadian Dodges had their own names (and engines) in Canada. The Canadian Dodges were Crusader, Regent, Mayfair, Viscount, etc.

Although some “Export” Chrysler-built models were built in Canada, they were not marketed in Canada. Other than some special models such as the Canadian Pontiacs, Acadians, Beaumonts, Canadian Dodges, Meteors and Monarchs, the “domestic” industry has always considered the Canadian and US markets as one. After the Auto Pact of 1965 they were solidified as one industry, the result that GM is now owned by US and Canadian governments.

If you ever need more specific info on Canadian cars, please advise.

—*Rheal Larose*, Navan, Ontario

Dear Sir:

Re those “Canadian” De Sotos in the Summer, 2009 *Journal*, those Plymouth-based De Soto Diplomats may have been built in Canada but Diplomats were not sold in Canada.

In the ‘40s and ‘50s Chrysler’s Canadian dealer network was divided as follows: Dodge-De Soto-Dodge Truck dealers, and Chrysler-Plymouth-Fargo dealers. The Fargo was a re-badged variant of the Dodge truck. Because the Dodge dealers



needed a low-priced car to sell, they were given a variant of the Plymouth to sell with series names like Regent and Mayfair.

Plymouth-based De Sotos were sold by De Soto dealers outside the USA and Canada, since these dealers need a Plymouth-sized and Plymouth-priced car to sell. Usually three series were offered; De Soto Diplomat, Diplomat-Deluxe and Diplomat-Custom. Corresponding to the Plymouth Plaza, Savoy and Belvedere. To convert the Plymouth into a Diplomat, new and unique De Soto grilles were designed to fit into the Plymouth’s grille opening cavity. The number of “teeth” often varied from the larger De Sotos, for example, the “regular” ‘55 De Soto had a nine-tooth grille while the Plymouth-based Diplomat had an eleven-tooth grille. Diplomats of course carried unique badging.

Beginning in 1957 a De Soto Firesweep front end clip was fitted to a Plymouth body to create the Diplomat. For 1960 and ‘61, the Diplomat was based on the Dodge Dart. Diplomat production ended when the De Soto was discontinued in 1961. A Dart-based Diplomat was assembled in South Africa in 1962.

Some De Soto Diplomats were assembled in Plymouth’s Lynch Road Assembly plant, while mid-level



Images top and above from *Nelson Bolan*

Diplomat two- and four-door sedans were also made in Chrysler’s Windsor, Ontario assembly plant. Some of these cars apparently “escaped” into Canada and the US, hence the pictures.

The station wagon, by the way, is a De Soto Diplomat two-door Suburban, corresponding to a Plymouth Plaza. It is a six-cylinder job, eight-cylinder Diplomats had the numeral “8” set above the De Soto badge on the hood.

—*Jeff Godshall*, Royal Oak, MI
Dear Sir:

The President’s Message in the Summer Issue prompts me to write this. The oft-repeated Santayana quote: “Those who forget the lessons of history are condemned to repeat them,” has more to do with interpreting the present rather than predicting the future.

It’s true that events are never replicated in exactly the same way, yet Alan Mulally’s decision to bring back the Ford Taurus is eerily reminiscent of George Romney’s decision to bring back the discontinued Rambler in 1958. Both decisions involved taking advantage of a strong brand identity in a crucial market segment. It is also interesting that neither man is considered a car guy.

I wonder if other members agree that Chrysler’s current problems began with the company’s takeover by Daimler-Benz in 1999. This was, I believe, an unprecedented act of industrial vandalism, prompted more by greed than by any business consideration. The subsequent mismanagement by DaimlerChrysler that saw a healthy, \$36 billion dollar company reduced to a \$6 billion dollar company in less than 10 years, surely deserves some comment from SAH members.

I would love to see the *Journal* become a platform for lively debate and the exchange of opinions on such subjects. History is not always shrouded in the past. It is happening every day, and as auto historians, we have a unique ability to make the present understandable.

—*Alan McPhee*, Nanaimo, BC

Letters

Dear Sir:

I am trying to determine any engine similarities between earlier designs and the last Pontiac-built Welch, the 70 hp Model R.

A little history first. Welch was a pioneer in the use of hemi-heads together with an exposed overhead camshaft. Prior to 1905 Welch had a full spherical head using concave pistons. The 4- or 6-cylinder engines were cast in pairs, except for the Model R, with a fixed head and the usual screwed access which incorporated the valves, angled at 45 degrees. Exposed rockers operated either side of the camshaft onto the valve stems.

The 1910 Model R that I am querying was launched in 1909. The cheaper Welch-Detroit Model S, also for 1910, used a more conventional T-head design.

What I do know about the 4-cylinder 70 hp 1910 Model R is that it was an "en-bloc" design rather than paired cylinders, and the valves were angled at 30 degrees.

My questions are as follows for the Model R:
Was the hemi-head design continued? Did it have a detachable head? Did it have an overhead camshaft? If so, was the camshaft and valve-train exposed as before?

Additionally I am curious whether the transmission was incorporated into the back axle and differential housing? Supposedly, the earlier 6-cylinder roadster had the transmission out back. One has to assume the weight distribution improved at the expense of the unsprung mass of the axle.

How many Welches continue to exist? The last count I am aware of is four; at the Henry Ford Museum, LA County Museum, previously at Harrah's Museum and one owned by author Ralph Stein. Any help would be much appreciated.

—Louis Fourie
2396 Nelson Avenue,
West Vancouver, BC
V7V 2R2, Canada

What Knocked the Model T Off Its UK Perch?

The reviewer of "The English Model T Ford – A Century of the Model T in Britain" in *Journal 240* asserts that it was the Austin Seven that dislodged the T from its lofty British perch. It was not the Austin Seven but the Bullnose Morris that was responsible for this.

The Model T must easily have been the most commonly encountered vehicle on the British roads at the end of 1920. In addition to the vast number produced at Trafford Park in the immediate post-war years (see Table 1) there were those that were returned to civilian use after military service. The Model T outnumbered any other make amongst the estimated 200,000 vehicles returned to the UK roads after military use.

A major, arguably the biggest, blow to the sales of Model T to private car buyers can be timed with precision. It was January 1, 1921, when the £1 per RAC horse power tax came into operation. By the mid-twenties the tax had taken its toll. SMMT (Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders) figures show that of the 684,000 private cars taxed in September 1926, only 45,500 were those in the 23 hp class (filled mostly by Model Ts) and by 1937, the number had fallen to just over 1000. That is the sad demise of Model T cars in the UK. However, T commercials fared better since commercials were taxed on unladen weight and not on bore size. This was a distinction of great importance to Ford and consequently, although Ford's market share for cars tumbled, it maintained a dominant position in the van and 1-ton commercial market.

In 1921 the Ford T was rocked on its perch by a double whammy. In the month after the introduction of the £1 per H.P. tax, Morris made the first of his price cuts. In February 1921, he cut the price of the four seater Cowley by a staggering £100. The battle was on. Sales of Morris cars overtook those of Ford in 1923 and Morris' overtook Trafford Park's total vehicle production towards the end of the following year. Quite emphatically, it was the Bullnose that knocked the Model T (car) off its perch and the Austin 7 had little, if anything, to do with it.

Table 1 - Production

	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927
Ford T Cars	8086	25665	11603	11091	11507	8919	5086	4510	1817
Total Ford T Trafford Park	12175	46362	31955	27303	30596	27987	22271	21895	12558
Morris	312	1994	2994	5000	14995	27100	48686	50623	58500
Morris Vans						468	1548	2120	2405
Austin 7				178	2409	4800	8024	13274	21671

Ford Figures

Source: *David Burgess Wise*

Due to a change in the accounting period, Ford figures for 1920 are for 15 months Sept 1919 to Dec 1920.

Morris figures

Production: Sept to Sept

Models: 11.9hp and 13.9hp. Change from Bullnose to Flatnose for 1927.

Morris total includes light vans.

Austin Seven figures

Source: *The Austin Seven by Jonathan Wood (Shire Publications Ltd 1999)*

TOTAL PROD 1/1/23 to 12/31/30: 11.9 and 13.9 Morris = 350,000; Austin 7 = 123,161

W.R.Morris was a shrewd purchaser and without a doubt, one of his best buys was Type U Continental engines of 2.7in bore by 4in stroke that he fitted to the 1485 Morris Cowleys made between 1915 and 1919. Thereafter copies of the engine with only minor modifications were made in the UK It remained in production until the early nineteen fifties as a marine or industrial power unit.

—Robin Barraclough

SAHB Science Museum Library Visit

On the rather wet and windy Thursday morning of 20th August 2009, twenty Society of Automotive Historians in Britain (SAHB) members gathered at the Science Museum Library and Archives at Wroughton near Swindon, Wiltshire. Forewarned about the time needed to process the official visitors' passes (which entails each person being photographed), most delegates arrived well before the appointed time – only to be informed that passes would not be required after all!

Perched on a windswept hilltop, the ex-military airbase looked somewhat bleak in the rain, and the former World War II aircraft maintenance building that is home to the library also seemed a bit gloomy at first sight. However, in direct contrast to its grey concrete exterior, the library is bright and ultra-modern inside. The warm welcome extended to SAHB members by the staff was equally upbeat and friendly, with tea and coffee made available.

Following a comprehensive introduction by Site Librarian Nick Wyatt, the party was split in two – half of the people going on a tour of the facility, the others examining an impressive display of automotive literature that had been specially arranged for us in the reading room. The two groups then swapped places.

Wroughton holds 85 percent of the Science Museum library collection and all of the archives. This adds up to over 10,000 journals and 100,000 books, plus patents, manuscripts and trade brochures, stored on 26 kilometers of shelving. During the look around the various sections we were shown a vellum-bound Galileo volume dating from 1613, a 1704 book by Isaac Newton and a first edition signed by Einstein. Illustrating the incredible variety of subjects to be found was a 1692 book entitled *Purging Pills for Horses*.

In the reading room, Archivist Cecilia Cassingham gave a brief overview of automotive material

available for research and, after explaining the problems of trying to unravel copyright issues, she was astonished to learn that one of our number – *Anders Clausager*, chief archivist at the Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust – would probably be able to assist her with rights concerning documents of the coachbuilder Hoopers. Several members discovered useful items on show and purchased photocopies, while our chairman was seen busily running a ruler over some original Napier engine drawings.

Without exception, everyone was hugely impressed by the library and its staff, and most of us plan to return at a later date to conduct further investigations. After departing from the airfield, the majority of members made their way to a pub called The Crown in nearby Broad Hinton where a convivial lunch was enjoyed. Without doubt this was a most successful SAHB event and grateful thanks go to *Malcolm Jeal* for organizing the whole occasion so well.

—Tony Beadle

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

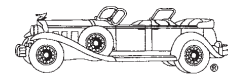
founded in 1952 to promote the preservation and restoration of distinctive motorcars built between 1925 and 1948.

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

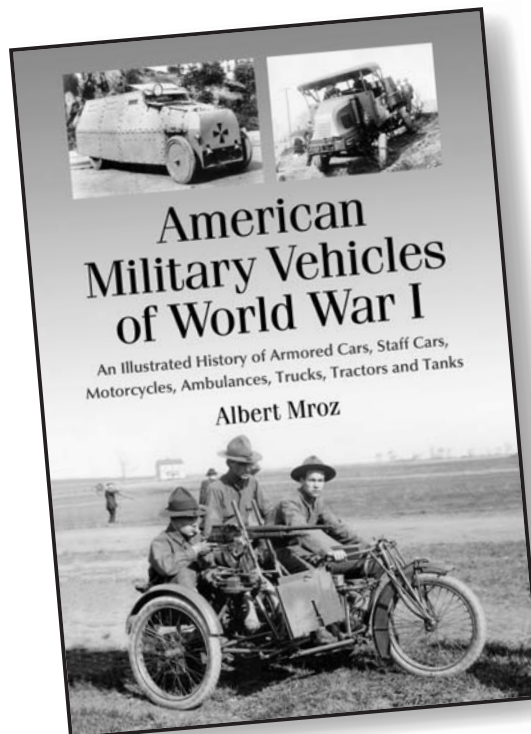
The club maintains a museum and research library on the grounds of the Gilmore Car Museum in Hickory Corners, Michigan.

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

CLASSIC CAR CLUB OF AMERICA



1645 Des Plaines River Road, Suite 7
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www.ClassicCarClub.org



This study of specialized military motor vehicles—armored cars, motorcycles, trucks, tanks and others—during World War I recounts their advent, development and use and analyzes how they indelibly altered modern warfare. It also gives attention to Pancho Villa and the Punitive Expedition of 1916-1917, which was the United States military's first experience with motorized ground transport. Includes more than 300 photographs.

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Survivor Car Event

It was a sunny and seasonally perfect summer day in St. Charles, Illinois. The 16th hole at the Pheasant Run Resort was closed to golfers to make room for showcasing about fifty vintage cars...and that's where the similarities to most automotive concours end. Usually concours separate the field with groupings of similar makes, models, or at least eras. Instead, many enthusiasts attending this event may have been surprised to find a 1984 Pontiac Fiero parked next to a 1956 Chevrolet Bel Air, or a 1930 Auburn 8-95 Phaeton flanked by a 1964 Studebaker Avanti and 1976 Chrysler Cordoba.

The common thread in all these cars is that they are celebrating preservation over restoration. This oddity represents a growing movement in the collector car world: a vehicle can only be new once. "Worn in...but not worn out" is the motto for the first all-model Survivor car event during the Bloomington Gold car show.

"Car shows give awards for making cars better than they came from the factory," says Survivor's creator David Burroughs, and he should know. Thirty-seven years ago Burroughs created the Bloomington Gold Corvette show, which has grown into a premier event for judging all Corvettes. Then he started noticing that some Corvettes were being restored not out of necessity, but only to gain status. So, in 1990 Burroughs created a Corvette-only Survivor event to recognize original cars and combat the trend of unnecessary restoration. Now this is the first year that cars of all makes and models were invited to participate their own event.

Almost two decades of Survivor Corvette judging make Burroughs and his crew good candidates for reviewing the rest of the car world. Corvettes, especially the first generation, never came perfect from the factory. The day before the event, Burroughs demonstrated this by pointing out many fiberglass and paint imperfections while casually looking

at a few certified Survivor examples of C1 Corvettes. He compared them to the smooth lines of a nearby heavily restored example. In this case, perfection means Survivor disqualification.

"Don't restore them; preserve them," is the idea Burroughs wants to get across for this new form of car collecting. This battle cry produces some interesting results. Rarely do car shows include examples with faded paint, worn interiors, missing emblems, or even a few rust spots. But the Survivor event is no junkyard. Each participant may show some wear from its multiple decades of life, but no one makes it onto the lawn at Pheasant Run without demonstrating that those years have been lived without serious abuse.

Survivor cars will often represent a personal passion. It's a very narrow category of owners who will go decades without an upgrade, and that can cause great memories associated with the metal. Boomers were overheard swapping stories from their youth about how they dealt with their Corvair's legendary handling problems. A fond memory for a 1970 Buick GSX owner included his high school years when he never had the gas tank more than a quarter full at any time to discourage his father from borrowing his Buick for grocery runs.

Cars are eligible for Survivor distinction starting with at least one element (interior, exterior, chassis, etc.) that is at least 50 percent original. The recognition tops out at highest prize available, the aptly named Zenith award. To receive this honor, the vehicle must be forty years or older and be at least 90 percent original. Burroughs doesn't see this as a "car show" because most shows are about competition, and the Survivor event is more about recognition. A standard car show looks to rank entries and crown an overall winner, but the Survivor event celebrates all cars that meet certain levels of factory-fresh.

Reaching the Zenith level is a not a well-paved road. Compared

to other collecting hobbies such as art, stamps, or even baseball cards, automobile collecting is in its infancy. That should help the chances of finding pristine untouched examples, but there are many factors working against it.

By the end of World War I production had risen to levels that turned the automobile from an extravagant luxury into an everyday appliance. Just like a refrigerator, most cars get repaired, upgraded, and replaced as needed. Also, because automobiles are usually someone's second largest purchase in life, people have gone to great lengths to individualize their cars. These disposable and customizable views of the automobile have worked against the idea of preservation and likely disqualify many cars for the Zenith award.

Even as survivor cars become a spreading trend in automotive collecting, Zenith cars will always be a rare sight. To be a top survivor will often mean an event, sometimes tragic, causes a car to get lost in time. A Zenith-winning 1966 Volkswagen Beetle was first owned by a Massachusetts VW dealer who passed away soon after the purchase. His wife tucked the Beetle away in a corner of the garage where it sat unused for decades. Another Zenith award went to a 1966 Jaguar E-Type that was owned by a man who got Alzheimer's at an early age. He had enough of an affinity for the car that he still remembered to occasionally run the engine of his beloved Jaguar, but it didn't hit the road again until it came under the care of the Hagerty collection.

Perhaps that is the moral of some of the pristine survivors. They didn't get to take as many family trips, or spend every weekend on winding country roads. And their sacrifice gets celebrated as a reminder of the cars that did.

—Myles Kornblatt.

Book Reviews

In the Shadow of Detroit: Gordon M. McGregor, Ford of Canada, and Motoropolis,

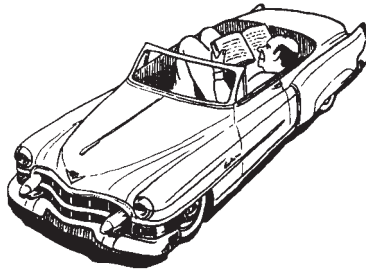
by David Roberts. © 2007, ISBN: 0814332846. Hardcover, 326 pages, photographs, bibliography, and index. Wayne State University Press, Detroit, Michigan. 48201-1309

David Roberts artfully uses the elements in the title to profile the central focus of Canada's automotive culture, Ford of Canada and its relationship to the parent company. One man, Gordon M. McGregor, was more than Ford of Canada's general manager; he was a key factor in Canada's worldwide industrial and political growth.

Born January 18, 1873, McGregor had an extensive list of corporate and civic accomplishments prior to his chance meeting with Ford Motor Company founder, Henry Ford. McGregor had followed Ford's successful automobile racing exploits, which were well-publicized in Windsor, Ontario, newspapers. McGregor viewed Ford's new automobile outside the Presbyterian church in Detroit where McGregor often sang tenor and an "irreligious Ford," according to Roberts, often attended.

McGregor was manager of his father's Walkerville Wagon Works (WWW) located in Walkerville, one of the five "Border Cities" that included Walkerville, Windsor, Ojibway, Sandwich, and the appropriately later-named "Ford City." The firm had plenty of orders for wagons and sleighs, with capabilities of producing "2,800 wagons and 1,000 sleighs annually," according to Roberts. However, McGregor lacked sufficient capital to meet customer demand and had planned to close WWW. As a last-ditch effort to keep WWW operating, McGregor decided to try producing automobiles.

McGregor's quest to bring automobile production to Canada in 1904 originally led him to Henry Martyn Leland. At this point, however, Leland was producing only motors and transmissions for Oldsmobile and Cadillac as well as for his own farm machinery production. Subsequently, McGregor remembered the Ford



encounters identified earlier and was, eventually, successful in talking with Mr. Ford.

Ford was skeptical at first and after receiving assurances that McGregor would "raise the needed capital and that Canada was the ideal expansion location for the Ford Motor Company," he agreed to license the Ford name to what, in reality, functioned as a separate company, Ford of Canada. Roberts emphasizes the fact that while the Ford alliance for Ford of Canada proved to be one of the most successful industrial accomplishments of Canada's early Industrial Age, the relationship as viewed by the "pioneer automotive community" appeared tenuous at best.

Even so, the enigmatic Ford hovered on the edge of the pioneer automotive community. Ford was an outsider, cut off from Detroit's social and financial elites, much like Ford's hard-edged secretary and business manager, James Couzens, a native of Chatham, Ontario, and one of a number of Canadians in Ford's inner group.

Even though Ford of Canada's beginning could be characterized as "questionable" by the emerging automotive elite of the time, McGregor's industrial success and civic philanthropy are concrete, as profiled by Roberts. Success was propelled by McGregor's ambition and James Couzens' financial guidance, which extended into the early 1920s, beyond Couzens' own relationship with "Ford-Detroit." Ford of Canada expanded into international markets, notably Australia and New Zealand, which would later prove to benefit Ford Motor Company as a whole for many years. Roberts provides numerous examples of these corporate successes, along with McGregor's equally-impressive civic accomplishments as director of Canada's Victory Bond campaign. Also documented are McGregor's efforts to establish a water management

network for the Border Cities and the "motoropolis" of Western Ontario that mirrored Detroit, if not exceeded it in some respects, relative to the earlier-mentioned Ford of Canada forays into international markets.

Along with the corporate and civic facts of the McGregor story, the personal aspects of "high society life" in Windsor and his frequent holidays to the "States" including Asheville, North Carolina, and the famous Greenbrier Resort in West Virginia are well documented. Some of the explanations, particularly his local committee work and some of the water discussions referenced earlier are somewhat long and pose questions of relevance. However, one must remain aware of the fact that *In the Shadow of Detroit* is, thankfully, as much of a memoir of McGregor himself as it is a corporate history of Ford of Canada.

McGregor had many friends. His business acumen and "beautiful tenor voice" are identified by Roberts as obvious reasons for that fact. Many of the names may be familiar to readers, author Virginia Woolf, composer John Philip Sousa, fellow auto pioneers the Dodge brothers, as well as Couzens and Ford. For another good book on Couzens, take a look at *Independent Man: The Life of Senator James Couzens*, Harry Barnard (2007, ISBN: 1432685911; Kessinger Publishing LLC originally published it in 1958) and an excellent profile of Henry Ford and his famous friends can be found in *There to Breathe the Beauty: The Camping Trips of Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, Harvey Firestone, John Burroughs* by Norman Brauer (1996, ISBN: 0964999602; Norman Brauer Pub.) Many of these friends attended McGregor's funeral, as he died an untimely death on 11 March 1922 at the age of 49 as a result of a rare blood disorder known as "hereditary haemorrhagic telangiectasia" or "Osler-Weber-Rendu disease."

Overall, *In the Shadow of Detroit* is a worthy read and evidence of the emergence of today's international automotive landscape, where successful corporate alliances crossed borders and continents. —Tom Adamich

Book Reviews

Sleeping Beauties

by Herbert W. Hesselmann & Halwart Schrader. 1st edition 2007.

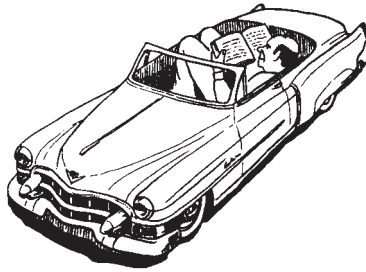
160 pages, more than 200 photographs in full color, text in English and German.

10 x 12 inches, hard bound. ISBN 978-3-283-00549-8. Published by Edition Olms AG, Switzerland, <http://www.edition-olms.com> US-distribution: Trafalgar Square from Independent Publishers Group, Chicago, <http://www.ipgbook.com> Available in bookstores. Price US-\$50.

Sleeping Beauties is a continuation of a motorcar fairy tale, which for the first time stirred the community of automobile lovers and connoisseurs with a book and various reports some 25 years ago. It created surprise, excitement and desperation.

The German photographer Herbert W. Hesselmann was one of a handful of people to be granted permission in the 1980s to have a look at a unique collection of high-grade automobiles – and to take pictures. He managed to capture the morbid charm of about forty collector cars in various stages of decay. He promised the owner to disclose neither his identity nor the location of the collection. His pictures and the story, however, went round the world. The new book contains those masterpieces of photography in bigger size and top quality with plenty of new material to keep the fairy tale alive.

For decades several dozen rare and highly praised classic cars, neglected and slowly overgrown with weeds and bushes, enjoyed a kind of one hundred-year sleep behind



the walls of an old farm somewhere in France. Until the publication of Hesselmann's photos hardly anybody knew of the treasure and the owner did everything to discourage and turn away any curious visitors.

On twenty pages Halwart Schrader, a well known writer and automotive historian, writes about the amazing history, the detection, the visit of the photographer and gives some comments on some of the cars. The collection contains several Alfa Romeos, a range of Bugattis, Ferraris and Lancia, three Panhards, two Cords and Lincolns each, single specimens of other marques such as Rolls-Royce, Aston Martin, Bentley, Graham, Hotchkiss, Jaguar, Jowett, Lotus and Tatra. The brilliant and dramatic photographs often are shown on full pages, sometimes even on double-pages and without any legends. At the end of the superb book the index offers major technical specifications of the cars as well as small black and white pictures of similar but well preserved models and indications on which pages photographs can be found.

It remains to say that meanwhile the owner of the collection has awoken the sleeping beauties and had them carried to a new, unknown place. In the book there are some pictures of their being

prepared for transportation and loaded on trucks. The text ends with "Like all fairy tales end, they all lived happily ever after."

This book is more of an art book than anything else. Showing such a wealth of highly desirable cars in deplorable, desperate conditions will bring some of us nearly to tears. But they are the property of a man who took the liberty to handle his possessions according to his own will. A man who was apparently not interested in money and who could not, himself, restore the cars as he possibly originally planned. Who knows, maybe in years to come one or the other of the jewels may yet see a restoration. Definitely an outstanding book with a special appeal, but not for everybody and let me warn you, no guide on how to find the sleeping beauties.

Postscript

Just when finishing this book review, I received the news that three Dutch historians are planning a new book on this amazing collection. They apparently have traced the cars, some of which were finally sold in the 1990s. The owner is said to have cooperated with them and has agreed to write the foreword and put at their disposal his files of photographs. So we can hope to learn more about the "Sleeping Beauties" soon.

—Ferdinand Hediger

HORSELESS CARRIAGE GAZETTE

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

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

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

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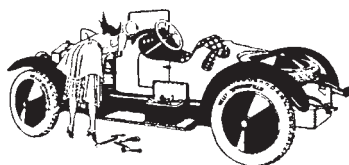
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Editorial

The Best Car Ever in the Universe!

First, last, fastest, most... these terms are gold for marketing departments but risky territory for historians. We know that obsessive research can still reveal a forgotten tidbit of evidence which refutes a definitive claim. The term "best" is even more risky. The word is almost totally subjective and too often used as a substitute for "favorite."

When I was a child I remember arguing with my friends about which car was the best. Our arguments took on a defensive, almost religious fervor as they escalated. My friend said his choice was the best car in the world. My response was along the lines of "Yeah? Well my car is the best one ever! In the universe!" I believe the cars in question were the Camaro versus the Barracuda, which our respective families owned, coincidentally.

Years later, I had a similar discussion regarding the Citroën SM versus the Mercedes W116 S-class. The argument was severely flawed in several respects. First, the SM was

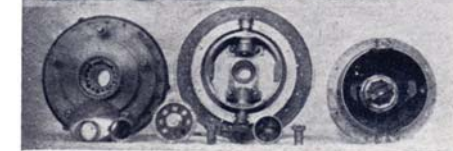
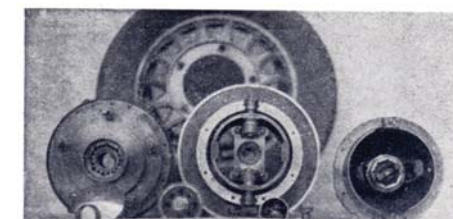
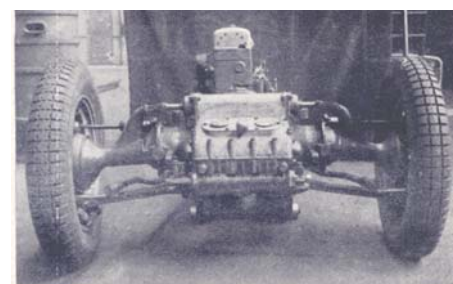
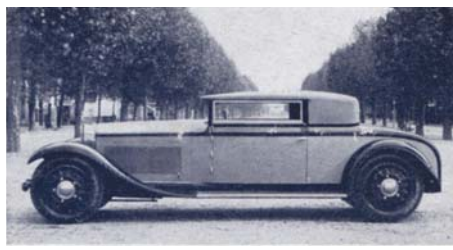


a two-door GT while the Mercedes was a four-door five passenger sedan. Second, at that time the SM had been withdrawn from the US market and it was rumored that Peugeot S.A. was going to pull the plug on the SM as soon as the acquisition of Citroën was completed. Third, it turned out that my father was in the process of buying a Mercedes S-class, which soon appeared in the family garage.

It took several more years to realize that the fervor people put behind these kinds of arguments results from defending a car which is, in fact, a personal favorite whether or not it is objectively the "best."

I decided to revisit a few "favorite" cars, shown here and page 12. But is any car simply the best?

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Bucciali T.A.V. series (left) Bucciali was building front wheel drive cars in France in the 1920s. It would be 1934 before Citroën's Traction Avant emerged.

Based on an example seen in the Petersen Automotive Museum, the Bucciali has a radical, almost sinister appearance which is appealing. Visible chassis and mechanical components show a high level of cosmetic finish, appropriate for an elite coachbuilt vehicle (*left*).

Rumors are that the gearbox and driveline were fragile (*lower left and bottom left*). Perhaps the engineering was so unconventional that no one outside the factory was willing to attempt repairs. The question is, did the drivetrain components hold together long enough to do any reasonable driving?



Ford Model T (above) The T was voted "Car of the Century" ten years ago. Other candidates for the title were the Volkswagen sedan, Porsche 911, Citroën DS, and Morris Mini-Minor/Austin Se7en.

In engineering terms the Model T was outclassed, but the premise of the competition was absurd on its face. The T was an ideal solution in its time and place, and for the price.

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Citroën GS Birotor (above)

The GS Birotor looked like a good idea on paper in 1974. Wankel twin-rotor engine, free of connecting rods, valves and valvetrain. Fully independent hydropneumatic suspension, without metal springs or conventional shock absorbers, accompanied by four-wheel disc brakes. Front wheel drive was taken for granted. All of the car's engineering features had appeared previously, but had not been combined in one vehicle.

Unfortunately, the car was over 500 pounds heavier than the standard GS range, had higher fuel consumption and fell into a higher French tax bracket due to the larger engine. The initial price to the customer was also higher.

This was all for a car which can charitably be described as compact, but in reality was short, stubby, and inelegant with a bulldog stance caused by an increased track width. Citroën tried to mask the wider track with flared wheel arches, which resulted in front and rear fender stampings unique to the GS Birotor.

This example is shown at the ICCCR meet in Amherst, Massachusetts in 2002.



Tatra Streamliners (above) The Tatra 87 in particular features a gracefully tapered and finned rear section housing the drivetrain and a small luggage locker behind the rear seats. Aesthetically this extended tail treatment looks good, but there is the issue of the weight of an OHC air-cooled V8 engine cantilevered behind the rear axle.

The front of the car is a bit truncated, but carries over from the 77 a three-headlamp treatment which later became something of a trademark of the models. Interior finish tends to be quite good and the engineering is interesting. Shown in the factory museum.



GM EV1 (above) General Motors showed the world a mobile test-bed for electric propulsion, aerodynamics, lightweight materials and construction methods.

Yet, the same Achilles heel remained from a century earlier, the heavy, cumbersome batteries. GM proposed a long-wheelbase version of the EV1, a fuel-cell version, and a hybrid version. Only the full battery-powered electric reached consumers.



BMW 600 (above) BMW took the Iso Isetta idea and developed it so far beyond the original as to be nearly unrecognizable. Compared to the BMW Isetta 250 and 300, the BMW 600 doubled major features. Four seats versus two; two mismatched doors instead of one; an air-cooled opposed-twin cylinder engine versus a vertical single in the smaller models.

The front opening door was retained though the door stamping itself was not interchangeable with the smaller cars. Furthermore BMW seemed to have forgotten that the purpose of the front door was to allow the occupants to step directly to the curb when the car was parked head-in between larger parallel-parked cars. The added length of the 600 meant that most of the time the car had to be parked parallel to the curb.

The car had a strange, asymmetric construction with two large windows on the left, four small windows on the right, and a single rear door on the right with an aggravating fixed window glass.

Mechanically, the car featured 12-volt electrics. The high-tension side of the ignition system used two 6-volt coils wired in series, common on German small cars of the day, but objectively quite odd.

My personal BMW 600 could travel on the freeway during the days of 55 MPH speed limits, but today it would be much too stressful. The car shown in a BMW publicity image features the optional sunroof and optional dress-up features such as wide whitewall tires and beauty rings. This car is hardly best BMW ever made but it is one of the most unusual BMW-designed production cars ever marketed. —A. Meyer.

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The Best Car Ever?

See page 10.



Duesenberg SJ "Twenty Grand."
Pictured in the early 1980's at the Nethercutt Collection, Sylmar, California. As a unique vehicle, the car has exceptional charisma. This no doubt fired the hopes and aspirations of World's Fair visitors during a very dark time in the United States.

Images from the Editor's collection.



Bugatti Royale. *Shown here, the "Esders" reproduction. Housed in the Cité de l'Automobile, formerly the Schlumpf brothers' collection, Mulhouse, France. The Royales are a marvellous example of rolling ceremonial artwork, superbly finished inside and out as the name implies. Most people exposed to the the Royales see them from a short distance at best. How many people alive today have even driven a Bugatti Royale?*



Toyota E10 Corolla. *Corolla is one of the best-selling nameplates. The cars themselves feel and look conventional, but assembly quality is notably good. In particular, the third-generation Corolla E30 in 1974 answered the challenge of fuel shortages and regulations. The Corolla looked like most consumers' idea of a normal, though very compact car, compared to the rear-engined VW model line and front-drive Honda Civic. Is best-selling the same as the best?*