

# SAH Journal



The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

Issue 247 *Electronic* September-October 2010



**SAH President Susan Davis Drives a Stanley Mountain Wagon, page 2**

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## Date Reminders

**October 8, 2010**  
SAH Banquet  
Hershey Country Club, Hershey, PA



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<b>Susan S. Davis</b>	<b>President</b>
<b>J. Douglas Leighton</b>	<b>Vice President</b>
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Through October 2011

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**David M. Woodhouse**

**Darwyn H. Lumley, ex-officio**

Through October 2012

**Steve Wilson** **Leslie Kendall**

**Thomas S. Jakups**

## SAH Annual Awards

**Benz Award**, magazine article

**Bradley Award**, research institution

**Brigham Award**, magazine

**Cugnot Award**, English language book

**Cugnot Award**, Non-English book

**Friend of Automotive History**

**Ingersoll Award**, non-print media

**Scharchburg Award**, student paper

## SAH Journal

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**Christopher G. Foster**

**D. David Duricy, Donald J. Keefe**

**Steve Wilson, Allan Meyer**

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**Copy Deadline for Journal 248  
November 1, 2010**

## President's Message

These dog days of summer are anything but sleepy for SAH. Six months of soliciting, reviewing and vetting the many SAH awards come to a head with decisions, sometimes tough ones. Awards cover the best English and foreign language books of the year, the best article, the periodical of the year, the library to be honored, the Friend of Automotive History, and non-print media and student paper awards.

Shortly, I will be contacting the winners and inviting them to the Awards Banquet at Hershey. And much time will be spent preparing for other aspects of the fall meeting as well. All this while we squeeze the last bits of fun and activity from shorter and shorter days, harbingers of the long winter ahead.

For me, this means playing with steam cars any chance I get. My most recent adventure actually ties into *Allan Meyer's* recent article on trucks. Over three days ending August 1, at the Seal Cove Auto Museum near Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park here in Maine, I led a steam team to get a 1914 Stanley Mountain Wagon running for the first time in 44 years.

Stanley Mountain Wagons were built on a truck body, designed into a bus in 1907-08 by Freelan Oscar "F.O." Stanley. He used these 9- then 12-passenger buses to transport people from railheads at 5,000 feet on the plains of Colorado to the mountain town of Estes Park at 7,500 feet, where Stanley was building his now-iconic Stanley Hotel, best known today as the inspiration for Steven King's *The Shining*.

In addition to the truck body, F.O. used the 30 HP engine designed for the Rocket land speed record car of 1906-07. That engine has two 4 1/2-inch x 6 1/2-inch bore cylinders in a double-acting, simple (vs. compound) steam engine. Those two cylinders provide four power strokes; internal combustion needs an 8-cylinder

gasoline engine to deliver as much power. The Rocket Racer set a land speed record in January 1906 of 127.7 mph, a record that confounded internal combustion until 1910 when Barney Oldfield finally broke it in a Mercedes by four mph.

Tested by racing as it was, this engine was the obvious pick for Stanley's truck-turned-bus. It takes a lot of power to move such a large vehicle empty, let alone loaded with passengers and their luggage, and then to climb 2,500 vertical feet for twenty miles up dirt roads into the mountains. As this old restoration came alive, it felt like a giant awakening.

The last person to work on and drive this car, in 1966, was one of the Deans of Steam, Maynard Leighton of Winthrop, Maine. Maynard was my first teacher, making this especially meaningful for me. When I started the Stanley Museum in Kingfield, Maine, in 1981, Maynard brought one of his several Stanleys the 45 minutes from Winthrop to Kingfield to give rides to the Stanley family members there for the occasion. Maynard assented to teach me about these cars, so for the next two-and-a-half years, I spent one day a week from spring till it was too cold in the fall learning from Maynard, an education I still credit with my love for Stanley mechanics as well as Stanley driving.

But that's not my only truck story, the other one also involves a steam vehicle. Around 1990, I was privileged to fire—not drive, but fire—an S-6 British Sentinel tipper truck from Woodstock to Bennington, Vermont, for the annual Bennington Car Show. On that two-hundred-mile round trip, I shoveled 1,500 pounds of coal. The fireman had to watch steam pressure, providing coal and water alternately. Exhausting work!

Yes, I did look like a chimney sweep each day I fired. Notwithstanding, I count this high on my list of peak steam experiences. Getting Seal Cove's 1914 Mountain Wagon back under steam after a 44-year hiatus is my newest addition to that list! And both of them trucks! —Susan Davis

# Letters

## From Ed Benson

This may be of interest to you. As a former resident of Flint, Michigan, I was noodling around on the Internet and found a film called *Partners in Progress* produced as part of the General Motors 50th anniversary celebration in 1958. If you are interested in looking at it, here is the link:

<http://flinthistory.com/general-motors/general-motors-50th-anniversary-1958/>  
Scroll almost to the bottom of the page and click on the arrow. You will have 23 minutes of pure GM nostalgia. Enjoy!

## From Steven Rossi

Couldn't agree more with *Susan Davis'* message from #246: those who plan ahead may have the ability to enjoy smooth sailing, and those who don't may end up on a rocky road. And none of us are getting any younger!

Which is why we prepared a pamphlet in the Pierce-Arrow Society, *Parting With Your Pierce*. This small, self-help folder is being included in one of our routine mailings with the idea of helping members and their families prepare for the inevitable.  
[www.pierce-arrow.org](http://www.pierce-arrow.org)

## From Nelson Bolan

Here are my observations on the discussions in *Journals* 245 and 246, especially about the Cugnot. I, too, always heard that the Cugnot was intended as an artillery tractor, designed and built by Captain Cugnot of the French Army.

There are two reasons the Cugnot-type vehicle could not be practical with all the mechanism on the one front wheel. As built it must have been a real bear to steer. However, the two major automotive components yet to be invented explain why everything was on that one front wheel:

1. The differential, which allows the drive axle to apply power to each

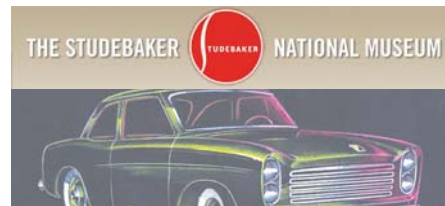
wheel at different speeds when making a turn. Both wheels receive power at the same time, but the one on the outside goes faster than one on the inside. On the Cugnot and, for that matter, every animal-drawn vehicle, none of the wheels are connected to any other wheel. On modern front-wheel-drive vehicles, the differential is in the front, on rear drive vehicles, it is in the rear, and on four wheel drive both front and rear (*with a third differential between the front and rear on some marques, such as Volkswagen and Audi.* -Ed.)

2. The component set of king pin, steering knuckle, spindle, tie rod and suspension had not yet been invented. On animal-drawn vehicles (*below*) the front axle and wheels



were always at a 90 degree angle to each other. There was a pivot or "fifth wheel" arrangement (*above*) attaching the center of the front axle to the floor or front frame, in the center of the vehicle being pulled. I am not aware of any pioneer automobile or horseless carriage being put on the market with the center pivot or fifth-wheel arrangement.

As soon as those two major components became available they were improved upon to where we are today, up to ball joints and torsion bars, etc.



## Via Robert Ebert

November 13, 2010 — June 20, 2011.  
The Studebaker National Museum, in conjunction with the League of Retired Automobile Designers, presents a look at what a modern-day Studebaker might look like. Over fifty works created by members of the League of Retired Automobile Designers will be shown in the Museum's AM General Atrium.

The League is a group of automotive design veterans from Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, AMC, Studebaker and Packard, and they are devoting their years of design experience and talents to present their interpretations of what a 21st century Studebaker would be. The exhibit is being coordinated by former Studebaker and Ford designer Virgil Exner, Jr.

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

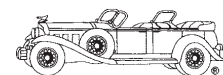
founded in 1952 to promote the preservation and restoration of distinctive motorcars built between 1925 and 1948.

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

CLASSIC CAR CLUB OF AMERICA



at either of the addresses below.  
1645 Des Plaines River Road, Suite 7  
Des Plaines, IL 60018-2206  
(847) 390-0443  
[www.ClassicCarClub.org](http://www.ClassicCarClub.org)



## Josef Sodomka, Jr.

During the inter-war period, Josef Sodomka, Jr. was able to transform his father's company into one of the best Czechoslovakian bodywork plants, and one which received great recognition even abroad. However, after World War II his talent and entrepreneurial spirit had no place in communist Czechoslovakia.

Josef Sodomka, Jr. was born in Vysoké Mýto to Josef and Katerina Sodomka. The senior Sodomka was from a village called Krouna near Pardubice. After his studies and work experience he labored in wheelwright companies not only in Trutnov, Jihlava and Prague, but also beyond the borders of former Austro-Hungary. His goal was to implement the knowledge and skills he had acquired in his own company. In 1895 he settled down in Vysoké Mýto. Thanks to his wife's resources he founded his own plant for carriages, wagons and sleighs.

Shortly after the birth of Josef Sodomka, Jr. the small trades company changed into the East-Czech locomotive carriage manufacturer "J. SODOMKA, Vys. Mýto." The years 1906 to 1913 were the most successful. The first world war, however, was a crisis for the company and brought a downturn in all its activities. After Josef senior returned from the Mladá Boleslav company Laurin and Klement, he trained his son as a wheelwright. Josef junior then furthered his knowledge at the school of carriage bodyworks in the Kašper Mountains from which he graduated in 1922. From 1923 to May 1925, Sodomka junior also worked at the Mladá Boleslav car factory, where he became acquainted with new trends in the design and production of car bodies. This acquired knowledge significantly influenced his orientation towards future production programs at his father's company.



### *Journey to the Top*

In June 1925, Sodomka junior returned to Vysoké Mýto. But he clashed with his father over operations of the stagnating firm. His father finally agreed to orient the company towards the design, construction and repair of car bodies. After finishing the first body of the Praga Mignon and a series of wooden frames for the body of the Praga Piccolo, the program started to develop well. From 1926, the company offered its products under the name Sodomka Body Plant Vys. Mýto. It's important to note that the design and construction of car bodies was under the immediate influence of Sodomka junior. The construction of car bodies used technological construction principles from the French company C.T. Weymann. Sodomka didn't focus only on body design and construction of personal vehicles, but also from 1928 on bus and utility vehicle bodies, mainly on Škoda, Praga and Walter chassis.

At the end of the Twenties there was an increase in demand for luxury convertible-type bodies. Sodomka responded to the demand and made new contacts with domestic vehicle manufacturers. Most important was experience he gained at the Dresden bodyworks Gläser, which was renowned for the construction of a folding mechanism on convertible



Above: 1937 Walter Junior. Bottom: 1939 Aero 50.

tops. In 1930, Sodomka designed his first convertible body type for a Tatra 30 chassis. In subsequent years his convertibles on Tatra, Praga, Walter, Jawa, Aero and many more on foreign chassis enjoyed success not only with Czechoslovakian customers.

After a property settlement in 1931, Sodomka junior became the sole owner of the company. This enabled him to further develop cooperation and projects. Thanks to his personal contacts with *Dr. V. Kabeš* from Aero, he began work a luxury body on an Aero chassis. It was to have avant-garde elements in the style of French companies Figoni & Falaschi from Boulogne-sur-Seine and Saoutchik. His work continued all the way to 1939 with the building of car bodies for Aero called "Dynamic."

Throughout the Thirties Sodomka, was successful in the areas of design and business. Under his leadership personal, utility and even bus bodies were built. Many of them were very bold designs but not all made it to production, for example the roadster body on the Rolls-Royce Phantom III chassis. Even so-called weekend caravans (camping trailers) for cars were being built and for a certain time there was also experimental production of gliders. New approaches and technologies were reflected in the construction of a



full-metal body on a Lancia personal vehicle or the new constructions of bus bodies. In the second half of the Thirties, Sodomka's bodyworks plant functioned over an area of 1922 square meters and had about 75 employees. At that time it belonged to one of the most important bodyworks companies in Czechoslovakia.

***A Bitter End to a Legend***

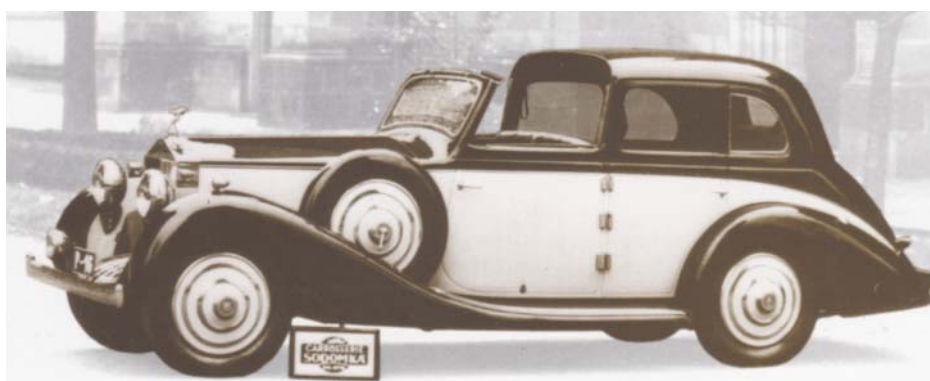
The establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia under German authority led to the suppression of many activities in Sodomka's bodyworks company, including the designing of personal car bodies. Yet, there was an increase in the numbers of bus, utility and even trailer body designs. The design and construction of a Maybach luxury armored limousine for the Slovak Republic president Dr. Jozef Tiso was a prestigious commission for Sodomka and his entire bodyworks company in Vysoké Mýto.

After 1945, Sodomka was, while still leading the bodyworks company interested in other projects — the design of a people's car, the establishment of a bodyworks school in Vysoké Mýto, and preparation of special exponents of the company for the XXVIII International Car Show in Paris in 1947. Sodomka's activities continued after the nationalization of his company in 1948, with new organization, the preparation of a convertible body on the Tatra T600 chassis and also other car bodies. This continued until November 1950 when he was arrested and charged with committing economic crime and preparing to emigrate. Although charges were later dropped he couldn't return to his original work. From 1953 he was employed at LIAZ in Mnichovo Hradiště as a constructor and test engineer, but he couldn't carry out independent creative work. After suffering physical and mental hardship, Josef Sodomka, Jr. died February 9, 1965, already forgotten by the public.

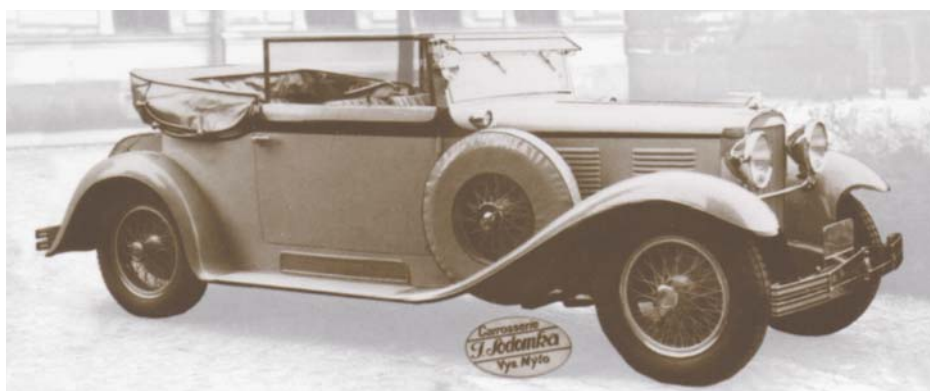
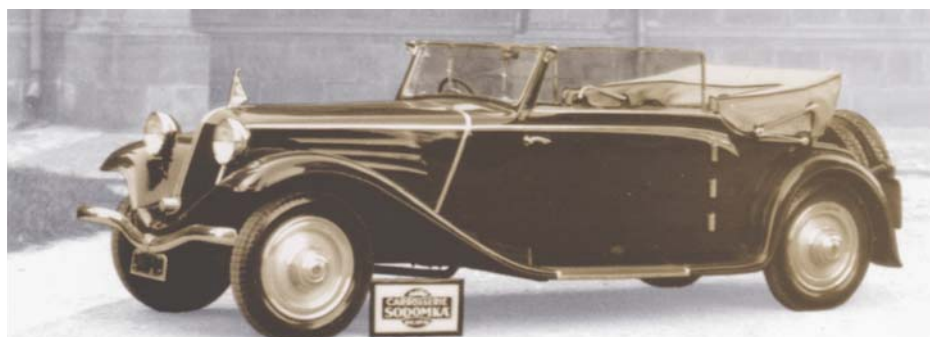
—Jan Tulis



Above: 1949 Tatra T600, later offered to Joseph Stalin. Below: 1934 Walter Regent.



Above: 1938 Rolls-Royce 20/25. Below: 1934 Tatra T34. Bottom: 1930 Walter 68. Factory images via Silueta.





# SAH Business

## ***Society of Automotive Historians Board of Directors Meeting***

March 24, 2010  
Tupelo, Mississippi

Present: *Susan Davis*, President, *Douglas Leighton*, Vice President, *Robert Ebert*, Secretary, *Patrick Bisson*, Treasurer, Directors as follows: *Judith Endelman*, *John Heitmann*, *Thomas Jakups*, *Paul Lashbrook*, *Darwyn Lumley*, *Stanton Lyman*, *John Marino*, *Steve Wilson*, *David Woodhouse*

Guests: *Christopher (Kit) Foster*, *Arthur Jones*

Absent: *Leslie Kendall*, Director

Meeting called to order at 9:07 AM by President Susan Davis.

President Davis called the roll and determined that a quorum was present. President Davis then presented certificates of appreciation to Arthur Jones, Past Secretary, and Darwyn Lumley, Past President.

Upon motion by Paul Lashbrook seconded by Douglas Leighton, the Minutes of the October 8, 2009 meeting in Hershey, Pennsylvania were approved. Upon motion by Thomas Jakups, seconded by Judith Endelman, the minutes of the electronic meeting of January 8-13, 2010 were approved.

Pres. Davis reported that a draft of an official policy on electronic meetings had been developed by Secretary Ebert. A draft of the policy is attached to these minutes and will become policy unless there is objection. There being none, the policy on electronic meetings will be as attached.

Sec. Ebert noted that in the upcoming review of the By-Laws that the possibility of Special Meetings held electronically needs to be inserted into the By-Laws in Article VIII, Section 2.

Pres. Davis presented the President's Report.

Kit Foster noted that in addition to the chapters listed in the President's Report, there are three other Chapters of the Society including *The Hoosier Chapter* (Indiana), *The Pioneer Chapter* (New England and New York and New Jersey area), and the *Wisconsin Chapter*.

***Treasurer's Report:*** Presented by Patrick Bisson.

Treas. Bisson noted that the budget approved at the Oct. 8, 2009 meeting projected a deficit of about \$12,000.

Projections at present are that added income for the year will bring in about \$20,000 and added expenses will be about \$33,000. The overall deficit for the year is projected at about \$13,000. However, with a current checking account balance of approximately \$25,000, it is expected that SAH will finish the year in a positive financial position.

A discussion was held on the use of credit cards for the payment of dues to the Society. While bank processing fees amount to about 17 percent of credit card revenues, by consent, the Board agreed that is a necessary expense to accommodate the Society's foreign membership, many of whom prefer to pay by credit card.

At this time, there was general agreement that a dues increase to \$50 should be considered to cover various costs including the costs of the publications. Treas. Bisson will file a change of address form with the Internal Revenue Service.

Treas. Bisson will file the necessary address change to start the paperwork

necessary to file Form 990 for 2009 with the Internal Revenue Service.

Upon motion by Doug Leighton, seconded by Paul Lashbrook, the Board approved the Treasurer's Report being filed for audit.

By consensus the Board wishes to extend its thanks to Treas. Bisson for his extra work on the Form 990 issue and to have such wishes reflected in the Minutes.

Stanton Lyman will consult with Kit Foster regarding procedures for proceeding with an audit.

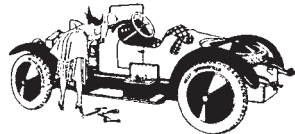
***Fund Raising Report:*** Pat Bisson reported the fund raising appeal went well with over \$7,000 netted for the Society. In discussion it was reported that the appeal was world-wide. The letter to the Europeans made a reference that gifts to the SAH were tax-deductible in the U.S. which caused a bit of embarrassment with the Europeans saying such information was irrelevant to them. It was decided that the wording of the solicitation letters in the future should be changed. Also, by consensus it was decided a thank-you message for the results of the appeal should be published in the *SAH Journal*.

***Membership Report:*** From Don Keefe. A general discussion of the report occurred. It is the consensus of the Board that development and publication of the new Roster should be expedited. President Davis will discuss the matter with Don Keefe. Discussion also occurred on the idea of having renewals be automatic. It was pointed out that a benefit of having members fill out the membership form each year is that data can be kept up-to-date.

**WANTED:  
AUTOMOBILE LITERATURE 1900-1975**

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e-mail: info@autolit.com



**Membership Committee:** Letters have been sent to former members who have not renewed in the past three years. About 200 letters were sent to the USA and Canada, but the response was only seven percent.

Because there is no uniform address for the Society, Pat Bisson's address, as Treasurer, is being used for normal membership renewals.

**Academic Committee:** John Heitmann reported that the SAH Session at the American Historical Association meetings in San Diego in January 2010 went well. Good papers were presented by some recent authors of automotive history including some younger authors. John Heitmann observed that automotive history is moving toward cultural history as well as of histories of autos.

The 2011 AHA meetings will be held in Boston in January 2011.

John Heitmann raised the question of whether the Society could provide a small stipend of \$200 to presenters at the AHA meetings coming from foreign countries to help them defray travel costs. After discussion, it was decided the possibility of a subsidy for foreign presenters of papers will be explored. John Heitmann will discuss with the AHA whether it has travel fees available.

## HORSELESS CARRIAGE GAZETTE

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

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

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

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

Horseless Carriage Club  
5709 Oak Ave  
Temple City, CA 91780-2431  
(888) 832-2374 or [www.hcca.org](http://www.hcca.org)

Stan Lyman said he will explore the possibility of having a tour of Racemaker Press for interested attendees at the 2011 AHA meetings.

**Archive Committee:** Kit Foster said his talk at the Conference on Saturday, March 27, 2010 will include discussion of what should be in a self-help brochure about disposition of a collection. The brochure will include material for those seeking to dispose of materials and information for those seeking to buy materials.

**Nominating Committee:** Darwyn Lumley reported that the term of three people is ending this year – Judith Endelman, Stanton Lyman, and Paul Lashbrook. All three have agreed to stand for re-election. Ballots should be in the July-August edition of the *Journal*. Darwyn Lumley mentioned that it will be important to the future of the Society to have some younger people start running for office to gain name recognition to eventually be elected to the Board.

**Awards Committee Reports:**  
Brigham Award: no report from *Leroy Cole*.

Cugnot Award (English language):  
Douglas Leighton reported that ten books to be reviewed have been received for 2010.

Cugnot Award (Foreign language):  
*Bill Kreiner* accepted the Chair of the committee. He reports that twelve books have been received for review in 2010. He has requested that a fourth judge proficient in Slavic languages be added to the committee. He also asked for consideration of increasing the number of awards because of the large number of entries. Pres. Davis suggested using Motormail as a means of soliciting people with Slavic language ability. It was also suggested that a notice be put in the *Journal*.

Benz Award: Don Keefe has sent word that he is soliciting articles for review. Other members of the committee present agreed to work with Keefe to solicit more articles.

Bradley Award: Judith Endelman reported the committee has been reconfigured with the addition of *Mark Patrick*, Manager of the Revs Institute for Automotive Research, being very pleased to be asked to be a member. *James Wagner*, past chair, has agreed to stay on the committee. A call has been put out for nominations.

Ingersoll Award: Arthur Jones reported that so far there have been no nominations for the non-print media award for 2009. Nominations are open to June 1, 2010.

Friend of Automotive History Award:  
Darwyn Lumley stated nominations are needed for this year.

Student Paper Award: Robert Ebert reported that letters and announcements of the Scharzburg Award for 2010 were sent in October 2009 to about 200 graduate schools with appropriate graduate programs. Follow-up e-mails were sent to academicians in SAH during February 2010. Deadline for submissions of student papers is June 10, 2010. John Heitmann will be assuming the Chair of the committee after this year.

After discussion it was decided that the awards should be listed in the *Journal* on a regular basis. Tom Jakups agreed to talk with the *Journal* editor, *Allan Meyer*, about this suggestion.

**Publications Committee:** Chair Tom Jakups reported that Editor Meyer is working to get the *Journal* on schedule, and appears now to have accomplished that goal.

Chair Jakups indicated it is important to reach out to the membership to contribute articles and information for the *Journal*.

Tom stated that the tradition of the President's Report in the *Journal* is an important one, and he recommends it continue. Kit Foster, editor of the *Automotive History Review*, reported that it is not on schedule.

The learning curve for editing the *Review* as a peer-reviewed journal is steep, despite his having done this before.

He is working on laying out the text of the journal himself which will save the Society a significant amount of money. In terms of formatting the *Review*, he wants to eliminate endnotes and move in the direction of the APA (American Psychological Association) format.

He observed that he does not have the large collection of illustration material that *Taylor Vinson* had and will have to rely on authors to provide appropriate illustrations.

*David Duricy's* report on the Web Site is attached. Tom Jakups presented the Web Site report.

In a general discussion, the Board agreed that the virtual world does not cover all things. The discussion also considered what is appropriate content for the SAH web site. It was agreed by consent that the web site needs updating. It also was pointed out that David Duricy and Don Keefe are facilitators of the web site from a technical standpoint. We have to provide the content.

After considerable discussion stimulated by a recommendation from Arthur Jones, Paul Lashbrook moved and John Marino seconded a motion to have an editor for AutoHistory.org. Further discussion ensued and it was agreed that an editor should create a partnership between the technical and content managers of the web site.

The motion being put and seconded, the vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. Thereupon, Pres. Davis appointed the Publications Committee to take up the development of a job description for the SAH web site editor and the search for a qualified volunteer to assume that role.

Discussion occurred on the possibility of paying for membership dues online. By consent it was agreed to consider PayPal for the online payment option. Pat Bisson will investigate the Pay Pal option.

Discussion occurred on having an online version of the *SAH Directory/Roster* available. The primary concern of the board is security for the information in the directory. By consent the Board stated that even if an online directory is established, there should always be a print copy available, even at an extra cost to members desiring a print copy.

**Silent Auction Report:** Leroy Cole has asked to be relieved of the responsibilities of the Silent Auction. Pat Bisson mentioned that Leroy Cole stated that Cora may have the Silent Auction finished by today, Wednesday, March 24, 2010. President Davis asked that the Board consider and offer suggestions for persons who would be willing to assume responsibility for the Silent Auction.

**NAAM/SAH Conference Report:** Arthur Jones and Judith Endelman presented the report. Because of delays incurred in some aspects of the conference, particularly with respect to development and mailing of the brochure, it is recommended that a conference manual be developed to guide future committees.

A very positive aspect of the 2010 Conference is that the local coordinators and supporters of the Conference have worked to keep costs low.

It was suggested that in the future, to attract presenters and speakers to the conference, the venues for the conference should be close to an air hub.

Registration for the Conference is 95 with 39 being SAH members. For previous Conference, attendance of

120 with 40 from SAH was considered normal. So, the decline in attendance is primarily a result of a decline in NAAM attendance which may be attributable to cuts in museum budgets.


Conference locations are a result of an automotive museum inviting the conference. NAAM is talking about soliciting invitations aggressively from museums.

The Board, by consent, commended Arthur Jones and Judith Endelman for their organizational efforts and planning of an excellent 2010 Conference.

### Chapters & Sections Report

Kit Foster and Patrick Bisson reported on the Leland chapter rejuvenation. Leroy Cole was instrumental in rejuvenating and reorganizing the chapter which met at the Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum and Miller Motors Hudson recently. *John Jos. Jendza (Top Hat John)* was elected Director and *Jim Petersen* was elected Associate Director.

David (Woody) Woodhouse submitted the attached report on the Southern California Chapter. The Southern California Chapter is publishing *The Historian*. The chapter has 149 members, however 45 are not members of the national SAH. Because the foundation of the chapter is motorsports, it is likely that many of the chapter members will join the SAH Motor Sports Section and will then will need to join the SAH. The Directors agreed by consent to the recommendation of Woody Woodhouse that we do nothing at the present time about the chapter's members who are not



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national members and wait to see what happens with the Motor Sports Section.

Discussion of the “quiet chapters” including the Wisconsin, Hoosier, and Pioneer (New England, New York, New Jersey) chapters. After discussion, Vice President Leighton was assigned the task of contacting these chapters to offer support and encourage activities.

Kit Foster reported on the British Chapter which has 150 members. It has semi-annual seminars, a quarterly newsletter, and an annual glossy publication entitled *Aspects of Motoring History*. It is a well-functioning chapter. It has evolved from being viewed as a group primarily interested in American cars into a chapter seriously interested in automotive history. Kit Foster was asked by the Directors and he consented to continuing as the primary liaison of SAH to the British Chapter because he understands its culture and travels there frequently.

At the request of SAHB Chairman *Malcolm Jeal* made to President Davis directly, discussion of the British Chapter was followed by a general discussion of whether SAH should have an SAH Ambassador-at-Large to coordinate with foreign chapters and members. Taylor Vinson had functioned in that role on an informal basis, but did it very well due to his multi-lingual capabilities and his diplomatic approach to matters. After an extensive discussion regarding attendance and cost at the Paris meeting during Retromobile,

the functions of foreign chapters, and the availability of someone who could serve as an Ambassador-at-Large, President Davis observed that at the present time the SAH is not in a position to appoint an Ambassador-at-Large, but that it is an ongoing concern. In the interim, on the advice of Kit Foster, it was decided that at the October meeting in Hershey the Board will need to find out who is going to the Paris meeting in 2011 and make appropriate arrangements for representation, presentations, etc.

International Motor Sports Section report from *Patricia Yongue* was read by Pres. Davis. By consent the Board wishes the minutes to express its appreciation for the excellent job Pat Yongue has done in stepping into a leadership position in the Motor Sports Section.

**Hershey Banquet Report:** John Marino reported that the Hershey Country Club charges us a 19 percent service charge and 6 percent tax making the added cost of a dinner for the annual meeting in October 25 percent over the menu price of the dinner. After discussion it was agreed that we should continue with the “German Buffet” dinner option to keep the cost of the dinner at a reasonable \$40 which will include tax and gratuity. As in the past, the financial part of the dinner will be handled by Treas. Bisson. Information on the Annual Meeting at Hershey will be in the July-August *Journal*. John Marino asked if it could also be included in the May-June issue.

**Hershey Tent Report:** Paul Lashbrook reported that this year we will have spaces through Pat Bisson. The expected spaces will be OBD 16-19. Paul Lashbrook is going to investigate the possibility of having a tent with transparent sides to improve visibility of the SAH and will investigate pricing for additional signage.

### Old Business

Pat Bisson reported he is trying to get former auto industry salaried people involved in SAH. He has given a talk to the Leland Chapter and will be talking to the Buick Salaried Retirees Club. The problem is that often auto industry

people are not interested in auto industry history. But, it is hoped to get people involved by asking them to tell their auto industry story as they lived it. Judy Endelman noted that the Ford Motor Company is interested in industry history, possibly because of the family’s continued involvement in the firm. She also reported that the rumor that Chrysler destroyed reports and records are absolutely false – they are being maintained electronically and there is a Chrysler archivist.

A Centennial Certificate was presented in honor of the Cole Company at the orphan car show in Michigan.


Kit Foster reported on the disposition of the Taylor Vinson Automotive Literature Collection. Pursuant to Taylor Vinson’s will, the Hagley Museum staff sorted through the materials, kept and removed what they wanted, and in the end, about 30 boxes of material are available for the SAH use in the Silent Auction. In discussions with Leroy Cole the possibility of having a separate Silent Auction for the items from the Taylor Vinson Collection is being considered. Art Jones offered to assist Kit Foster in sorting and cataloging the materials.

### New Business

Pres. Davis stated that the By-Laws need to be reviewed. After discussion, and upon motion duly made by Douglas Leighton, and seconded by Tom Jakups, that a Task Force be created, chaired by Paul Lashbrook, and consisting of the officers of the SAH, the Directors voted unanimously for approval. Paul Lashbrook asked that officers read the By-Laws and make recommendations for revisions to him by May 1, 2010.

Pres. Davis discussed briefly the issue of Long Range Planning and stated that will be a task for the Executive Committee.


Upon suggestion by Douglas Leighton, it was agreed by consent that the SAH should reimburse members of the Cugnot Committee for expenses incurred in shipping



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## SAH Business

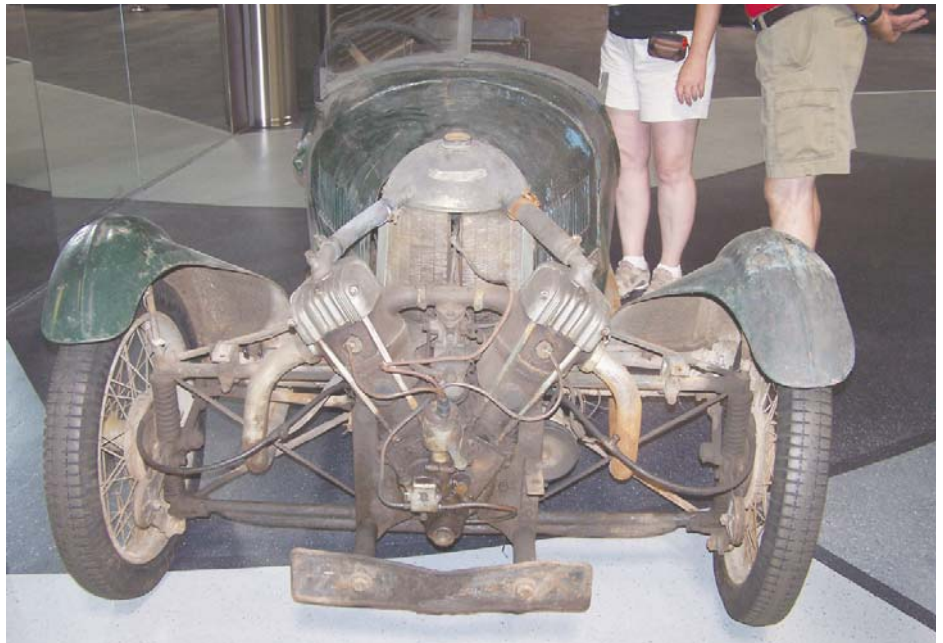
the books to each other when and if requested by members of the committee, as they often simply absorb those expenses personally.

Vice President Leighton invited the officers to London, Ontario for the Spring 2011 Directors Meeting. By consent, the invitation was accepted for the April 10-13, 2011 period.

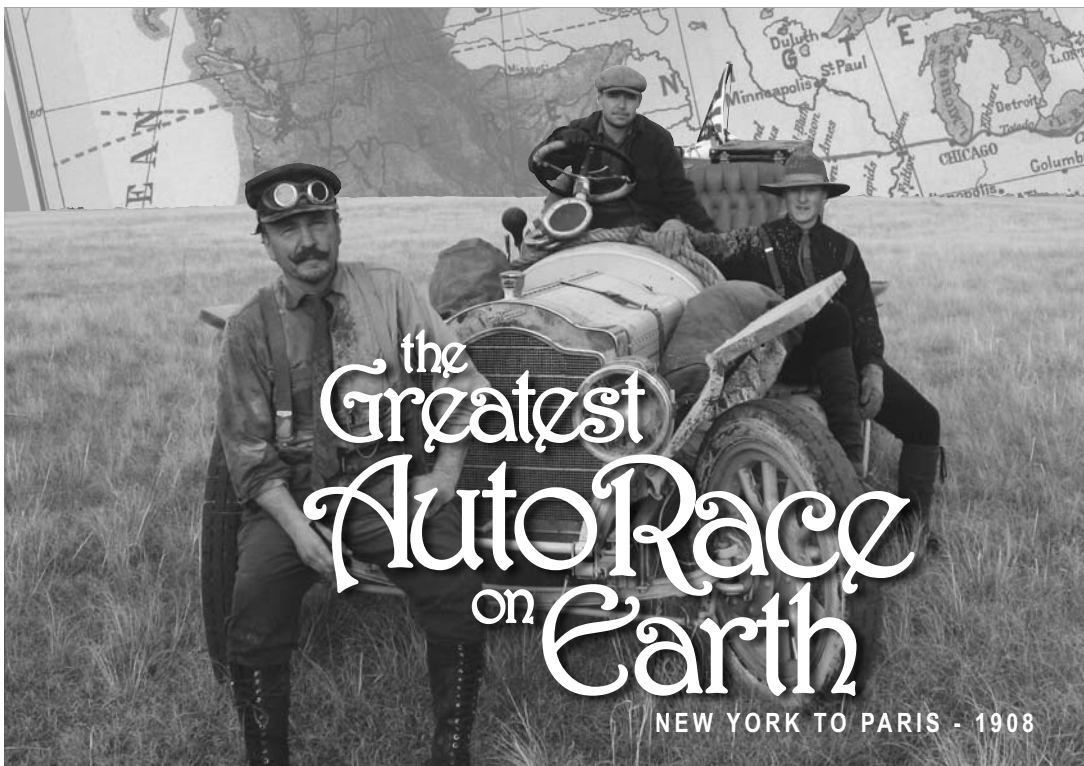
A general discussion was held regarding the use of the money from the Special Appeal. It was decided that listing activities and publications of the SAH and using the term "to fulfill its mission" should be sufficient explanation in future letters of appeal. Upon motion duly made by Douglas Leighton, the meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robert R. Ebert,  
Secretary

## What Is It?



**1930 Darmont Morgan Sport Aero Roadster.** Brothers Roger and André Darmont took over the distributorship of Morgan cars in France in 1919. By 1925, the brothers acquired a license to produce the Darmont Morgan. They introduced a racing version called the Darmont Special. This version became so popular that Darmont offered it to their clientele, equipping the cars with fenders and headlamps. Roger Darmont did his own body styling and built his own engines. By 1935 he created a four-wheeled vehicle.



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



# Book Reviews

## *Cord Complete*

By Josh B. Malks

Jericho Publications, 2009, 304 pages, 627 b/w & 99 color illustrations, 14" x 10" hardbound with hardside slipcase  
List Price: \$159  
ISBN-13: 978-0-615-28691-4  
www.cordcomplete.com

*Cord Complete* emulates the marque it chronicles in an ironic, yet unintended, way. As with the cars themselves, the book has enduring worth and value. Both are beautiful examples of their respective crafts. And each, bowing to financial constraints and the calendar, falls short of the desired perfection.

To be sure, none of the book's shortcomings are of a serious factual nature for the history has been researched and documented. The presentation is both clear and pleasing, but would have benefited from another thorough proofing, preferably from "fresh eyes" to catch typos, missing-but-intended referrals to other pages, and other similar oversights. This reviewer would have appreciated the inclusion of a bibliography, but with 304 pages already packed with information, along with the 626 black-and-white images and 99 color plates, it's an understandable omission, especially when one takes into consideration the specifics and detail contained in the 30 pages of appendices.

*Cord Complete* is an amplification of author, Cord scholar and owner *Josh Malks'* earlier book and, as he puts it, is "an expansion, an upgrade, a revision, a correction of all that was contained in *The Timeless Classic*. In its day *Timeless* was considered by others to be the best book on the Cord to that time. But ordinary. For *Cord Complete* I started with the notion of not only the best, most comprehensive book on the Cord ever, but also the most beautiful."

In order to achieve that "most beautiful" goal, Malks engaged the participation of two others, both design professionals. Cord owner/aficionado Robert Pease confirms he attended

classes at Art Center, though not to the point of fulfilling all requirements to graduate before embarking on his career, first with the McCann-Erickson ad agency's San Francisco office and eventually establishing his own independent agency. Pease provided overall art direction for the book while graphic design was handled by William Evans, who confesses that sailboats are his motive passion but working on the book has brought him to a deep appreciation and enthusiasm for Cord as well.

Between them Pease and Evans created especially pleasing pages, both as to appearance and lucid content organization. Sidebars offer material and images that enhance the main text. And footnotes are usefully placed on each page-pair wherever applicable thus saving the reader from having to flip to a section at the rear of the book, thence back to the main text. And there are subtleties that are fun to discover. As an example, a glance at the period photos of the Auburn, Indiana, showroom and you realize that it is that floor's pattern that decorates the hardside slipcase in which the book resides when not being read.

This reviewer in no way pretends to be expert in Cord history or lore to be able to judge the accuracy of the book. It is telling however to look at the list of names who were consulted for materials and/or comments.

Then too there are words written by Jonathan Richards, used here with his permission. As an acknowledged and knowledgeable Cord aficionado, Richards commended this book to me to read and review: "It is a very scholarly study of the industrial design and general history of the Cord Models 810/812. The thrust and aura of Malks' newest utterance is guided by his intense desire to be accurate and to provide the detailed evidence and documentation to support the information presented. That anyone could or would expend this colossal effort to write a book about a hastily designed and produced automobile, of which slightly fewer than 3,000 units were built in the two years of

production, is remarkable in itself. It is a labor of love."

Richards had gone on to perfectly describe the narrative found between the book's 14-inch-wide covers as I discovered after reading it for myself. As I can't improve on his description, that too is now shared with you: "It is an intense study of American industrial imagination and innovative automotive design (being done) at a time when the industry had barely recovered from the effects of the Great Depression. The design concepts and ideas had been developing for years in the minds of Gordon Buehrig, who designed the body, and Roy Faulkner, who as president of Auburn Automobile Company supported Buehrig's concept at a time of very tight finances for the company. Then too there were the resourceful minds of Auburn engineers Herbert C. Snow, who was responsible for the front wheel drive design, and Harry A. Weaver, who designed the transaxle. Each employee contributed his share with the result an automotive design concept, imperfect and deficient in many respects, yet advanced and ahead of its time."

*Cord Complete* completely captures and presents it all, clearly and in a most readable fashion, from the "bigger picture" of events in the surrounding world to the Cord-specific events and story. There are newly found and published images of Ab Jenkins running the Cords at the Indianapolis Speedway in 1937 as well as a chapter on other later-produced vehicles whose very design and existence were inspired by the Cord. Individuals particularly significant in preserving Cord lore as well as cars are acknowledged as well, and there are photos of owners with their Cords whose names and faces don't require a caption to identify them. Then there are the color plates of original artworks that feature Cord created by a variety of accomplished artists.

This is, in the estimation of this reviewer, one of those books that time will rightly judge and determine is the seminal work on its topic.

—Helen Hutchings



# Book Reviews

## *The Detroit Electric Scheme*

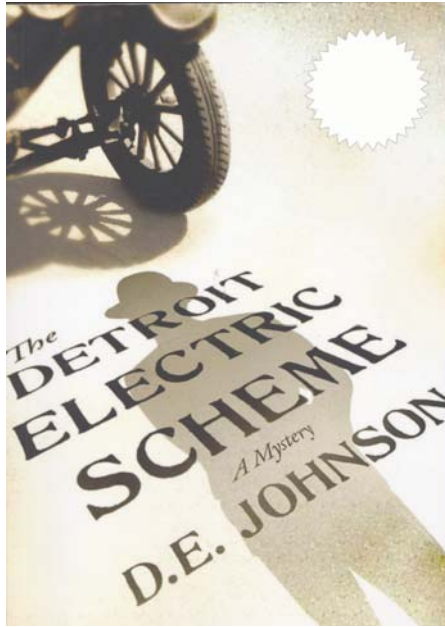
By D.E. Johnson  
Minotaur Books, New York, First  
Edition: December 2010, 310 pages.  
ISBN 978-0-312-64456-7, \$24.99

I was very pleased to be given the opportunity to review this book. Like many of you I have been known to watch a film simply to see a rumored automobile sequence that might only last 15 seconds and being an avid reader this book proved to be much more than the literary equivalent. This proved to be the first such book that was interesting since one of the “Monsieur Pamplemousse” books by Michael Bond in which a Citroën 2CV provides entertainment as well as transport.

*The Detroit Electric Scheme* is a classic gothic murder mystery. The author has taken the pains to write the text, and even the title, as it would have been written in 1910, bringing to mind the moralistic “Auto Boys” books for teenage boys from about 1903, with some vocabulary that is now out of common usage, and with a near singular use of vulgar exclamations. However, this is not to say that portions of the book are not uncomfortably graphic, as some certainly are.

The automobile, industrial competition, intrigue, deceit, labor unions, bribery, coercion, murder, alcoholism, smoking, sex, drugs, prostitution, fashion, morality, integrity, loyalty, responsibility, retribution, fate, and of course the Mafia all have a role to play and a point to make in this mystery. The action plays out like a Greek tragedy with the inevitable truths and fate guiding the characters to their unavoidable ends. This is the kind of book where you know and understand the characters and can feel for them, but really never develop empathy with them.

An interesting twist with this mystery is doing all of this storytelling with real historically accurate people as



the major characters. The actions of these figures are fictional but care was taken to keep them consistent with what is known about their lives and habits. The bulk of the characters were real people and the book starts with a plausible situation and lets the characters run with it. The supporting characters include historical and automotive figures such as the Andersons of Anderson Electric, later named Detroit Electric, Edsel Ford, the Dodge brothers, etc.,. The story contains a splattering of references to Thomas Edison, his new electric battery and his campaign to demonstrate the dangers of AC power in order to promote his patented DC power system.

One odd thing that stood out in the book was that as every new character is introduced or returns to the action, there follows a detailed paragraph on the character's attire. For both the men and women this is all described as would be expected with discussion of period clothing items and contemporary fashion sense.

As for the automobiles, the major player is of course the Detroit Electric, in 1910 still “Anderson Electric.” However both Oldsmobile and Ford automobiles have their roles as does the competition from Baker Electric. Many details of the body styles and operation of the Detroit Electric are given and these are well integrated

into the plot line. Without a Detroit Electric at hand I can only say these sections are very believable.

Critical to the plot is the Detroit Electric factory itself. Specific areas relevant to the plot include the metal shop, battery room, offices, parking garage, security operations, and various protocols. A large hydraulically operated metal press is described that is used to stamp the one-piece aluminum roof panels. As best as I can determine, without an enclosed Detroit Electric from 1910 to inspect, Detroit Electrics of this period, in fact, most cars of the period, did not have metal roofs and aluminum being a soft metal would not require a large press. My attempts to verify one way or the other if aluminum roofs were being used on Detroit Electrics in 1910 lean toward a “no” based on discussions with friend who is a fan of the early electrics, but I was unable to come up with anything in print or photos that was definitive. Most photographs from the period were taken from below the level of the roof and this it is not visible.

The emerging city of Detroit itself also plays a role. The early development of the city, the street-car system, new housing tracts, ethnic neighborhoods, entertainment palaces, bars, restaurants, various industrial parks, and the emerging downtown provide both a varied background for the action as well as for a Sunday drive. Here again, care has been taken to describe these as they were in 1910.

This book is perfect for the car enthusiast who is also an avid reader. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in the automobiles or society of the early 1900s. All of the details that I was able to research were accurately portrayed, including such details as the music being played in the bars. The “advance uncorrected proof” provided for this review contained few, if any, errors. However, the binding on this paper-back copy did not fare well. In the first reading pages simply came out in my hand as they were turned. Presumably this will not be the case with the first printing, which will be hardback. —L.G.H. Sarmanian

## Miller - Meteor: The Complete Illustrated History

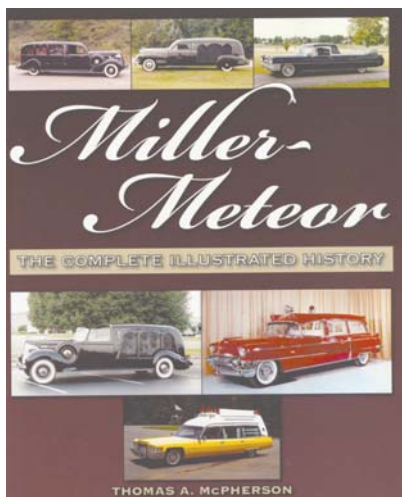
By Thomas A. McPherson  
Published by Iconografix, 2010.  
ISBN: 978-1-58388-258-0  
334 pages, \$79.95.

American attitudes on death and funerals have changed over the last one hundred years. During the Civil War undertakers started to embalm bodies so they could be sent home. This was mostly done for officers as it was expensive to do this. As the 19th century progressed embalming became much more common allowing for more elaborate funerals even for the middle classes.

At the the beginning of the 20th century funerals were more elaborate, with great attention paid to all the details of a "proper" display, both to honor the deceased and uphold family honor. The gangster funerals of the 1920s are a case in point. It should also be noted that for most people their only ride in a limousine would be attending a funeral, and for many others their only ride in a custom would be in a funeral coach. The result was that funerals and attached products and services were big business. A large part of these funerals were the funeral coach, limousines, and flower-cars. These, even in their simplest forms, were elaborate with some truly over the top. These were true bespoke custom bodies, modified to the individual requirements of the funeral homes which ordered them.

Today in the new millennium people are opting either for very simple funerals, or none at all, with the corresponding rise in cremations with no cemetery burial. The result being the evaporation of the market for fine, unique coachbuilt funeral equipment.

What little "custom" work being done today is in effect a modification of standard sedans as no manufacturer is supplying specialized commercial chassis. The wonderful ambulances supplied by these companies have also been replaced by more mundane, albeit practical trucks and vans.

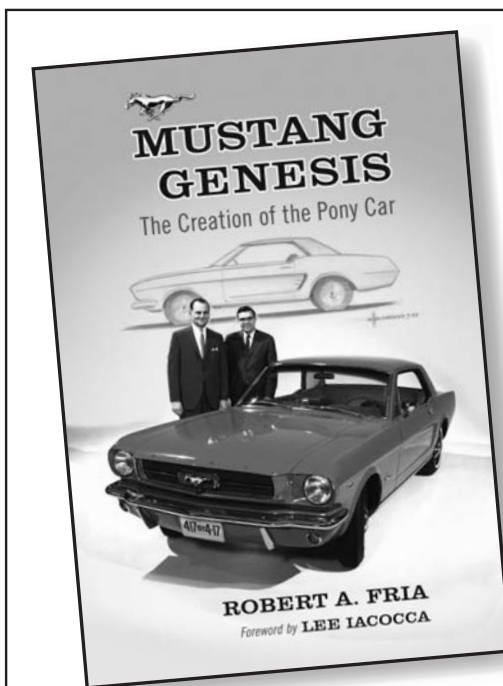


In the last century, a really top end undertaking establishment wanted to have the latest chassis and designs for their customers and ordered every several years. The result was that many of these coaches were destroyed, after all who wants an old funeral coach?

Fortunately, in the last years of the 20th century collectors have emerged who appreciate these coachbuilt masterpieces, and are saving and collecting them, often with a bit of humor. Mr Thomas A. McPherson has now written a book on two of

the best of the early builders, the Meteor Motor Car Company and the A.J. Miller company. They were later merged into the Miller Meteor division of the Wayne Corporation, after its acquisition of the two companies in the 1950s. The book begins with a wonderful history of the Meteor motor company and its various ventures, followed by an equally comprehensive history of the A.J. Miller company. It covers fully the products, of both companies and is wonderfully illustrated with photos and charts. It covers not only funeral equipment but also the important ambulance business as well. There are price lists by year and, and a nice section at the end of the book with color photographs. the reproduction of which is good but not exceptional. This is only a minor criticism as there inclusion is noteworthy and helps bring to life these extraordinary vehicles.

It is a fine book. Mr. McPherson's writing is fluid and a real pleasure to read. The book is well worth shelf space in any library that has an appreciation of fine coach built vehicles. —Greg Nolan



This is the story of how a clandestine group of Ford marketers, designers, stylists and executives created one of the most successful car designs of the twentieth century. Based on extensive research and interviews with Mustang team members, including Iacocca, management and factory employees, this history traces the Mustang through every stage of development from initial concept to the start of production, correcting some popular misconceptions in the process.

208 pages \$45 hardcover (7 × 10)  
137 photos (17 in color),  
bibliography, index  
ISBN 978-0-7864-5840-0 2010



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# Editorial

## Editor's Query

Several people have expressed the idea that contemporary car design is insipid, which leads them to find no interest in newer cars. Do you think there has been one "Golden Age," or several, in automotive design? What factors do you think contribute to the bland nature of today's car designs?

## Museum Piece

Museums are essential to our activities as historians. We can study the photos, the technical specifications, the advertising, the parts and repair manuals, the eyewitness histories, but eventually we have to see an actual car. Museums generally have similar missions, to provide a learning opportunity.

Some establishments, like The Henry Ford, go beyond the regular definition of a museum to become more like an institution. Other museums are small or medium-sized private collections which are occasionally open to the public. Perhaps these establishments are motivated by tax laws as well as an educational mission, but for historians the result is the same, access to the cars and information. A few examples out of hundreds around the world:

**The Nethercutt Museum**, located in Sylmar, California. This collection of 250 vehicles, pictured in 2001, features the Duesenberg Twenty Grand in addition to several steam-powered vehicles such as a Doble roadster. The Doble is shown alongside a cut-away display chassis which reveals the inner workings of the boiler, cylinders and integral gearbox. The collection also includes a Canadian Pacific Royal Hudson locomotive and dozens of examples of automated musical instruments.

**Tatra Technical Museum**, located in Kopřivnice, Czech Republic. The museum is located in the heart of Tatra's hometown, next door to the "Hotel Tatra." The vehicles range



Duesenberg Twenty Grand in the Nethercutt



1901 Toledo steamer, Nethercutt



1914 Rauch & Lang electric brougham



Doble burner and boiler, in the Nethercutt



Doble motive power unit with integral gearbox



Tatra scale development models for new vehicle designs. Tatra had to work with very limited resources.



Tatra V570. This experimental car was Tatra's version of a small, economical car.



Tatra 601 Monte Carlo. This 1949 experimental car featured a two-door body.



Tatra 603 Ambulance, proposal. This vehicle as well as the 603 X represented Tatra's efforts to update the 603 styling in the 1960s.



Tatra 613 V6 engine. This engine was simplified compared to the production air-cooled V8 powerplant. This version proposed single overhead camshafts per bank rather than the standard double overhead cams.



from a replica of the Nesseldorfer Präsident to the last Tatra 700-series passenger cars. The museum has dozens of examples of Tatra air-cooled engines for cars, trucks, and aviation. A unexpected treat is display cases full of sketches and scale model mock-ups from the styling department showing how the company developed new vehicles. The museum also features a Tatra-designed aerodynamic railcar set, at the entrance.

**Mullin Automotive Museum**, in Oxnard, California. This must be the largest concentration of Bugatti automobiles in the country, if not North America. The location was formerly owned by Otis Chandler to house his personal vehicle collection, and the building has been extensively remodelled since Peter Mullin acquired it in 2006. The Mullin also features a sub-collection called the Schlumpf Malmerspach Reserve. The museum has a display of Style Moderne, or “Art Deco” glass and art objects as well as furniture. Vehicles represent both artistic and technical achievements, with several racing cars including the Voisin Laboratoire and a front-wheel-drive 1927 Cooper-Miller racer.

**Toyota USA Automobile Museum**, in Torrance, California. The Toyota Museum in Japan offers one of the most comprehensive overviews of Japanese automotive history. The Toyota USA museum covers the history of Toyota in this country from 1957 on. Local Toyota history is of interest because of Caltex Research Design, Inc, in Newport Beach, California, which among other things designed the second-generation Celica series for 1978.

—A. Meyer



1922 Bugatti T23 Bresica



1922 Hispano-Suiza H6B, body by Labourdette



1927 Bugatti T40 in the Schlumpf Malmerspach Reserve.



1994 Bugatti EB110 SS



Voisin C6 Laboratoire racer. Created for the 1923 French Grand Prix.



Toyopet Crown and Tiara



Toyota Land Cruiser, Stout, and Hi-Lux pickups

One example of the Toyota 2000 GT in the museum. All images from editor's collection.



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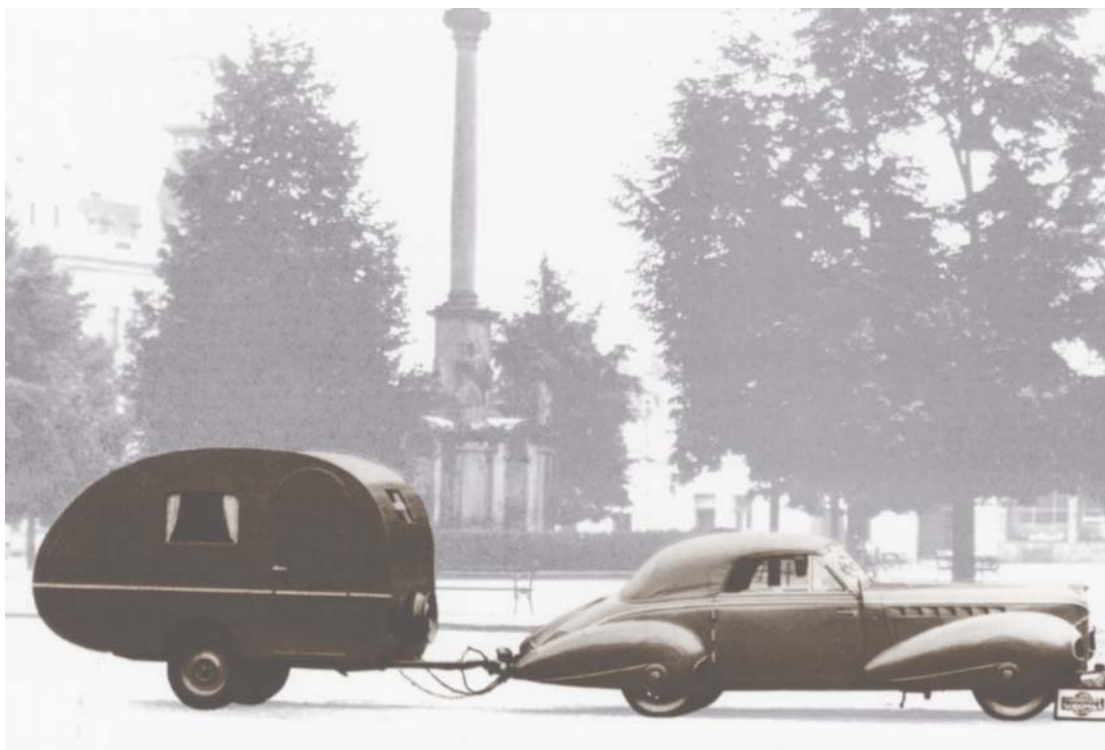
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## Josef Sodomka, Jr.

See page 4.



*1940 Aero 50, above. Convertible body on Aero chassis and the "weekend caravan" both constructed by Czech coachbuilder Sodomka of Vysoké Mýto. Factory images via Silueta.*