

The NORCAL CLASSIC OVERVIEW



JULY-AUGUST, 2011

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Upcoming events (see our calendar on page 3)
JULY 10—Mt. Hamilton Tour & Lunch



Franklin "Airman" 1928 Model 12B Standard Coupé
Owned by Donn Tatum
(see story on page 4)

GOODGUYS

Concours d'Elegance

June 4-5, 2011—Report and photos by Lynn Kissel



Steve Witort resting on the running board of his 1931 Cadillac

The Goodguys Rod & Custom Association represents auto enthusiasts of a different bent than those with which readers of this newsletter normally associate. In spite of the apparent differences, there are threads of common interest that run through all variations of the hobby. There are many techniques and skills that cross over, common interest in legislative actions that impact us, components and suppliers that serve multiple purposes. Owners of custom cars are often quick to appreciate original, unmodified autos. Owners of unmodified cars are not completely pure and often make changes to their autos for improved safety and performance even though they may be subtle and hidden. Instead of being polar opposites, they are points on a continuum. Both are variations on a theme that are richer through a better understanding of the activities of the other.

For a second year, Goodguys made a special effort to reach out to the larger collector car

community and should be commended for their actions. They solicited exhibition of unmodified and classic cars in a Concours d'Elegance at their 18th Summer Get-Together, at the Alameda County Fair Grounds in Pleasanton.

In addition to the Bay Area Horseless Carriage Club (BAHCC, with which I participate with Annie, our 1914 KisselKar Touring) and the NorCal Region of the Classic Car Club of America (NorCal CCCA, with which I participate with Bugsby, our 1924 Kissel "Gold Bug" Speedster), I recognized cars and owners from several other area car clubs such as the Packard Club and the Cadillac-LaSalle Club. This special concours was not judged and limited to 50 cars.

For those of you who have never attended a Goodguys show, you would not fail to be impressed by the large and youthful crowds that they typically draw (weather



Bob McKee's 1935 Packard

Goodguys Concours d'Elegance, June 4-5, 2011



Bob Pease's 1936 Cord

permitting). Many of us can point to a particular past event, often as a young person, that planted the seed that grew and blossomed to our current interest in old cars. This special concours was a rare opportunity for us to help plant that seed in a new generation of collectors. Our involvement is an act of enlightened self interest and an investment in the future of our hobby. Seven cars from NorCal CCCA signed up (four cars found their way to the show floor).

To enhance the educational opportunity, an 8.5"x11" informational placard was created for each car. The poster for each car was different, but all displayed the year/make/model of the car, car owners name and city, and a picture related to the car. A couple of paragraphs of text briefly overviewed some information about the car, the owner, the marque or some bit of related automotive history. It's been my experience that many spectators are more likely to stop and read this kind of information than to initiate a conversation with the owner. After the written "introduction" to the car and some common points of reference, it is easier to "break the ice" with follow-up questions that can lead to a meaningful dialog.

In fact, I think all collector cars should have some kind of informational placard or window sign displayed whenever the car is viewable by the public. This is a low-cost, high-impact way to help others identify and appreciate our vehicles. (If you're prose challenged, do a Google search on your year and

make, or do a search in Wikipedia. You'd be amazed at the relevant information you'll find.)

To hold the placards, small acrylic sign holders are purchased and stands are fabricated from PVC pipe. I received some financial support for this effort from both the BAHCC and NorCal CCCA, but also spent additional personal funds to realize this vision.

The cars (from oldest to newest) and owners that sign up for the show from NorCal CCCA were:

- 1924 Kissel "Gold Bug" Speedster—Lynn & Jeanne Kissel
- 1931 Cadillac V12 Roadster—Steve & Janet Witort
- 1935 Packard Phaeton—Bob & Mary McKee
- 1936 Cord Westchester—Bob & Lorraine Pease
- 1946 Lincoln Continental Coupe—Peter & Robin Frazier
- 1947 Cadillac Club Coupe—Ed Gunther

On the face of it, this two-day weekend show was a disaster. Rain was forecast for the entire weekend and steady rain falls for most of Saturday. The resulting crowds were a small fraction (1/6th? 1/10th?) of what one normally finds at the show. Only about 1/4 or less of the expected vendors showed up for the swap meet and the huge swap space was largely empty.



Lynn Kissel's 1924 Kissel

Goodguys Concours d'Elegance, June 4-5, 2011



Rita Hayworth with a Lincoln Continental

1946 Lincoln

Continental, V12 Coupe

Owned by Peter Frazier
Lafayette, California



The Continental was introduced in 1940, just prior to the onset of World War II. The design was modern, elegant, and slightly European with a long front bonnet that gracefully concealed a potent 130-hp V-12 engine. On the inside, they were lavishly appointed; on the outside, there was little trim or chrome to keep the car simple.

Located in the rear of the vehicle was a covered spare tire. This came as an afterthought as the designers noticed there was little room for a spare, so they covered it and incorporated it into the vehicle's trunk. This would become a signature of the Continental series.

1940 Zephyr becomes the basis for the original Lincoln Continental - a car Frank Lloyd Wright declared to be the most beautiful in the world. It also was the first vehicle honored for design excellence by the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Lincoln was founded in 1917 by Henry M. Leland. One of the founders of Cadillac, he left the Cadillac Division of General Motors during World War I and formed the Lincoln Motor Company to build Liberty aircraft engines. After the war, Lincoln encountered severe financial troubles and was bought by Ford Motor Company in 1922.

uting literature and information.

I was particularly gratified to see owner's interaction with many young visitors. Amongst the horseless carriages, I saw one owner repeatedly propping young people in the front seat of her vehicle. Now that's the kind of experience that's going to leave a lasting impression! Way to go, girl!

She wasn't the only owner that engaged visitors with energy and enthusiasm. Steve Witort spent hours with people who were interested in his car, suited in his cleaning apron, talking passionately on the merits of his 1931 V12 Cadillac.

Bob Pease was an active spokesperson for *Cord Complete*, a fabulous book on the 1936/37 Cord 810/812s for which he provided the art direction. He shared his considerable insight with people who stopped to look at his beautiful blue 1936 Cord sedan.

All participants at the Goodguys Concours received an award of excellence; while some cars received special recognition, such as a "class act" award. The Witorts received a "Rockstar" award for their Cadillac and the Kissels received a "Class Act" award for their Gold Bug.

Typical of the information placards is this one prepared for Peter Frazier's 1946 Lincoln.

Sunday was better but not good. The sun was occasionally seen between clouds and the rain held off in the morning and more people are seen at the show. But many of the vendors did not come and the crowds were thin.

Still the weekend was filled with many bright moments. The concours was held inside a building and our cars were high and dry. Many of the people that do attend were channeled into the buildings increasing our contact with them.

People stopped to read the informational placards and ask questions. The concours car owners were great spokespersons, engaging with the crowd in animated discussions. Tables were setup for each club distrib-

During the week after the show, I received a letter from the Goodguys, thanking us for our participation. They stated that "our 2nd Concours d'Elegance (was) the best display of cars that Goodguys has ever promoted." Although the weather didn't cooperate, the concours "was the hit of the event."

Indeed, it was a memorable weekend and I will long remember my involvement at the Goodguys Concours d'Elegance. Did the event succeed in planting any seeds in future collectors of horseless carriages or classic cars? We may never know. But I do know that we need to keep trying.