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Classic Cars

Calling Owners of 1949-1958 Pontiacs

Long overshadowed by their more popular siblings from Chevrolet, the highly distinguished Pontiac models from 1949 to 1958 were equally handsome but with a higher level of interior appointments and finer trim throughout. However, finding information about them can be difficult.

If you either own or are restoring a Chieftain, Streamliner, Catalina, Star Chief or Bonneville that was produced during these years, then you need to join the 1949-1958 Pontiac Owners eGroup. It's an Internet group that shares information on where to get hard-to-find parts and services, as well as providing technical assistance.

So whatever help you need, send your e-mail request to: pontiac-1950s-subscribe@yahogroups.com

- By Richard Lentinello



Owners of fine automobiles like this 1950 Pontiac: You are not alone.

Muscle Cars

Informal Goat Gathering, August 13

Live too far from St. Louis and didn't want to deal with the incredible heat they had out there for the GTOAA Nationals in late June and early July?

Well, if you live in northern Virginia and don't want to deal with the unbelievable traffic around the Capital Beltway leading to Washington D.C., but can still deal with the heat, then on August 13, you can take your GTO to the TGI Friday's in Manassas, Virginia, beginning about 4:00 p.m.

The event's organizer Keith McDonald said this is the first meeting of his new Northern Virginia GTO (NoVa GTO) Owners Club. After a short meet and greet, the gaggle of goats will cruise to a huge cruise-in at the Manassas Burger King.

So far, more than a dozen GTOs will be shown. For more information, drop an e-mail to NOVA_GTO@yahoo.com

- By George Mattar



The Northern Virginia GTO Club will hold its inaugural event on August 13. All Goats are invited.

Sports Cars

Lotus Offers Loyalists a Glimpse at the Exige
You can't buy one in the United States -- at least,

not yet -- but Lotus will be showing off its Exige, a coupe based on the Elise platform, at the annual gathering of Lotus aficionados at the 25th Annual Lotus Owners Gathering in St. Louis, Missouri, on August 27-29.



Lotus loyalists will get a glimpse at the Exige coupe this month. The Elise-based machine isn't available in the U.S. yet.

Group Lotus CEO Kim Ogaard-Nielsen will be making a special trip to the United States to offer club members an exclusive sneak-peek at the car. The Exige, a coupe based on the Elise platform, is widely expected to go on sale here in the fall, with a price in the low- to mid-\$50,000 range.

The Exige, unveiled at the Geneva Motorshow in March 2004, has just recently passed its federally required crash testing, and has been undergoing extreme climate testing on U.S. soil.

This will be the second model spun off the Elise, following the circuit car announced earlier this year.

- By David LaChance

Street Rods and Hot Rods

Rods Set to Shake the Salt at 2005 Speedweek Racers have already hit the road for what many consider to be the last bastion of true hot rodding left--the Southern California Timing Association's Bonneville Speedweek.

Officially, the week lasts from August 13-19 at the Bonneville Salt Flats outside of Wendover, Utah. As of this writing, 307 cars and 71 bikes from 39 states and five countries have registered.



Despite a good amount of rain and snow in the region, salt conditions reportedly remain good, perhaps the best racers have seen in years.

Expect to see all sorts of hot rods in the pits, in the parking areas and as push vehicles, but the racing will take center stage.

Tech starts Friday morning, then racing begins Saturday at about noon.

Record return runs will begin at 7:00 a.m. Sunday and run through Thursday. Expect racing results on the SCTA's website www.sctabni.org or on www.landracing.com.

And as in the last few years, General Motors will field several entries at Speedweek pushing the performance capabilities of the company's Ecotec four-cylinder engine. A 2006 HHR, modified with a turbocharged and intercooled 2.0-liter Ecotec, will join GM's 179.381 mph (officially; 184.135 mph unofficially) supercharged Ecotec Lakester and the 243.127 mph-tested supercharged Cobalt SS. So-Cal Speed Shop worked with General Motors to prepare all three entries.

- By Daniel Strohl

Trucks

Pay the Fare and Hop Aboard

How diverse is this hobby? There are clubs for people who are into everything from milk trucks to microcars to three-wheeled Morgans. There's also a well-established club that celebrates vehicles frequently used by people who don't even own a car. It's the Motor Bus Society, preparing to celebrate its 54th year by hosting its 2005 annual convention in Philadelphia, October 8-10.

Based in Paramus, New Jersey, the Motor Bus Society consists of some 890 bus enthusiasts from the U.S., Canada and a dozen other nations. U.S. dues are \$35 annually, and the society publishes two magazines, *Motor Coach Age* and *Motor Coach Today*.

Details of the Philadelphia convention are still being finalized, so check the society's website at www.motorbussociety.org, or send an e-mail to membership@motorbussociety.org, and be sure to tell them Hemmings sent you. The Web site, incidentally, includes a ton of neat bus links.

- By Jim Donnelly

Exotic Cars

California's Own Exotic

Henrik Fisker and Bernhard Koehler left Ford's Global Advanced Design Studio to form their own company, Fisker Coachbuild, and they're planning to out-Aston Aston-Martin with the 2006 Fisker Tramonto.



The Fisker Tramonto will be built in California and will boast a 200-mph top speed.

The Tramonto, a handsome DB9-like convertible, is said to deliver 610hp, a 3.6-second 0-60 time and a 200-plus-mph top speed. Production of this exclusive California-assembled car will be limited to 150 units, and it will debut at September's Frankfurt auto show.

For more information, visit www.fiskercb.com.

- By Mark McCourt

Legislation

Black Box Law Crashes

Montana's HB 322, the so-called "black box law," is dead.

Representative Roger Koopman's bill would have regulated the types of data obtained by car-based event data recorders and circumstances under which it could be collected and transmitted. However, it missed the deadline for financing in this year's session.

Similar in concept to those found in all commercial aircraft, event data recorders and crash data retrieval systems are being developed primarily to aid in accident reconstruction, although their critics fear they could also be used to gather information that would infringe on motorists' civil liberties. The National Transportation Safety Board and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration currently recommend that once standards for event data recorders are developed, their installation should be required in all newly manufactured light-duty vehicles.

HB 322 would also have prevented the sale of automotive black boxes that

could not be deactivated.

- By David B. Traver Adolphus

Motorcycles

Classic Bike Auction Scheduled in L.A.

Bonhams and Butterfields has announced that it will be holding its third annual Los Angeles Sale of Collectors' Motorcycles and Related Memorabilia at the Petersen Automotive Museum. The auction will be held in conjunction with the 22nd annual "Love Ride," which is alleged to be the largest single-day motorcycle event in the world.

The auction and the ride will be held November 12, 2005, at the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles. Bonhams and Butterfields has announced a few of the motorcycles on the block, including:

A 1937 Brough Superior SS-100, said to be a "lovely older restoration," displaying the frame and engine numbers found on the original Works Record Card.

A 1956 Norton Featherbed International, a racing model which dominated the World Championship scene in the early 1950s, essentially reinvented the Norton Brand following World War II. This '56 Norton recently underwent a complete restoration.

A 1936 Norton Racing Model 30 International, which was Norton's most successful racer in the years between 1931 and 1938, when the manufacturer won all but two Senior and Junior TT races. These motorcycles were intended for racing, but were sold to the general public in road trim until 1939.

For more information on attending, or consigning a motorcycle at the auction, contact Mark Osborne at Bonhams and Butterfields at 415-503-3353, or mark.osborne@bonhams.com.

- By Craig Fitzgerald



Bonhams and Butterfields will conduct its third annual Los Angeles Sale of Collectors' Motorcycles and Related Memorabilia, November 12 at the Petersen Museum.

Vintage Racing

Banshee Brethren Stirs Baja Memories

This ad for an Oldsmobile 4-4-2 Baja race car on page 564 of the August issue of *Hemmings Motor News* grabbed the attention of your humble Hemmings e-Weekly Vintage Racing reporter and refuses to let go:

1968 Oldsmobile 4-4-2 Baja 1000 race car, car is 100 percent complete as raced, less engine and trans, orig super rare Spyder motor, wheels, full instrumentation, Vic Hickey cage, etc, needs rest, will be the coolest historical race car or show car when finished, \$3,500. PH: 805-466-1015, CA.

Though it's unclear why the owner bothers to list the original super-rare



The Banshee, a mid-engine, all-fiberglass Olds Cutlass, made a splash in off-road racing with actor James Garner behind the wheel.

photo courtesy www.442.com

Spyder motor in a car that's "less engine and transmission," I have to agree that it would be the coolest historical race car or show car when finished. Vintage Baja enthusiasts will recognize the name of off-road legend Vic Hickey in the ad as the man who built the mid-engine Olds Banshee Cutlass driven by actor James Garner in the early 1970s. *Hot Rod* magazine called the Banshee an off-road Funny Car--a fairly apt description considering that the body was all fiberglass and a foot shorter than a stock Cutlass.

To see the Baja racer for sale in *HMN* go to: www.hemmings.com. For more about Vic Hickey's Banshee there's a reprint of a 1996 *AutoWeek* article about the car at www.442.com.

- By Mike McNessor

Did You Know?

Does a Met by Any Other Name...

Nash's diminutive Metropolitan was called the Nash NKI, which stood for Nash-Kelvinator International, right up until a few weeks before the car's public debut. When the decision to change the car's name was made, new Metropolitan badges had to be fashioned to fit in the same mounting holes as the original NKI badges. Nash dealers were issued a supply of the Metropolitan badges to retrofit any cars that had shipped from the Birmingham, England, factory with the NKI emblems.

Source: October 2005 *Hemmings Classic Car*-- History of Automotive Design 1953: Developing the Metropolitan

- By Mike McNessor



Nash hung the name Metropolitan on its popular compact at the last minute. Early in production it was called NKI.

Collectibles

Shrocks' Sensational Scale Studes

Ask most die-cast collectors about the Shrock Brothers and you'll be greeted with a blank stare. This should not be. The brothers make masterpieces--exclusively Studebaker--in 1:72 scale.

The brothers' stated goal is to offer every Studebaker model ever mass-produced in miniature, and a quick surf around their sparse but easy-to-navigate www.shrockbrothers.com web site shows that they're well on their way.

At 1:72, these models are a little smaller than your typical Hot Wheels car, but they offer all of the detail of a handmade white-metal 1:43-scale model. And, at about \$70 a whack for these beauties, you're never going to find them littering the toy aisle at TRU or Wally World. Still, for those who decry the lack of scale Studebakers available, the Shrock Brothers will cure what ails.

Call 814-672-5544 or surf to the website to see the latest models, including



The Shrock Brothers are on a mission to reproduce every Studebaker ever built in miniature. This Studebaker Cannon Truck is an example of just how creative they're getting.

the newly introduced 1962 GT Hawk, 1936 Dictator Business Coupe, 1942 Land Cruiser and more--and take a visual tour of the process of creating these miniature masterpieces.

- By Jeff Koch