

Finally, the Packard I Always Wanted!



Antique Expression

Gulf Coast Region, Houston, Texas



After the Second World War, Americans were hungry for new cars – there had been none from January of 1942 until October of 1945 – and the auto manufacturers stepped up to the plate with warmed-over pre-war models. It did not matter -- people would buy nearly anything -- but it was clear that this enthusiasm would not last long. 1948 saw radical changes in styling from three major independents (Packard, Hudson, and Nash – Studebaker having introduced a new design the previous year), and General Motors. The most “modern” styling came from the independents, GM being content to let them take the risks and see how it played out.

The Packards for 1948 were not substantially different under the skin from the Clippers that had preceded them but the bodies (built for them by Briggs) were something different altogether. Gone were separately defined fenders and the remnants of old-fashioned upright radiator grilles. In their place were smooth lines from the front fenders all the way to the very rear of the car, with no hint of a running board to be found. Much maligned today as “a bar of soap”, “an upturned bathtub”, or more pejoratively “the pregnant elephant”, the new styling was praised by the automotive press and was even awarded the “Fashion Car of the Year” gold medal by the New York Fashion Academy. Packard did not conform to the industry standard “model years” until 1951, and thus the 1948 Packards were “22nd Series”, which continued until May 1949, when the 23rd series was introduced (with few changes, mostly styling details).

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Do not forget to come to our meeting at Tracy Gee on Oct. 11



(Continued from pg. 1)

1949 was Packard's last year as the top selling luxury brand. They sold 116,955 vehicles – more than 25% more than Cadillac. The next year Cadillac outsold Packard more than two to one.

This car is a very late 22nd series Custom Eight Touring Sedan, sold sometime in the spring of 1949 by Bompert Motors in Helena, Montana. It is easily identifiable as a late production model because of the solid front bumper which replaced a complex multi-piece bumper late in the run. The Custom Eight was the top of the line, distinguished by the plush interior trim, a larger "egg-crate" grille in front with matching trim in the back, a longer 127" wheelbase, and the legendary 356 nine-main-bearing straight eight engine.

Mysteriously, in 1953 the engine of this car was replaced by Packard (Frontier Motors in Helena, the successor to Bompert did the work). At the time, Packard notified Frontier that they were no longer supplying the 356 engine but were sending the nine-bearing 327 which had replaced the 356 as Packard's top offering. This engine also featured a high-compression head (in fact, the 288 head) which gave it slightly more power than the more complex 356 had delivered.

Other than this, the car is entirely original, except for the paint on the hood (whether this is related to the engine replacement is unclear). It has had an easy life. As with many older cars, it is difficult to trace its entire history, but we know it was in Helena at least until May, 1977, when a classified ad appeared listing it for sale for \$4000 (with 28,000 miles). It shows up again in Nashville in the mid-1980s through the early 2010s, during which time it won an AACA National Senior First Place award in 1985. By 2017 it was living in the Philadelphia area, where it stayed until October 1, 2020, when it came to Houston. Today it has just over 75,000 miles – 2000 of those since I acquired it.

Everything on the car works beautifully – even the electro-magnetic clutch -- and I drive it regularly. The paint is not perfect but is pretty darn good for 72-year-old paint and the chrome and stainless are stunning. The real glory of the car is the untouched interior. The shadow cloth seats show almost no wear, and the dash looks like it just came off the showroom floor.

I had been wanting a 22nd Series Packard for a long time. My maternal grandfather (the only other "car guy" in my family) had owned one (that I had only seen in photos) and was a Packard owner until there were no more "real" Packards, when he switched to Cadillac to the end of his life. I cannot explain my affection for this model other than it was his first Packard and I knew I wanted one. Finally, I coerced my long-suffering wife into indulging me in my first old car and this is the result.

(Continued on pg. 4.)

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★HAPPY★ BIRTHDAY!

OCTOBER

Lisa Griffin	10/2
Joyce Hargrove	10/7
David Kaiser	10/7
Wayne Bartlett	10/11
Louise Calvert	10/16
Tom Pruett	10/18
Barbara Byrd	10/19

NOVEMBER

Gordon Bennett	11/1
Debbie Shaw	11/5
Pam Smits	11/5
Victoria Seward	11/6
John Doerfler	11/13
Dennis Husfeld	11/14
Chuck Sheldon	11/14
Tommy Baccaro	11/16
Nick Ferrantino	11/16
Patsy Bennett	11/17
Hal Naumann	11/19
Bill Wahlberg	11/23
Britney Husfeld	11/26

Let's Hit the Road!!



Don't forget our next trip—
Cars and more!
See page to sign up and
bet more information..

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

OCTOBER

Ashley & Lisa Griffin	10/6 (20!!)
Wayne & Theresa Bartlett	10/11
Billy Ray & Esther Duncan	10/12 (60!!!!)
Sergio & Tina Fernandez	10/21 (32!!!)
Lenny & Paula Holzband	10/21 (49!!!!)

NOVEMBER

Thomas & Carol Kidd	11/4 (21!!)
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If I do not have your celebration date, or have it
incorrectly given, please let me know.



***On the Road Again.....**

By Leon & Pam Ahlers

Pam & I recently took a "Road Trip" in our '69 Dodge Charger to the AACA National Meet in Auburn, Indiana. Old cars and long distances are nothing new to us, as we have covered over a hundred thousand miles in used cars in the past 45 years!

The first trip was to **California in 1975 in a 1967 Mustang**, the longest was to **Victoria, British Columbia in 1996, (6200 miles in a 1939 Ford Convertible**-kids rode in the rumble seat).

This time, we took a somewhat circuitous route to Auburn, Indiana, through Chicago and Detroit. While my bride was meeting with clients in Detroit, I took the opportunity to visit the Packard Proving Grounds in Shelby Township, MI.

Upon my arrival, I checked with a nice lady who could not find my reservation. I'm glad I had taken my copy with me. She told me she had no docents scheduled that day and as I was 1200 miles from home, I couldn't just go back to the house and wait! She made a phone call, and a gentleman named **Dave Dolby** appeared. We made introductions, and I knew that I'd hit the jackpot as he is **The Director of Acquisitions** and also in charge of the volunteers. The man has been there for a number of years and is currently restoring the facilities originally designed by Albert Kahn.

Our first stop was at the electrical room. All electrical is underground. Radical for 1928, but Packard was at its zenith. We toured the garages where Packard executives parked and is now used as a wedding venue (117 last year). We then went to the dormitory where Joy and his family lived, and where Packard executives stayed during inspections and meetings. The blue smaller rooms were for lower-level management where the Gold (yellow) rooms were for executive types.

On to the garages and teardown facility. **Henry Joy was president of Packard** at the time and his brother ran the proving grounds. The brother took delight in calling Henry to tell him that they had broken one of his newly designed engines!

We then went through the displays:

- Packard marine engines, Packard PT boat engines, and even a non-magnetic engine for a mine sweeper.
- I took Dave to school on the 1954 Packard dash knobs and why they have a three-point star. Once he

realized that I was familiar with the marquee, anything was fair game.

- Dave explained that a gentleman, recently passed at age 99, gave him invaluable information about the facility, as he had been a test driver before the war and tested tanks for Chrysler at the facility during the war.
- There is a crack in the exterior of the administration building; they started to patch it but the old gentlemen told them that it happened in 1933, during Michigan's only earthquake.
- Dave was a font of information, not just Packard but was a veteran of forty-seven years at GM engineering. He had worked with Ed Cole, Zora Arkus Duntov, and John DeLorean, just to name a few luminaries.

Needless to say, all of this could not have been accomplished in forty-five minutes; my 11 am tour as the only guest lasted until 1:15pm. What an experience! I had to wash the smile off my face that evening.

Oh, and yes, we did make it to Auburn. The car was awarded a plaque and we returned home without incident, a little more than 3000 miles and more memories.

(Continued from pg. 2, cover story)

The longest trip so far, not long after its arrival in Houston, was to Schulenberg and the painted churches. It goes down the road comfortably at 70 mph smoothly and comfortably as a Packard should. It has been maintained faithfully over its life. Naturally there are a few things yet to be sorted out – a leaking rear pinion seal and some fuel and ignition issues resulting in occasional hard starting – but it is beautifully reliable and a real pleasure to own.

By Stephen Morris

**On The Road Again is a series that welcomes stories from Gulf Coast Region AACA chapter members about how a shared interest in cars and helping others can pave the way to friendship and adventure.*



Moving on Down the Road..... with Pres. Jim Johnston



First things first!

If you all remember, in 2020 our Board and membership voted to consider two National AACA Events. One is a National Tour with the other being a consideration for an AACA National, previously known as a National Meet. Our first discussion was to apply for provisional approval from the National AACA Board to host an AACA National (Meet) again in Galveston, TX as we did in 2016. It was decided that we would consider the Hosting of the AACA National at the Moody Gardens Resort by duplicating the 2016 meet (which was a very successful National), but with us following the some blueprint with some slight adjustments, we would not be starting from ground zero, because most of the planning work was already done. So, we sent in our application for provisional AACA Board approval which we did obtain.

The second National event we were going to consider would be an AACA National Tour in 2022. For that item we have never sent in all the documentation to get that final approval from the National AACA Board.

SO where are we now for that National Tour in 2022? It looks like we are going to have to pass on hosting that event in 2022. I feel that we have a situation where we are just still too close in the issues and concerns to consider hosting a large event. It just boils down to the fact that there are too many unknowns with the COVID-19 still staring all of us in the face. For some of us that issue hit home base for 4 of our GCRAACA members with the most recent being Robert Wheelless. I can tell you Robert was very sick with that virus. But the good thing is, Robert has pulled through as did our other 3 members. So, we all should be very thankful for that. For Sandra and me, we have had a total of 8 people in our family that have survived covid-19. So, for hosting a National AACA Event in 2025, we feel it would be best to be satisfied with that 2025 National AACA and continue with that plan.

Now that that is out of the way, in Robert Wheelless's absence, I attended a Pate meeting with our Director Wayne Bartlett in Waco, Texas. And I can tell you that was a very interesting meeting, but also a very sad situation where the Pate Officers, not to be confused with the Pate voting Board of Directors, have steered all the Pate Ownership Clubs into a corner. The situation is far too complex to try to explain in this newsletter. But I would strongly suggest that all of you attend the October meeting for a complete overview of the Pate situation.

But setting Pate aside, Wayne and I were not able to attend the Hot Dog and Ice Cream Social on September 18th in Tomball. From all of the pictures I've seen, it was a great event and I would like to applaud club member/Director Ashley Griffin and wife Lisa for all the planning work as well as all the other members who pitched in for that very successful social event. And to add a reason for you to attend the October 11th meeting, we all will be getting the details of our next outing tour to the 5 Garage Tour set up by Robert Wheelless to visit a car collection and have lunch on October 23rd. So mark your calendars for that driving tour..

HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL AT OUR NEXT MEETING ON OCTOBER 11TH AT THE TRACY GEE CENTER!!



Here's hoping you all have a wonderful Thanksgiving. We have much to be thankful for, one being able to see each other at the meetings!

It's over.....the 2021 Summer Season, that is.

By Ashley Griffin

Sept. 18 was the last Saturday of the 2021 Summer Season, according to the calendar, anyways. Sept. 18, 2021, was also the date of the GCRAACA End of Summer Hotdog and Ice Cream Social held at Spring Creek Park in Tomball.

As is typical Houston area weather, the day started warm and humid with a chance of rain, but the gathering was held under the vast expanse of the large covered pavilion and was to be held, rain or shine.

While the Social was scheduled between 11a and 3p, club members and excited guests began arriving much earlier, not only to help with setup, but also to jockey for the more favorable parking spaces in front of the pavilion and the adjacent lot. By 11:30a, more than 45 classic and antique cars and many more late model drivers had filled the southwest parking lot of the county park. Cars from the local Packard, Lincoln and Model A clubs mingled with cars owned by no-club affiliated participants along with cars owned by GCRAACA members.

Under the roof of the pavilion, extra large picnic tables were covered with rolled paper to ease clean up after the party. Each table had an assortment of table top games, vintage car sales ads along with automobile trivia, such as "What is the firing order of a small block Chevrolet?" or "What car did Columbo drive?". Additionally, markers were left on the tables so that guests could partake in a friendly game of Tic-Tac-Toe, answer the trivia questions or leave personal notes.

Robert Bullard was our head chef who cooked the hotdogs for all to enjoy. He was able to man the charcoal grill while maintaining a persona of "cool", even as the temps started to reach 90 degrees. Approximately 175 hotdogs were served along with chili without beans prepared by member Julie Palmer and chili with beans prepared by guests "Aunt" Lisa and "Uncle" Lee Weatherwax.

Warming up the crowd and providing additional entertainment was our very own Bill Palmer. While he fought some small technical difficulties early on, Bill's accordion set was on time and kept people's toes tapping and bringing smiles to their faces. If you've never had an opportunity to see Bill perform in front of an audience, you're missing out. His performances and story telling are seamless and it is evident that he is very comfortable in front of a crowd.

As hotdogs were dwindling from the serving line, clouds grew darker to the North, prompting a few guests to "head for the hills" so that they weren't caught in the rain while on the road or in traffic. The remainder of the guests couldn't be bothered with the incoming storm and were waiting for the next course of the Social - Ice Cream!

Ice cream was scheduled to be served at 1p and by 12:59, a line of people stood, prepared to pounce on the tables set up with sugary goodness. On top of the store bought Blue Bell standards, custom creations were brought out of the freezer to be sampled by any who braved to try a unique ice cream flavor. Club member Diana Forbes made a smooth Cinnamon flavored ice cream. Club member Julie Palmer had her ice cream maker working overtime the week prior to the Social as she brought several tubs of homemade ice cream as well. Julie's creations included Mango, Cheddar, Horchata, Hatch Chili cookie and cream, and a very unique Garlic.

Bowls of ice cream moved down the serving tables, some looking like pure art, while others looked as if they were constructed by a 5 year old. While everyone was enjoying their ice cream, either by itself, or with one of the many toppings available, the temperature grew a little cooler as a brief summer downpour blew in. Some people scattered to the parking lot to roll up their windows while others stayed under the pavilion, content to let mother nature play out for a few minutes.

By the end of the gathering, people who had never met before were trading stories, experiences, and in some cases, contact information. Many new friendships were made, some long lost connections were reintroduced and many new people were introduced to the GCRAACA.

Special thanks to all who participated and an extra special thanks to those who helped to make this gathering a success.

Meeting Minutes From June 14, 2021

Our meeting was called to order by President Jim Johnston at the Tracy Gee Center at 7:45pm. The prayer was offered by Diana Forbes. The pledge was led by Dean Forbes

Refreshments were provided by Ashley and Lisa Griffin.

Jim explained the error in the AACA Magazine. We have Not confirmed hosting an AACA driving tour in 2022. The decision is still in "Proposed" status, and not yet confirmed by our club. The committee will discuss and present at the next board meeting.

Our club may possibly host the 2025 National AACA Meet in Galveston, similar to the event held at Moody Gardens in 2016.

Tahl Rozycki, our fully inoculated member was exposed to and developed the Covid virus. He is fully recovered, tested negative, twice, but appeared at the meeting in a complete Hazmat suit! Only Tahl!!! Look for his picture in our newsletter.

The club discussed items to add or change on our club web site. Julie mentioned we need to add a watermark on all pictures of cars, so outsiders can't "steal" and display as their cars. License plate numbers should be blacked out on all vehicles. John Sweney suggested possibly giving up the website and moving everything to a Facebook page. Jim will talk to Julie Palmer, our Facebook admin, and Thomas Kidd, our webpage admin to discuss suggestions.

Ashley discussed our club's Ice Cream Social, scheduled for Saturday, September 18th from 11am to 3pm. The location is Spring Creek Park, located at 15012 Brown Road in Tomball. This is not a "Car Show", it is part of our membership drive, and an opportunity to share the "old car hobby" with others in the Houston area. The board has approved \$1500 for this event. Ashley proposed we would need 300 hot dogs w/buns; two gallons of chili; ten to twelve gallons of Blue Bell; homemade ice cream from our members. Julie Palmer and Jim Johnston will each bring homemade chili. Club members are needed to help set up the tables, serve hot dogs and ice cream, and clean up at the end of the event. Tables may be needed, and Ashley will let us know. Jim will contact the AACA for insurance coverage of the event.

Ashley also discussed the annual Houston AutoRama event to be held at the GRB – George R Brown center. The event is Thanksgiving weekend. November 25th to November 28th. Contact Ashley if you are interested in participating.

Robert has secured our tour of John Burkland's Five Garages Ranch, including 125 Classic cars, hot rods, and other collectible automobile memorabilia. The cost is \$10 per person and includes lunch. They are located in Rutersville, Texas. Watch for the flyer coming from Evelyn, so you can register for this event.

The board and club will have discussions of having fewer monthly meetings and more events. Suggestion has been made to limit meetings to once a quarter.

(Continued on pg. 9)

We have new members! Say hello to James and Illona Blaszcak who just joined. They live in Montgomery and are the proud owners of 5 Fords and 1 Willys Jeep and 1 1967 VW sedan! You'll have to find out the other cars when you meet or when they come to a meeting. Their email is jblaszcak@mac.com in case you can't wait.



Down the Road

Underlined items are club (GCR AACA) sponsored activities.

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- Oct. 11 Columbus Day and our club meeting at Tracy Gee Center, 7:30 PM.
- Oct. 23 Mini tour to Five Garage Ranch. See page 9 of this issue.
- Nov. 13 Annual Veterans' Day Celebration. TBD
- Nov. 15 Last day to submit information/content for the Dec. issue of the AE.
- Nov. 25-28 Autorama—Houston. Contact Ashley Griffin for participation information.
- Dec. 4 Annual Christmas Lunch at Monument Inn from 11-2PM. Be sure to save the date. Registration forms will be sent at the end of the month.

P

Public Car Outings.....

The items below have not been checked as to their current availability. You might call in advance to confirm or check Showplace Classics. If you know of any changes, please advise.

Sunday, 8-12 Prince's Hamburgers, near Sharpstown Golf. Kicking tires with friends.

Friday evenings Pearland Antique & Classic Auto Show (PACA) Cruise Night at parking lot behind Freddy's Hamburgers, FM 518 & Pearland Parkway. 6 PM

Saturday evenings cruise in at Chick-Fil-A in Home Depot's parking lot, 5 PM, Hwy 146 and FM 2094 in Kemah

Last Sat. morning of the month: Coffee, Cars, and Books from 8 - 10 AM in Barnes & Noble parking lot on Bay Area Blvd.

Last Sat. morning of the month: Coffee and pastries at Gateway Classic Cars, 71 Esplanade Blvd., Houston, 77060

Third Sat. of the month: Tailpipes and Tacos, 8-11 AM. 99 & Kingsland.

Send me any recurring items you wish to advertise here.

The Antique Automobile Club of America

Is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, restoration and maintenance of automobiles and automotive history. It is the country's oldest and largest automotive historical society.

Gulf Coast Regional Meetings at Tracy Gee Center 3599 West Center Dr., Houston, TX 77042

**Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m.
2nd Monday of each month,
Except for February, July
and December, when
special activities are scheduled.**

The Antique Expression

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**OCTOBER
REFRESHMENTS
Bea & Rob McLellan
Tahl Rozycki**

THANK YOU!!

October 23rd Driving tour to the “Five Garages Tour”

On Sat., the 23rd, we will meet as a group at the Sealy, TX Walmart parking lot (310 Overcreek Way, Sealy, TX 77474) between 9:00 and 9:15 AM.

Mr. Burkland's car collection is in 5 Garages at **6924 Wied Rd., La Grange, TX 78945.**

Cost to all attendees will be \$10 each which also includes lunch. Mr. Burkland will provide a box lunch.

Plan on being at the Sealy parking lot group departure at 9:00 AM for the approximate 1 hr. drive from Sealy to the collection in La Grange.

Maps and more information will be provided at the meeting this Monday night as well as when we meet at Walmart on the 23rd. The collection is in 5 garages and should last 2 to 2 ½ hours. Please fill out the following sign-up and send (or email) to Ev Timmins, or call Jim Johnston at 832-693-4008.

This event is not open to non-members. It's very important you let us know if you will be attending as there is a limited number that can be accommodated. Please do NOT show up at Mr Burkland's without letting us know you will be attending.

Name: _____ # of member attendees _____

Cell phone number _____ Cost paid _____

Payment may be made at the event. If you reserve and do not attend, you will be billed for the reservation.

(Continued from pg. 7, Minutes)

Scheduled Events for 2021

August 16th – View Big Boy steam engine in Hempstead, Withers Street Crossing (Dean Forbes)

Sept 11th – I Love America event at Santa's Wonderland in College Station (Bob Smits)

September 18 – Ice Cream Social, Spring Creek Park (Ashley Griffin)

October 23 – Visit Five Garage Ranch, Rutersville (Robert Wheelless)

November 13th – Veterans Day Picnic, Bear Creek Park (Sandra Johnston)

December 4th – Annual Christmas Lunch, Monument Inn (Elaine Bullard)

Bill Seward told us about the new vehicle he and Victoria will be driving soon. It is a 1934 Lincoln. John Sweney and Mike Stargel have a new 1949 Cadillac Club Coupe.

Wayne discussed new software that Pate has paid to have developed. The developer now wants additional money. Our club, represented by Wayne, voted NO to providing more funds for something we have already spent money for.

The Attendance Drawing was won by Ashley Griffin

The Membership Drawing would have gone to Paula Holzband. Sorry you weren't there Paula. Next month the membership drawing will increase.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

Submitted by Sandra Johnston for Secretary Elaine Bullard

Javis Boudreaux, our future former President, tried to call the meeting to order at 7:33 pm, but he needed a drink before he could spit it out. I think his mouth was still dry from the Halloween candy he consumed two weeks earlier.

HOT DOGS and HOT RODS

Just like Stephen told us in the cover story, it is a really super car, in and out!



Ashley Griffin, the originator of the Social.



Now, that's a real hotdog!



And we had music!!

