



# NCKCC News

Handcrafted Automobiles

January 2015

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- January 17, 2015 - Annual Planning Lunch & Meeting. Lunch at 11:30 a.m. meeting 1:00 p.m. Hance residence in Walnut Creek. Bring your kit car for a small show, weather permitting. (See page 2 for more details)
- February - December 2015 - To Be Determined. Send your suggestions to: [jamesUU@comcast.net](mailto:jamesUU@comcast.net) OR [nckcc@astound.net](mailto:nckcc@astound.net)

## **FROM THE PREZ**

The Club finished another year with a wonderful brunch at the Basil Leaf Café in Danville. The weather was not too bad and the turnout was just right for our assigned seating area. It was really great to finish the "Club" year with such great conversation and camaraderie.

By the time you receive this newsletter, the "Ball" will have dropped on 2014 and a new year, 2015, will be upon us. As always, a new year always requires a new calendar of Club events and activities. In that regard, Vern and Carol have once again graciously opened their home for our first get-together of the new year: the Annual Planning Meeting. It is scheduled for Saturday, January 17th at Vern and Carol's home in Walnut Creek. We hope to work out an event/activity schedule for all of 2015. So, if you have any suggested activities or events that you would like to see on our calendar, please forward your suggestions to me or to Vern so they can be included in our new Club event calendar. Better yet, bring your ideas to the planning meeting in person and enjoy some camaraderie over a pizza prior to the actual meeting. Be sure to let Vern and Carol know you plan on attending. Weather permitting, be sure to bring your collector car for a mini NCKCC car show on Ellesmere court. We do need to have all our members be part of the planning process as well as participate in the actual events or activities. Hope to see you all at the planning meeting with some great new ideas. Vern has the meeting details elsewhere in this newsletter.

Hope you had a great Holiday Season. Welcome to what I hope will be another great year for the NCKCC.

See you on the 17th.

Jim W

## **PLANNING MEETING JANUARY 17th**

Our 2015 planning meeting will start at 11:30 a.m. with a little social time followed by a pizza & salad lunch at the Hance residence, 3317 Ellesmere Court, Walnut Creek. The meeting will start about 1 p.m. so if you can't make lunch come for the meeting.

At the meeting we will discuss our 2015 choice of "official" club activities for the rest of the year.

Please give some thought to events you would like to see on our 2015 schedule. Also, do a little research about suggestions. If it involves a visit to some display, museum or show, please check the dates it is open, the cost, who to contact, etc.

We will also need to vote on who will fill the officer positions for 2015. We would like to see some new participants, so let us know if you would be willing to fill one of our positions.

Another item on our agenda will be to decide about our '31-year-tradition' of having a "Annual NCKCC Car Show". We have found over the past years a trend of fewer kit cars entered and fewer spectators. This has led us to welcome more restored cars that were never offered as kits. Our experience in 2014 having the show at the Oakland Aviation Museum seemed to be successful but we didn't get good data on the participation of club members as spectators versus aviation museum enthusiasts.

Please let Vern know if you're coming so he can be sure to get an adequate supply of pizza. Call 925-938-1442 (leave message) or email [nckcc@astound.net](mailto:nckcc@astound.net)

If you can't attend please give us some event ideas that we can discuss. Send ideas to Jim Wagner at 650-341-0211 [jamesuu@comcast.net](mailto:jamesuu@comcast.net) or to Vern.

## **HAPPENINGS AROUND MY OFFICE**

By Vern Hance

During the Christmas Season the Christmas cards and letters are a welcome treat and a great way to catch up (at least annually) with other people's activities.

We received a card from Gloria Green, the daughter of Peggy Morrissey. Many of you will remember John & Peggy as active members of the club about a decade ago. (John died in 2002) Anyway, Peggy at 90 suffered a fractured femur in early 2014 but recovered slowly and is living in a senior home near her daughter in Sunnyvale.

We also received a Christmas card from Mike & Melinda Koken (our most faithful car show exhibitor from So. California). They sent their Greetings to all the NCKCC members.

One thing that came in after the December newsletter was the December issue of "Car Builder" (Formerly 'Kit Car Builder') You can download it at [www.kitcarclub.com](http://www.kitcarclub.com). Then go to page 149 for an article on our September Car Show at the Oakland Aviation Museum. Then check out all the other good stuff on the rest of the pages. You can also download a .pdf version to start your electronic library.

The O. A. M. article below recently showed up in the Contra Costa Times and a few days later another article appeared in "Your Town Monthly", a free flyer. I included it below thinking you might be interested in some more information about our 2014 Carshow site.

## **INDIANA JONES AND THE OAKLAND AVIATION MUSEUM**

*By Angela Hill  
Oakland Tribune*

POSTED: 12/22/2014 12:00:00 PM PST

One in an occasional series showcasing the Bay Area's lesser-known museums

Remember the scene near the beginning of "Raiders of the Lost Ark," when Indiana Jones boards a plane on the way to Nepal, circles a tight staircase to the upper cabin, then settles into a cushy seat, tugging his trademark fedora over his eyes for a nap -- all while evil, bespectacled Gestapo agent Arnold Toht eyes him from a couple of seats behind?

Well, you might not recall the scene in such detail, as it's only 45 seconds long. But you can relive it in that very seat aboard that very plane -- the big, tubby-bellied prop-job City of Cardiff, a Short Solent Mark III flying boat that now rests outside the hangar of the Oakland Aviation Museum like a beached white whale.

Museum folks keep a fedora on that legendary seat, and they let people sit there and take pictures.

"It's not quite the original seat now," docent Bill Lippincott told me on a recent visit. "So many people have taken pictures there over the years, the seat got worn out, and we had to redo it."

Alas, any yummy Harrison Ford cooties are long gone. But it's still pretty darned cool.

The Solent may be the big draw for movie fans and general passers-by -- you can't miss it, if you stray anywhere near the Old North Field at Oakland

International Airport, out among the streets with such names as Earhart, Wright and Langley. But aviation buffs know there's much more to this under-the-radar museum. It's a treasure trove for anyone taken with the notion of flight. It's filled with old aircraft and memorabilia -- each plane, helicopter, old engine part, uniform, faded photo or World War II log book tells its own tale in the history of aviation.

### A NO-FRILLS FLIGHT

Be advised, the nonprofit museum -- here for the past 25 years -- is what you'd call no-frills. It smells of oil and old rubber, and it demands meandering and a bit of patience to read about various inventions and engine specifications. Several flight historians have likened the place -- in a good way -- to going into somebody's garage and rummaging around all their stuff.

At the same time, this isn't some fly-by-night operation.

"People don't seem to know we're here, but when they do find us, they're amazed," Lippincott says.

Even the hangar itself holds history. The corrugated steel shell was built in 1939 by the Boeing School of Aeronautics and used to train aircraft mechanics for the Army Air Corps and Navy during World War II. It now houses several vintage planes -- one a full-size replica of the Vin Fiz, an early Wright Brothers' Model EX biplane. Wooden propellers hang here and there, including a pair from the Army Corps' Bird of Paradise that completed the first nonstop flight from the West Coast to Hawaii in 1927, piloted by Albert Hegenberger and Lester Maitland.

Around the building's rim are exhibit rooms. One is dedicated to Alameda-born Gen. James Doolittle, and another to the Tuskegee Airmen, America's first black military pilots of World War II. Still another highlights women in aviation, including Amelia Earhart, who flew out of Oakland and into an enigma in 1937 on her famous, ill-fated, around-the-world attempt.

### THE WILD YONDER

Outside are interactive exhibits of the old-fashioned kind, where you can climb inside the cockpit of an A-3 Skywarrior, the Navy's first strategic all-jet nuclear bomber and, if you're lucky, hear some tales from docent John Horton, who flew that very plane. (Be sure to ask him about the bright orange tape on a small piece of machinery inside the bomb bay. It's a story of life and death.)



*A Short Solent Mark III sits outside at the Oakland Aviation Museum in Oakland on Dec. 14, 2014. The Short Solent was a passenger flying boat produced by Short Brothers in the late 1940s. (Jose Carlos Fajardo/Bay Area News Group)*

Crew chief Greg Ely often is out in the yard, tinkering on one engine or another. "Other air museums, you'll see beautifully restored planes, which I love. But here, these old girls, this is what the planes really look like, with all their wear and tear," he says. "We're the caretakers of history."

He took me up inside the nose section of a DC-6, a predecessor to today's jet passenger planes, he says. This one, built in 1958, has lived a lot of lives with various airline companies, flying the polar route, serving as a U.N. rescue plane and then later converted to a firefighting tanker.

And, of course, there's the Solent Mark III. It's an extra \$5 to climb aboard for a docent tour, but it's totally worth it. The aircraft, once owned by Howard Hughes, is the only one of its kind left in the world, Lippincott says. It was originally built in England as a military submarine chaser during World War II, then was reconfigured as a luxury plane to hold 34 passengers in the 1940s, flying wealthy travelers to exotic ports in the South Pacific.

Its walls have faded paintings of palm trees and beach huts. A fringe-trimmed bar can be found on the main deck, and the ladies powder room is done up in pink with curvaceous counter tops on the vanity. The only thing out of place is a flat-screen TV, but it's there with a purpose -- to run the 45-second Indiana Jones scene in a continuous loop.

Indeed, take the curved staircase to the upper deck -- the same steps Indy climbed -- and there's the infamous seat, saved with a brown fedora. Sit there. Take a photo. Tug the hat down

over your eyes and dream of adventure.

Contact Angela Hill at [ahill@bayareanewsgroup.com](mailto:ahill@bayareanewsgroup.com), or follow her at [Twitter.com/GiveEmHill](https://twitter.com/GiveEmHill).

## DREAM CARS AT THE HIGH MUSEUM OF ART

By Mark Yost

Concept cars, those futuristic models that auto makers unveil at auto shows to demonstrate how cutting-edge they are, almost never get made. I can remember going to an exclusive viewing of the Ford Forty-Nine, created by designer J. Mays as an homage to the revolutionary 1949 Ford. Another Detroit beat reporter and I walked out of there saying to each other, "That thing will never get made." And it didn't.

But that's not really the point of concept cars. Beyond the media buzz they create, such automobiles are exercises in "What if . . . ?" And often they predict the future.

That's certainly the case with the 17 exquisite cars in the Atlanta, GA High Museum of Art's recent "Dream Cars" exhibit. Not only are these vehicles gorgeous, but visitors can clearly see how a concept car introduced in the 1940s had styling and engineering cues that appeared on the production line a decade or more later.

The curators of this show, which fills three large galleries and several smaller rooms, hit you right away with what is arguably the best-looking car in the collection, the 1947 Norman Timbs Special (below). The car was a 2-1/2 -year vanity project that cost the designer and engineer about \$10,000 (about \$100,000 today) - and landed this beauty on the second issue of Motor Trend in October 1949. The Timbs experiment in aerodynamic design featured skirted fade-away fenders, a split



windshield and no doors. Underneath was a Buick straight-eight and a tubular frame capped with a compressor providing air for stiffness and to operate the air horn.

Also in the opening gallery is the 1936 Stout Scarab, (below) a living room on wheels that was more like a small RV, but which many consider a precursor to the minivans that became so popular in the 1980s. Inspired by the ovoid shape of the scarab beetle, it featured an aluminum body, tubular frame and lace-



headlamps and molded fenders. Perhaps on his deathbed the Ford most famously linked to one of the auto makers biggest flops thought to himself, "Why didn't I build the Model 40 (above) instead of the Edsel?"

While these were all one-offs for men with money and ideas, Gordon Buehrig's 1948 Tasco (The American Sports Car Company) had the most long-term impact on the mass market. The famed designer of the Cord 810 and the Duesenberg Model J created a beautiful, one-of-a-kind car. But perhaps the designer's most lasting legacy was his use of a new vacuum-form process to create 3-D models that eventually became industry standard and shaved valuable time off the design process. The Tasco's T-



wood interior walls. Later in the exhibit, in one of the smaller galleries, we see a 1981 work by artist Chuck Byrne, who took Buckminster Fuller's patent drawing for the 1933 Dymaxion car, similar in size shape and function to Stout's Scarab, and overlaid it on a screen print of the actual vehicle. (see Dymaxion below)



top roof with removable panels was later incorporated into the 1968 Corvette. An informative plaque nearby tells us that because the car was never produced, Buehrig considered it a failure (photo above).

A 1940 airbrush-and-pastel work on colored paper by Arthur Ross ties all these themes together, showing a car much like the, cutting-edge models on display being followed closely by a Fighter plane reminiscent of the P-38 Lightning, with a modern obelisk in the background. As a panel nearby tells visitors, it "illustrates the strong influence aeronautics had on car design."

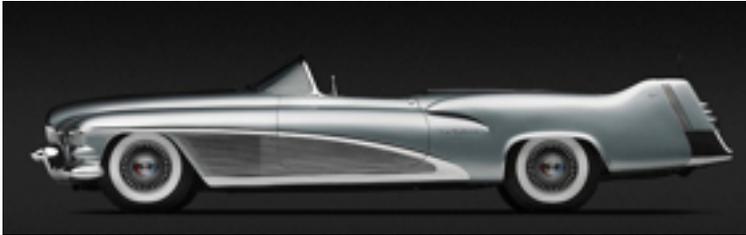


There's a 1934 Edsel Ford Model 40 Special Speedster here as well, the scion's take (with the help of Ford designer Bob Gregorie) on the "continental cars", he saw while traveling in Europe on his father's Model T money. It features an elongated alligator hood, louvered side panels, low

That's a running theme through the rest of the exhibit, which moves quickly. Anyone who has

followed cars since the 1960s, can look at these prototypes and see familiar styling cues. No other U.S. designer – then or now – has been as good as General Motors' Harley J. Earl was in getting people comfortable with change through concept cars.

His 1951 GM Le Sabre XP-8 (below) gave consumers a glimpse into the future of wraparound windshields, aircraft instrumentation and heated seats.



Debuting at the Geneva International Auto Show, it was a two-seater that was just 37 inches tall.

The exhibit closes with a tribute to GM's Motorama, a traveling circus of sorts that toured the country from 1949 to 1981, taking what had been exclusive previews for industry executives to the masses. It was at the 1953 Motorama that Earl introduced one of his most famous concepts, the Firebird I XP-21, (shown below), dubbed by the press at the time as

His 1956 Buick Centurion XP-301 (below) had the long, lean body design, sweeping fenders and distinctive tailfins that influenced a generation of Chevrolets and Buicks. GM briefly produced a Centurion model in the early 1970s, but the body style is perhaps best seen in the 1971 Buick Riviera, perhaps the last gasp of an industry still hooked on big-block V-8s and elongated, sculpted tails. But even the great Earl sometimes went too far. His 1959 Cadillac Cyclone XP-74 (above) paced the first-ever Daytona 500 and featured a fully enclosed



cockpit, complete with a plastic bubble over the driver and passenger that retracted when the doors opened and an intercom for communicating with people outside the car, two things that never went into mass production.

In the late - 1960s the focus of concept cars changed markedly to create what the exhibit calls "the ultimate wedge," small cars with pointed noses and a gradually expanding slope that were much smaller than what was on American roads at the time. While not as exciting as the designs of the '40s and '50s, the contest to create the smallest, most aerodynamic car was essentially won by Italian car maker Ferrari (with help from longtime partner Pininfarina) in the form of the 1970 Ferrari 512S Modulo (above right).

"a jet fighter on four wheels." The first gas turbine car ever built in the US, it was, of course, never made, partly because it was too loud, and the tailpipe temperature was about 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit. But that doesn't mean it wasn't important —like most of the cars on display here—in giving consumers a glimpse of what was to come.

*Mr. Yost, a former Dow Jones Newswires reporter in Detroit, now lives and writes in Houston.*

Shown above is the 1933 Dymaxion designed by Buckminster-Fuller and was mentioned earlier in the article noting its similarity to the Stout Scarab design of 1936. Since the Stout Scarab was a four-wheel vehicle rather than the three-wheel design of the Dymaxion, it was probably more stable and roadworthy than the Dymaxion. However it looks like the spark of inspiration for modern SUVs and RVs was present in both these vehicles.

## **FOR SALE**

1952 Red MG-TD Replica built by Daytona. VW 1600 engine.  
New everything. Always garaged.  
\$6200 Call Ron for info: 925-829-4046 or email [honestronn@yahoo.com](mailto:honestronn@yahoo.com)



Ron Sutherland's MG-TD

1952 MG-TD kit partially completed. All parts to complete the build are included (seats, carpets, top, wiring, etc.) Equipped with a 1974 Ford Pinto 2.4 L engine, automatic transmission and rear end, which are already installed in the car. It has real wire wheels but only junk tires. Asking \$3000. Call Frank at (916) 383-6826 or [lazyfrankie@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lazyfrankie@sbcglobal.net)



Frank's MG-TD

1984 Ferrari 512bbi replica – Registered as a 1987 Pontiac, rebuilt Fiero V6 with 5-speed manual. Fiero parts are readily available and car is inexpensive to maintain, no problems with insurance or smog requirements. Amenities include: removable hardtop & tonneau cover(rare), Kenwood stereo, 4 wheel disk brakes, power windows, Performance AS R16 tires, chrome Ferrari wheels, Ferrari steering wheel, emblems, etc. Car always garaged, and covered in the garage. Firm price of only \$8,500 is an excellent buy and good investment. For pictures or information e-mail: [ferrari512.bbi321@yahoo.com](mailto:ferrari512.bbi321@yahoo.com)



Al Clavelli's Ferrari 512bbi