



# **NCKCC** News

## Handcrafted Automobiles

*June 2008*

*Volume 26 Number 6*



Here is part of the Sunday Art & Wine Show, which included a surprise appearance of a Russian motorcycle with sidecar. More pictures on page 4 & 5.

### **ACTIVITY NOTICES**

July 19, 2008 - Tour of Hays Antique Truck Museum (Vern Hance, Champion, is having second thoughts on this and will offer a less gas intensive option soon, but save the date)

July (late) - To Be Announced Car show in San Jose (Will Smith Champion)

***Sorry, But it's getting tough to keep a club club active when gas costs are out of control !!***

## **FROM THE PREZ**

Greetings and Apologies to all. Last month the Words From the Prez article went Missing In Action due to responsibilities at my job and almost went MIA this month because of some pressing family concerns.

My job at Costco, besides driving , deals with the safety matters of the fleet operation and also investigation of accidents that occur. Last month we had a man almost crushed to death by his own truck. Needless to say the investigation was long, laborious, and intense. However, the gentleman will live. He will be in considerable pain for sometime to come, but he will live.

As of the week of this writing for this newsletter the Jones family has experienced a heart attack by one of my sister-in-laws on the afternoon of the 31st, the subsequent surgery to correct the problem on June the 2nd, and then the birth of our new granddaughter on the night of the 4th at 8:33 P.M. after a full day of labor that started at 4:30 A.M. Just a little bit busy wouldn't you say?

Now to move on with news that pertains to our club. Last month we had a good turnout for the Niles Spring Fling. In attendance for that event were Steve and Mary Ellen Bales with two cars. Their beautiful Mercedes 500K and Steve's latest project a outstanding

1939 Ford Street Rod. Bill Navratil brought his Gatsby out and received many ooos and aahhs. Jim and Wendy Wagner came in their ZR-2 outfitted Feiro and parked next to the Ponrari of the Jones clan where people came and could not quite figure out what they were looking at but knew there was something vaguely familiar with what they were looking at. When told what the cars were all were very impressed with the workmanship of the two car. I also brought my cobra out and had my share of fun with the crowds. The Ponrair was driven to the event by Sarah and Will.

We were busy all day answering questions from interested people and handed out many of our invitations to our Sept show. Will and Sarah went down the street looking for cars that showed outstanding handcraftmanship to invite to our show and were well received.

The jewelry lady that attended our show last year on Sat. said she would be glad to come again this year. She enjoyed last years event very much.

I also attended the Walnut Creek Art and Wine Festival but only for one day. As described early on in this article I had to tend to family matters the next day.

One change already in the show

arrangements has to do with the driving event on Sunday. Because of a wedding that is to be held at the Towe Museum on Sunday we are looking into other activities to do. Another consideration is also the gas costs projected for holding a driving event. The event will most likely be closer to San Leandro but still of interest to the participants.

Again, sorry for the lapse in communication. More information on the show will be discussed at a meeting time to be set by our show chair, Sarah Smith, and announced in next months newsletter. Thanks to all who came out for the May and June events. Both were well supported.

Yours Truly, THE PREZ

## **SPRING FLING** **DASH**

by Sarah Smith

We had a great time out there on May 10<sup>th</sup> to kick off the car show season. We were well represented and also were able to see many one of a kind cars that would look great at our show as well. Many people took a lot of time to make them their own. We saw tricked out mustangs, one of a kind panel trucks, an unfin-

ished McLaren and never duplicated Studebaker. We were able to talk to a lot of car enthusiasts that were actually interested in coming to the show in September.

We had Dave Jones there with his Cobra and his Ponarri, the Wagner's with their Fiero based ZR-2, Bill Navatrill and his Gatsby, and the Bale's with their Mercedes and their other baby a 1939 Ford Deluxe.

*Shown below right to left: Jones' Ponarri, Wagner's ZR-2, Navratil's Gatsby, Jones' Cobra, Bales' Mercedes 500K and Bales' 1939 Ford Deluxe.*



## **ART & WINE IN WALNUT CREEK**

By Vern Hance

I'm not qualified to report on this, since I missed the Saturday event. However, I did make it to the Sunday show and managed to keep warm by moving my chair into the sun periodically.

Paul King reported 11 member families & 12 cars attended the Saturday festivities, as noted below.

Paul King - Mercedes SSK, Dave & Joyce Decato - MG-TD, Alex & Amelia Penalosa - Mercedes SSK, Gil Somerhalder - 1950 Ford Easy Rod, Jim & Wendy Wagner - ZR-2, Bill Landers - Cobra, Steve & Mary Ellen Bales - 1939 Ford Coupe & Mercedes 500K, Chuck Maddux - Mercedes 500K, Dick Thomson - MG TD, Dave Jones - Cobra and Mark Rubenstein - M-B, Baron.

The spectators were friendly and appreciative Sunday, but we didn't sell Paul King's M-B SSK to allow him to shop for a Porsche Speedster.

One late afternoon surprise was when a guy showed up in a Russian motorcycle with side car. He said it was a replica of a German WW-II design (BMW



maybe?) It permitted a choice of 1-wheel or 2-wheel drive. The 2-wheel drive included

power to the side car wheel. This was for "military" off-road traction, but it couldn't be used on the road because the torque steer was overwhelming. While talking to him another person said he owned a Chinese-built version of the same motorcycle. So, it looks like manufacturers are invading "kit car" territory.

Sunday's attendees included Jerry Barrilleaux (MG-TD), Vern & Carol Hance (Mercedes 500K), Paul King (Mercedes SSK), Chuck Maddux (Mercedes 500K), Mark Rubenstein (Barron), Gil Somerhalder ('50 Ford Easy Rod) and Tom & Irene Wallters (Mercedes 500K).



*Here are some other views from the Sunday show.*



*Including the Russian motorcycle.*



### **ABOUT THE BENICIA PARADE**

I got two responses to our inquiry last month regarding who would plan to attend the Benicia July 3rd Torchlight Parade. One was a "Don't plan to attend" and one was a "Who's going?" question. Based on this we have cancelled NCKCC's participation and won't send in our application.

### **"CAR" EVENTS OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS**

#### **ED "Big Daddy" ROTH HOT ROD DISPLAY AT BLACKHAWK MUSEUM**

Continuing display 2/13 to 6/15. Plaza show of Hot Rods 6/15/08. Father's Day free pinstriping of personal items. Dads get free admission.  
[www.blackhawkmuseum.org](http://www.blackhawkmuseum.org)

#### **RIDIN' FOR HOSPICE POKER RUN**

Bob Bohaboy has invited NCKCC members to participate in this benefit poker run on Saturday June 28, 2008. Cost is \$30 now. Starts at Placerville at 9:00 a.m. and cruises through Gold Country and Crystal Basin. Finishes at Camino, CA with a BBQ from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

#### **PACIFIC GROVE CONCOURS AUTO RALLY**

This is limited to 200 cars so if you are interested in attending you must act fast even though the date is August 15, 2008. Registraton is \$75.

For anyone needing a registration form, you can get a registration form by calling Vern at 925-938-1442 or email <[nckcc@astound.net](mailto:nckcc@astound.net)>.

## **DELOREAN AUTOMAKER GOES BACK TO THE FUTURE**

- Texas entrepreneur brings celebrity vehicle back to life with a limited production of cars

By John Porretto, Associated Press  
(Contra Costa Times 8/24/07)

HUMBLE, Texas—In a nondescript warehouse in east Texas, mechanic and entrepreneur Stephen Wynne is bringing a rare sports car back to life. If he succeeds, he has Michael J. Fox to thank.

A quarter-century after DeLorean Motor Co. began making its glitzy, \$25,000 two-seater— an operation that collapsed after two years—Wynne's small automotive outfit plans to bring the vehicle back into limited production at a 40,000-square-foot factory in this Houston suburb.

The creation of renowned automotive engineer John DeLorean, DMC eventually made fewer than 9,000 cars, distinctive for their gull-wing doors, stainless-steel exterior and rear-engine design. An estimated 6,500 remain on the road.

Despite DMC's flop, the car has persevered, gaining notoriety largely as the time machine Fox drove in the blockbuster 1985 movie "Back to the Future" and its two sequels.

The trilogy's enduring popularity on cable TV has exposed countless viewers—and potential customers—to a souped-up version of the DeLorean.

"There isn't a day somewhere in the world that 'Back to the Future' isn't playing as a rerun," said Wynne, president of the new, privately held DeLorean Motor Co.

Wynne formed the company in 1995, when the bulk of his business was working on original DeLoreans at a Houston garage. Still, he needed a name and because there was nothing legally preventing him from using the original, he decided to give it a shot. He even called John DeLorean, who wished him luck.

A dozen years later, Wynne hopes to parlay the car's celebrity — along with the world's biggest stash of DeLorean parts and engines—into a niche production business that begins handmaking two DeLoreans a month sometime in 2008. They've just started taking orders. (Picture page 11)

Already, the Humble operation will take an existing DeLorean, strip it to the frame and rebuild it for a base price of \$42,500. Wynne's staff can rebuild one every couple of months.

The company also handles routine maintenance, such as oil changes and tuneups, and ships 20 to 50 parts

orders a day to mechanics and individual owners worldwide.

But because the original models are about 25 years old, finding suitable candidates to refurbish has become increasingly difficult.

So Wynne figured why not use the thousands of parts and hundreds of engines sitting in his massive warehouse and build the cars from scratch?

“Everything seems to evolve around here, and that seemed to be the next logical step,” said Wynne, a Briton who began working on DeLoreans in the 1980s in Los Angeles, and became an expert in their mechanics and equipment. He eventually expanded to suburban Houston and opted to make his base there, in part because of the lower cost of living.

Like other DeLorean mechanics at the time, Wynne bought replacement parts from an Ohio company, Kapac Co., which had acquired the original inventory when DeLorean failed. In 1997, when Kapac wanted out of the parts business, Wynne bought the supply for himself, though he declined to say how much he paid.

A decade later, he’s decided to take the company to the next level as a niche automaker.

The handmade cars will feature about 80 percent original parts. The other 20 percent will be new, supplier-made parts from companies such as Valeo SA and the Bosch Group, said DeLorean Vice President James Espey.

The one limiting factor is the doors. The company has enough for about 500 cars, though it’s important to keep some in stock for repairs and such. Beyond that, Espey said, the company is studying its options.

Enhancements to the new cars will include an improved stainless-steel frame, a stronger but lighter fiberglass underbody and electronics upgraded from the disastrous systems in the early DeLoreans. A peppier engine—the original cars’ 135 horsepower was a downer for performance enthusiasts—will be available as an option.

“After working on these cars practically every day for 25 years, we’ve identified most of the issues and replaced them,” Wynne said. If there’s a better part available, we’ll use it. If there’s a better way to install it, we’ll do it.”

The base price of a new DeLorean is expected to be \$57,500 —about the same price a 1981 DeLorean would have cost in today’s dollars. The company will sell the cars from its

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shop in Humble and affiliate shops in Bonita Springs, Fla.; Crystal Lake, Ill.; Bellevue, Wash.; and Orange County. DMC also has a shop in the Netherlands for European owners.

"It's taken years to get the wheels moving, and they're moving slowly, but we've got motion," Wynne said.

Ken Baker likes the company's direction—so much so that the Bentley and Rolls Royce sales executive in Fort Lauderdale drives his own original DeLorean and heads that region's DeLorean owners' group.

A car guy to the core, Baker says he became enamored of John DeLorean in high school after reading DeLorean's book "On a Clear Day You Can See General Motors," the author's critical look inside his former employer

DeLorean was the antithesis of the buttoned-down auto executive of his day, sporting designer suits, dating models and moving in celebrity circles. While at GM in the 1960s, he created what some consider the first "muscle car," putting a V-8 engine into a Pontiac Tempest and calling it the GTO.

When DeLorean began making his own car in Northern Ireland in 1981, Baker says he fell in love with it. Of course, as a teenager, he wasn't able to shell out

\$25,000. Now, at 41, Baker is a proud DeLorean owner.

"You have to understand, it's a car that never got to its full development because it was gone before it really hit its prime," Baker said. "And you have to realize it's 25 years old. But understanding that, it's fun to drive and very comfortable."

DeLorean simply couldn't sell enough of the cars to sustain the business. The company folded in 1983, a year after DeLorean was busted in a drug trafficking sting and accused of conspiring to sell \$24 million worth of cocaine to salvage the venture. He used an entrapment defense to win acquittal, but legal entanglements plagued him for years. He died in 2005 at age 80.

Kevin Smith, editorial director for the automotive Web site Edmunds.com, said he's interested to see whether the Humble effort fares better than the Irish debacle. He said quality control is often an issue with limited production "but I'm always optimistic for people who want to make new and interesting cars."

The newest version of the DeLorean will certainly be interesting and exclusive, Smith said, "and for some people with means, that's enough."

## **WHO'S TO BLAME FOR HIGH GASOLINE PRICES?**

An Editorial by Vern Hance

Yes, the price of gasoline pains me too!

If you read the papers, you know that our Congress is busy trying to find someone or industry to blame. Oil companies were first to be interrogated, then the President begging Saudi Arabia for more oil, there was even a proposal to sue OPEC for not increasing production. Currently hedge funds and speculators are under the microscope, as the source of the price increases.

What these legislators don't want to admit is that our energy policy has been irrational for several decades, thanks to them. I have asked many people recently "Why is it OK to explore and drill for oil and gas in the Gulf offshore area, but not OK on the Pacific Coast, the Atlantic Coast or in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge?" The typical answer I get is "politics" or "environment". That's probably right but it doesn't do much to enlighten us about the nature or extent of the problem.

Worldwide petroleum consumption is about 87 million barrels per day (mbpd). This has increased about 15% since 2000. The U.S. consumes about 20.7 mbpd or about 24% of the total world's consumption. This means we are importing 60% of our petroleum needs. (It was about 40% in '70)

Meanwhile, U.S. has declined slightly and world production has not increased

enough to keep up with demand. A classic supply & demand situation.

It seems rather dumb that our legislators prevent exploration and drilling except on the Gulf coast, when we are dependent on other parts of the world (including many not-so-friendly countries) for 60% of our needs. Here are the top 5 suppliers: #1 = Canada, #2 = Saudi Arabia, #3 = Mexico, #3 = Nigeria, and #4 = Venezuela. Anyone want to bet on what Chavez of Venezuela might be thinking? Sounds like a bad gamble to me.

If you like to worry, consider that 50% of world petroleum shipments move through one or more of these "choke points": Suez Canal, Strait of Hormuz, Red Sea, Bosphorus, Strait of Malacca. What a terrorist-friendly country opportunity !!

So what are our legislators doing? Considering a windfall profits tax on oil companies; Raised the fleet miles per gallon to 35 by 2015 (But large trucks only have to do 25 mpg and cars over 45 square feet - whatever that means - get a break too.) and ignoring supply vulnerability issues.

The ever decreasing value of the dollar is another big factor, but that's another topic.

This necessarily is a broad brush view of the U.S. Energy issue, but I think it's one you don't get from TV news sound bites.

The National Petroleum Council website suggests a 5-point strategy and will give you a better perspective of what our energy policy should consider. Go to [www.npc.org](http://www.npc.org) for more a more detailed and comprehensive explanation.

## FOR SALE

COBRA Ford power, Jag rear-end. Silver w/ black interior. \$21,500 Call Bob Elster 707-938-3254 (1/02)

COBRA-NAF. Ford 289power, 4-speed, Jag posi rear-end. Blue w/ black interior. 5,000 mi. \$23,900 Call Trifam (925) 820-1847 SB-100 smog-exempt (9/07)

COBRA - VW KIT - 427 Snake body fits on your 3" shortened VW chassis. Two available; **reduced to \$2,200 from \$3,200** Call Wayne McAllaster (510) 656-5844 or E-mail 427medusa@sbcglobal.net (2/06)

FERRARI - TESTAROSSA Spyder. Based on 1989 Corvette with 350 V-8 engine and automatic tranny. **Reduced to \$12,000.** Contact Anthony Ramsinh (408) 268-6554 or e-mail aramsinh@aol.com (11/05)

GATSBY - Ford 351W, auto overdrive tranny, SB100 CA smog exempt. Great driver, awesome condition, continuous show winner. \$29,000 Bill Navratil (408) 374-5277 E-mail bnavra@aol.com **New Listing** 4/08

MANX SR-2 - 1678 cc VW engine with 4-speed stick. New interior in 2002. Built in 1977 by present owner who has all receipts, etc. Includes a spare 1600 VW engine and extra parts. \$5,500. Call Don Wicks (707) 998-9383 or e-mail at dkwicks@mchsi.com (11/05)

MERCEDES SSK (Gazelle) Parts: 4 fenders (brown), windshield, radiator shell, bumpers, interior leather and top (tan), tail lights, supercharger pipes, doors (yellow), latches, hinges, etc. Tim 510-278-3085 (04/05)

PANTERA Factory built, only one known to exist. Red w/ beige interior, Chev engine \$35,000 Call Bob Elster 707-938-3254. (1/02)

PORSCHE 550 Spyder. A Beck turnkey built in 2003. 5,000 orig miles, never tracked, 2156 cc custom 182HP dynoed engine w/ 44mm Webers. Everthing polished or powder coated, ceramic mufflers, 4-wheel discs, custom roll bars, silver-blue, tan interior plus all Beck options. SPCNS smog exempt. Asking \$30,000. Dan Rowland 916-989-4330 or cell 916-367-8502 **NEW LISTING** 02/08

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## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2008**

July 3, 2008 - Benicia 4th of July Parade. (CANCELLED FOR LACK OF RESPONSE)

July 19, 2008 - Tour of Hays Antique Truck Museum (Vern Hance, Champion, is having second thoughts on this and will offer a less gas intensive option soon, but save the date)

July (late) - Car show in San Jose (Will Smith Champion)

August 16, 2008 - Hot August Niles Car Show. Niles District of Fremont.

September 6-7, 2008 - NCKCC San Leandro Show 9/6 with Driving Event 9/7.

October 11, 2008 - Wine tour by Wagner & Maddux.

October 25-26 -, 2008 - Club Sandwich, Laughlin, NV

December 7, 2008 - Annual Brunch, Pleasanton Hotel.



**STEPHEN WYNNE** walks through the mechanic shop at the DeLorean Motor Company in Humble, Texas. Wynne has enough parts for about 500 DeLorean vehicles.

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