

THE SPARK PLUG

News to spark your interest

January/February 2021

Spirit of St. Louis Region Classic Car Club of America



Jim & Myrna Schild's 1947 Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith H.J. Mulliner Sedan de Ville at Union Station.

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Director's Message

I Wish

As a New Year dawns we have all 'wished' for things or something good to happen in the coming year, and perhaps even more so this year given the events of 2020. Here are a few of mine, and in no particular order....

I wish for everyone's good health and wellbeing.

I wish for the safety of first responders and those serving in the military.

I wish for an end to this pandemic, and a return to normal everyday life, including businesses.

I wish to see Bob and Todd and Larry and Kevin and Jim and Wendell and.....again.

I wish for the return of monthly Spirit Nights in the Club.

I wish I could stumble upon a rare Classic automobile stored away in a barn somewhere....a Duesy perhaps

I wish that Hershey will be on once again in the Fall

I wish for Classic Car status for the Packard 120

I wish you will all consider renewing your SSR membership for 2021 even though 2020 was a bust

And I wish you all a Happy and Healthy New Year!

What do you wish for?

I have hope and I keep wishing.....wishes do come true!

Keep well,

John



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Across the Editor's Desk

This year should be looked forward to by all of us in the great hope that it has to be better than the last. Almost all of our activities and meetings have been cancelled throughout 2020 and we are all looking forward to 2021 as a time to reactivate our enthusiasm for Classic Cars and for the wonderful fellowship of our members. Unfortunately, the first and biggest event of the year for that has always been our Membership Kick-Off meeting and at this time that is still not possible. Hopefully the distribution of vaccines and the path into spring weather will gradually improve our lives.

Generally, feature car articles are not part of the purpose of the Spirit of St. Louis Region Spark Plug newsletter but since I had little to provide in this issue I hope you will appreciate the feature on one of our Classic Cars. This 1947 Rolls-Royce has been laid up for a few years awaiting installation of two new pistons but I am hoping this year will be the one to get it running and rolling again. The picture on this page shows some of the slow progress on our long term 1936 Cord Phaeton restoration. We have heat in this small garage now so that should help. I really don't like to work on anything in cold weather.

The second article is based on some thoughts I had while thinking about too many projects. I hope it will bring some thoughts to your minds about ways to finish those restoration and renovation projects that have been set aside too long.

Don't forget to renew your membership in the CCCA for both national and local on the forms that you should have received and hopefully returned by now. We look forward to seeing all of you soon. Stay safe and healthy. **Jim**



Our 1936 Cord Convertible Phaeton Sedan is coming along slowly. The re-plated windshield frame, Ramada Red instrument panel and new gauge panel are done.



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Membership Musings



Welcome new member:
Matt Palisch, Jackson, Missouri

Welcome to Matt Palisch. Matt lists a 1940 Packard 180 Super 8 Formal Sedan as his Classic. So that's another score in the Packard column – if you are keeping track: two for two with our newest members.

Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year. Speaking of new year, 28 members have renewed their membership for 2021. I'm sure everyone is looking forward to a vaccinated new year. We will schedule a kickoff event when we can be reasonably certain that we can arrange a safe event for everyone. There are 58 members yet to go to get everyone renewed. By now you should have received the paper renewal in the mail. Or go paperless and find the renewal on-line button in the Classic Car Club of America website (www.classiccarclub.org).

Happy Christmas for the kid in all of us.

Todd

Below: Toby points out some of the special features of Todd's La Salle engine compartment.



Parts and pieces from non-Classic Sources. By Jim Schild

I have always wondered how many Classic Car restorer's, collector and owners knew how many parts and pieces of their favorite Classic could be acquired from sources they may not expect? Although the quality and workmanship of our Classic Cars is indisputable, there are and always have been components that are identical to those used on "lesser" automobiles or even from non-automotive vendors. In the 40 or so years Myrna and I have been deeply involved in Classic and Antique automobiles, we have always had interests in broad areas that are not common to everyone. Whether it is Model T and A Fords, Brass Era cars, trucks or foreign cars such as Rolls-Royce, we were interested in all of them and things I learned about in one field always found a way to connect to another.

Some of the first examples that come to mind are electrical components. Those unique headlight and taillight bulbs and sockets for your 1929 or 1931 Cadillac, LaSalle or Packard could be the identical lamp that fits a 1928-1931 Model A Ford. Why is that important? Although there are few dealers who directly offer bulbs and sockets for those Cadillacs and Packards, there are dozens or Model T and A parts dealers who have them available. Lang's, Mac's, Bratton's and Snyder's are popular quality Model A and even Model T Ford dealers.



Correct electrical wiring in another important area of parts availability that might be helpful when repairing or restoring an early Classic. If one studies factory service and workshop manuals, you may find that wiring color charts are, in most cases using the same color and size wires for the same systems in many different makes of cars. Some of these electrical systems were standardized at the time and what was a green or blue wire in a Ford may be the same color and size in some other make of car,

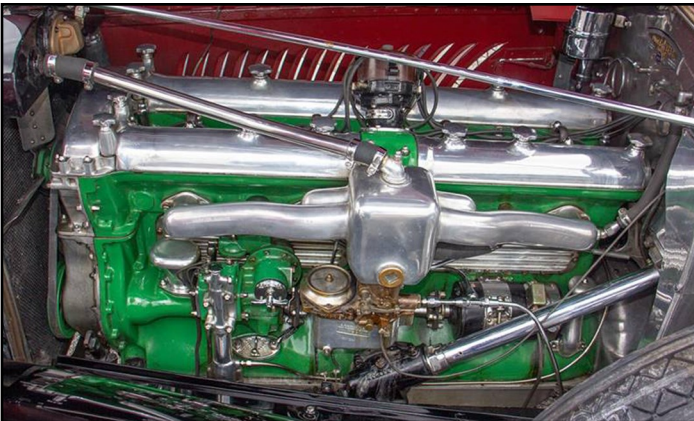
including the Classics. Obviously this made work easier for after-market service shops and repairmen. This research also shows that although too many restorers choose yellow spark plug wires with black stripes for spark plug wires, no cars of that era came that way. Spark plug wires in almost all cases were cloth-covered 7 mm black and it was indicated as such in the factory wiring diagrams.

Wiring for your Classic Car is certainly available from common sources such as XYZ Wiring and Rhode Island Wiring, but one might be surprised to know that is also available by the foot from Model T Ford suppliers such as Lang's Old Car Parts in Baldwinville, Massachusetts. Lang's is a Model T Ford parts dealer but their 12 and 14 gauge cloth-covered wiring, ends and connectors are the same as those used on many other cars of the same era. They also carry proper headlight and taillight bulbs, including modern halogen and LED conversion equipment for early cars of all kinds. Some of you may be surprised to learn that Snyder's Antique Auto Parts manufactures seat springs for all kinds of cars on order.

Of course, a lot of common parts for early Classic Cars are also available from more general dealers such as Restoration Supply Company of Escondido, California. They have proper brass and steel fuel line, oil and grease fittings, welting, bolts, screws and nuts for most applications. Many of these common parts were different in the 1920s and 1930s than in later years and should be used when authenticity is desired. Don't depend on your local hardware store for the right parts and fasteners such as slotted oval head screws and thick-headed bolts and nuts (Although I did find some 8 x 32 slotted oval-head machine screws at our local ACE Hardware this past week.).

It may surprise some to know that even in the Classic Era, original manufacturer's found components from common vendors to use on their new cars. One of the more well-known of these builders was Cord. When our 1936 Cord 810 was being developed in Indiana, money was a problem. Components such as the steering wheels, window cranks and inside door handles were procured from outside makers and redesigned for use in the new Cord.

While planning and working on our replica 1929 Duesenberg Dual Cowl Phaeton, I came across another possible original manufacturer acquisition I had not thought of before. We are using a 1952 Buick 320 cubic-inch Straight Eight engine in this project, but we want to make it as visually appealing as possible. The original plan was to order special Duesenberg engine paint from Bill Hirsch in New Jersey but at some point we realized that Duesenberg Engine Green looked very much like the familiar and more easily available John Deere Green used on their farm tractors and agriculture equipment. As I thought about this further I wondered whether the similarity went historically deeper.



Fred and August Duesenberg were born in Germany but they moved to Iowa soon after their arrival to the U.S. Over the years, their business interests moved around Iowa, Minneapolis and later Indiana after E.L. Cord entered the picture. Because the John Deere Company, makers of farm and agricultural equipment, operated around Moline, Illinois and Waterloo, Iowa, it is entirely possible that Fred Duesenberg noticed the distinctive green paint used on John Deere equipment in the Midwest and decided that it would be a great color to use on the Duesenberg Model J engine. There is no way to know at this time whether this actually happened but it seems a natural conclusion. The minds of creative people work in mysterious ways. Our Buick Straight Eight engine will be John Deere Green.

The Movieland Rolls-Royce By Jim Schild

With four Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith motorcars in our garage we have come to identify each of them by the order in which we acquired them. We had a number one car and a number two car but when it came to the last two we decided a different description was in order. In 1995 we acquired the 1948 Rolls-Royce Westmoreland Speedster from the Norris Allen collection auction which had a special local badged identity of its own but the one we acquired in 1996 had a surprise identity of its own.

It was not uncommon for me to find a car we wanted from an ad in Hemmings Motor News. Our 1929 Cadillac Fleetwood

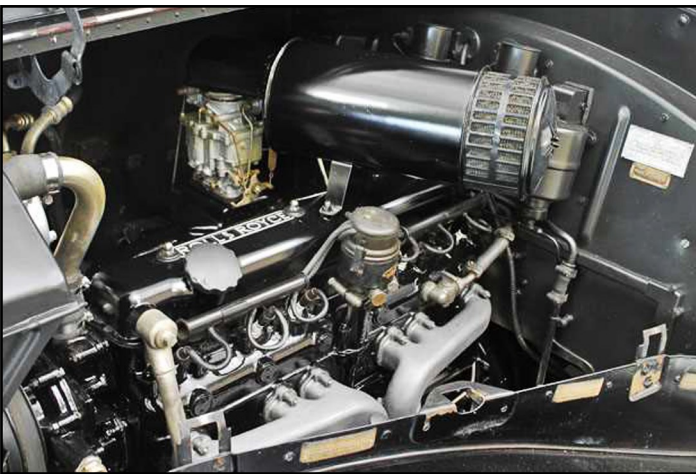
Town Cabriolet was found that way in 1985 and was so desirable that Myrna had me on my way to Wichita, Kansas the next day to work out a trade. It was sometime in 1996 that an ad appeared for a 1947 Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith H.J. Mulliner Sedanca deVille Chassis WAB26. There was no picture with the ad but we knew it was exactly like the one a local St. Louis doctor owned and it was something that would be a hit for our limousine service. The price was very good and we knew the seller, Tony Handler in Los Angeles, California through the Rolls-Royce Owner's Club. Myrna called Tony right away and informed him that a check for the car would be on the way immediately. Tony, being the trusting, honest business man that he was, held the car for us. He later told us there had been 100 calls that day but we were first to commit to the purchase. This was in contrast to the disappointing experience we had earlier from Gullwing Motors in New York who sold a PV Rolls-Royce to someone else after we sent a check to them.

When Myrna called Tony, she learned that this car had been on display for many years at the Movieland Wax Museum in Buena Park, California and was known as their "Gold Car" because of its bright gold metal flake finish on the body and all plated components. In addition to being displayed daily in front of the museum, the car was used to transport a number of movie stars and celebrities to the presentation of their wax figures at the museum. Some of these celebrities included Gina Lollobrigida, Natalie Wood, Isaac Hayes, Kirk Douglas, Gloria Swanson, Boris Karloff, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans and more. The museum was being closed and the owners were disposing of the properties.





The Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith is an ideal example of post WWII automobiles that are much the same in many ways as their pre-WWII counterparts. The Silver Wraith was announced in 1946 and was among the first production British automobiles after the war. It was based on a heavy-duty 127-inch wheelbase chassis with parallel leaf springs in the rear and independent coil spring front suspension that was based on the fine design used on the Senior Series 1940 Packard, but improved to Rolls-Royce standards of construction. The brakes are mechanical in the rear and Girling hydraulic at the front, assisted at both ends by a Hispano-Suiza designed mechanical clutch-type servo on the manual four-speed transmission. Chassis Lubrication is provided by a foot-operated Bijur oiling system like that used on Packard and Duesenberg. The steel disc wheels are 17-inch diameter with large hex nuts securing the wheel covers. The original tires were Dunlop Fort 6.50 x 17 black sidewall.



The Silver Wraith engine is a 4.25 Liter inline six-cylinder using an F-Head design with intake valves in the cast aluminum head and exhaust valves in the cast-iron block. Carburation is

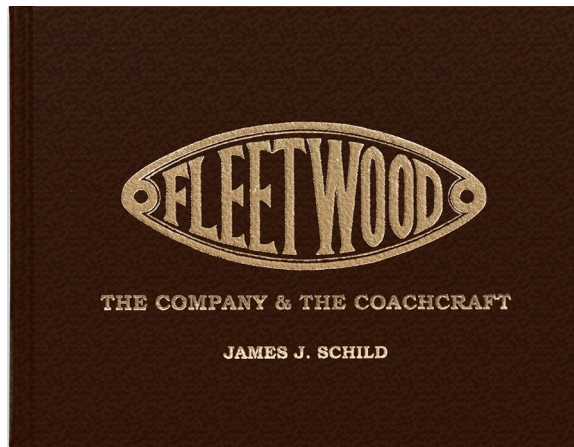
provided by a single Stromberg dual downdraft, similar to that used on the Buick and Chrysler. A forged steel crankshaft is kept smooth by a RR designed balancer on its nose. This engine develops approximately 125 horsepower. The vertical stainless radiator shell covers a large radiator with thermostatically-controlled vertical shutters.

The Movieland Rolls-Royce was soon delivered by a man & wife team with a small truck and an open trailer and that would be the first time we saw the car. It was now painted black with dark metallic gold on the side panels and still had the Movieland Wax Museum decals on the doors and deck lid. The bright gold metal flake finish had been painted over for a more acceptable appearance which was better for our purposes. The rear spats (skirts) were gone and the radiator shell was missing. Apparently, someone decided that to remove the gold plating on the stainless shell, they tried to polish it off and in doing so, caused some damage. Tony Handler was attempting to repair it. They did not know that the way to remove plating was to reverse the electroplating process which would have resolved the problem in minutes. We received the shell later but it was not as it should be and later required almost \$1,000 in repairs at a local St. Louis fabrication shop.

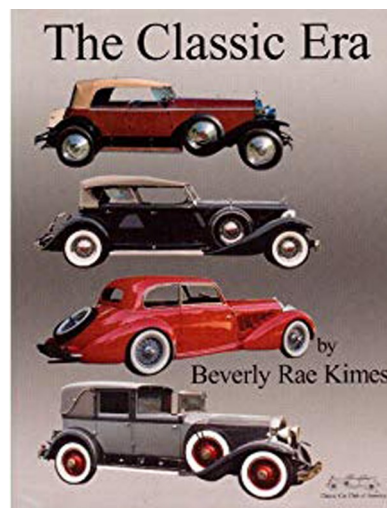


The car was in good shape generally although the original interior had been replaced with what I would call a “Tijuana trim job”, replacing the nice cloth and leather with some cheaper tan vinyl material. The RHD car ran and drove reasonably well and everything seemed to work so it required almost nothing to put it in service other than new Wilton rear carpet. It soon became Myrna’s favorite car to drive. Other than its 1947 Chassis Number that makes it a CCA Full Classic, it is identical to the other two aluminum bodied 1951-1952 H.J. Mulliner Silver Wraith’s (NC) we have except for expected variations in the custom coachwork.

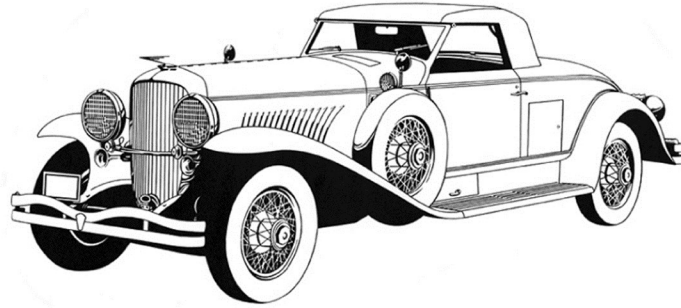
THE CLASSIC BOOKSHELF



The SSR Region proudly announces a re-issue of the book *Fleetwood, The Company and The Coachcraft*, by Region member James J. Schild. Long out of print, and a must for all Classic Car enthusiasts, the book is printed on high quality paper, and is the authoritative work on Fleetwood coachwork supplied to the finest American and European car manufacturers. Awarded the prestigious **Maurice Hendry Award** for excellence in journalistic contributions by the Cadillac & La Salle Club in 2012, and the **Thomas McKean Memorial Cup** by the Antique Automobile Club of America in 2013. Brown leatherette cover with gold foil stamping, 464 pages, 1100 b/w illustrations. \$99.50 postpaid. International buyers, please contact us for a shipping quote. Order your copy today from the SSR Region via email at ssr.ccca@yahoo.com, or via our webstore at www.spiritccca.com.



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HUNTER CLASSICS

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20 February 2021

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