

**THE SPARK PLUG**  
 News to spark your interest

September/October 2023

Spirit of St. Louis Region Classic Car Club of America



Larry Hassel's 1931 LaSalle Rumble Seat Coupe V-8 340/345 Series with Model Jordan Burmester. Photography by Larry Hassel.

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# Director's Message

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**A**s we near the end of 2023 in a matter of months, and our calendar year of activities comes to a close, the election of new Officers and Board Members at our Annual Meeting will be a top priority. Many of those who currently serve on the Leadership Team will be stepping down this year as their terms expire, and now would be a great time to throw your hat in the ring if you have an interest in helping chart the course of our Region in the years to come.

I will be completing my second consecutive 3-year term as your Director, and it's time for me to pass the torch to someone else. Change is good, for it brings a different perspective and vision for the Region's future. I'm proud of what we have collectively accomplished as a Region, and I know the next Director will do great things. Whoever it is that succeeds me, I am confident that you will support that individual as you have supported me.

So, please consider getting involved at the leadership level. The time commitment is minimal, the rewards are great, and the people that serve alongside you are wonderful.

*John Lowell*



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# Across the Editor's Desk



## *Ghosts of the Past...*

**L**ast night, Spirit of St. Louis Region CCCA had our monthly Spirit Night at a legendary “rural” location on a remaining, but somewhat forgotten lonely and desolate stretch of old Route 66...Big Chief Roadhouse. Built in 1929, the Chief played host to baseball star Babe Ruth and legendary Mafiosi, Al Capone. Route 66 was the “mother road” that stretched from Chicago to LA, ending at the Santa Monica Pier and the Pacific Ocean...the stuff of songs, books and stories for certain. I’m sure most of us can hear the words of the popular song performed by Nat King Cole originally...”Get Your Kicks on Route 66.”

**I**drove Lucy the LaSalle (1931 Rumble Seat Coupe) westward out what is now Highway 100, fighting rush hour commuters with their “hair on fire” trying to get home to accomplish little or nothing of significance or relevance. As I drove, my destiny was in another world, another place and another time. My world was 1931 as I listened to the Cadillac flathead V-8 engine whine as we went through three slow gear changes getting up to cruising speed. I had my windows down but the smell of exhaust blow-by permeated the air. I imagined what life must have been like ninety-two years ago when this car was delivered new out of GM’s Clark Street Plant by legendary designer, Harley Earl. Driving home after dinner I imagined those who saw us heading towards them with massive headlamps ablaze and Trippe Lights illuminating the roadway. They had to be doing a double take as if they were seeing a ghost coming towards them. I have to wonder what they thought and what they concluded as we motored past. Did they see this car as rolling art and history as I did or did nothing register at all?

I have loved fine and unusual motorcars as long as I can remember. Driving this car or similar Classics evokes a sense of time travel and nostalgia for me. I would much prefer to be driving something like this

than sipping on fine aged whiskey or puffing on a hand rolled Cuban cigar. It is that oil and grease under the fingernails combined with the acrid smells of exhaust that facilitate my sense of time travel. Driving a Classic evokes a myriad of sensory perceptions and I can’t help but feel a bit regal when I’m at the massive wheel. Maybe it is the “Pavlov’s Dog syndrome” and I salivate at any opportunity to drive or ride in a fine “Classic” motorcar. I vividly remember the opportunity to drive a magnificent Springfield, MA built 1925 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost and became embarrassed as I shifted into first too quickly and heard the start of that sickening gear-grinding sound. As time has gone on, I see fewer legendary motorcars on the road as cookie-cutter irrelevant and disposable Nissans, Mazdas and Toyotas seem to prevail like Mosquitos. Let me march to my drummer and appreciate the excitement and opportunity to see one of these fine automobiles in operation and not in a dusty museum. I hope others consider driving their Classics and Antiques as a means of sharing history and the spirit of “active” preservation.

Many of us are looking forward to the upcoming Gateway to Fountains: A Classic Car Tour of Kansas City Sites in mid-October. This is a combined tour of KC Region of the Cadillac LaSalle Club and the Oil Belt Region of CCCA, Spirit of St. Louis Region CCCA, St. Louis Region of CLC and the Mid-America Rolls Royce Owner’s Club. The itinerary has visits to three car collections and the Steamboat Arabia Museum.

*Larry Hassel*

*As of this writing, Jim Schild continues to have successful chemotherapy treatments and is starting to regain some strength. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers.*



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# Membership Musings

## ADVERTISEMENTS

You can now place an ad in the Spark Plug! Buy the full year.

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We ask that advertisers submit ads reflecting services or businesses consistent with our members' interests. Digital graphics are not required but will result in a higher quality advertisement. If submitting a hard copy of graphics please make sure there are no fold lines, tears in the paper or information that is not accurate.

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Payment in full must be received before ads are published. Ads must be received prior to each deadline. If purchasing full year package the same graphics and or wording will be used each time unless otherwise notified before the next deadline. Deadlines are the 20<sup>th</sup> of every other month. Spirit of St. Louis Region CCCA reserves the right to refuse advertisement space. The Spirit of St. Louis region CCCA does not assume liability, either implied or expressed as to accuracy of any ad. The Spirit of St. Louis Region CCCA does not insure or endorse any product or services advertised.



**J**im Schild reports that he is continuing treatment and receiving positive reports from his doctor. Jim and Myrna came out to the Horseless Carriage Club's picnic at the end of August and stayed for lunch. He is using all his strength to continue his recuperation. Please feel free to reach out to Jim and give him your positive thoughts. Thanks to Larry Hassel for pitching in to help get the Spark Plug out while Jim gets treatment.

Thanks to Jim Hendrix for coordinating the tour of Manns Restoration shop in Festus. Great turnout at Manns, who have had a number of high visibility successes, most recently at Pebble Beach. Thanks also to member Jason Manns for hosting the group.

John Hartmann graciously pitched in for a couple of events. John arranged for the Spirit Night at the Chop House in Fenton, a very tasty experience. Then to cap off the week, John organized a tour of the Fox Theater, featuring SSR member Dave Stephens on the mighty Wurlitzer organ. As a result of the painting in the seating areas, we were unable sit but had to gather around the organ and get Dave's description of the history and mechanics of the organ, complete with ah-ooga horn. Then he regaled us with selections from Phantom of the Opera and Star Wars. All without sheet music. It's no wonder that Lloyds of London won't let Dave use his hands for anything but playing the organ!

There were about 20 cars and their drivers participating in the Annual Car Show at the Missouri Veterans Home on Lewis and Clark Blvd. SSR was represented by John Gibson, Joe Krzan, Wendell Smith and grandson Alex, and Todd.

We also had a Spirit Night Dulaney's Grille and Pub, thanks to Thomas Quick. Plans for September Spirit Night is at Big Chief, hosted by Larry Hassel, and in October at the Frisco Barroom in Webster Groves, hosted by Trish and Jim Gormley.

If you are interested in participating in the Kansas City CARavan and tour, please be sure to get your hotel reservation at the Fontaine and get your registration in to Paul Williamson in Kansas City. We are planning to take US highway 50 to Kansas City with lunch along the way. Get your touring car ready!

*Todd Tobiasz*

It's That Time Again...

2024 Dues are Due...Both National and Local

*Below is a preview of things to come...Photograph by Larry Hassel...Natalia Cantwell poses as Jean Harlow with her Belgian Malinois, Chanel No. 5 next to Charles Gallagher's 1930 Marmon V-16 Convertible Sedan.*

2023 MEMBER DIRECTORY



Spirit of St. Louis Region  
Classic Car Club of America



*Beauty and*  
*the* **BEAST**



*Evoking the spirit of screen legend Jean Harlow, lovely model Natalia Cantwell poses in Classic Era style next to the iconic, massive powered 1930 Marmon 16-cylinder Convertible Sedan owned by SSR member, Charles Gallagher. Photo courtesy Larry Hassel.*

*Save the Date...Spirit of St. Louis Region CCCA Annual Mtg.*

*Sunday, November 5th, Noon until 4:00 PM.*

*Final Location is still "To Be Determined!"*





## 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.cca@yahoo.com](mailto:ssr.cca@yahoo.com), or via our webstore at [www.spiritcca.com](http://www.spiritcca.com).



The SSR has a limited supply of the award winning book, *The Classic Era*, by the late Beverly Rae Kimes, available for sale. Hardcover, 8-1/2 x 11, 720 Pages. The top and bottom cover Classics are owned by SSR members. These books are brand new and a must for the Classic Car enthusiast. \$50.00. To reserve a copy, contact Bob Radel at 314-991-3590.

# Three-Region Grand Classic

July 21-23, 2023

The Indiana, Ohio, and Greater Illinois CCCA Regions have been annually rotating hosting Grand Classics.

This year the Indiana region served as the host region, sponsoring the year 2023 Grand Classic in Columbus, Indiana. Columbus is a small city located about fifty miles from Indianapolis and is the home of Cummings Diesel, the community's leading industry since it was founded here in 1919.

The Abbotts, Gibsons and Smiths enjoy taking in an event or two together each summer. Our preference is to attend shows with tours that are a day's drive from St. Louis. This year the group chose to attend the Indiana Grand Classic and the Geneva Concours d'Elegance.

The three-day Indiana event started with a Friday evening reception at Irwin Gardens, a lovely formal garden which is part of one of the community's elegant historic mansions. On Saturday, the car show was held on a grassy area at Round Lake in Mill Race Park. Saturday evening featured a semi-formal dinner and awards ceremony. Sunday featured a scenic drive of approximately forty miles through Brown County to the rustic Story Inn for brunch.

Carol Pumphrey served as coordinator of the activity and did an outstanding job with her committee, managing a very enjoyable weekend which included approximately sixty cars.

The Abbotts entered their 1928 Cunningham, and the Smith car was their 1927 Rolls Royce Phantom I. Both cars received trophy awards. On this trip, the Gibson's ended up serving as "skilled handlers" because the new radiator for their 1931 Pierce Arrow, the car they had intended to bring, had not been received in time for installation and to enable attendance at this show. Also in attendance were Alan and Nancy Strong from Spirit of St. Louis Region with their lovely 1918 Pierce Arrow 48 Dual Valve 7 Passenger Touring.

Next summer, the Ohio Region, will be hosting the Three-Region Grand Classic under the leadership of former CCCA president Dave Johnson.

*Wendell Smith*





Right—Nancy Strong and Rose Gibson enjoy the Grand Classic.

Left—Bob and Annalynn Abbott were thrilled with their award.

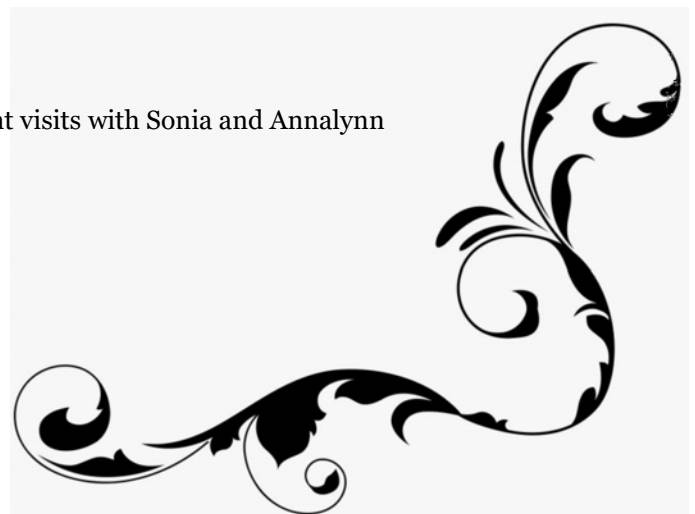




The lovely Nancy Strong plays the role in period attire of the Strong 1918 Pierce Arrow.



Sheila Joynt visits with Sonia and Annalynn Abbott.



# How Cars Were Tested in the Day...Real Time at Rolls Royce!!!



*From Wendell Smith Regarding Rolls Royce Testing Proceses:*

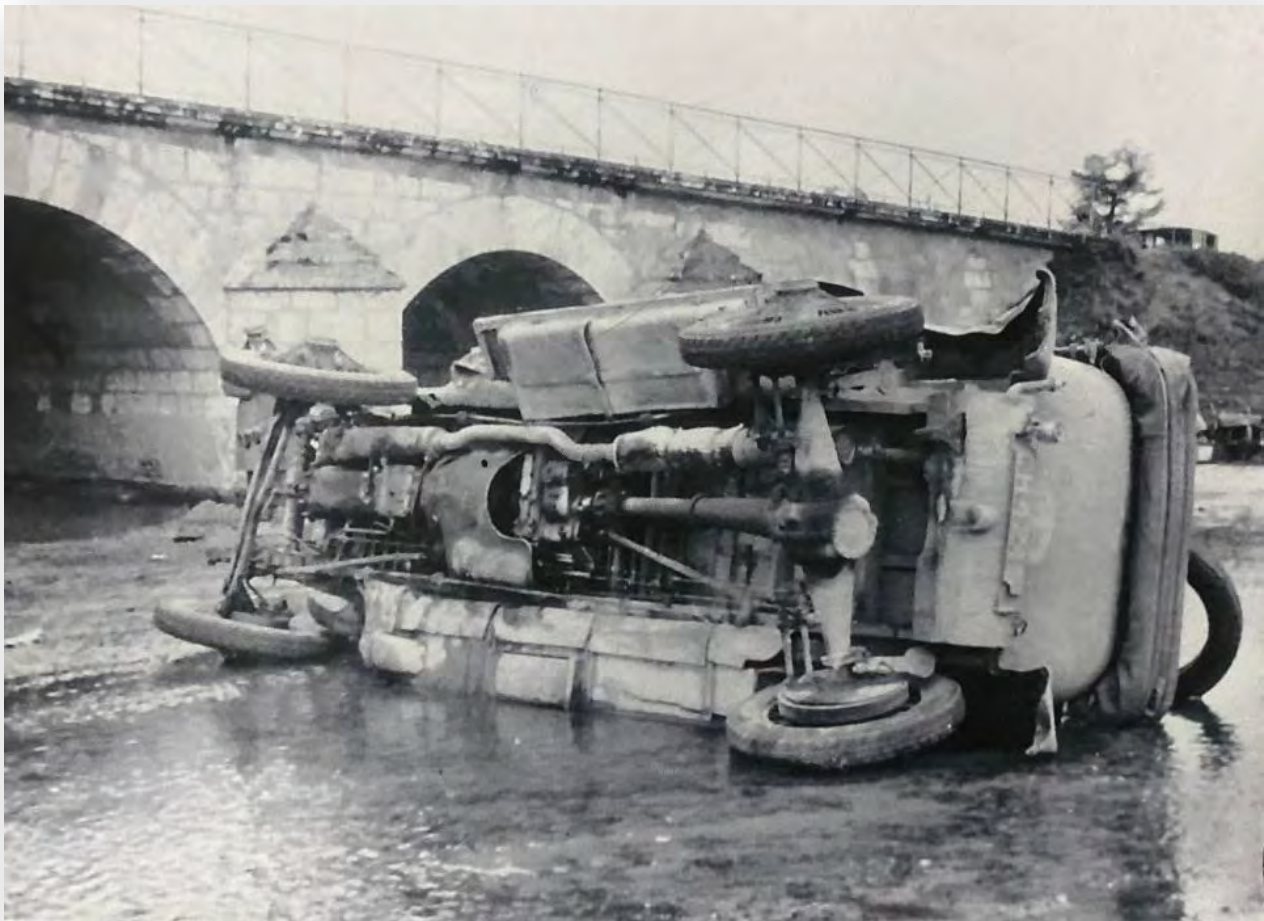
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met a local resident when I was attending the Indiana (Three Region) Grand Classic. Both his grandfather and father worked for Rolls Royce in the early days.

They were both engineers.

In 1924 when this wreck happened his grandfather was testing his prototype design for four wheel brakes on the 24 ghost that turned over when the front brakes locked up. All engineers in that era had to go out to field test for 6 months per year. This particular test was and example of that. Testing was done in southern France near the French Riviera where Royce spent the last years of his life with his nurse/mistress (another story. I am sure many have heard this story..."Nellie in Her Nighty..." or rather less in a derogatory manner..."The Spirit of Ecstasy" hood ornament design (Eleanor Thornton).

*Anyway...the grandfather and passenger ended up in the hospital as a result of the wreck. Fortunately they were not killed.*



# The Fabulous Fox and the Fabulous Organist...

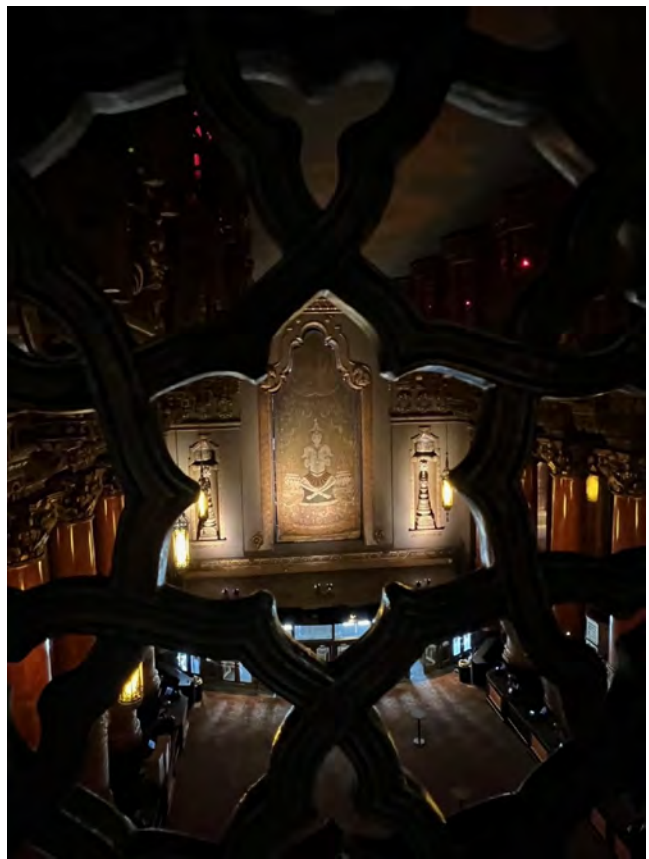
The Spirit Region joined the Horseless Carriage Club of Missouri, Inc. for a tour of the Fox Theater organized by John Hartmann and Dave Stephens. Fifty members and guests of the clubs were divided into two groups to tour the lobby, seating area, stage, and the back stage. But the most anticipated part of the tour was the 25 minutes that talented Pierce Arrow owner and organist Dave Stephens spent giving us a rundown of the Mighty Wurlitzer. As a result of the painting in the seating areas, we were unable sit but had to gather around the organ and get Dave's description of the history and mechanics of the organ, complete with Model A ah-ooga horn. He dispelled the rumor that he has been playing it since the theater opened in 1929. Dave is the successor to long-time Fox organist and showman Stan Kann. Stan convinced theater owners to restore the organ, which has sat neglected in the basement when talking pictures made the theater organ unnecessary. Interestingly, Stan also owned a Classic Pierce-Arrow. Finally, Dave played a selection of tunes from Phantom of the Opera and a combination of Star Wars and Star Trek tunes to demonstrate the theater organ sound. Thanks to Dave for making our visit to the Fox memorable. We finished out the day with a sumptuous lunch at the Fountains on Locust Street...previously this building housed the Supreme Motor Co. from 1918 until 1924, dealership for Stutz automobiles.

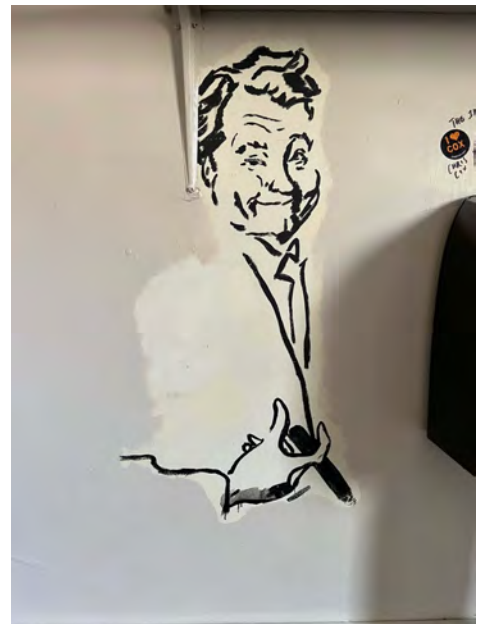
Ed. Postscript...

*A number of years ago, the late Stan Kann performed at the one **National Meeting of the Classic Car Club of America held in St. Louis at St. Louis Union Station**...members were taken to the Fox Theater and Stan's original silent movie print of Phantom of the Opera was projected in the massive auditorium and he performed his original score that he wrote to accompany the film, comparing it to the Andrew Lloyd Weber version. Stan was classically trained as a musician...he was a great friend and a great soul, appearing as a guest of Johnny Carson on the tonight show more than any other guest. We used to talk on the phone for hours about cars, vacuum cleaners and the organ at the Fox as well as his days performing on local St. Louis TV with Charlotte Peters and then where I first saw Stan as a young lad, Ruggeri's Italian Restaurant on the Hill. Mom and Dad used to take me there just to see Stan play the organ. I eventually learned to play a home organ we purchased to "bribe" dad to quit smoking (he didn't) but I learned enough about the organ to be dangerous and not nearly the "artist" as Stan or Dave (Larry Hassel)*

Todd Tobiasz



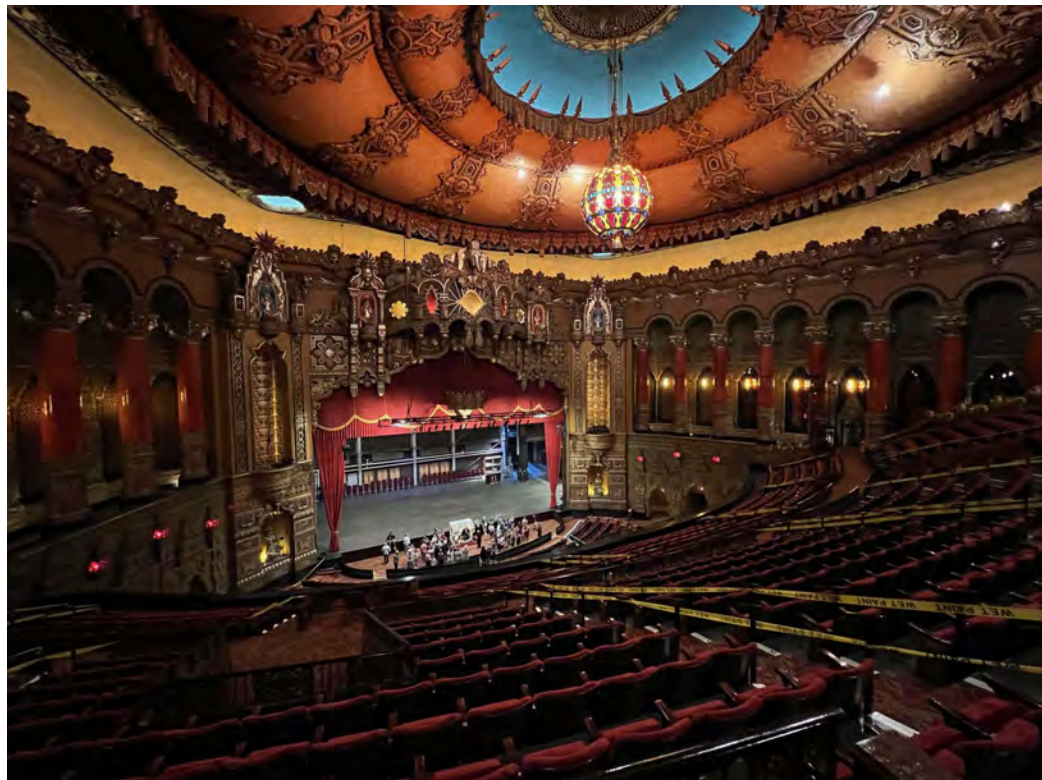








*The Fox Theatre has a fabulous history, beginning when the theatre opened on January 31, 1929 as one of the crown jewels in William Fox's motion picture empire. Billed as "St. Louis' largest and most magnificent temple of amusement," the theatre anchored St. Louis' entertainment area along North Grand Boulevard.*





# **GATEWAY TO FOUNTAINS: A CLASSIC CAR TOUR OF KANSAS CITY SITES**

**OCTOBER 13-16, 2023**

**F**all driving tour from St. Louis to Kansas City along US route 50. Leave St. Louis on Friday, Oct 13, with lunch along the way. Arrive in KC late afternoon. Host hotel is The Fontaine, 901 W. 48<sup>th</sup> Place, in the Plaza district. Our team is still talking to the hotel about a group rate. Planning to have a welcome reception that evening, giving arriving travelers a chance to meet the KC host clubs: KC region of the Cadillac LaSalle Club and the Oil Belt region of CCCA. As with last Fall's event, this tour is being planned with Spirit region CCCA, St. Louis region of CLC, and the St. Louis Rolls Royce Owners Club.

Current plan is to visit three car collections and the Steamboat Arabia Museum on Saturday and Sunday. Car collections are planned to be the Ehinger Collection, Armacost Collection, and the Kansas City Automotive Museum. Option for the group will be to return to St. Louis on Sunday afternoon or explore individually and return Monday.

We expect to have the plans firmed up and registration materials available in the next few weeks.



# SPIRIT NIGHTS...CB CHOP HOUSE...FENTON, MO/BIG CHIEF ROADHOUSE...WILDWOOD, MO



*...and the Grilled Salmon was to die for...not to mention the other menu choices.*





Big Chief Roadhouse has a celebrated history dating back to 1929. Located near Pond, Missouri, Big Chief Roadhouse was originally built by William Clay Pierce, of the Pierce-Pennant Oil Company, as part of the Big Chief Highway Hotel to serve transcontinental travelers on the now famed Route 66. According to local historians and tourist guides from the period, Big Chief was one of the largest tourist cottage courts in Missouri.

Big Chief differed from average cottage courts of the time in that it offered relatively elaborate and elegant dining. The uniqueness is rumored to have attracted star baseball legend, Babe Ruth, as well as infamous gangster, Al Capone.

Over the years, Big Chief has gone through many transformations. After Route 66 was diverted to follow the path of what is now Interstate 44, Big Chief lost most of its visitors and eventually closed. In 1946 the restaurant became "Mike Aceto's Café 66." The bell tower was taken down in 1959 and the cabins were demolished due to disrepair in the 1970's. Since then, Big Chief was revived as a re-sale shop, landscaping company, and once again a restaurant.



Re-opening as a restaurant in the mid 1990's, Big Chief has for the past 20 years or so, remained a dining destination. The cabins are gone, but it is one of the last remaining full service restaurants on the famed roadway.

Today, the restaurant boasts a diverse, from scratch, menu with dishes ranging from classic comforts like the country fried steak and chicken pot pie, to modern takes on classics like the toasted lasagna and smoked pork chop.

*The toasted Lasagna was "out of this world..."*



# Pierce Arrow Society's 65th Annual Meet

By Duane Wesche

The 2023 Pierce Arrow Society's 65th Annual Meet was based in Glens Falls, New York.

Event co-chairs, Tony Zappone, Bob Dluhy and Craig Lovrich planned a great time for all.

The event began on June 20th with the Board meeting and welcoming party in the Adirondack Room at the host Queensbury Hotel, a restored grand hotel that opened in 1926. This was also the base hotel 30 years ago, for the 1993 Annual Meet.

To have your car judged at the Pierce Arrow Society shows, you must drive it on a tour and there were three days of touring offered.

Wednesday the group drove north to the Adirondack Experience through beautiful forests and small hamlets in the Adirondack Mountains. The Adirondack Experience is a seventeen acre museum dedicated to the history and traditions of life through the ages in the magnificent wilderness of this six million acre forest preserve. We had lunch at the cafe overlooking Blue Mountain Lake.

After lunch, the route back to the hotel took us through Lake George Village. This small town fills with tourists every summer to enjoy the beautiful Lake George. This area has hiking trails, winter ski slopes and a restored British Fort from the French and Indian Wars.

For those who didn't miss a turn or get lost, the total tour was about 150 miles. Most of us added dozens more miles wandering around the backroads of the Adirondack Mountains. Dinner was on our own with many wonderful choices within walking distance if not eating at the hotel.

Thursday took us south to the Saratoga National Historic Park. The battle of Saratoga was a turning point of the Revolutionary War. The museum was very interesting and educational. There was an optional tour to the Saratoga Monument which looks like a smaller version of the Washington Monument.

The drive back to the hotel went for a while along the Hudson River/Champlain Canal.

That evening the group boarded buses to go to the paddle boat Lac du Saint Sacrement for a two and a half hour dinner cruise on Lake George. The excellent food was backed by live entertainment and gorgeous views. The sun set over the trees was beautiful.

Horse racing was on the agenda for Friday. Actually the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame in Saratoga Springs. This impressive and comprehensive museum featured interactive videos with Hall of Fame jockeys and trainers and a theatrical presentation What it Takes: Journey to the Hall of Fame.

After the museum, lunch was at a delightful little Italian restaurant Mama Mia's. From there we drove to the Saratoga Auto Museum. This has 30 vehicles in three galleries, one of which featured actual cars used in various James Bond movies. The docent that we had was incredibly knowledgeable and engaging.

Dinner again was on your own and the evening was completed with the Flea Market and Ladies Vintage Attic with period clothing and accessories.

After having four beautiful and sunny days, Saturday, the car show day, started with a light rain that would occasionally get much heavier. Over twenty cars and one newly restored Travelodge braved the rain on the closed off street in front of the Queensbury.

Early in the afternoon the judging completed, most of the cars were returned to the parking lot or their trailers and people tried to dry off and relax.

Saturday evening was the awards banquet. There were good beverages and great food. Very lively conversations at every table. There were over 100 in attendance, including Spirit CCA members the Gibsons and Wesches. With 35 cars and the Travelodge registered for the meet, even with the rain at the show, it was a success.

Award winners were:

Vale Faro Award-most original..E. Peterson 1937 Model 1702 7 passenger sedan ( happens to be my old car)



Parnagian award and Becker award- longest distance driven to meet..W. Hunter 1931 Model 42 5 pass sedan (driven from Chicago area)

Special award- chief judge choice, A. Roleau 1937 Model B Travelodge

Class 1 First place..J. Walsh 1918 48-B-5 7 pass Touring

Class 2 First place. G. Long 1925 Series 80 7 pass Touring

Class 3 First place..W. Scites 1929 133 Club Brougham

Class 4 First place G. Long 1932 Model 54 Convertible Coupe

Eric Rosenau award . . B. Dluhy 1931 Model 43 5 pass Touring

Bernard Weis Award-Best of Show.. S. Lehrman 1936 Model 1602 Convertible Coupe

Sunday brought another rainy day for people to leave for home. Next year's Annual Meet will be in Kalamazoo, Michigan August 20-25. Hopefully we will see more local members attend.



Larry Hassel  
646 Woodhill Est. Dr.  
Ellisville, MO 63021



Blast from the Past...1919 Cole 870 Tourer owned by Helen Cole Imbs...on display at Hunter Farms Pavilion...CCCA Mini-Caravan.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### October 2023

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| <b>Gateway to Fountains—A Classic Car Tour of Kansas City Sites</b>                  | <b>October 13-16, 2023</b> |
| <b>Missouri Athletic Club West and Friends—Classics and Cocktails (4:30—7:00 PM)</b> | <b>October 19, 2023</b>    |

### November 2023

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| <b>CCCA—Spirit of St. Louis Region Annual Mtg. (Noon to 4:00 PM) Location TBD</b> | <b>November 5, 2023</b> |
|---|-------------------------|

### December 2023

**Merry Christmas!!!**