



THE BELLTOWN BULLETIN

Belltown Antique Car Club - P.O. Box 211, East Hampton, CT 06424

April, 2021

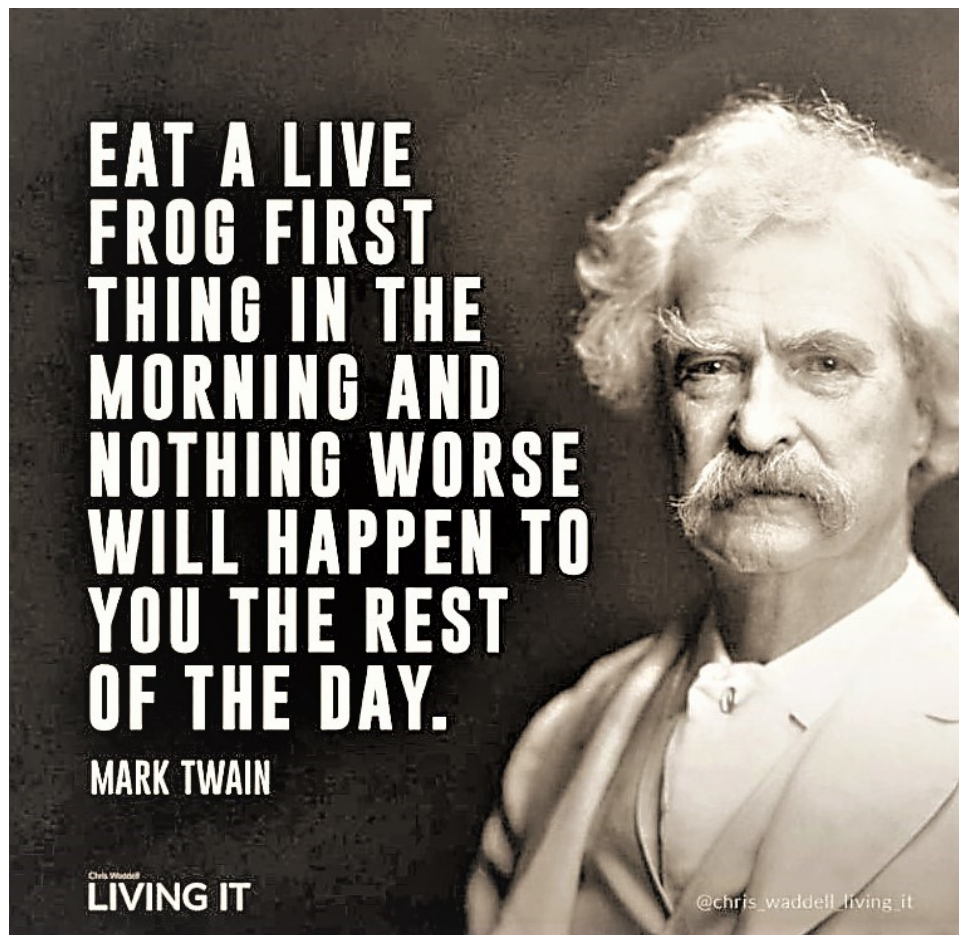
NEXT MEETING

Saturday, April 3, 2021 at 1:30 p.m. at Karl Helming's in Portland

Please bring a chair and a mask - social distancing practices will be observed
Stay home if you show any signs of illness or have underlying health conditions

- On the Agenda:
- The Final Word on our 2021 Antique Engine & Tractor Meet
 - Suggestions for possible spring activities
 - Membership update
 - Upcoming meetings and location

"APRIL FUEL"



This quote is a favorite of Chris Waddell, the Paralympic athlete, motivational speaker and *Living It* interviewer.

[Thanks to Lauren Gister, Chester First Selectman, for sharing this in one of her COVID update emails.
Wearing a mask doesn't seem so bad by comparison! - *Ed.*]

CLUB NOTES

Our third monthly meeting of 2021 was held on Saturday, March 6 in Portland. Once again we thank *Karl Helming* for hosting the meeting. *Alan Carlson* presided following his COVID-19 quarantine and recovery from pink eye. According to the head table, the attendance was the highest so far this year.

Cliff Baker reported that a member who wishes to remain anonymous donated \$400 to the Club treasury. This generous donation will ensure that we are able to procure trophies for this year's shows. The members showed their appreciation with applause.

Jon Grant said that he would re-apply for an event permit from the State of Conn. for our Engine & Tractor Meet on Sunday, April 25, at Salmon River State Forest field. We are somewhat encouraged by comments made by Governor Lamont last Thursday on the forthcoming loosening of restrictions related to COVID-19. [At press time the state was still not willing to commit to allowing outdoor gatherings in excess of 200 people, however, it is possible that this could change as of April 5th. We will have to make a decision at the April meeting no matter what. *Alan Carlson* and two other members walked Tim Cone's field in East Haddam and believe it is a viable alternative if Salmon River is denied. This will also be discussed at the meeting. - *Ed.*]

Alan Carlson revealed that we have a new insurance proposal underwritten by Chubb that offers a significant reduction in our annual insurance premium. *Cliff Baker* will pursue making a carrier switch after confirming that there will be no adverse impact on coverage. Update at the April meeting.

On the assumption that our Antique Engine & Tractor Meet will take place, we need to be ready with flyers, publicity, masks, etc. Once *Jon Grant* gets word from the state about the permit he will notify the Leadership Team plus *Mark Aldieri* (publicity), *Betty Lichota* (Facebook) and *Ralph Phil* (web site and street banners). **Note:** if the event is held on state property we must make it clear to vendors and attendees alike that the flea market is restricted to hobby-related items only; the sale of general merchandise is prohibited.

Jay Beveridge followed up his previous proposal to host a Spring Dust-Off driving tour by offering up the second weekend of May as the target timing, which garnered a generally positive response. Jay will firm up the details at the April meeting. The idea is for two groups to converge at Gillette Castle for a leg stretcher and lunch. One group will come down from the East Hampton area and the other from the Essex area. Mustering locations will need to be determined for each group, as well as driving directions from there to Hadlyme. The Castle will probably still be closed but the grounds are open. Rest room availability needs to be confirmed.

Short Strokes - /// Xavier High School in Middletown announced it is having its annual car show May 1st. /// The 40 year cut-off for our August Vintage Motorcar Meet will be 1981. /// The East Hampton Library does not plan to allow evening meetings in its community room for the near future, therefore, our April meeting has once again been scheduled at Karl Helming's garage on the first Saturday. ///

Don Liepelt was volunteered to be guest speaker and chose "How he got his start in the hobby" as his subject. Back in 1922, when Don's dad, Bill, was 14, the family moved to Madison. Bill saw a 1911 Ford Model T Touring that summer and decided he would have it someday. Bill pursued the car for quite awhile until he contracted TB and was laid up in a sanitarium where he recovered in 1936. In the meantime the Model T's owner passed away and a local handyman who was paid to clean out the estate got the car and traded it for an Oakland at the local Ford dealer. In 1937 Don's father spotted the car on display at the dealer. The owner, Elville Harris, did not want to sell it. When war broke out he stored the car in a barn for ten years to keep it out of the scrap drive. In 1952 Don's father finally got the dealer to part with it. As a nine year old, retrieving the car with his dad thus began Don's lifetime of loving old cars. For the

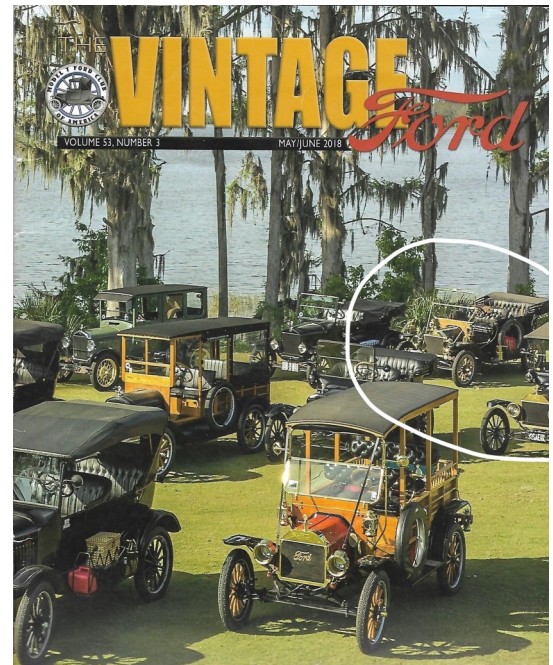


Photo Left: Don Liepelt's 1911 Model T Touring at the Westbrook Centennial parade in 1940, while it was still owned by Ford dealer Elville Harris

CLUB NOTES, continued from p. 2

the next four years, father and son overhauled the engine and did everything else required to make the Model T roadworthy again. While Don thoroughly enjoys the mechanical challenges old cars have presented him over the years, he says he never worries too much about the cosmetic stuff being perfect because his aim is not to have show cars. He likes to drive them, and drive them he does. He told a story of how he drove his 1912 Overland to the Willys-Knight-Overland meet in Duluth, Minn. some years ago, joining up with a fellow car nut with a Whippet in Colchester, Vermont en route. The pair traveled out and back the old fashioned way via secondary roads, staying at camp grounds when they could.

And what became of that 1911 Model T Touring? Don still has it of course, proudly noting that it has been continuously owned in his home town of Madison, Conn. for 110 years and counting.



Right: The cover of *The Vintage Ford* with Don's Model T Touring at the right rear of a group photo taken at Marina Del Rey in Florida during the Model T Club's Winter Tour in 2018. (He trailed it down to Florida and back on that occasion.)

MEMBER MILESTONES

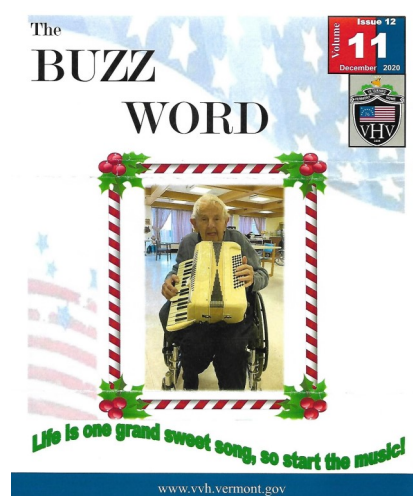
<u>Happy Birthday to:</u>	Mark Aldieri	April 2nd	Gordon Hallberg	April 14th
	James Borbas	April 4th (90)	Maureen Hallberg	April 17th
	Corky Lieder	April 9th	John Hoban	April 18th
	Richard Everett	April 10th (90)	Patty Skinner	April 19th
	Alan Carlson	April 13th	James Borbas, Jr.	April 21st
	Jonathan Foote	April 14th	Linda Elgart	April 24th

Congratulations to: *Jon Grant*, who retired from his career as a sales rep. in the heavy equipment industry. Jon has traded in his company cell phone for this new number: 860-510-9550.

Lifetime member *George Birner*, 95, who made the cover of *The BUZZ WORD*, the monthly newsletter of the Vermont Veterans Home, in October and December, 2020:

Membership Update:

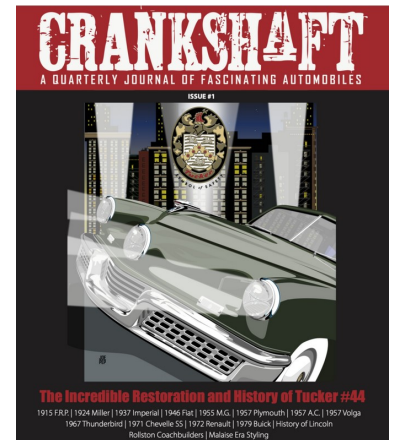
The 2021 BACC roster will be included with the May issue of the newsletter. At press time the number of primary members stands at 85, including seven lifetime members, which compares to 86 total members one year ago, a figure which then included nine lifetimers. We reached a high of 90 members late last year, just before the annual renewal process commenced.



HOBBY HEADLINES & HISTORY

New Collector Car Magazine Debuts - Richard Lentinello, the former editor of *Hemmings Classic Car*, has announced his own new quarterly collector car magazine called *Crankshaft*. Joining Lentinello in this endeavor are a few familiar alumnae from the Hemmings stable of writers and editors. *Crankshaft* magazine will be sold only on a subscription basis. Visit www.crankshaftmagazine.com for details.

Gone, But Not Entirely Forgotten - 80 years ago, the 1941 model year marked the end of the road for the Graham Hollywood, a failed attempt to save the company as an auto manufacturer by building a “new” car utilizing repurposed body dies once used by Cord. The similar Hupmobile Skylark, built for Hupp by Graham, met its end early in the 1941 model run. A decade later, 1951 would be the final year for the Frazer, which still included in its line-up an exclusive for the times four-door Manhattan convertible. Sister brand Kaiser would carry on after Frazier’s demise. Looking ahead another ten years to 1961 and we might remember that Chrysler Corporation pulled the plug on DeSoto just 47 days after the start of production for that model year.



CONNECTICUT AUTOMOBILIA

Submitted by Steven Rossi



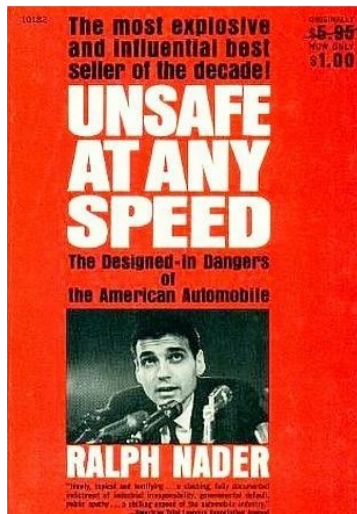
Father Alfred Juliano, a Catholic priest in Branford, Conn., designed and built what is believed to be the first modern experimental safety car. This ground-breaking concept, called the Aurora, debuted in Manhattan in November, 1957 and was also featured on the cover of *Mechanix Illustrated* in April, 1958. Fr. Juliano did not intend to manufacture such a car, his aim instead was to get auto makers to adopt his ideas, such as the soft, scooped front end that was intended to lift pedestrians out of harm’s way. Other innovations were the bubble windshield to reduce risk of injury to front seat occupants and front seats that could swivel 180 degrees in advance of an impending front end collision. The car was also equipped with seat belts, padded dash, roll cage, side impact bars and a collapsible steering column, all of which we take for granted now. The Aurora was based on a conventional chassis resurrected from a wrecked 1953 Buick and funded by parishioner donations in addition to the priest’s own savings. According to a write up by the New England Auto Museum, Fr. Juliano went bankrupt shortly after his prototype was completed, at which time it was forfeited to a repair shop that had done some work for him. Miraculously it survived and has been restored to its original glory in the U.K.



SAFETY TAKEN SERIOUSLY

Unmuffled Exhaust from the Editor

A few weeks ago I was driving north through the town of Winsted, where I spotted the American Museum of Tort Law, founded by Ralph Nader. I recalled his book, *Unsafe At Any Speed*, published by Grossman at the end of November, 1965. Often cited as the wake-up call America needed regarding the rising death toll on our roads, it highlighted the dangers of contemporary cars and accused the automobile industry of indifference to the carnage. This got the attention of U.S. Senator Abraham Ribicoff of Conn., who invited Nader to testify at committee hearings in February, 1966. Before the year was out, Congress had passed the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act and it was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. This established the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, with the power to conduct safety investigations and create Federal motor vehicle safety standards and test procedures. New regulations first affected the 1968 models.



Around the time I got my driver's license in 1966 (long before I owned a 1964 Corvair), I heard about *Unsafe At Any Speed* and bought a copy. While the first chapter is the one that takes the design of the early Corvairs to task, most of the book concerns other examples of vehicle safety shortcomings and makes the case for regulation. Despite the book's broader scope, Nader has long been viewed as Suspect No. 1 whenever the question, "Who killed the Corvair?" is raised.

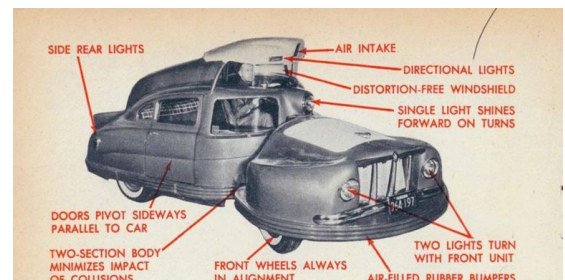
As impactful as Nader's book was, innovators preceded him who were pursuing ideas to improve vehicle safety. For example, some of the injury mitigation and structural integrity features we take for granted on today's cars were conceived in the 1950s or before, including air bags for which a patent was granted to John Hetrick of Newport, Penn. in 1953. On the automaker front, Lee Iacocca, then an up-and-comer at Ford, promoted an optional Lifeguard Equipment Package for 1955-'57 models which included a padded dash and sun visors, plus seat belts, to go along with Ford's new standard equipment deep-dish steering wheel and safety door latches. The effort failed to get much response from consumers,

which led some industry honchos to steadfastly maintain for two decades or more that "Safety doesn't sell."

Also predating Nader's book, as well as the NHTSA-sponsored Experimental Safety Vehicle (ESV) Program of the early 1970s, were three odd-looking safety concept vehicles that have largely been forgotten. The first is the "Aurora" (see **Connecticut Automobilia** on p. 4 of this issue). Another is "Sir Vival," the brainchild of a Worcester, Mass. engineer named Walter Jerome who revealed it in 1958 after ten years of work converting a step-down Hudson donor car to achieve his vision of an articulating safety cell. More realistic was the 1957 collaboration between the Cornell Aeronautical Labs and Liberty Mutual Insurance called the Cornell-Liberty Safety Car that was built to demonstrate learnings from pioneering crash testing research performed in the late 1950s at Cornell Labs using early crash test dummies developed for the purpose.

Unlikely as it sounds, the Aurora was found in derelict condition behind a Cheshire, Conn. body shop in 1967 and was restored by a Brit named Andy Saunders. It is now at the Beaulieu Motor Museum in Hampshire, England. Sir Vival was

last seen languishing at a former Hudson dealer in Bellingham, Mass. The Cornell-Liberty car, once stored at Liberty Mutual's offices in Worcester, Mass., is now in the collection of the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation in Dearborn, Mich.



Above: The original "Sir Vival."

Left: The Cornell-Liberty Safety Car on display at the Henry Ford Museum.

BELLTOWN CLASSIFIEDS

Send your sell/wanted ads for cars, parts and hobby-related services to dan12david@yahoo.com

For Sale – *Little Giant submersible sump pump, 1/3 hp, new. \$125.*

14 ft. Necky Zoar Sport kayak, complete package with paddle, spray skirt, rudder it & accessories. Call for details.

Trailax aluminum two-bike carrier, fits 2 in. receiver, brand new in box. \$120.

Plastic totes, 18 gals. or larger, good clean condition, great for storing clothes or hauling parts to flea markets. \$3 each.

>> Open to offers on all items - Watch for my large garage sale coming in May! <<

Scott Macgregor, 860-391-2889 after 7 p.m. or email jscotmac@sbcglobal.net [BACC member]

For Sale – *1962 Jeep pickup, green, pretty much original inside and out, low mileage, six cylinder, 4WD, new tires, driver quality with typical old work-truck patina. \$9,995.*

Steve Rossi, East Haddam: call 248-470-5788. [BACC member]

Wanted – *Model A Ford car jacks A-17080-A (1929) and A-17080-B1 (1930). I can send photos. I will buy them or trade other Model A parts if you prefer. This is to complete my collection of all eight Model A jack types.*

Bill Nitschke, Deep River: call 914-323-8958 or email williamjnitschke@gmail.com. [BACC member]

WHO, WHAT, WHERE OR WHEN

Challenge your automotive history IQ

“Mysterion” is the name of which of the following:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>a. Mercury’s version of the mid-90s Ford Contour compact</p> <p>b. A widely-sold oil additive and upper cylinder lubricant</p> | <p>c. Ed Roth’s Cyclops-eye custom creation</p> <p>d. A Ford dream car from the late 1950s</p> |
|---|--|

The correct answer to last month’s Who, What, Where, or When, “Match the car designer to the vehicle(s) he was responsible for:”

Brooks Stevens, 1911-1995, was an independent industrial designer based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Stevens designed all but one of the listed vehicles, including the Jeep Wagoneer, the Studebaker GT Hawk (a 1961 freshening of the original 1953 Studebaker Starlight Coupe credited to Loewy’s firm), the Oscar Mayer Weinermobile, and Stevens’ own Excaliber SS “Neoclassic” roadster. The exception is the AMC Cavalier concept car credited to **Richard Teague**. Even so, Teague’s Cavalier, unveiled by AMC in 1965, arguably was influenced by the Studebaker Cruiser concept car penned by Stevens two years earlier. Both cars featured “suicide” rear doors that used the same sheet metal stampings as the diagonally opposite front doors, an idea to save costs. Neither concept car ended up in production although the new-for-1970 AMC Hornet borrowed much from the Cavalier, but not the rear-hinged rear doors.



UPCOMING EVENTS (Club participation events in bold)

Saturday, April 3 - **BACC monthly meeting** at Karl Helming's garage at 1:30 p.m., 220 Jobs Pond Rd. in Portland. Fourth business meeting of the year. Date and location may change depending on reopening of the East Hampton Library community room (update at March meeting).

CANCELED - Ty-Rod's Spring All-Automotive Swap Meet at Stafford Motor Speedway, normally held in April. The club has scheduled its Fall Swap Meet for October 17, 2021. Info at: <https://www.facebook.com/tyrodsautoclub/>.

POSTPONED - The New York International Auto Show, traditionally held at Easter, has been moved to the last week of August this year. Info at: <https://www.autoshowny.com/>.

Sunday, April 25 - **Belltown Antique Engine & Tractor Show**, Fireman's Field at Salmon River State Forest, Rte. 16, East Hampton, across from the old covered bridge. Show open 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. Donations accepted. Includes a flea market limited to hobby-related items. *LOCATION YET TO BE CONFIRMED*. For updates check the BACC web site, www.belltownantiquecarclub.org. Show subject to cancelation or relocation due to COVID-19.

Saturday, May 1 - **BACC monthly meeting**, tentatively at Karl Helming's garage at 1:30 p.m., 220 Jobs Pond Rd. in Portland. Fifth business meeting of the year. Date and location to be confirmed at the April meeting.

Saturday - Sunday, May 1 & 2 - Zagray Spring Show & Swap Meet, 544 Amston Rd., Colchester, Conn.; adm. \$5. Info at www.ZagrayFarmMuseum.org; check for updates on status of the event.

Saturday, June 12 - Annual Automobilia Auction at the Nest Egg Auction Gallery, 758 Four Rod Rd., Berlin, Conn. Info: <http://automobiliaauctions.com/index.html>; consignments: email glettieri@cox.net

For more old car event listings check out the Conn. Council of Car Clubs @ <https://ctccc.net/events-calendar.html>, the Conn. Seaport Car Club based in Fairfield area @ <https://www.ctseaportcarclub.com/carshows.htm>, and Shoreline Antique Auto Connection based in Branford area @ <http://www.shorelineantiqueautoconnection.com/calendar.htm>.

NEXT ISSUE

The next *Belltown Bulletin* will be the May, 2021 issue, which will include the 2021 BACC Membership Roster. The copy and classified ad deadline is Friday, April 16. Tuesday the 20th is the publication date. E-delivery will take place April 22.

Your content suggestions, comments, classified ads and other contributions are most welcome. Send them to the editor at dan12david@yahoo.com (or call 860-575-6194).

BELLTOWN ANTIQUE CAR CLUB

President - Alan Carlson
Vice President - Mark Hoydilla
Secretary - Peter Christianson
Treasurer - Cliff Baker

Elected Directors* - Ray Lichota (yr. 1 of 2) & Dan David (yr. 2 of 2)
Sunshine Chairperson - Polly Beckwith (860-345-4256)
Newsletter Editor - Dan David (dan12david@yahoo.com, 860-575-6194)
*) The BACC Board of Directors is comprised of the four current officers plus the previous president (Jon Grant) and two elected from the membership at large

Club web site - www.belltownantiquecarclub.org [webmaster: Ralph Phil, mail@rjphil.com]

E-mail address - belltowncarclub@gmail.com

Club Mailing address - BACC, P.O. Box 211, East Hampton, CT 06424

Facebook - www.facebook.com/BACC-Belltown-Antique-Car-Club-116729245345421/ [FB mgr.: Betty Lichota]

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By The Way...

“April showers bring May flowers.”



E-Delivery Bonus*

As this issue of the newsletter was going to press *Autoweek.com* posted a video from *Jay Leno's Garage* about Jay's 1966 Corvair Corsa. The timing seemed perfect, so here is the link so you can hear Jay sing the praises of the Corvair as a collectible car and enjoy a demonstration drive in his turbocharged example. Along the way he throws in a few observations about Ralph Nader, who always seems to be mentioned when the subject of Corvairs comes up:

https://www.autoweek.com/car-life/classic-cars/a35876215/jay-leno-1966-corvair/?source=nl&utm_source=nl_aut&utm_medium=email&date=031921&utm_campaign=nl23264210&utm_term=AAA%20--%20High%20Minus%20Dormant%20and%2090%20Day%20Non%20Openers

[Editor's note: Pay attention during the opening sequence to the row of cars lined up behind the Corvair in Jay's shop. You will see a number of Citroens and Panhards, two of Jay's favorite makes - and mine, too!]

Finally, this is the annual **April Fuel** issue, so (no joke) take a look at the infamous Mohs Ostentatienne Opera Sedan of 1967:

<https://www.curbsideclassic.com/automotive-histories/automotive-history-1967-mohs-ostentatienne-opera-sedan-with-a-truck-chassis-20-wheels-and-lots-of-bling-it-was-way-ahead-of-its-time/>

*) The E-Delivery Bonus is a feature not found in the printed version of this newsletter that is distributed via the USPS.

Note: All links in the electronic version are “clickable” as long as your browser is open.

