



The Belltown Bulletin

News & information from the Belltown Antique Car Club

March 2024



Timing is Everything



The Belltown Bulletin



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

March, 2024

NEXT MEETING

Saturday, March 2, 2024 at 1:30 p.m. at Karl Helming's in Portland

Timely Topics:

- Status: April Antique Engine & Tractor Meet planning
- Suggestions: Spring tours and activities
- Presentation: Henry Ford Heritage Assoc. (*Scott Macgregor*)

FUEL FOR THOUGHT

This just in, from the **Timing is Everything** Dept. - The recently held "Rolex 24" IMSA endurance sports car race, the one that traditionally kicks off the auto racing season in Daytona, was notable for the fact that it ended one lap (1 minute, 35.28 seconds) short of full race distance. "Due to an officiating error in race control," the white flag was displayed a lap too soon. According to the rule book, the checkered flag is to be shown the following lap and the race officially ended, regardless of whether the white flag was shown inadvertently. Despite some confusion in the pit boxes over how much time was left, the four class leaders were not being challenged closely enough that another lap would have changed the outcome. The no. 7 Team Penske Porsche 963 prototype [right] was the overall winner, giving soon-to-be-87 Roger Penske his second Rolex win in 55 years.



CLUB NOTES

Our second business meeting of 2024 was held on February 3 at *Karl Helming's* garage in Portland. Special thanks to *Betty Lichota*, *Beverly Astles*, and *Diane Baker* for the meeting refreshments and goodies!

Old Business

Karl Helming has registered the club trailer.

According to *Ralph Phil* the East Hampton Lions Club reconfirmed it will serve as the food service vendor at our upcoming Antique Engine & Tractor Meet. *Mark Aldieri* explained that the advance publicity with clubs and publications (show calendar placements) has been completed for the event. Mark added that all that remains to be done are the announcements in the local press, which go out closer to the show date.

There was a discussion about including a handout on the history of Bevin Bells (our trophy bell supplier) in the show car packets for our August Vintage Motorcar Meet. *Joe Lombardo* volunteered to have it printed. It could be a synopsis or reprint of the **INK Magazine** article on Bevin, to which there is a link on our website courtesy of *Ralph Phil*. A final decision was not taken although there was a general agreement about doing something to increase awareness of the history of the Belltown Bell on the part of show entrants and even spectators.

Cliff Baker announced that we received a "Thank You" letter from the Colchester Fire Dept. in response to our donation in *Bob Fiala's* memory. Cliff also noted that *Ben Jermaine* finally has the green light to return to work after his knee rehabilitation.

Continued on p. 2

CLUB NOTES (continued from p. 1)New Business

A motion was made and passed to donate \$200 to *Karl Helming* to cover heat expenses for our winter meetings at his garage.

Scott Macgregor will order trophy and dash plaques for this year's Meets based on last year's quantities.

Alan Carlson reported that the Haddam Neck Fair Association recently purchased a house and 9 acres of land adjacent to the HN fairgrounds. This immediately caused some concern over whether this will have an effect on what they want to charge for using the field. *Peter Christianson* will meet with them as soon as possible to negotiate a contract for this year's August Meet. Alan noted that the HNFA has "paved" the exit lane across the grassy field used for spectator parking, an improvement that will be much appreciated.

Approval of the Vintage Motorcar Meet flyer was postponed pending contract talks with HNFA in case we need to consider changes to admission charges. There was discussion of whether to state that show car registration ends at 11:00 or extend it to 11:30. According to *Dan David*, we allow a 30 minute grace period as it is and declaring it ending at 11:30 will only encourage more late arrivals, bumping up against the noon start of judging [see also the editor's rant on p. 5 of this issue].

Upcoming Club Activities

Bill Nitschke previously reported that the Model A Club did a "hands-on" presentation at Valley Regional High School last year that was a hit with students. VRHS would like to do it again, this time with a variety of different antique cars. The date would be Friday, May 24 (ahead of the holiday weekend), from noon to around 1:30. There was enough interest at the meeting that Bill will set it up with the school administration.

Scott Macgregor indicated that the Henry Ford Heritage Association is sending him an information program that he is willing to put on at our March meeting. Scott believes it is an hour long and he will see if it can be shortened.

Karl Helming secured a date for a BACC tour of Wayne Carini's private collection. The date is May 18 and the time is TBA. Strict limit of 50 persons, with first come, first serve among Club members. *Cliff Baker* will coordinate the attendance list. The idea would be to show up in force in our vintage cars. A suggestion was made that we could show our appreciation afterwards by making a charitable contribution to the autism research and programming organization that Wayne supports.

Story Time

Jay Beveridge reminded us that today was the 65th anniversary of the fateful plane crash that took the lives of Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and J.P. Richardson, a.k.a. The Big Bopper. Their Beechcraft airplane went down in a snow storm soon after taking off from Mason City, Iowa. Jay recalled that stalwart Conn. radio personality Bob Steele got emotional on air when reading the terrible news of that day in 1959. The tragedy was later memorialized in 1972 in the hit song "American Pie" by Don McLean as "the day the music died."

Honorable Mention

Gerald Perschbacher, writing in his Club Clips column in *Old Cars*, commended our *Steven Rossi* for his well-researched article on Locomobile racecar history that appeared in the Sept.-Oct. 2023 issue of the AACA's *Antique Automobile* magazine. Beyond admiring the article for the monumental story it told, he called it "...a grand reminder for hobbyists to save significant pieces and pages of car history before it's too late."

[Photo credit: Alex Dragone]



MEMBER MILESTONES

<u>Happy Birthday to:</u>	Mark Hoydilla	March 1st	Jon Grant	March 18th (76)
	Nonie Diebold	March 4th	Carl Bjorge	March 20th (82)
	Richard Shipman	March 9th	Bill Nitschke	March 26th (70)
	Thomas Cash	March 10th (84)	Jared Lamenzo	March 28th
	Paul Rich	March 11th (60)	Paul Seely	March 31st (76)
	Bradley Smith	March 15th		

Happy Anniversary to: Steven III & Gail Zeiba March 17 Stan & Terri Mericki March 26th

New Member: Please welcome *Gordon Laing* of Ivoryton, Conn. to BACC. Gordon joined us from the Essex Auto Club. Gordon owns a pair of antique British motorcycles and an Alfa Romeo Spider Veloce.

Membership renewal status - Unpaid dues result in a lapse of membership as of March 1. As of the publication of this issue of the newsletter there are **91** members in good standing and **9** who are in jeopardy. Late payment will be subject to the \$10 dues increase that takes effect March 1.

CONNECTICUT AUTOMOBILIA

Submitted by Steven Rossi

Bridgeport was once known for the large, expensive Locomobile automobile. It was also the home of a small "cycle car" called Trumbull, produced by The American Cyclecar Company. Another manufacturing company in the Park City was Bridgeport Brass, maker of the Atlas Auto Tire Inflation Pump among other things.



The TRUMBULL
 AMERICA'S LEADING CYCLECAR
 THE MOST COMPLETE

PRICE, \$425

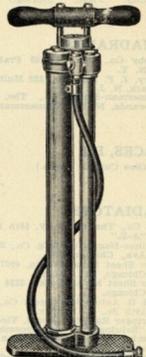
The price includes standard equipment as follows:
 Mechanical Starter (operated from seat).
 Top Complete (curtains and envelope).
 Wind Shield (adjustable).
 Electric Lights with special dimming arrangement.
 Electric Horn.
 Oil Gauge, on oil reservoir.

We have adopted gearless transmission, special interchangeable wire wheels, social seating.
 Motor 2 3/4" bore, 4" stroke, water cooled.
 Demonstrators April, Quantity shipments May 1st. You are interested in the **Best**, most **Economical** and most **Pleasing** small car. Address.

THE AMERICAN CYCLECAR COMPANY
 BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

MOTOR CYCLE, MOTOR BOAT & AUTOMOBILE TRADE DIRECTORY 295

The Pump That Has Made Good



ATLAS AUTO PUMP
 Made by Bridgeport Brass Co.

The excellent service which the ATLAS is now giving everywhere is proof of its remarkable efficiency and popularity.

The ATLAS inflates tires quickly, easily, with little effort. It's very powerful. A few strokes and your tire is inflated. Does away with lame backs.

It's strong—bang it around—knock it around—makes no difference to the ATLAS. It can't rust, because it has seamless brass tube cylinders. It can't leak, because it has non-leakable joints. It inflates on upward or downward stroke. Has a new and perfected tire gauge, which tells your tire pressure within 3%. We guarantee this.

No intricate valve mechanism. No complicated parts. Everything accessible. Buckets specially treated—practically indestructible. Handsome in finish.

Get YOUR ATLAS pump to-day

Price, without Gauge . . . \$4.00
 Price, with Gauge 6.00

Bridgeport Brass Co.
 106 Crescent Avenue
 Bridgeport, Conn.



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

It's fun to see a collector car that was formerly owned by a Belltown resident turn up unexpectedly, particularly in a crowd-pleasing way. Our *Phil Hamilton* owned a baby blue 1966 Valiant for many years, eventually selling it to James Clark, the proprietor of Essex Detailing, an automotive services and tire business on Rte. 153 in Essex. We have since enjoyed seeing Phil's former ride at a few local shows including the one held in Essex on the Fourth of July, 2021-22.

Last month, the Valiant was pressed into service by the Essex Foundation (of which Mr. Clark is a supporter) as the "Daffodil-Mobile," in an effort to publicize the Foundation's goal of raising money to add to the daffodil fields it has been planting around Essex over the past few years. So adorned, it participated in the "Essex Ed" Groundhog Day parade on January 28 in Essex.

[Thanks to Steve Mierz, *Shoreline Antique Auto Connection* for the tip on the Valiant parade sighting. - Ed.]



Above: Bev, Hannah & James Clark, pre-parade

UPCOMING EVENTS (Club participation events in bold)

Saturday, March 2 - **BACC monthly business meeting at Karl Helming's home garage**, 220 Jobs Pond Rd., Portland, Conn., 1:30 p.m. [in the event of poor winter driving conditions it may be postponed to Sunday, Mar. 3].

Saturday, March 23 - Annual 'Essex go Bragh' Irish Parade; participants are to gather at Town Hall on W. Main St. in Essex, parade begins from there at 11 a.m. Contact Mary Ellen Barnes of Essex Park & Rec, 860-767-4340, ext. 100, or email mbarnes@essexct.gov.

Sunday, March 24 - 28th Annual Winter Blahs Swap Meet presented by the Minuteman Model A Ford Club (MAFCA chapter), at the Elks Lodge, 34 Powdermill Rd, Rte. 62, Maynard, Mass., 7:30 - 11:30 a.m. Vendor tables \$20, general admission \$3. For registration info call Craig Martin at 978-562-2390.

Friday - Sunday, March 29 - April 7 - New York International Auto Show, Jacob Javits Center in Manhattan; info: www.autoshowny.com.

Saturday, April 6 - **BACC monthly business meeting at Karl Helming's home garage**, 220 Jobs Pond Rd., Portland, Conn., 1:30 p.m. [Last Saturday meeting of season. Mid-week meetings resume at the East Hampton Library in May.]

Saturday, April 6 - Automobilia and Literature Auction at Winter Associates, 21 Cooke St., Plainville, Conn. Consignors should contact Jerry Lettieri at 860-655-8682 or glettieri@cox.net. Snow date Sunday, April 7. For info go to <http://automobiliaauctions.com/>.

Sunday, April 7 - 36th Annual Ty-Rods Spring Automotive Swap Meet, Stafford Motor Speedway, 55 West St., Stafford Springs, Conn. \$15 general admission. Info: <https://staffordmotorspeedway.com/events/36th-annual-ty-rods-spring-auto-swap-meet/>.

Wednesday, April 17 - First 2024 monthly cruise night on the Green in Colchester, Conn. presented by the Good Times Motoring Club, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Rain date following Wednesday. Info: <https://www.goodtimesmotoringclub.com/>.

Sunday, April 28 - **49th Annual Belltown Antique Engine & Tractor Meet**, Fireman's recreation area, Salmon River State Park, Rte. 16, East Hampton, Conn. Event opens at 8 a.m.; free admission, donations accepted. Flea market restricted to items related to the engine and tractor hobbies.

Wednesday, May 8 - **BACC monthly business meeting at the East Hampton Public Library**, beginning with a pot-luck supper at 6:30 p.m., business meeting at 7:30 p.m. [NOTE: Date to be confirmed at March meeting - Ed.]

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

IT'S ABOUT TIME

Unmuffled Exhaust from the Editor

"Timing is everything"... "A stitch in time saves nine"... "Time is all we've got." There is a shortage of time, so let me get to the point. The traditional thinking about our Vintage Motorcar Meet is that we have all day to run the event and we should therefore allow the whole morning for show cars to arrive, as long as they can get through registration and be parked before judging begins at noon. However, given our current process for judging and tallying scores, by starting judging at noon we are locked into a trophy presentation that cannot begin until 2 p.m. or later.

As the lead dog on the registration team I have tried to inject some discipline in the schedule over the last two years by stating that show car registration closes at 11 a.m., even as we say that means "in the lane by 11" and we wouldn't turn away a late arriver up to 11:30. Others argue that we should state that registration closes at 11:30. Fine, but we will be tested by late arrivals after that. Who is going to park them? Many (most?) of the registrars and parkers also volunteer as judges, and the latter job has always had a hard and fast starting time at noon. These multi-taskers deserve a little time for a break between tasks, too. Extending registration won't bring in more cars, it will only cause more stress.

I think there is actually a more important question here than how do we maximize the window of time for registration. That is, **how do we best provide an event experience that pleases the most people?** Many show cars leave the field prior to the trophy presentation. Why? Perhaps the event takes up too much time and we ought to look at tightening things up a bit. Maybe some arrive with their show cars late in the morning because they want to stay for the trophies, but, they don't want to hang around more than 3 or 4 hours. On the other hand, entrants who register early are apt to tire of being out in the heat and want to leave soon after lunch. Age could be a factor, but people also lead busy lives and they have other interests competing for their time.

We ought to consider shortening registration by half an hour (or an hour!), moving up the start of judging by the same amount. Do we really need to allow more than two and a half hours to register and park 250 vehicles? Wouldn't it be better for spectators to have all show cars in place earlier? Starting the judging at 11:30 (or 11!) instead of noon would mean that the trophy presentation could begin by 1:30 (or 1!), a process that can take an hour considering that we give out 52 trophies despite having fewer classes than we once did. We could still officially end the event at 3 p.m. as in the past, allowing for an unhurried emptying of the field and the possibility for us to begin clean-up activities a bit earlier.

Wouldn't attendees (show car entrants, spectators and volunteers alike) appreciate having the trophy presentation right after lunch instead of having to wait an hour or more? It isn't as if we must heed our mother's admonishment to "stay out of the water for an hour after eating." Let's get on with it!

RECAPPING JANUARY'S BIGGEST TV AUCTIONS

The January collector car auctions are in the history books. The Mecum auction in Kissimmee, Fla. saw a record 4,383 vehicles cross the block and raked in \$275 M in sales. What about the kinds of cars Belltowners might be interested in? There were 27 Model T and Model A Fords, of which just 15 were restored to stock condition ... the rest were hot rods and customs. The high water mark was set by an AACA-Senior Award winning 1931 Model A Huckster at \$33,000, while a 1931 Model A DeLuxe 2-door Phaeton sold for \$29,700. A 1926 Model T Tudor Sedan went for \$20,900, whereas the bargain of the bunch was a 1913 Model T bakery truck that sold for just \$8,800.

There were 73 Flathead V-8 Fords on offer at Mecum, of which a mere dozen represented their original specification. Turning to GM cars of the 1950's, there were 194 lots, of which 77 looked factory-fresh, the others being customized or modified to some extent. Of all the many C1 Corvettes in that group, a high percentage appeared unmodified, with winning bids of \$55,000 to well into six figures. More than 10% of the total number of vehicles that crossed the block at Mecum were pickup trucks this year, reflecting the strong market for collectable trucks.

The no-reserve Barrett-Jackson auction in Scottsdale, Ariz. was another barn burner this year: total sales of \$207.6 M on more than 1,700 vehicles sold. It seems the vast majority of the cars fell into the categories of Modern Muscle, Restomods, Custom Trucks and Exotic Sports Cars. Scanning the results for affordable, survivor or restored-to-stock vehicles there was nice 1987 Cadillac Allante (one of several), silver with a burgundy interior (no hardtop) that sold for \$6,325. Another good buy was an ice blue 1976 Lincoln Continental Mark IV that hammered home for \$8,250. A bright red 1927 Model T Roadster with a 2-speed rear and Rocky Mountain brakes went for \$13,200. Another notable pre-war example (out of just 26 in the whole auction, 8 of which were six to seven figure Full Classics from the Don Williams Collection) was a 1927 Nash sedan that was converted from 6 to 12 volts that sold for \$17,600. Among post-war cars, a 1966 Pontiac LeMans Sprint hardtop equipped with the 4 bbl. OHC six fetched \$34,100 and an off-frame restored 1949 Plymouth DeLuxe Coupe went for \$25,850. A fully-restored 1959 Ford Sunliner convertible (not a retractable) changed hands for \$44,000. OK, so the last three examples were not what anyone would call bargains...

BELLTOWN CLASSIFIEDS

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

For Sale – **1959 Ford Retractable Hardtop**

Located in Myrtle Beach, So. Carolina.

If interested call **Bill Petras, Jr.**, 860-301-0680 [BACC member]



For Sale – **Reproduction “Prohibition Era” Wooden Moonshine Crates**

Great as props with your antique car for garage displays or car shows. Will consider trade for Model A Ford parts or tools.

Vintage Gas Pump Price Sign (1920s -'30s era)

Original numbers & letters, head piece not orig. Asking \$260.

Call **Bill Nitschke**, 914-323-8958 [BACC member]



For Sale – **2012 Subaru Outback 2.5i Premium - Asking \$12,500 OBO**

Cold weather package, 80,000 miles.

Very reliable AWD car. Everything works as it should.

Text **Jackie Reardon** at 860-338-6118. [BACC member]



For Sale – **1987 Cadillac Allante - \$7,900**

Maroon/dark red leather interior, removable hardtop.

Low miles, stored four years, no rust, all original.

1927 Ford Model T Roadster - \$14,000

Recent total restoration, excellent condition.

Call **Richard Beckwith**, 860-343-3056, Haddam [BACC member]



For Sale – **1917 Ford Model T Touring - Best Reasonable Offer**

Looks good and runs, but may need some attention to put it back on the road.

Being sold to settle an estate.

Call **Richard Beckwith**, 860-343-3056, for info [BACC member, representing owner]

For Sale – **1931 Ford Model A Sport Coupe - \$10,500**

Registered, runs well, and is a high driver-quality car. Black on black, with red wheels.

Elderly owner can't push a clutch anymore.

Call **Richard Beckwith**, 860-343-3056, for info [BACC member, representing owner]

HOBBY HEADLINES & HISTORY

New Milford, Conn. First To Install Automatic Street Lighting

On March 2, 1949, the Connecticut Light & Power Co. installed 190 photo-cell controlled street lights on seven miles of roads in New Milford. This marked the first use of photo-cells in this application, eliminating the need to turn on the lights manually at dusk or to do using a timer with a fixed schedule.

Fifty Years Ago

- ◇ The Arab Oil Embargo ended in March, 1974, but gas prices remained high (54 cents/gal.!).
- ◇ The Honda Civic was introduced in the U.S. It is still sold today, serving as Honda's longest-running, best-selling nameplate of all time, now in its 11th generation.
- ◇ Ford's downsized, Pinto-based 1974 Mustang II was a sales success in an otherwise down market. Meanwhile, Plymouth Barracuda and Dodge Challenger rode off into the sunset as sales of those holdover models fell rapidly. Chevy Camaros and Pontiac Firebirds soldiered on for the remainder of the decade, burdened by their weight and diminished performance.



WHO, WHAT, WHERE OR WHEN

Challenge your automotive history IQ

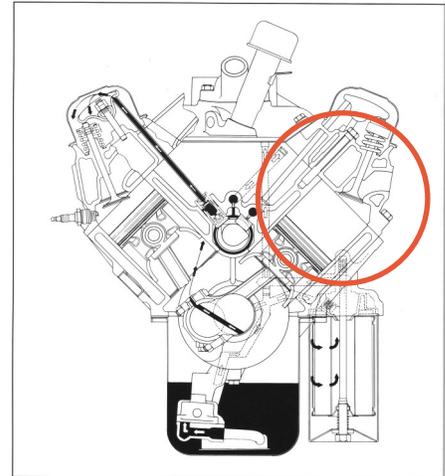
Thinking mainly about the analog automotive world that pre-dated the 1980s, match the “timing device(s)” from column A to the function being controlled in column B:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A1 Gear-driven camshaft | B1 Fuel delivery to diesel injectors |
| A2 Thermal flasher relay | B2 Checkpoint arrival |
| A3 Distributor-type mechanical pump | B3 Spark (Otto-cycle engine) |
| A4 Odometer, stopwatch & chronometer | B4 Turn signal blinking |
| A5 Distributor + advance mechanism | B5 Valve opening/closing |

The correct answer to Who, What, Where, or When in the last issue, “**Long before it became known as the ‘Small Block Chevrolet,’ the all-new V-8 engine that debuted in the 1955 Chevrolet was initially called the ‘Turbo-Fire V-8.’ What best explains the choice of that name?**”:

- C. The engine design included wedge-shaped combustion chambers that created turbulence during the compression stroke to assure quick ignition and complete combustion of the fuel-air mixture.

As for the other possible answers, turbocharging was never contemplated in the development of the first Chevrolet OHV V-8; yes, marketing staffs were obsessed with Jet Age imagery but that did not seem to enter into the choice of names for the new engine; and, the name “Turbo-Fire” was not chosen as part of a contest sponsored by a Michigan newspaper.



NEXT ISSUE

The next *Belltown Bulletin* will be the April, 2024 issue. The copy and classified ad deadline is Thursday, March 21. Monday the 25th is the publication date, with mail-out on March 26 and e-delivery no later than March 28.

Club member suggestions, comments, classified ads, and content submissions are most welcome. Send them to the editor at dan12david@yahoo.com (or call 860-575-6194). **Thanks go to this month’s contributors: Steve Rossi and Joan Frey.**

BELLTOWN ANTIQUE CAR CLUB

President - **Mark Hoydilla**

Vice President - **Ray Lichota**

Secretary - **Peter Christianson**

Treasurer - **Cliff Baker**

Elected Directors* - **Phil Schuster** (yr. 1 of 2) & **Jon Grant** (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 (Alan Carlson) 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...



[Submitted by *Joan Frey*]

Luckily, we have had only one significant snowstorm this winter... so far!

E-Delivery Bonus*

Cover Image - Heuer Dashboard Rallye Stopwatch and Chronograph [Photo credit: Chronomobilia].

The RM Sotheby's Arizona classic car auction held in January, while much smaller than Mecum and Barrett-Jackson, put up some big numbers in terms of price per car sold. Check out the results here:

<https://rmsothebys.com/en/home/auction-results/az24>

David Conwill of *Hemmings* likes "attainable" cars. Here is a link to Conwill's report about some of the affordable cars he saw on day one of the Barrett-Jackson auction:

<https://www.hemmings.com/stories/barrett-jacksonscottsdale-2024/>

*) The E-Delivery Bonus is not included 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.

