



Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 2/April-June 2005

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Spring has arrived and the pressure is on for all of us. All those winter projects that we hoped to get done are supposed to be finished now.

The Martin Aerodynamic Car has left the workshop and been shown at the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance. The museum is proud to have made it roadworthy again and we are fortunate to have one of the earliest streamline cars ever made. Even though it has its faults, it certainly is an engineering masterpiece.

January 10 finally saw the moving of the LARC-LX and it rests outside the back of the museum. Inside the museum in the motorcycle wing is a written archive and DVD presentation on the moving of the LARC.

In February, I was able to attend a track day at the Nashville Superspeedway put on by Phil Wicks Mini Driving Academy. The 1960 Saab 93 joined the 2001 Caterham Blackbird for a full day of fun. Phil and I plan to race the Saab at Barber Motorsports Park on April 1.

Susan and I were fortunate to be able to attend Retromobile in Paris which is the premier vintage car event in France. While there, we were treated with a viewing of the only known running Leyat Helica (propeller powered car). Jean-Francois Bouzanquet is the owner and his grandfather purchased the car new. Many pictures were taken and Mr. Couzanquet let us sit in the vehicle. Claude Gueniffey has created a wonderful website on the Leyat and has done a tremendous amount of research on the vehicle.

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Above: 1932 Lancia DiLambda

Below: French sculptor Francois Chevalier captures William Grover at the wheel during the 1929 Grand Prix.

A WORD FROM THE CURATOR

2005 proves to be an exciting year for Lane Motor Museum. Foremost, we are indebted to our 41 Founding Members who believed in the mission of the Museum during our first year of operation. We will honor those Founding Members on Monday, May 16th, with a special evening reception featuring food, a basement tour, and the dedication of the Founding Members plaque.

A few new additions have been added to the exhibit floor: a 1932 Lancia DiLambda and a full-scale bronze sculpture of a 1929 Bugatti T35. The largest addition, a 1959 LARC-LX, is parked behind the building. This 100 ton amphibious vehicle began its journey to the Museum last summer as it made its way up the Tombigbee Waterway to the Port of Nashville. On January 10th, it was driven by our director Jeff Lane across the streets of Nashville to Lane Motor Museum.

Already this year, we have attended two local, indoor shows. The Maserati and Peel Trident were featured at the Nashville Auto Festival; the Messerschmitt, Mini, and Scootacar at Frosty Wheels Car Show. With our predominant European collection, it was a natural fit that we should attend Retromobile in Paris. This trip was especially rewarding as we had the opportunity to view two Leyat Helica's—a propeller driven automobile built by Marcel Leyat in France during the 1920s. Leyat was primarily an aircraft builder before he began building the Helica (which is derived from the French word for "propeller").

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The website is www.helica.info and is in French although there is an English translation available on the site. We were able to spend a day with Claude and learned a great amount of information.

My next big project will be the repairing of the Helicron propeller so we can use this unique French vehicle on the road this summer.

The museum is please to announce we have added a marketing director to our staff. Bethany Hawkins started in early January and is doing a great job. Some of her many fun tasks will be editing the newsletter, increasing our membership base, working with school groups, and marketing Lane Motor Museum to the public. We have added a full calendar of events for this year, and I hope you will be able to attend some of them.

See you on the road driving your classic car!

Jeff Lane

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The highlight of this new year was an invitation to show the 1928 Martin Aerodynamic Car at the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance. The Martin was displayed in the "Rear Engine Sedan" class which included a 1935 Daimler Benz 130H, 1936 Stout Scarab, 1948 Tatra T-87, 1948 Tucker Torpedo, and 1974 Fascination. In addition to the Concours, the Martin participated in a road tour. Greg Coston is to be commended for returning the Martin to running condition after it having sat on display at the Stone Mountain Antique Car and Treasure Museum for nearly 60 years.

Lane Motor Museum cars were featured in three segments on Car and Driver Television—one segment featured the Maserati, one featured the Museum, and one featured four of our "Bubble Cars." If you missed these shows, check the schedule as they will be reshowed in the next few months.

2005 looks to be an exciting and full year for Lane Motor Museum. We hope you will take advantage of the activities listed on our Calendar of Events and continue to share in our passion for automobiles.

Susan Lane



*1928 Martin
Aerodynamic
Car*

The Monday Report

1928 Martin Aerodynamic Car

Jeff and I felt it at the same time ... **thud!** And then, the Martin rolled to a stop. Only a mile or so before it had stalled because heat had built up in the enclosed engine compartment and caused vapor lock in the fuel system, or the coil overheated. I cooled both with a damp rag and off we went. Now, miles down a sandy road, Jeff, Susan and I looked for the source of the "thud."

Six months before, the Museum had received an invitation for the Martin to be shown in the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance. This year, the annual March event attracted around 250 exceptional and historically significant automobiles. We would be in a class of rear engine automobiles with the likes of a Tatra T-87 and a machine that resembled a bomb on wheels called a Fascination. While the Concours was on Sunday, the real test for the old machines was an optional 50 mile Island tour held on Friday.

The Martin, when acquired by Lane Motor Museum less than a year ago, was inoperative. It evidently had not run in some time and had few miles on it since its public introduction in 1932 at the National Automobile Show in New York. The odometer, now inoperative reads 672 miles. From various publications, we learned that when it was drivable, the Martin had an overheating problem and potentially weak transaxle. With some 60 years of neglect, we assumed many more significant repairs would be necessary to make it capable to endure the 50 mile tour.

The work began with the removal of the radiator and fuel tank. After securing it on jack stands, the tires were removed exposing the very strange suspension system that uses shock cord, like bungee cord but stronger, instead of metal springs to soften the ride. Also we saw mechanically actuated bands that brake only in the rear, not a lot of braking ability! The first objective was to get it running and make sure the transaxle was in working order. So, we replaced the shock cord, wheel bearings, and found a new carburetor. When we fed it some fuel, the engine fired right up. Jeff then fitted it with a small radiator in the engine compartment and drove it around the Lane Motor Museum Test Track, better known as the parking lot.

With all seeming well, four weeks before the Concours, Jeff went out of town leaving me with the task of running new coolant lines under the floor board, installing the radiator and tidying up a few other repairs in-process. He returned to find the entire interior spread all around the shop and the floor board removed. As it turns out, the design of the Martin did not include easy access to the space between the floor of the passenger compartment and the smooth underbelly. This void, a hollow area, ribbed for support, is 3 ½" in height and runs from the front of the machine, below the floor board, into the engine compartment, and functions as an air duct. The engine fan at the rear, draws the air through the radiator in the front, below the floor and exhausts it out the back. A very clever solution to cooling the rear engine ... way ahead of its time. T

When I finished fighting the Martin to give up its old natural rubber coolant hoses that snaked under the floor board and through the old wood frame, and had run new lines, there were less than two weeks until the Concourse. It still had not been driven enough for us to feel confident it was roadworthy. Feeling in a bit of a pinch, I secured it enough to drive and test the repairs. But, on the second lap around the track, I felt a snap and the Martin came to a stop. The drive shaft yoke had broken, and it took several precious days to make the repairs. With less than a week left, Jeff took the Martin out for its first real drive in possibly 60 years or more. Cruising down Elm Hill Pike, I followed, observing the amazement of onlookers. "What is it?" I could hear them ask, a question we would become accustomed to hearing everywhere the Martin went. The drive was a success; it did not overheat, its overall runability seemed acceptable and nothing else broke. But, a lot of work remained to put it back together, clean it up for the show, and get it to Florida by Friday morning for the tour. With focus now exclusively on the Martin, I finished the repairs and loaded it on the trailer Wednesday night. By the time I arrived, late Thursday night, on Amelia Island, I was pretty confident the Martin was going to perform well.

Friday morning was a beautiful sunny day, and I looked forward to spending a few carefree days enjoying the weekend events from an observer's point of view. Jeff was happily behind the wheel; Susan assumed her position as navigator; and me, *just along for the ride*. Off we went. First we met the other owners willing to brave the drive with their machines through the streets and alleyways of the Island towns. We then followed the others off of the pavement down a long sandy road.

Although I had not completely relaxed from it stalling, it took me completely by surprise when I felt the "thud." I followed the line of Jeff's finger pointing to the drive line, detached from the hub, the securing bolts laying in the bellypan. The bolts I had put in only a few days before, had worked their way out. Fortunately, the threads had not been damaged. After lunch, I returned to the Martin while Jeff and Susan caught a ride to get the trailer. After an hour or so of work, I was able to reattach the drive line and drive the Martin out of the park when the Lanes arrived with the trailer. At that point we all agreed it was best to trailer it back, to ensure it could be driven to the show on Sunday.

Sunday morning, the Martin made its way onto the golfcourse show ground and took its place among the interesting array of rear engine machines, all tributes to innovation and function. As spectators hovered around the petite Martin asking that now familiar question, "*what is it!*" I thought back on the challenges that have faced this one-of-a-kind machine. I thought back to the work we had done, in some ways, retracing a small part of an enormous amount of dedication by those unnamed craftsmen in the 1920s who created it from a pile of materials into what we see today. I then began to realize that my irritation over it not having been entirely cooperative, had given way to respect.

Although not new to the machine race, I think the Martin returns to the Museum with a renewed sense of place and respect among an increasingly competitive field of machines.

Greg Coston, Restoration Specialist

Jimmy's First Car

(continued from Volume 2, Issue 1)

The '55 Chevy was now a mean-looking car, but the straight-six engine was not up to the task at hand. Not only was it puny in size, it was tired internally - I am not even sure if Great Granddad *ever* changed the oil and filter! The engine ran OK, but it *really* needed to be rebuilt. Since I'd been involved with hot rods since I was eleven, I decided to pull that motor and rebuild it in my dad's garage. Upon opening it up, it was disgustingly sludgy. It looked like it had been driven 130,000 miles rather than 13,000!

The cylinders were in great shape, so a good honing was all that was required for the bores. After completely disassembling the engine and meticulously cleaning all the components, I noted it needed new rings, bearings, and gaskets. The head was gone through, and then I reassembled it and carefully painted the exterior. It was ready to drop back into the engine bay! The transmission was fine, but as insurance I installed a new clutch kit. Mechanically and cosmetically, I now had a practically brand-new '55 Chevy! All it needed now was an eight-track stereo and some rear deck speakers, and I was ready to cruise the drive-in!

The first day I drove the Chevy to school, I think my head was hitting the roof - I was floating off the seat I was so elated. *What a feeling!* Every kid in school wanted a '55-'57 Chevy, and here I was with one of the coolest ones around.

That straight-six ran darn good for what it was - especially if you wound it out in every gear like I did! The truck muffler I had installed sounded really great, and the stereo system was outstanding. Within no time I was dating the prettiest cheerleader at Franklin High School, and my '55 Chevy was a prime reason why. It was a really cool, good looking car.

In 1972 it all ended. My uncle's Firestone tire store in Nashville had recently aligned the front end, and the hack mechanic had probably used Vise-Grips and a hammer to beat the right front tie-rod into adjustment. This evidently cracked the tie-rod itself - you can guess the rest. Driving it back home to Murfreesboro, about 30 miles, I detected a little "wobble" in the front, so I took extra care not to drive hard until I could get my uncle to check it out.

I returned to my uncle's shop the following Saturday, but they were too busy to look at it, so he told me to take it to the Murfreesboro Firestone shop, and they would take care of it. I had three of my college buddies with me as I returned to Murfreesboro. We had stopped by my dad's house to pick up some "party supplies" (legal age then was 18) for college, but never opened the bottle. We rounded a curve on the back road we were on and BAM! The steering wheel instantly spun hard to the right, nearly tearing my arms out of their sockets. The Chevy hit the ditch and plowed 100 feet or so into a driveway under construction. The property owner had seen us coming and luckily got out of the way! After hitting the concrete and brick abutment, the car jumped over the culvert, back into the ditch, mowed down a barbed-wire fence, finally rolling over twice in a field and coming to rest upside down, with most of the barbed-wire wrapped around the car. Two of my passengers swapped places during the crash - somehow clearing the seat and passing each other in mid-flight. Only God knows how these two big football players managed that, or how nobody was ejected from the car, as I had never quite gotten around to installing seatbelts.

As we were crawling through the windows of the upside-down Chevy, folks started running up to help. Once they smelled the sweet scent of whiskey, everyone assumed we'd been drinking. Believe me, I was straight as an arrow after rolling over in my car! I wish we'd found that bottle of Haig and Haig with the unbroken seal to prove it, but it was smashed to bits in the wreck.

Miraculously, none of us were injured, which still amazes me to this day. The Chevy was, of course, totaled. Dad came and picked us up, and we had the hulk towed back to his house. He got \$25 for it from a junk hauler that had spotted it in the back yard. I still dream of maybe finding it sitting in a junkyard, waiting for another chance at life.

After that experience, I just had to let it all rest - my uncle was my dad's brother, and I just didn't have the heart to sue him or Firestone. It was time for something a bit newer - I went out and bought a brand-new 1972 AMC Gremlin X, which I still drive to this day. Of course, it's had a few modifications too, but that's another story.

*Jimmy Carter
Gift Shop Manager*

Calendar of Events

- April 2 Car Club Appreciation Day at Lane Motor Museum with discounted adult admission with a membership card to any classic car club.
- April 16-17 Phil Wicks Mini Driving Academy at Nashville Superspeedway. Contact (615) 354-5576 for more information
- April 17 Microcar Drive through Middle Tennessee followed by Behind the Scenes tour of the museum. No charge to drive your micro or mini car. Regular admission rates apply for tour.
- April 21 Earth Day Celebration at Lane Motor Museum from 1-5 p.m. with a special emphasis on Alternative Fuel Vehicles. Programs will include Earth Day Crafts, Story Times, and demonstrations on Alternative Fuel Vehicles.
- April 22 "The Art of the Motorcycle" opens as part of the WONDERS series in Memphis. Visit www.wonders.org for more information
- April 23 Kars4Kids Car Show; Sponsored by TN Spokes Sports Car Club, and benefitting the TN Baptist Children's Home, Brentwood, TN. See www.tennessee-spokes.org/calendar/ for more information.
- May 16 Member Appreciation Night from 6-8 p.m. with a special evening reception for Lane Motor Museum members only featuring food, basement tour, and the dedication of the founding members plaque.
- May 27-29 EuroFest Nashville; The Factory at Franklin, benefitting Bridges of Williamson County. See www.eurofestnashville.com for more information.
- June 10 Family Day at Lane Motor Museum featuring children's activities and Behind the Scenes Tours at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.
- June 11 Federated Auto Parts 300 at Nashville Superspeedway. Visit www.nashvillesuperspeedway.com for more information.
- June 19 Free Day for Dad. Bring Dad for a free tour, scheduled demonstrations and car rides (on a first come, first serve basis). Regular admission rates apply for family members.
- July 8 Family Day at Lane Motor Museum featuring children's activities and Behind the Scenes Tours at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.
- July 16 Firestone Indy 200 at Nashville Superspeedway. Visit www.nashvillesuperspeedway.com for more information.



July 22 Willys -Overland-Knight International Meet at Lane Motor Museum. A gathering of over 60 classic overlands, Willys-Overlands, and Knights.

July 30 Magic of the Machine Day at Lane Motor Museum. You can celebrate the magic of the automotive machine with open hoods on most of the cars, Behind the Scenes Tours at 11 a.m., and a special chance to win a ride in one of the classic automobiles at 2 p.m. There will be a special demonstration of the LARC LX and its official christening as part of the LMM family at 10 a.m. There will also be a demonstration of propeller powered cars at 1 p.m.

Curious Car of the Quarter The Toyota S800 Sports

For many post-Baby Boomer Americans, it is hard to imagine an automotive landscape without Japanese cars. The fact of the matter is, prior to the late 1950s, the names Datsun, Toyota, and Subaru were virtually unknown here. Known today as the world's third largest auto manufacturer, Toyota did not even have an export office in the United States until 1957. Primarily exporting trucks and forklifts to the west coast, their small car offering, the Toyopet Crown, sold only 287 units!

Toyota Motor Corporation began in the 19th century weaving industry in Japan. Sakichi Toyoda, known in his native land as "The King of Inventors," developed and patented a power loom revolutionizing the industry. In 1933, Toyota Spinning and Weaving Co. LTD. established an automotive department, and three years later, produced the Model AA, their first car. Most people think that Toyota entered the U.S. market with small economy cars, but Toyota's first models sold in the States were actually full-size offerings. Their first "small" car, the SA, was not produced until 1947.

Enter the British sports car and the enticing American market. Toyota had nothing to lure sales from the traditional sports car manufacturers - MG, Triumph, Austin-Healey, etc.- nor could they even compete with their smaller but more adventurous Japanese competitor as Honda had already introduced its own sports car for both home and export markets. So, Toyota did what any other manufacturer would have done - take an existing small saloon car, the Publica, and rebody it in the shape of a sports car!

The Publica Sports, as it was called, debuted as a prototype at the 1962 Tokyo Motor Show. The fresh shape nevertheless made quite a difference - the roof slid back like an airplane, granting access to the cockpit over the high sills - there were no doors! After further development, the production car was again displayed for the first time at the 1964 Tokyo Motor Show, this time with an innovative and practical removable roof panel, now known as a "Targa", predating Porsche by some two years (but also following Triumph's TR4 Surrey by three). Conventional doors were also now a part of the program.

Penned by Shozo Sato, ironically a Nissan employee "on loan," the design was not at all derivative of anything seen before, and certainly presaged the upcoming Toyota 2000GT (another icon of Japanese sports cars often but erroneously attributed to Count Albrecht Goetz of BMW 507 and Nissan 240Z fame). The S800 was intended solely for the home market, and many reference books state that exports never went further than Okinawa. Unfortunately its space-age styling was not backed up by anything more than very pedestrian mechanicals. Lightweight aluminum body panels were not enough to offset the fact that the 790cc air-cooled two cylinder two-stroke produced only 45 HP and 97 MPH. While never seen as a strong performer, the S800 still managed to become a formidable race competitor, winning its class at the prestigious 24 Hours of Mt. Fuji.

The unusual left hand drive example seen at Lane Motor Museum was one of a small group of cars specially modified to test the US market. Of the 3,120 cars produced from 1965-69, 41 were modified to left hand drive and brought to the US to test the market - that was one for each dealer! After looking the car over, the dealers decided the car could not be competitive in the US market. Toyota sold the cars to the dealers rather than incur the cost to ship them back. Toyota gave up on the US sports car market, instead focusing its attention on affordable and inexpensive family cars and trucks. The rest, as they say, is history...

David Yando, Museum Manager



702 Murfreesboro Pike
Nashville, TN 37210
(615) 742-7445
www.lanemotormuseum.org

**Coming Next Quarter: Jeff's
Experience Driving the LARC!**