



The Fuel Line

GOING PLACES



David P. Hartman, Editor

www.replicarclub.com

June 2007

From the Desk of "El Presidente"

Now that all the dust has settled on our 28th "Fun Under the Sun" gathering, we have determined we did end in the black financially. We will be able to contribute to the Braille Institute. At our next board meeting we will decide on the amount of our donation.

Speaking about the Braille Institute, the Braille Rallye, will be held on July 14th. We will be letting you all know more information by next month's newsletter.

My wife and I just got back from spending a week in College Station, Texas at my mother's and brother's places (GIG'EM AGGIES!). On one of our days there we took a little road trip over to Austin. Their state capitol building is beautiful. We visited the state history museum as well as the Blanton Museum of art at Texas university.

Why I bring this up was an interesting exhibit area which had "replica" plaster statues and busts of Greek and Roman marble and bronze original sculptures. What is interesting about these "replicas" is their history. It seems that in the late 1800s to the early 1900s colleges and museums could buy plaster "replicas" that were molded directly from the original sculptures. Places like the Louvre and other great museums would allow this, even the Vatican.

By the 1930s this practice stopped (WWII) and by the 1950 most institutions that had these "replicas", destroyed them because the art culture looked down on the "replica" as an abomination to the art world. Texas university did not destroy their collection but placed them in storage.

Well as times and opinions change, so has the art world's attitude toward these "replicas". The Blanton has had these "replicas" carefully restored and have placed them on display for all to enjoy what the masters sculpted through the centuries.

It is now impossible to get permission from the institutions, which in the past allowed the practice of mold making from the original sculptures, to use the originals to make new "replicas". So now these old "replicas" have become of great importance and value.

I could not help but see a little irony and similarity to what is happening in the "replica" car industry today. As originals are being priced into museum pieces and popular demand is generating a growth in "reproductions" and "replicas", because the average Joe has been priced out of the ability of owning and enjoying an original. Do you love "replicas"!?

Until next month,

Hasta! "El Presidente"

Dean Hornbacher

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The deadline for the July newsletter is June 24th. Please have submissions to the Editor by that date.

Rumblings from the Editor's Desk - by David Hartman

See the Activities column for details about the June meeting. It's a lunch for the Knott's Show, club volunteer workers.

Included in this newsletter is the flyer announcing the Northern California Kit Car Club's annual show at San Leandro in September. Currently I'm planning on attending. Since it's their 25th Annual show, I think we should make a good showing in support. (I'll take out a small loan for the gas. Maybe sell my body to science) But, more on that later. I know several of us from the Board are planning on making the trip.

Activities - Ron Biggerstaff

June Event – Knott's Car Show Worker Appreciation Luncheon and NHRA Museum
All members welcome.

The Appreciation Luncheon is scheduled for Saturday, June 16th, at El 7 Mares Restaurant in Pomona. Plan to arrive at 11:30 AM.

Here are the directions to El 7 Mares. Get off the I-10 in Pomona on Dudley, head south (away from the Fairplex) and turn left on Holt. The El 7 Mares Restaurant is located at 1542 W. Holt Ave.

After lunch we plan to head back up Dudley St. to Fairplex Drive, enter the Fairplex, and visit the NHRA Museum.

 SUGGESTIONS FOR MONTHLY MEETING ACTIVITIES ARE ALWAYS WELCOME. GIVE ANY ONE OF YOUR BOARD MEMBERS A CALL WITH YOUR SUGGESTION.

This year at Knott's we sponsored a Tech Tent with the help of handcraftedcars.org to provide some information about the things that first time kit buyers were likely to be curious about. The tech seminars went well and we appreciate the hard work and donation of time from a number of manufactures and other volunteers. We – the A.H.A. - had scheduled a discussion forum for noon on Saturday to talk about the fate of Kit Car clubs in the industry, mostly to try and find out what the magazines and manufacturers thought about the topic since we constantly see notices in the magazines about this club going under or that club being downsized.

We received our answer about the fate of Kit Car clubs at that seminar. **No one really cares.** We had exactly 2 members of the NCKCC and 3 AHA members – counting the moderators – along with a couple of passerby's who thought we looked lonely. No magazines, no manufacturers, no vendors, not even the Knott's security guards. Certainly a message was delivered...

Why? Here's some thoughts from a Kit Car Club member.

Fifteen years ago when I was buying and building my first kit car – a 427 Cobra – I joined the A.H.A. I joined for three basic reasons:

1. I had no clue how to register this car in California and the smog laws were making me wonder if I had gotten in over my head – I needed help from people who have already traveled the trail.
2. I had a lot of questions about how to build the car... brakes, steering, heating, etc.
3. I wanted to enjoy my car with other kit car people. Go on runs, shows, have bar-b-ques, argue about the fastest cars, etc...

Joining the A.H.A. satisfied all the above along with meeting some really great people who I now have the honor of calling friends. It also, through Knott's, introduced me to a number of industry people – manufacturers, builders, vendors, odd balls and everything in between who I hope think of me as a friend. The internet had not yet jelled into what we have today (AI was still working on it) so information was to be found through clubs, friends, and "The Big Book of ..." along with catalogs galore. What changed to drive club membership down?

A couple of major changes happened while we weren't looking.

First, the internet did jell and now offers anyone with a computer a number of abilities that 15 years ago required knowing people

- 1) The ability to research kits and manufacturer's prior to talking to anyone – Manufacturer websites, forums, owners home pages
- 2) Find out exactly what the State of California requires for registering a car. Who to call, requirements, even set up appointments
- 3) E-mail! Now you don't even have to use a phone... email someone you met online in a forum, or post to a forum and get an answer back quickly – hopefully a good one
- 4) Find happenings in your local area. Most magazines and a number of other organizations post info about their events on-line. In fact some car clubs post their newsletters online before their members even get them in the mail – say milk for free?

The other major change was in the manufacturers. When I bought my kit in 1989 I was lucky the manufacturer remembered my name after the first year let alone provided any additional "no cost" interface (not a reflection of all manufacturers at the time but more common than not). Now manufacturers actively support "owners groups" of their products. It could be sponsoring a forum online, appreciation days at their shop, or events around the country. Owners are used as references and are shown on the manufacturer's web sites. They are the best advertising for a vendor and they use it.

Manufacturer's newsletters are replacing the club newsletters and the owners groups have replaced the club – you paid the dues when you bought the product. Brand loyalty rules.

Okay, so if all the above explains the lack of car club participation what's to be done? Nothing... See paragraph two above. No one really cares.

Wait a minute! I do! In fact I'm sure a number of people reading this do. I enjoy going on events with other types of cars! I enjoy talking about the odd Lambo, or the clutch on a Fiero Ferrari, or stripping a T-bird to make a '40s Ford and yeah, why would anyone want a trailer queen Cobra? Talking with 50 other guys about the same basic Cobra kit is – in the words of my seven year old – boring! I can choose to go cross country with a couple of Cobra's or cruise the wine country with a sampling of car marques. I enjoy my friends, current and hopefully new to come, regardless of their choice in cars. I love the internet and its endless information – with the caveat that the browser beware. What will happen to clubs? I don't know but I do know that while we have one we should do everything in our power to preserve it because the answer is not in a one size fits all mentality – unless for you it's what feels comfortable.

2007 Calendar of Events

June

Knott's Car Show Worker Appreciation Luncheon
Saturday the 16th, at 11:30 am

July

Braille Rallye 2007
Saturday the 14th, at 8 am

August

Event tbd

September

25th Northern California Kit Car Show

San Leandro Marina
Saturday and Sunday, 8th & 9th

8th Annual Cruisin For A Cure

Jonsson Cancer Center Sponsor Charity Event
Orange County Fair & Expo Center
Saturday the 22nd

October

River Run to Laughlin

Formerly Club Sandwich
Starts Friday the 20th

November

(Event and date tbd)

December

Annual Christmas Party

(Date and location tbd)