

The
Pious
Pelican

September—October
2023



Northern California Packards

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A Region of The Packard Club, Packard Automobile Classics, Inc.

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Pious Pelican

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*Not an elected position

Any changes, additions or corrections to the *Pious Pelican* should be directed to Clint Moore at batbuick@yahoo.com.

The Pious Pelican
September — October, 2023
Volume 62, No. 5
Director's Report

I am overwhelmed and overjoyed to see the full calendar we have lined up for 2024, which you'll find on the next page. Thanks in advance to Mike Solomon, Hal & Becky Schuette and Mike Hayward for their efforts in planning events, Since the leg work has mostly been done already, it would be easy to have someone step in as our regional tour director... (HINT, HINT... Anyone??)

Many of the concours around the state and around the country will be having special classes in 2024 to commemorate the quasiquicentennial (that's 125 years to you and me) of the founding of the Packard Motor Car Company, and I've already received phone calls from Hillsborough and Niello asking to have Nor Cal Packards bring out our cars. I also know that Pebble Beach, San Marino and Amelia Island will be featuring Packard next season. Please start planning your summers appropriately so that you can participate in the celebration of America's premier auto make!

By the time this reaches you, our Veterans Day event in Yountville may be in the rear view mirror. Rod Dahlgren has been a huge help in transforming this event into something special, and I thank him for his time and generosity.

And finally, it's time to start picking through your closet and garage to find those silent auction items! Our annual Holiday Party is typically the club's biggest moneymaker, and its success depends on you! Whether it's engine and trim parts you no longer need or books and ephemera squirreled away, bring them to Michael's restaurant next month to give your fellow club members a chance to own your unwanted treasures!

Happy Motoring!





- | | |
|--------------|--|
| November 11 | Veterans Day Visit—Yountville |
| December 10 | Holiday Party—Mountain View |
| January 7 | Board Meeting—Blackhawk |
| January 14 | Silent Movie Day—Niles |
| February 25 | Candy Store Social—Burlingame |
| April 14 | Board Meeting—Blackhawk |
| April 21 | Cobra Experience—Martinez |
| May 16-19 | Western Regions Tour—San Simeon |
| June 9-15 | National Meet—Wisconsin |
| June 23 | Hillsborough Concours |
| July 28 | Portal Park Picnic—Cupertino |
| August 11 | Board Meeting—Blackhawk |
| August 18 | Pebble Beach Concours |
| September 7 | Annual Swap Meet—Vallejo |
| September 14 | Antique Autos in History Park—San Jose |
| September 28 | Ironstone Concours—Murphys |
| October 6 | Niello Concours—Eldorado Hills |
| October 13 | Board Meeting—Blackhawk |

For a complete list of events, please visit our website at
www.norcalpackards.org/calendar.php

Upcoming Event **Veterans Day in Yountville** **Saturday, November 11**



Gerry Wuichet's 1950 Super Eight Deluxe Sedan and Adam Simms' 1929 640 Custom 8 Touring were displayed at last year's event.

In what has become a tradition, we look forward to giving back with another display of cars on Veterans Day at the Veterans Home of California in Yountville. This year several of our sister clubs have been invited, and we have added to the day by inviting a veteran helicopter pilot from the Vietnam War to speak during our visit. A catered lunch at the home of Rod and Cindy Dahlgren will follow our display.

A registration form to RSVP was sent by email. Please call Clint for last minute additions.

When: **Saturday**, November 11
Arrive at the Veterans Home before 11am,
lunch to follow at Rod Dahlgren's House

Where: Yountville Veterans Home
190 California Drive, Yountville, CA 94599

Cost: Free to display, \$25 for lunch.

RSVP: Clint Moore 408-426-0741 or batbuick@yahoo.com

Upcoming Event
Annual Holiday Party
Sunday, December 10



Your intrepid leader always dresses to make a statement at the party. Will you help make the occasion bright by donning your gay apparel?

Join all your friends in Nor Cal Packards for our annual holiday party. Typically one of our best attended events, we always have a lovely time at Michael's Restaurant, an easily accessible and picturesque venue. The buffet never disappoints and is stocked with plenty of food to go back for seconds or thirds—but be sure to leave room for dessert!

The holiday party also serves as a fundraiser for our club, so please bring an item or two for the silent auction. This is your chance to pull something from a closet or garage shelf that you've been meaning to divest!

Many thanks to Mark and Kay Barchas for coordinating!!

When: Sunday, December 10 from 11am-2:30pm

Where: Michael's Restaurant
2960 N. Shoreline Blvd, Mountain View

Cost: \$45 for members/\$35 children/\$50 non-members

RSVP: If you have not received the email with the flyer and registration form, contact Mark and Kay Barchas at 650-823-3585 or 650-793-0133

Where We've Been
Antique Autos in San Jose History Park
Text & Photos by Clint Moore



We were very happy to see that Roark Deters drove his 1939 1703 Touring Sedan up from San Martin to join in the fun at San Jose History Park.

Credit is due once again to our hosts in the Santa Clara Valley Model T Ford Club for putting on an incredible day in San Jose History Park. The turnout of cars never ceases to amaze as they are able to attract all manner of prewar makes and models. As usual, Packard was well represented with nine cars on display. Many friends and club members stopped by to say hello even if they couldn't bring a car, including Bob and Mary Jane McCoy.

Displays of period housewares, electronics, toys and crafts drew interested passersby, and entertainment throughout the day was provided by a wonderful jazz orchestra, a barbershop quartet and a troupe of flapper dancers!

Food trucks provided different choices for lunch, and O'Brien's Ice Cream Shop was open for business supplying sweet treats to beat the heat of the afternoon.

(Continued on page 6)

Thanks again to our hosts, including our own Rob Guzzetta. We look forward to participating again next year to continue making this one of the premier prewar events on the West Coast!



Above: Rod Dahlgren, Doug Moore and Kathie & Tim Toland admire George Myers' 1939 Station Wagon by Cantrell.

Left: Bob & Mary Jane McCoy were happy to be out enjoying the day.

Packards on display:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Koch Family (PI members) | 1927 426 Six Runabout |
| Allen Family | 1930 726 Standard 8 Sedan |
| Clint and Doug Moore | 1932 903 8 Deluxe Conv. Sedan |
| John and Matt Kilkenny | 1935 1207 Twelve Sport Phaeton |
| Roark & Alicia Diters | 1939 1703 Super 8 Sedan |
| George Myers | 1939 Station Wagon by Cantrell |
| (brought by Rod & Cindy Dahlgren) | |
| Tim & Kathie Toland | 1940 110 Convertible |
| John Higgins | 1940 110 Sedan |
| James Laughlin | 1941 120 Coupe Convertible |

Other Members in Attendance:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| Frank Giodrano | Bob & Mary Jane McCoy |
| Rob Guzzetta | Ed Soss |

Where We've Been **Annual Swap Meet** Photos by Christopher Slater



Just one of the tables displaying Packard wares!

Parts, parts and more parts! The annual swap meet brought our favorite vendors back to the parking lot of the USA World Classics Event Center in Valejo for a day of consumerism, consultation and camaraderie. A healthy turnout kept the day lively as people recounted tales of triumph and woe taking place in garages and shops around the Bay Area.

Many thanks to Buck Kamphausen for allowing us to once again use his property for the day, and especially thanks to Ron Carpenter for continuing to steward the event. We really appreciate it!!



The front end of a 22nd/23rd Series car was ready to find a new home at the swap meet.



Above: Packards in the amphitheater at Ironstone Concours: (l to r) Rod & Sharon Smith's 1937 120 Convertible Coupe, Larry & Susan Nannini's 1937 1507 Twelve Convertible Coupe, George Beck's 1937 1500 Sedan and Al Vasquez's 1941 120 Business Coupe.



Above: Ladd Stephenson at the swap meet along with his 1937 115C Business Coupe and his Packard vacuum.



Left: Kilkenny's 1935 1207 Sport Phaeton by Dietrich and Tolland's 1940 110 Convertible Coup.



John Allen and his sons Matt and Ben showed off their recently acquired 1930 726 Sedan at History Park.



John Higgins' 1940 110 Sedan sports its new Oahu license plate badge.

An artist sketches 3 of George Myers' woodies at Ironstone: (l to r) 1941 110 Station Wagon, 1940 120 Station Wagon by Cantrell and 1939 120 Station Wagon by Cantrell.



Where We've Been **Ironstone Concours d'Elegance**

Text & Photos by Clint Moore



Basking in the afternoon sunshine in the amphitheater: (l to r) Al Vasquez's 1941 120 Business Coupe, Doug Moore's 1950 Super 8 Deluxe Victoria, and prospective member Logan Morris's 1952 300 Sedan.

Hats off once again to our own Chris Bock for organizing the beautiful concours d'elegance at Ironstone Winery in Murphys. A benefit for local 4-H and FFA organizations, the event packs the venue with spectators eager to see high quality unmodified vehicles built from the late 1800s to the early 1970s. The display of more than 300 cars was nicely rounded out by 12 Packards, 8 of which belonged to Nor Cal members. The cool breeze during the day kept away the heat that can sometimes plague the event, and a new location for the lunch buffet in the amphitheater made for easy access to the midday repast.

As has become tradition, the brass-era racers were put through their paces on a dirt course outside the show field, and it was exciting to see the cars cut through the muck as they rounded each curve and crested the slippery hill. Most important, the winning car was a Packard!

If you've never made the trek to the Gold Country for this impressive, but very casual show, mark your calendar for September 28 next year. Let's make sure Packards of all eras are displayed to prove that after 125 years, our favorite brand of automobile is as elegant and drivable as ever!



George Beck, Al Vasquez and Doug Moore get reacquainted in the shade of Al's pop-up tent.

Nor Cal Members who brought Packards:

Paul Williams	1933 1002 Club Sedan
Larry & Susan Nannini	1937 1507 Twelve Conv. Coupe
George Beck	1937 1500 Super Eight Sedan
George Myers	1939 120 Station Wagon by Cantrell
George Myers	1940 120 Station Wagon by Cantrell
George Myers	1941 110 Station Wagon
(brought by Rod & Cindy Dahlgren)	
Al Vasquez	1941 120 Business Coupe
Moore Family	1950 Super 8 Deluxe Victoria

The stunning class-winning 1931 826 Sedan owned by Gary Marchetti of Vista, CA, headed up the row of Packards in the amphitheater.



Spotlight Feature **The Front Wheel Drive Packard**

by Michael Hayward



Experimental Twelve-Cylinder Front Wheel Drive Car, 1932

In 1929, two front wheel drive automobiles came on the scene, the L-29 Cord manufactured by the Auburn Motor Car Company and the Ruxton.

The Ruxton story has many twists and turns involving many different companies. Finally, there were only 96 built, some by the Moon Automobile Company and some others by the Kissel.

I imagine most people are unaware that Packard built a front wheel drive automobile.

By 1929, Packard had assembled a great engineering department led by Jesse Vincent. Working for Vincent were chief engineer Al Moorehouse, chassis engineer J.R. Ferguson, and retired race car driver Tommy Milton as development engineer. Tommy Milton was responsible for bringing on board Cornelius Willett Van Ranst as an outside consultant. Van Ranst was a former race car driver and an engineer with vast experience. He had spent some time at Duesenberg, later at Chevrolet. He designed the Monroe racing cars. His reputation as a front wheel drive specialist was secured when he and Tommy Milton built a front wheel drive racing car for Russell Durant, son of the General Motors founder. Due to his experi-

ence with front wheel drive cars, E.L. Cord hired him to work with Harry Miller in developing and building the L-29 Cord.

Van Ranst left to work for Chrysler in July 1929. Milton rejoined Packard and when the company decided to build a new car, Milton convinced the people at Packard it should be a front wheel drive car of Van Ranst's design. On June 25, 1930, Packard's board of directors approved the project with one proviso: the car had to be priced down in Buick's price range, which would be in the \$1,500 to \$2,000 price range. What convinced Packard to build a front wheel drive car as the way to go is unknown. For the engine of the car, Van Ranst decided to go with a small bore twelve-cylinder engine, which could be made shorter than a large bore eight-cylinder engine. A more compact engine compartment would add a degree of lightness and provide better handling. Packard's target for the 12-cylinder engine would have a 3/5/16" bore and a stroke of 5", giving the engine 344.8 cubic inches.

Van Ranst stated the project was given a corner of the engineering building and was left pretty much alone. Helping were the Storey brothers. Frank Storey was assistant chassis engineer and Edward Storey was in charge of the engine section. There were few instructions by Packard on design and the components used for the car. Van Ranst was able to achieve what he considered proper weight distribution for ideal traction by placing 60 percent of the weight over the front wheels. The front wheel drive Packard was built on a 138-inch wheelbase. Its center frame base was an X member extending from the frame rear axle kickup to the front of the engine block. The transaxle case contained a unique two-speed transmission and two-speed axle. First and second gear are on one side. As you cross neutral, you change axle ratios and third and fourth gears are on the other side. Fourth gear was more of an overdrive gear suitable for the open highway but was hard to use in town. Because of the space constraints for this article, a complete discussion of the mechanical aspects of this car are found on pages 405-406 in *Packard: A History of the Motor Car Company*, edited by Beverly Rae Kimes.

(Continued on page 14)

In April 1931, design revisions for the transmission were made, but the revisions were insufficient. A complete redesign of the transmission would have to be undertaken. Unfortunately, Packard's registrations in 1931 fell 41 percent compared to a 21 percent increase in Cadillac registrations for the same year. Cadillac was Packard's biggest rival. A complete redesign of the transmission would take time and expenses, something the company could not afford to do. As a result, the front wheel drive Packard was not to be.

There was only one built. The body was pretty much designed by Mr. Van Ranst. He would drive the car off and on.

The car was part of the Harrah's Automobile Collection for a number of years. A photograph of this car is found in *Packard: A History of the Packard Motor Car Company* when it was part of the Harrah's Collection. The front wheel drive Packard was a good idea at the time, but because of the Depression and the loss of income by Packard, it was not to come about.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Gail Valeskie for her help on this article.

References

Beverly Rae Kimes, *Packard: A History of the Motor Car Company*. Published 2007 by Automobile Heritage Publishing and Communications, L.L.C.

James Fasnacht, *The Ruxton Automobile: History and Authenticity Guide*. Published 2014 by Fetherston Publishing, Sebastopol, CA 95473

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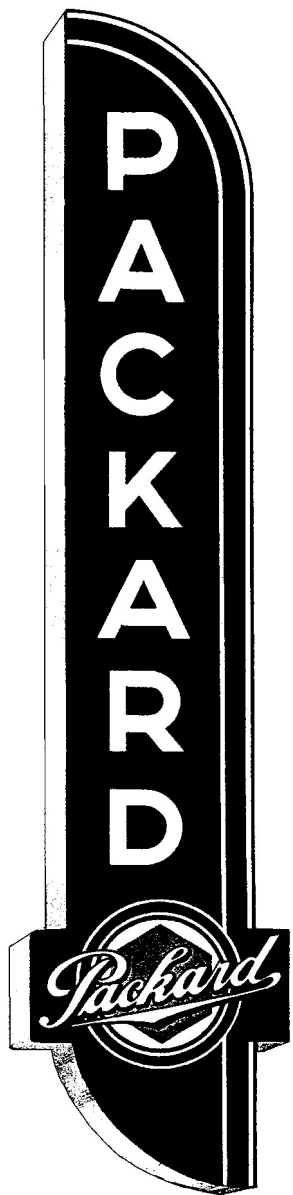
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