

Under the Hood, April 2020

Drag racing is notoriously noisy. Visit Pacific Raceway when the funny cars, or even the Pro-Street cars are racing, and you better have your good ear plugs with you. Last fall, a group of Northshore High School students, all participants in their Automotive Technology Center, set a drag racing world record at the strip in Woodburn, OR. They went against convention and built an electric drag vehicle. This effort started in 2014, so we can assume that dozens of students had a hand in the vehicle. Their new electric record is 8.328 seconds at 166 mph. It is hard for me to imagine a vehicle that fast, that doesn't make a lot of noise. I suspect that the ASEP program at Shoreline Community College has added an electric vehicle component as GM builds more electric cars. I wonder how many of the Northshore HS students graduate to go on to the Shoreline program.

We are proud to claim that CMCS is going to be celebrating our 57th year, having been founded in 1963. In my search, the oldest marque club I have found was the first BMW club that started in 1927. BMW didn't even make automobiles in 1927, so this was a motorcycle club. Have you wondered about the dues cost to maintain CMCS? In the January, 2020 newsletter, there was a comment that the dues in January, 1970 were \$13/couple. Our current dues are \$50/couple, or \$70/couple if you want a printed newsletter. A dollar in Jan, 1970 was worth 6.8 times today's dollar. Doing the math indicates that the 1970 dues were the equivalent of \$88 today. Appears we have a relative bargain in our dues. I suspect one current factor that is different from 1970 is our concern of liability in these litigious times. The club spends a considerable amount of our annual budget on liability insurance including a separate policy for special coverage for director and officer liability. If you have ever been reluctant to volunteer for a leadership role in the club, you should be reassured that the club maintains the D & O insurance plus general liability coverage.

I dutifully recorded the major January vehicle auctions. Mecum in Florida is usually the first one, followed by the major Barrett Jackson auction in Arizona. There is a significant difference in the "soul" of these two auctions. Probably the biggest difference is that the Mecum vehicles generally have a "reserve price". If the bids don't get to that reserve "The Bid Goes On" and the car is listed as a no-sale with the hope that the buyers and sellers will get together out in the parking lot to complete a sale. Yes, you can often find out the final price, but I find it much more satisfying to see the immediate sales price which helps me decide whether I thought the vehicle was "well sold" or "well bought". Mecum this year had 3,500 vehicles cross the sales block and as usual we find a few poor sellers. One seller had bought a 1982 Firebird convertible as soon as GM had announced that they were discontinuing the Camaro and Firebird. It was a fully loaded convertible and the seller probably assumed they would make big money later. The '82 was presented for sale with only 600 miles and sold for \$7,500. A well-used, and loved, 98 C5 purple Pace Car was sold at \$15,000. Not hard for me to determine which of these two was the successful seller. There were literally hundreds of Corvettes at this sale, so if you watched you probably had your own favorites or noticed trends. Generally, the high horsepower Corvettes are always preferred over their less powerful brethren, and that was still true to some extent. However, a couple of almost base models commanded premium prices. A silver '63 split window, 300 hp/4 speed car sold for \$140K. A silver '60 230hp/4 speed example went for \$175K. The silver '60 was reported to be a 98.9 point concours example. In contrast to these higher dollar sales was the white '63 split window, 300hp/4 speed example that sold for \$75K. One of my favorites was the resale red '64 C2 convertible 365 hp/4 speed car that didn't originally sell at the high bid of \$48K. I never did understand what happened, but the bidding was re-opened before the car left the arena and it then sold for \$52K. The

car was nice, but not spectacular. I was automatically drawn to this '64 when the auctioneer announced that the seller had owned this car for 45 years. Now, there was a loved car. Many Corvette owners also appreciate English sports cars. A gorgeous silver '62 Jaguar E Type, reported to be a 98+ point example, sold for \$230K.

I am one of the CMCS members that prefers to get our newsletter in paper copy and willingly pay the premium that this entails. I simply find it more enjoyable to read longer documents in paper form than on my computer screen. We all know that printed media is having a hard time as more and more people discontinue this option. In the last few months we have lost two of our major automotive publications. First, "Autoweek" announced with much fanfare that the latest issue was the last issue, and this last issue was presented as somewhat of a tribute issue. Then I received the February "Automobile" issue which looked much like all the previous issues. The editors reported on their 12-month experience with the Kia Stinger and then introduced the Hyundai Veloster N that they had just added to the fleet for the new 12 month trial. With a total lack of fanfare, a couple weeks later I received a form letter informing me that "Automobile" has ceased publication. I can only imagine the blood bath that must have occurred when someone from management had to announce to the entire staff that the magazine was no more. Close to home, those of you that still read "The Seattle Times" know that our local newspaper is having their own problems. The classified ads used to supply a significant source of revenue for the paper. I can remember many a Sunday morning pouring over the automotive classics section or even the normal car ads. A very similar revenue situation existed for home sales. As the advertising revenue has decreased the paper has been further reduced in editorial content by the reduction in reporters. Last summer, we renewed our annual subscription the "Times" at a 15% price increase. We understand that the "Times" needs revenue to exist, but I wonder how many more annual increases like that we will accept. Even before that increase we were the only remaining household in our cluster of 6 mailboxes/newspaper slots to receive the printed "Times". It is a rapidly changing world for print media. I do have a Kindle which I find very convenient for travel, but normally I much prefer a book.