

REVOLTING
DEVELOPMENT

WITH

FULL PAGE

PHOTO SECTION

FAPA



Q. Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of the MSFS?

A. I refuse to answer on the ground that it would tend to incriminate and degrade me.

THE 1949 PACKARD CUSTOM

127 inch wheelbase, title weight 4310 lbs., actual read weight about 4800 lbs., tire size 3.20 X 15, engine 8-in-line, L-head, bore $3\frac{1}{2}$ " , stroke $4\frac{5}{8}$ " , displacement 356 cu. in., compression ratio 7 to 1, brake hp. 160 @ 3600 rpm, max. torque 287 @ 2000 rpm. Equipped with overdrive and Electromatic Clutch, rear axle ratio 4.09, final ratio in overdrive 2.95. From that you can gather that the Packard Custom is the heaviest standard 4-door sedan made since the war and that it has the largest engine as far as piston displacement is concerned.

General impressions as to appearance, in general I like the lines and style of the body. I think the grille and front end is about the best looking one made in recent years, the chrome, while rather ornate, isn't too bold or gaudy. On the other hand, there is one angle, about 45 degrees from a rear view, where the car has a squatty, bloated look around the rear door and fender. The interior is top-notch. The Customs are upholstered in wool broadcloth, green, blue, maroon or tan, depending on the paint color. My car, being maroon, has maroon upholstery. The carpeting, of the same color, is mohair with sponge-rubber backing and is about $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick. The sour note on the interior is that there are panels of some sort of plastic or fiber on the doors where the handles and window cranks are and the varnish on these has clouded up and started to peel.

The instrument panel is of the "black-light" type, that is, the dial numerals and indicators are of fluorescent material and are illuminated by ultra-violet light. In the dark they glow like a luminous clock dial but brighter. Visibility is tops as there is no reflection or glare. You can scarcely see the illumination, just a faint purple glow.

As I mentioned, my car is equipped with overdrive and Electromatic Clutch. As most of you know, overdrive is a semi-automatic 4th speed gear, higher than normal high. The Electromatic Clutch is Packard's trade name for a power (vacuum) operated clutch. In operation, when you release the accelerator pedal the clutch disengages the same as though you pushed the clutch pedal, when you step on the gas the clutch engages the same as when you let up the clutch pedal in a conventional car. The normal operation is this; you are in the car with the motor running, shift into first gear, step on gas, clutch engages, car starts, ease up on gas, clutch disengages, you shift into second, step on gas, clutch takes hold, car speeds up, ease up on gas, shift into high, step on gas and you are on your way. You don't touch the clutch pedal. There is an interlock with the overdrive so when slowing down in high gear with foot off the gas the clutch doesn't let go until the car slows to 20 mph., thus you have the braking force of the motor to help slow the car and hold back on hills.

The one disadvantage of the Electromatic is that for smoothest results the device must be adjusted to the habits of the driver. It wouldn't be so good in a case where several people drive the same car.

On the credit side, both the overdrive and Electromatic can be shut off at any time and the car used just like any standard shift model.

So far the durability seems OK, at 46,000 miles the only parts replaced have been a head gasket and a steering rod joint, less than \$20 installed. The original tires still have some tread left. In the next few weeks I intend to replace muffler, tail pipe, reline brakes and give it a ring and valve job. Far as I know that's all it needs.

Handling seems very good, there is little body tilt on high speed turns and less than average nose dip during braking and not much rear end "squat" under acceleration. The road holding is excellent, traffic permitting, I've often taken long stretches of winding road at 80 mph with perfect ease and confidence. (After the last Mexican Road Race I note the Italian drivers of the winning European cars singled out the Packards as having the best handling characteristics of any of the American cars in the race.)

The springing is quite firm and solid but gives a comfortable ride.

Performance is generally good, shifting is quick and easy, top speed is about 100 mph (actual, not speedometer speed) and it cruises quietly at 80 mph. Acceleration is satisfactory, with one exception. It has no "jump" from a standing start. On the main roads around Detroit racing from the lights is a major sport and I've tried it with many cars, mostly Fords. The results always are the same. Starting together, the Ford will jump out ahead and gain up to around 25 mph, by which time the Ford's rear bumper will be 10 or 15 feet ahead of my front bumper. 25 to 35 mph we'll hold even, when I get the Packard in 2nd gear and start winding up I'll gain and go by when we reach 50 or 55 mph. By the time I hit 70 or 80 mph I'll be 100 feet ahead. But I just can't stay with them in the first few lengths. According to other owners, the lack of "jump" is normal with all the big Packards, including the pre-war 160 and 180 models.

(*) Mileage is good, considering the weight of the car and engine size. On several trips of 300 miles, driving about 50 mph with a full load I've averaged around 19 mpg., 19.11 from Royal Oak to Mackinaw City and 18.8 mpg from Detroit to Cincinnati are a couple trips I have recorded. Detroit to Chicago and back, heavy traffic and running 80 mph whenever it was possible to do so averaged 15.25 one way and 15.75 the other way. The lowest trip average was on the trip to Portland, over the 5975 miles the average was 14.63 mpg. That was to be expected as some 2000 miles was at elevations of 6000 to 8500 feet and of course my carburetor was set for sea-level operation. However, in Iowa and Nebraska I averaged around 17 mpg at around 70 mph.

One big kick is the windshield wipers. They are lousy! The vacuum type, they slow or even stop on hills or when passing. (A new vacuum booster pump did no good.) On the otherhand, while coasting down hill they flail so wildly the blades ride up over the corner posts! Baaah!! I see one of the mail-order stores has an electric drive unit which replaces the vacuum motor, costs about \$11. I think I'll get one. Other owners make the same complaint.

In general, I like the car. Frankly, it doesn't show the fine craftsmanship found in pre-war luxury cars but neither do any of the other makes. I don't know of any regular stock model American post-war car I'd rather have.

If I were buying a new 1952 car would I take a Packard? I don't know. Packard no longer makes the Custom model and their largest car now has a smaller and less powerful motor. Also, the Electromatic clutch is no longer available. Would the Packard with its superior handling and ride but mediocre performance be better than the 180 hp. Chrysler or 190 hp. Cadillac with their rip-roaring power but only fair handling, ride and brakes? I don't know.

Many cars are called deluxe, super, custom etc to designate minor variation in trim etc. In the Packard line the Deluxe, Super and Custom are separate models, each has a larger more powerful motor than the preceding model and there are differences in chassis and running gear as well as in trim and body fittings.

(*) Mileage figures are based on U.S. gallons, Canadian & British readers should add about 25% to convert to Imperial gallons.

SKY HOOK

Many chuckles from The Flypaper of Fandom, so true. The Face of Facts was interesting and contained some facts which were new to me. Redd Boggs! In commenting on Wassaw & Ossabaw Backwater Journal you say "The great bomb plot might be 'legendary stuff' but like most legend it's distorted. The blowup occurred in Art Rapp's lawn, not Kossuth's. Damn it to hell, Redd, I stood and watched the dago-bomb go off on Kossuth's lawn! Don't try to tell me it didn't! Of course, there was a bomb that was set off on Rapp's lawn but that was an entirely different event, separated by 100 miles of space and a year and a half of time. What the hell? Do you think there was only one bombing in the MSFS? It's just that the Rapp one got more publicity than the others.

HORIZONS

What's this about caves 10 miles down? Thought no one has ever been down more than a mile or two into the earth.

IRUSABEN

Commenting on Non-Warp you refer to Ben Singer as being "actually just a hanger-on of the Michigan group" and wonder that he was able to sell several stories while Art Rapp couldn't. In the first place, Ben Singer isn't a hanger-on, Ben was the most active founder of the MSFS, he was the first MSFS President and he furnished most of the drive and fire that kept the club going for the first year or so. As to why he sells when Rapp didn't-- that's easy to answer. Ben is full of original ideas, many of them screwy but some not. They just seem to bubble up within him all the time. In short, Ben Singer is creative but eccentric. Rapp on the other hand is what one might call the plodding plugger type, he is intelligent and well informed but I can't recall ever hearing him express a truly original or novel idea. Art achieved his fannish fame simply by plugging away at Spacewarp and other fan projects, putting out the best he could month after month. I've read some Rapp's pro rejects and they were good fan-fiction. As I once told him-

"It reads just like your Morgan Botts stories, except it's longer and the guy's name isn't Botts."

The MSFS was just like the N3F, only more so!

THE POWER OF THE PRINTED WORD DEPT.

A few mailings ago F.T. Laney wondered whether it was more fugg-headed to call oneself a "photo-fanatic lensman" or a "sincere acolyte of HPL". That depends, did being a "sincere acolyte of HPL" ever do you any good?

Unlikely as it may seem, being a "photo-fanatic lensman"- or at least having letterheads listing myself as one--- does do me some good at times, mainly in getting me discounts on photo products I buy by mail. As an example, I recently decided to have one of my Contax lenses coated and I wrote to a coating lab on my letterhead, asking the cost. I got a prompt reply, offering a 40% dealer's discount, which amounted to about \$10 in this case. I have noticed many times that a printed letterhead seems to impress people no end. Why, I don't know. After all, anyone with a couple bucks or a debtor who owns a printing press (as was the case with me) can have one. The odd part is that there is nothing on mine that implies I'm a professional photographer or dealer.

REVOLTIN' DEVELOPMENT AT THE CHICON

In reporting on the CHICON I'll follow the same idea I used with the NORWESCON, leaving the formal reporting of the program to others and concentrating on events and persons that caught my eye.

Of course, the big news is the size of the Con, the last time I checked, over 1050 had signed in. Bea Mahaffey thought the final figure would reach 1075 to 1080. The membership was well over 1500, so just about two out of three members came to the Con, which seems like a very good percentage.

The only disadvantage of the good turnout was that the place was rather badly crowded, during some sessions when there was a lot of moving around, such as during the auction, things got quite confusing. Other than the size of the crowd, the things I noticed most were the fact there were many women present, I don't know just how many but there were scores of them of all ages-- and the fact there were several colored fans present, both men and women. This is the first time I've seen any colored fans at a national convention, though we had one at the last Midwest Conference in Ohio.

Among the well known pros there were; J.W. Campbell, E.E. Smith, Geo. O. Smith, Ray Palmer, Sam Mines, Lester Del Rey, Tony Boucher, Ted Sturgeon, L. Sprague de Camp, Jack Williamson, Hugo Gernsback, Willy Ley and several others.

The auction went pretty well, there was a good supply of artwork and it sold fast, prices were about average- the best covers brought \$35 to \$40 and most good black and white items \$5 to \$10. The odd thing was often work by unknown artists brought good prices too, some very average interior illios brought \$4 or \$5, the kind that have gone for 50¢ or \$1 at previous cons.

There were a number of worthwhile speeches, I thought those of J.W. Campbell and Hugo Gernsback were the best, though John Pomeroy's "How to Be An Expert Without Actually Knowing Anything" was also very good. The banquet was well attended despite the rather high price. The Terrace Casino was well filled and a group picture was taken.

The stf ballet Asteroid was interesting and the fluorescent costumes showed up well under the ultraviolet lighting. But, gad! I hope J.W. Campbell didn't see it! I can just picture the next dozen issues of ASF with covers of the "Blue Girl" holding an atom made of fluorescent pink ribbon! Right after the ballet Ray Nelson rushed up to me and demanded to know what I thought of the drum part of the ballet music. I replied -- "It sounded like a bunch of toads copulating on a tin roof! Who the hell was the crumb that did it?" (A couple days before Ray had told me he was to be the drummer.) He beamed delightedly at the insult.

The Masquerade brought out the usual assortment of BEM costumes, in addition there were several Bergy-type Babes this time. Harlan Ellison came as himself.

There were several well known non-fans at the con, Gerry Davis, the "Citizen of the World" put on a skit about splitting atoms. Burr Tillstrom, creator of Kukla, Fran and Ollie was also there. I understand there were reporters from several news-services and magazines present but I haven't learned of any writeups resulting.

Les and Es Cole were there and they didn't look like 15 year old twin brothers, though I didn't get a chance to talk with them.

One sour note was the behavior of the fans, I only heard one small firecracker explode! I heard of no buckets of water being thrown thru transoms, no fans ran down the halls in birthday suits and I don't think and one shot Roman Candles off the roof at the pedestrians down in the street. Fans are going stuffy!

MOON SHOTS

Shortly after World War II, in the course of my photo swapping, I bought a Carl Zeiss aerial camera lens of 1200 mm focal length. It was a fairly simple matter to fabricate an "AHMF" mounting for using it with my Contax camera. It made quite a telephoto outfit, as on 35 mm film the 1200 mm focal length gave a magnification of 24X. In fact, it was so powerful as to be almost useless of ordinary use as it magnified the heat waves in the air to the point that a subject a mile or more away would show wavy or blurred outlines on a sunny day. However it worked fine on the moon, these are 5X enlargements.

THE "NEON" NELSONS

This shot shows how Ray and Perdita Nelson won their nickname of "The Neon Nelsons". The place was the 2nd Midwest Con at Indian Lake, Ohio in 1951. Even the red toned print doesn't do full justice to the eye-blasting splendor of the scene. Their caps were pink, his sweater was white with pink stripes, his socks were orange, her dress was a shade between pink and flame and her belt and his sash were chartreuse and of course, all were fluorescent material. The object on the ground by Ray's foot is a little tin wind-up robot bearing a sign "Ray Nelson is my master!" It is reported that Ohio fans could see the glow in the sky until they got almost back to Chicago.

THE AHMF \$3.75

MIMEO

There you are folks, the AHMF\$3.75 mimeo. In case any of you should wish to build one the photo should give you the general idea of how it goes together. Strictly speaking it isn't the AHMF\$3.75 anymore, I added a Veeder Root counter, which you can just see the corner of at the far end of the cylinder. That made it the AHMF\$4.50 mimeo. The counter is very handy though, saves a lot of bother counting the paper.

In the event anyone does wish to make one, I see no reason why the cylinder ends couldn't be made of hard plywood rather than of metal. This would avoid drilling and tapping all the screwholes. In commenting on the AHMF\$3.75 some of you have pictured me as using an elaborate machine-shop. This is far from true. The only power tools used were an Atlas 6" lathe (about the smallest and cheapest metal-working lathe that isn't strictly a toy) and a $\frac{1}{2}$ " electric drill. Other than that, just ordinary hand tools were used- saw, hammer, screwdriver and, of course, taps and dies.

In case you wonder at all the photos it isn't that I'm becoming extravagant, it happens I have quite a lot of old photo paper left from when we had the studio. Most has a 1943 expiration date! It still works fairly well, except for a little fog or mottle in the whites.

