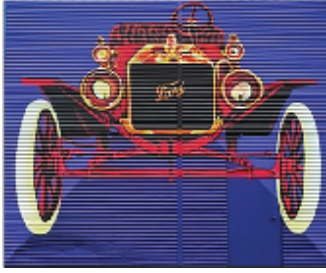


DOCENT NEWSLETTER



Docent Corps of the California Automobile Museum

Notes From the Dashboard...

Volume 25, No 6 November - December 2023

It's Fall, Halloween is over, and the Holidays are approaching fast along with the end of the year. As I reflect on where we are as a museum and as an organization—and how far we have come through the year to be better at nearly ev-erything we do, I think it is safe to say it's been a really good year. We have everyone in, and associated with, CAM to applaud and thank for that.

Here is just a sampling of important things—signs of a bright future ahead, that have or are happening now—or are on the horizon. We can be proud of the accomplishments and anxious to see others be accomplished:

- During 2023 we have coalesced an excellent staff and volunteer force.
- There are 9 people already registered for the 2024 Docent Class.
- The small engine classes are happening regularly and selling out.
- We are seeing more public-school tours booked.
- With our finances stabilized post-pandemic, the Board and Docent Council are joining forces to upgrade the audio and visual equipment in the Bill Millard Room to bring CAM presentation capabilities up to today's standards.
- The Research Library is expanding to be able to actually organize and house more of our collection and have a little more working space to help speed up the very time consuming process to get our collection online and thus make the Library virtually accessible to the public anywhere. Museum Research Libraries are a valuable sought-after museum asset.

The future of CAM is looking bright as we move forward into 2024.

Mike Whelpley

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Upcoming Events

Annual Fund Raiser.....	Fri, Nov 10
Car Club Tree Trim.....	Sun, Nov 26
Holiday Gift Fair.....	Sat, Dec 2-3
Docent Holiday Party.....	Wed, Dec 13
Board Meeting	Last Thurs, 5:30 pm
Docent Council.....	2 nd Weds, 1:15 pm
Exhibits.....	2 nd Thurs, 1 pm
Library.....	Weds, 10 am
Road Crew.....	1 st & 3 rd Weds, 1:15 pm

**36TH ANNUAL
DOCENT HOLIDAY PARTY
AND FUNDRAISER
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2023 AT 5:30PM**

**Potluck Coffee Nudges
Raffle Prizes Auction Items
Music of the Season**

Get together with old friends AND make new ones

The Holidays are almost here, and the plans for the Docent Holiday Party and Fundraiser are already underway! This Party provides the main resource of revenue to support the Docent Program, as well as exhibits and educational programs around the Museum. As always, you are invited to attend. Also, we urge you to participate in our annual raffle.

As in past years, we will be hosting a silent auction and the raffle will include fun items as well. We are in need of donations for the auction and raffle! If you have something you would like to donate, please contact Denny at jllyndblair@gmail.com or 916-440-6552.

Hope to see you there!

Sincerely,

Denny Albrecht & Dan Rodriguez Docent Council Co-Event Chairs

CALIFORNIA AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM



2200 Front Street
Sacramento, CA 95818
916.442.6802

www.calautomuseum.org

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Exhibits & Education



LADY LOWRIDERS: MEET THE REAL 'FAST AND FURIOUS' CHICANAS REDEFINING THE 'MALE-DOMINATED' WORLD OF CAR CULTURE

In Southern California, a distinct growl of car engines is heard on the boulevards, led not by stereotypically macho characters often portrayed in street-racing films like *Fast and Furious*, but by women — with as much style and swagger — who once felt marginalized in the car culture scene.

“We used to be known as ‘passenger princesses,’ but now we’re running the show,” Sandy Avila, 40, leader of, Lady Lowriders a six-member all-women car club in Pasadena, Calif., founded in 2021, says. “We want people to know how much the scene has grown and how much positivity we’re pushing in it. It’s less about speed, and all about family, community and giving back.”

On the weekends, Avila leaves a full-time job managing her family’s construction business to go cruising in her ‘84 Cutlass Supreme. The mother of four purchased the car in 2018 and has since reworked the suspensions and added hydraulics to “give it a little extra *something-something*.”

“I’ve always had a thing for cars,” she tells Yahoo Entertainment. “My dad used to fix lowriders, so it’s been part of my DNA since I was a baby.”

Historically, car clubs (groups of people who share a love for custom cars and a passion for lowriding) have been predominantly led by men, with the exception of a few, such as Lady Bugs Car Club, an all-women club of V.W. Bug drivers founded in the 1970s, and Black Widows Car Club, founded in 2000. But in recent years, a string of newly founded car clubs, led mostly by Mexican American mothers, have found opportunities to celebrate their heritage while also shifting the misconceptions people have about lowriding, which many say is largely due to how it’s portrayed in film and TV.

“Hollywood put a label on us, portraying us as gangsters, always with their cars,” says Angel Romero, 44, leader of the Bay Area-based all-women car club Dueñas, founded in 2019. “I was on a radio station one time, and we had a caller who said, ‘Do I have to be in a gang to have a lowrider?’ We laughed it off, but it’s something that people generally think. And we’ve done a lot of work to change that.”

Portrayals of women in car films are also changing, she adds, though not as fast as she’d like. In decades past, women would typically fall under a “femme fatale” archetype, she explains, often with “fast car chase scenes” representing a “life on the run or from danger” — like Faye Dunaway in *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and the pairing of Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon in *Thelma & Louis*.

Continued on Page 4



(L-R) Angelique Aguilar, Vivian Gallo, Sandy Avila, and Debbie Flores are part of a growing number of women-led car clubs are redefining lowriding culture in Southern California and beyond. (Credit: Nathalie Cruz and Aisha Yousaf for Yahoo / Photo: Getty Images)

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Sandy Avila, leader of the all-women car club Lady Lowriders in Pasadena Calif., poses next to her '84 Cutlass Supreme.

In recent years, however, women have been portrayed as skilled drivers (better than the men, in many cases) and the lead protagonists, in franchises like *Mad Max: Fury Road* and *Fast & Furious*, the latter of which stars Michelle Rodriguez as Letty Ortiz, a street racer and mechanic at the center of the series.

“I think they nailed it with her character attributes,” Romero says of Rodriguez. Still, “I would love to see more movies about women in lowriding on the big screen. We’ve taken it above and beyond, and it’s time for Hollywood to take it the rest of the way.

“Our youngest member is 22 years old and just graduated with a degree in criminal justice, so how’s that for changing the persona of who lowriders are?” she says.

In the last year alone, Dueñas raised tens of thousands of dollars for breast cancer, donated hundreds of toys to foster youth and has organized various drives to help people experiencing homelessness.

That mission is a group effort. Other lowriding legends like Debbie “Diamond” Flores, a 53-year-old hospice nurse and leader of the Inland Empire-based Latin Queens, an all-women car club founded in 2021, says women are taking the tradition “back to its roots” of community service.

“People think we’re gang members or something, which is absolutely not true,” she says. “We may have tattoos, but we’re all professionals. My vice president is a second-grade teacher, one of my girls is a correctional officer and her arms are just all done up. You can’t judge someone by their looks because we’re making a move out here, we really are. We’re family. We build each other up.

“We’ve adopted a shelter for battered women and children, and we have two shelters for homeless sex trafficking teenage victims,” Flores, who drives a ‘58 Chevrolet Biscayne, says of her group’s work.

In August, Flores and Romero will receive an “Icons in Lowriding” award for their respective clubs’ service.

‘The future of lowriding’

Lowriders, classic or vintage model cars that have been modified to sit as close to the ground as possible through a variety of customization techniques, became an integral part of Chicano culture (people of Mexican descent who are born in the United States) soon after the post-World War II era, when returning servicemen took to modifying their cars as a form of self-expression.

As Denise Sandoval, professor of Chicana/o studies at California State University, Northridge, tells Yahoo Entertainment, the two have been intrinsically linked since the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, when Chicano artists created politically-motivated murals in their neighborhoods depicting the injustices happening at the time — from housing and employment discrimination/segregation to police brutality, language suppression and immigration policies.



*Michelle Rodriguez, seen here posing for a press conference in Los Angeles in 2009, is the epitome of feminine power as Letty Ortiz in the *Fast and Furious* film franchise.*

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“That inspired more riders to put murals on their own cars,” she explains. “Cars became a source of cultural pride” and an opportunity for others to “build a sense of community with car clubs.”

From murals of Mexican saints to political messages written in Spanish in bright colors conveying their cultural heritage, lowriders have become a symbol of identity and resilience in the Mexican American community.

To that end, Sandoval explains, the idea of “giving back” has always been a vital part of the scene. “I’ve seen flyers going back all the way to the ‘60s of clubs doing Toys for Tots drives and community drives,” she says. “What these clubs are doing today is nothing new, but I think what we’re seeing now is women taking a more central role in the culture.”

That part *is* new, she says. “A new generation is taking up leadership roles and trying to change their communities, but more importantly, they’re really challenging these ideas of what women can do, in particularly women of color,” she adds. “They are the future of lowriding.”

Women leaders like Flores, who grew up in the scene alongside her late uncle Danny Flores, a well-known lowrider and Chicano activist, are helping in those efforts, noting the feeling she gets when little girls watch her cruising the boulevard in her ‘58 Chevy Biscayne.

“It makes me so prideful,” she says. “When you drive down the street with your vehicle and all you get are these *thumbs up, thumbs up, thumbs up*, it’s an incredible feeling.”

Romero, who drives a ‘65 Chevy Impala, is eager to pass along the tradition to her nieces, something she’s especially proud of.

“It’s a second full-time job sometimes during the summer, and in the winter with all the toy drives,” says Romero, who works a finance job during the weekdays. “They say if you love what you do, you don’t work a day in your life. And I love lowriding. It’s my life.” 🇲🇽

David Artavia, yahoo entertainment, June 8, 2023



The ladies of Dueñas Car Club, an all-women lowriding club based in the Bay Area, pose with the kids of Dueñas Bike Club, an all-girl affiliate club. (Photo: Courtesy Angel Romero)



All went well for the Sacramento Archives Crawl held on October 7th. We arrived at the Center for Sacramento History at 9:30 to set up our table display. Promptly at 10 am, people were at the door waiting to get in to see what treasures were displayed from the various institutions. Our table was across the aisle from the Delta Historical Society and the West Sacramento Historical Society. In the next room were the Placer County and Yolo County archives.

Busloads of people arrived at various times throughout the day with folks anxious to see the various treasures on display. And, we had a chance to talk to two students from the library/archives program at San Jose State University. Some people commented about the CruiseFest on the same day, to which I replied, "They are metal part, we are paper part."

In all, around 300 people passed through the doors at the Center. Nineteen institutions in the Sacramento region participated in this year's archival crawl with four major institutions hosting the various libraries and archives. These institutions included the Center for Sacramento History, California State Archives, California State Library, and the Sacramento Room at the Sacramento Public Library.

It was a fun day meeting all people and explaining what our library/archives at CAM were all about. Our presence there prompted some folks to promise to renew their memberships while other folks were interested in joining. ■

Ron Grantz, Librarian

Events

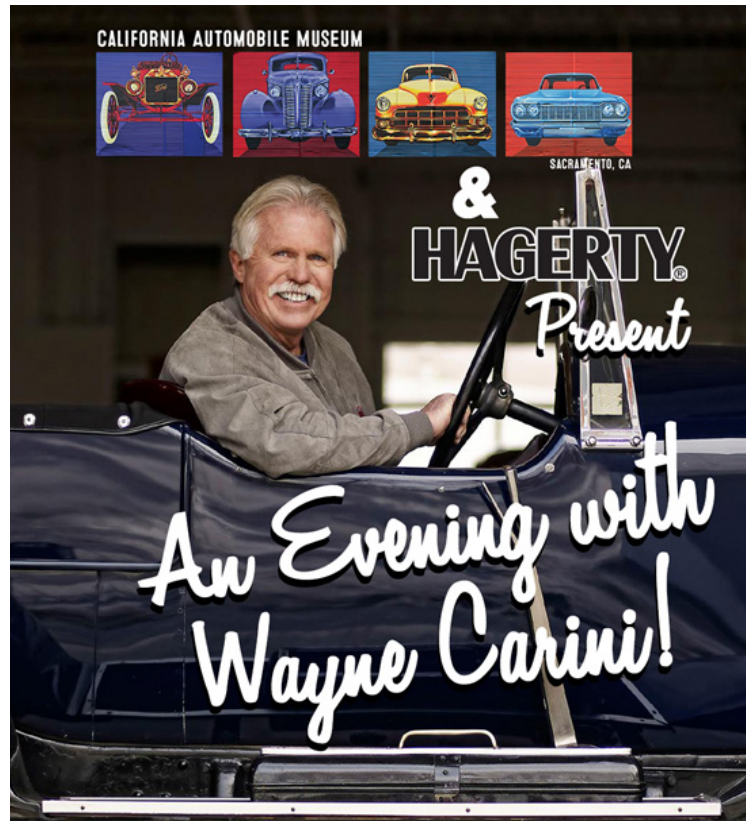


AN EVENING WITH WAYNE CARINI!

FRIDAY, NOV 10, 6:00 PM - 10:30 PM

The California Automobile Museum is proud to announce the revival of our “Evening With” series featuring gourmet food & beverages with an automotive celebrity followed by a presentation along with live and silent auctions.

The star of our upcoming event on November 10th will be the highly regarded American car enthusiast, master restorer, and television personality, Wayne Carini! Mr. Carini is perhaps most widely recognized as the host of the television show “Chasing Classic Cars,” which follows Carini as he travels across the country in search of rare and valuable automobiles to buy, sell, and restore. His carefully curated automotive collection includes a diverse range of vehicles, from iconic American muscle cars to elegant European sports cars.



Wayne’s zeal for cars began when he was a child, working alongside his father on Duesenbergs, Lincolns, Packards, and Model A Fords. At the age of nine, he enjoyed his first ride in a 1960 Ferrari 250 SWB, and he was bitten by the Ferrari bug. Automobiles have been his passion and life’s work ever since. He has since been the Grand Marshall and judge at numerous concours events around the world. His current affairs include a new car magazine titled “The Chase,” his first book titled “Affordable Classics,” and an upcoming podcast named “Classic Car Talk.” Wayne is also filming a new show called “The Classic Bid” and “On the Road with Wayne Carini.”

Tickets:

Museum Member \$95.00

Non-Member Ticket \$125.00



HOLIDAY VENDOR FAIR

DEC 02, 10:00 AM - DEC 03, 4:00 PM

Be one of dozens of craft vendors at the California Automobile Museum's Holiday Vendor Fair! Free with admission for visitors.

This is a two-day event with both days taking place from 10 am to 4 pm. All funds raised go towards supporting the California Automobile Museum which is a 501(c)3 non-profit.

Vendor Registration (both days) \$50.00

The 2024 Le Mans experience

June 11-23, 2024

If you have ever wanted to experience the 24 Hours of Le Mans race (one of the Motorsports Triple Crown events - along with the Indy 500 and Monaco Grand Prix), see the City of Lights – Paris, and visit Normandy for D-Day sights, Mont-Saint-Michel, and more, the California Automobile Museum alongside Good Carma Travel have an outstanding tour organized for you!

Our 14-day tour will include:

- All hotels
- All museum and site admissions
- Ground transportation
- All guides
- All gratuities
- All tickets for 24 Hours of Le Mans
- All breakfasts
- Several dinners
- Several lunches

The full ground itinerary is round trip out of Paris as follows:

- Fly and arrive to Paris on June 11
- Stay in Paris (June 11 – 14)
- 3 nights at Hotel Des Arts Paris Montmartre in 10th Arrondissement neighborhood
- Tour of Musee des Space Le Bourget
- Free day in Paris for tourism
- Transfer to Le Mans hotel (June 14 – 18)
- 4 nights at a TBD hotel in Tours, France
- Daily track transfers for race
- Tour Musée des Blindés – Europe’s largest armored vehicle collection
- Wine tasting in Loire Valley
- Transfer to Bayeux, France (June 18-22)
- 4 nights at Grand Hotel du Luxembourg in Bayeux
- Full day tour of American sector of D-Day
- Full day tour of Mont-Saint-Michel
- Full day tour of Bayeux, Caen area sights (William the Conqueror's castle, Bayeux Tapestry, etc.)
- Transfer to Paris Airport Hotel (June 22)
- 1 night at Sheraton De Gaulle Airport Hotel
- Travel Home June 23



For the Le Mans race, we are partnering with the [The Grand Prix Club Inc](#) and leveraging their 40+ years of experience at Le Mans.

The tour is arranged in a ‘modular’ manner and can be tai-lored to your needs/desires. For example – if you ONLY want to attend the 24 Hours of Le Mans, we can arrange and price this. If you do NOT want to attend the 24 Hours of Le Mans, we can arrange and price this as well. If your travel partner wants to do everything with you EXCEPT the race, we can arrange this. Let us know what you are interested in!

While there’s time to decide on some options, due to un-precedented demand for Le Mans tickets, we need to get our spots reserved ASAP. Please place your \$500 per person deposit TODAY!



CAM profiles



Personalities at the California Auto Museum

GENE VAUGHN

DOCENT CLASS OF 1988

FORMER DOCENT COUNCIL CHAIR

1996 DOCENT OF THE YEAR

ROAD CREW



Gene spent his early life growing up in Connersville, Indiana. Connersville, in Fayette County, is among the old-est cities in Indiana, having been established in 1813 by its namesake, John Conner. In the early 20th century, the town became known as “Little Detroit” because of its importance to the automobile industry. Automobiles manufactured in Connersville include Auburn, Cord, and Duesenberg.

Gene is the third of 6 children of Martha and Roy Vaughn from oldest to youngest Dale, Howard, Gene, Sara, Nine, Noel. Gene’s dad, Roy Vaughn, was a electrician in the factory that had been the Cord plant. Gene picked up his electrical skills by working with his father in his after-hours business of rewiring old farmhouses.

Gene attended School at Columbia township grade school in Fayette County and middle school in Connersville Jr. High and High School, then at Fayette Central High School, then moved to Rush County and attended New Salem High School for 2 years and then Rushville School.

Gene’s first car was a ‘57 Plymouth that he bought for \$125. That didn’t last long and was replaced by a ‘59 Rambler. Later, he bought a ‘60 Dodge body, from a junkyard, and put the ‘57 Plymouth engine in it. He remembers his oldest brother, Dale did some street and drag racing with a ‘60 Ford that he and his friends built.

Gene was drafted into the Army in 1969. After basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky, he went to Fort Bliss Texas for Air Defense training, then was loaned to the 191st MPs as a stockade guard. He then returned to Air Defense training. After training at Fort Bliss, the newly formed unit was shipped to Fort Riley, Kansas.

Following military service, Gene returned to Indiana where he worked in an electrical supply warehouse, and as a subcontract trainee for about 1 year. Then he worked for a communication contractor that did contract work for telephone companies - working in Indiana from 1973 to 1980. Gene was married in 1974 and divorced in 1980. He has two kids - Christina and Nathan. Leaving Indiana in 1980, Gene worked in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and moved to California in 1987.

In 1988, Gene attended an event at the then Towe Ford Museum and quickly enrolled in the already-started second Docent Training Class. As one of CAM’s longest serving current docents, Gene has also served as docent council chair and was Docent of the Year in 1996. Gene was also a long-serving member of the Road crew.

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In Gene's own car collection, he has his aunt's '59 Ford Custom 300. This car was originally sold to a local Ford executive in December of 1958 as a 1959 model. It was then traded back to the dealer and his aunt traded her 1938 Ford for it. Gene's father, Roy, kept the car after his aunt's passing in 1982, and Roy kept the car until 1996. Gene has owned it longer than anyone. He also has a 1965 Rambler American Convertible, a 1956 Dodge pickup. His daily driver is a 1995 Jeep Cherokee.

Congratulations to Gene on 35 years of service to the museum.



Docent Scrapbook



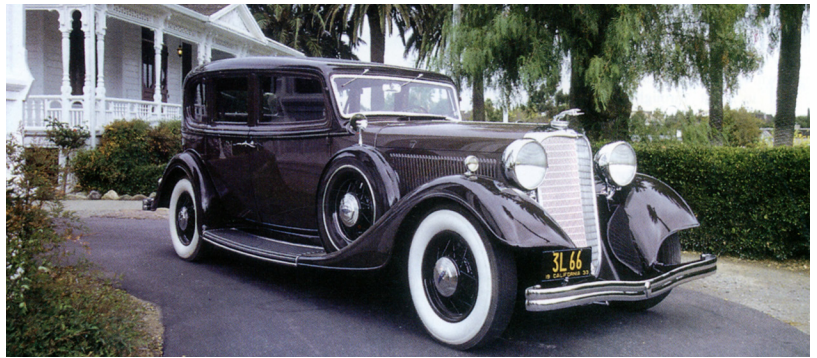
A.P. GIANNINI'S 1933 LINCOLN KB

The year was 1933. Franklin D. Roosevelt had just moved into the White house and Hitler's National Socialist had seized control of Germany. The Lone Ranger premiered and Amadeo P. Giannini, founder of Bank of America bought his 1933 Lincoln KB. Ford Motor Company only sold 52 Lincoln KB five-passenger sedans that year because the country was in the middle of the Great Depression.

Unemployment was high and morale was low. People were hoarding what little money they had. Giannini believed that the Depression attacked the soul of the American people as well as their pocket-books. "Depressions are a product of fear." he said "recovery has to start somewhere, why not California?" So, at time when others were counting their pennies, he poured more than \$200,000 into an enormous advertising campaign of hope and optimism and enlisted the support of dignitaries and celebrities throughout the state including Governor James Rolph and entertainer Al Jolson.

A.P. needed a car that was reliable and that would allow him to travel at the drop of a hat to different communities throughout the state. The 1933 Lincoln KB fit the bill. The mechanical notes on the car state that "When you take the wheel of your Lincoln, you have the satisfaction of knowing that it is ready for immediate use." Giannini's car was essential to his work. ⁽¹⁾

The KB is regarded by many collectors as the ultimate Lincoln. The KB was an all-new V-12 carried on a 145" wheelbase chassis. Displacing 447.9 cubic inches, the mighty KB engine had valves that were two inches in diameter and had a forged steel crankshaft with seven main bearings. Horsepower was impressive for the time, but it was by no means the highest in the industry. A 1932 Cadillac V-16 was rated at 165 hp, and the contemporary Duesenberg was rated at 320 hp and higher with supercharging.



This car could go from a dead stop to 60 mph in 26 seconds using only the top gear. An honest 95 mph could be achieved if the owner could find a road that could handle it. So smooth and flexible was top gear operation that a cruising speed of 80 mph could be sustained all day. A trip from Chicago to San Francisco on the Lincoln Highway or from Chicago to Los Angeles on Route 66 could be made in less than three days provided there was no other traffic to interfere. The problem was that these were mostly two-lane highways at the time with most traffic moving along at 45 mph. ⁽²⁾

Joe Garcia, who chauffeured A.P. from 1927 to 1936 said the A.P. never learned to drive a car. "He drove a horse and buggy in the old days. By the time I was working for him he was too busy to learn. Besides, he didn't want anything to interfere with his concentration. During those years when A.P. was building the bank, he was a man in a hurry. I was a young man and I wanted to drive fast. A.P. didn't seem to mind – he never told me to slow down."

Slowing down was not A.P. Giannini's style. He had to fight through the Depression and great opposition, but by the time he died in 1949, his mission of placing capital in the hands of working people was copied so widely it transformed the economic base of America. He succeeded on such a scale he made a lasting difference in the lives of millions of people. As a matter of fact, movie director Frank Capra was so inspired by Giannini that he modeled the banker George Baily after him in *It's a Wonderful Life*. ⁽¹⁾

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1933 was the very bottom of the Great Depression. It was the year that FDR entered the White House with his New Deal and drastic reform. The troubled times were reflected in Lincoln sales with a mere 587 KBs built and 1420 KAs. Bank of America's 1933 KB Series 255 – is a five-passenger four-door sedan which was factory priced at \$4,500. ⁽²⁾

After A.P. Giannini's death in 1949, the Lincoln KB was purchased from his estate and was stored – only to be discovered 23 years later in a rickety old barn where small animals used its once posh cushioned seats to build cozy nests.



In 1995, a bank customer alerted Nancy Gill, then manager of the Robidoux branch that Giannini's 1933 Lincoln KB was in an old barn in Artesia, California and was for sale. Nancy followed up on the lead, and the bank researched the provenance of the car and verified that it was the A.P. Giannini car. The bank purchased the car for approximately \$32,000. B of A mechanics began the restoration by disassembling the car, but complications arose.

Enter Stu Laidlaw, a renowned restoration expert from Angels Camp who took over the project. "My first impression of the car was that it was in pretty good shape. It was not rusty, it had a dent in the top but other than that, it seemed in pretty good condition." He started by re-assembling the car in order to get a sense of the car as a whole.

Laidlaw's good impression slightly altered as the work proceeded. The dent in the top was complex to repair, and acid had totally destroyed the engine's internal components. Unable to find another engine, Laidlaw scrounged all over the country for parts. In some cases, parts such as pistons, valves, and valve springs had to be fabricated. They originally budgeted \$100,000 but spent over \$220,000. Due to the condition of the engine, another engine was purchased for \$32,000 for parts. Stu Laidlaw was able to sell the block of that engine for \$25,000. ⁽¹⁾ 

1. A.P. Giannini's 1933 Lincoln KB, Connie St. John, Bank of America

2. Lincoln KB History, Tim Howley