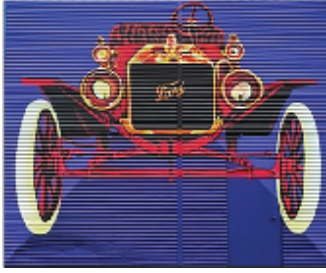


DOCENT NEWSLETTER



Docent Corps of the California Automobile Museum

Notes From the Dashboard...

Volume 25, No 3 May - June 2023

It has been a busy and eventful Spring 2023 at CAM. We have seen some important changes and events.

Foremost among them—we welcomed Karen McClafin back to CAM as Executive Director. Some will remember that it was during her first tour as Director that the Towe Auto Museum became the California Automobile Museum, and our first Museum Curator was added to the staff. We look forward to her leading CAM forward to become an even better museum and grow in stature in Sacramento and the state.

We also celebrated the life of Bill Millard who among his many contributions to CAM laid the foundation for our Docent program. We will miss his physical presence in the building and his wisdom and experience. However, he has left behind an indelible imprint on CAM and his handiwork is evident in the spirit and inspiration with which we engage the public, and endeavor to carry forward the stories, factual knowledge, and practices he championed.

We look forward to the graduation of the 2023 Docent Class in May as they join the Docent Corp and carry Bill’s vision for the Docent program forward.

It’s also important that we take note of the fact that Mike Zinser will not be with us as he has been in the past. He will still be around sometimes he says but not regularly or as volunteer coordinator, nor doing the myriad of other tasks that he did in the past from plumbing repairs to setting up for events and clean up after events. We will miss his presence and humor. I remember in particular the many late nights after the museum closed, when he could be found very high up on the lift drilling holes and installing bolts in the beams to provide extra support and stability for the roof. The project went on for many weeks of dedicated hard labor. We thank Mike for all of that and for his humor and his unselfish positive presence in the building.

Meanwhile, with the important changes in staffing and other areas, our visitor numbers are back up, the number of scheduled group tours is growing, and school tours are increasing. We have had more—and very good media coverage, and the gift shop is busy. Those are a few of the signs that CAM is back better and stronger.

Mike Whelply

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Upcoming Events

Woodie Inservice.....Weds, May 3
Big Day of Giving.....Thurs, May 4
Docent Graduation.....Sat, May 20
Vets Mem. Day Car Show. .Weds, May 3
Summer Art Fair!...Sat&Sun, Jun 24, 25

Board MeetingLastThurs, 5:30 pm
Docent Council.....2nd Weds, 1:15 pm
Exhibits.....2nd Thurs, 1 pm
Library.....Weds, 10 am
Road Crew.....1st& 3rd Weds, 1:15 pm

IN MEMORIAM: BILL MILLARD

1938-2023

AUTHOR

TEACHER

HISTORIAN

PHOTOGRAPHER

OL' SCHOOLMASTER



William Lee Millard was born in Chicago on August 11, 1938. Bill's early years were a time of blackout curtains, air raid sirens being tested, gas and food rationing.

One of the first books in his collection was one full of airplanes that his dad gave him when he was about four. Bill claimed that book, which probably triggered his Air Force career, remains in his extensive library. His mom can be blamed, too: She had a habit of dumping Bill in the public library while she did the shopping. So, at an impressionable age he contracted a chronic book addiction. Young Bill mowed lawns and carried papers for spare change to buy car books.

Bill also discovered cars and trains - everything to do with technology, in fact - and his dad, an amateur photographer, gave him his beginner camera. Bill discovered the first law of photography: Cameras were invented especially for taking pictures of cars! At thirteen, Bill went to work for a camera shop.

Bill grew up in Freeport, Illinois and graduated from high school in 1956. After high school, Bill worked in the chem lab of a local manufacturer for a year. Then, in 1957, Bill joined the Air Force. He wanted to repair radar sets - and did. After four years in uniform, he moved to Sacramento in 1961, where he began working as a civilian at McClellan Air Force Base in radar technology.

In 1963, Bill met Macell and on October 31, 1964, and they were married at the Methodist church in downtown Sacramento. Bill and Macell both retired from civilian work at McClellan in 1991. Bill then became active as a volunteer docent at the Towe Ford Museum.

The docent classes started as a small group of people who met in the front office. The lectures focused on the history of Ford, the "Man", the machine, the times. This was the start of the first docent training program. The majority of the cars were Fords, there was no interpretive signage, but volunteers helped make it happen.

Bill enrolled in Docent Class 6 the spring of 1991. After graduation, he suggested to director Ernie Hartley four additional topics that might nicely round out the Ford story. That's when he learned a cardinal rule of 2200 Front Street: such a suggestion most likely equals a job application. By 1993, Ernie was asking Bill to take over the docent training program. He was Docent Training Coordinator from 1993 until 2017.

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Docent Newsletter

May - June 2023

CALIFORNIA AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM



2200 Front Street
Sacramento, CA 95818
916.442.6802

www.calautomuseum.org

FOUNDING DIRECTOR: DICK RYDER

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Andrea Rhodes	Office Manager
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Saul Goldman	Vehicle Sales Assistant
Gabriella Taylor	Volunteer Contact

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In January 1998 the museum raised the curtain for a brand-new Docent Course II, now attempting to take on the automotive world in 19 tightly packed evenings. Today our annual course is 20 sessions long and our graduating classes average about 25 to 30 new docents. Our current roster of instructors totals about 50, giving us an enviable teacher/student ratio of 2:1. We have heard it said that we have one of the most comprehensive automotive docent training programs in the country.

Besides long volunteer hours at the Museum, Bill occupied himself with automotive history, as well as books, models, computers, cameras, old jazz and rag-time, motor sports, his red '54 'Vette, wine, Australia, and for that spare change he ran a little one-man business, repairing photographic equipment and the occasional clock.

Luckily Bill spent 58 years married to the most patient woman on earth. Bill and Macell celebrated their 50th anniversary on October 31, 2014

At the 2015 Annual Membership meeting, then Docent Council chair Ron Vogel announced that the Docent of The Year award would be titled the "Bill Millard Docent of the Year Award." The council decided to formally recognize "The Ol' Schoolmaster's" over thirty years of dedication in developing what we all agree to be the most extensive auto museum docent training program in the country.

On April 29, 2021 the CVF Board of Directors voted unanimously to name the CAM education center The Bill Millard Education Center.

Bill and Macell travelled many places together, including Australia 6 times, New Zealand 2 times, and 4 Viking river cruises in Europe, logging innumerable miles by rail, sky, and water together during their 58 years. Bill is survived by his wife of 58 years, Macell, and his sister, Marilyn. He is interred at a family plot in Alpine, Texas. ■



Exhibits & Education

THE POST WOOD ERA



By 1953, the market was mutating and the public wanted more. For a start, the customers demanded four-door wagons that did not have maintenance problems. GM and Chrysler were selling far more wagons than Ford, and only one of them was a traditional woody model.

In 1952, when Ford introduced its all-new Gordon Buehrig designed line-up, it joined GM's line of thought using wood as a light trim option for the new wagons. Both three and five-door models were introduced, although Mercury offered only a five-door version. The highline Ford Country Squire and Mercury Custom Series wagons were both trimmed in wood.



Chevrolet, Pontiac, and Oldsmobile shared the main body section and sheet metal of their wagons until 1953. In 1954, Chevy and Olds introduced new models with their own style, while Pontiac carried on for another year before introducing its new wagon models.

Each of these pre-1955 wagon models offered a touch of wood with a section of photo-stencil wood graining around the belt line of the upscale models. From 1955 on, it was hands-off at GM for any wood-look trim. Chrysler also dropped the wood look and went into fins, chrome, and multicolor paintwork for its most decorative models.



It was now up to Ford to carry the banner. The company had created and held the woody market in its hands for over twenty years, and now, with the advent of so many new materials and pressing consumer needs for family automobiles, it pursued the station wagon as a new status symbol.

Henry Ford II still had quite a fancy for the wood look and oversaw the continuation of the theme as a Ford styling cue. Ford continued to use real wood trim to surround the artificial wood paneling on both the 1954 Ford and Mercury models.

These new station wagons carried the Country Squire tag while the Mercury version was tagged the Monterey. The Monterey was sold as a five-door only, in either six or eight-passenger seating configurations. These models featured woody styling, which was rather heavy handed considering the more refined look of the GM products.

The switch to “fiberglass wood” framing on the Fords in 1955 was double-headed. It meant that servicing the wood on a regular basis was unnecessary, and it also allowed the design staff the opportunity to create a more refined look to the framing. They could now make it any size or shape. The problems of warping or cracking because the wood was too thin or could not be made in a desired shape became obsolete.

This was the first year of the new look, “simulated boat-deck planking” and the combination was actually quite startling on either a white or a bright red wagon because it was also two-toned in a complementary color around the windows. The Mercury version looked completely different to the Ford version as it featured double panels set in two levels, fiberglass frames, and simulated mahogany wood paneling.

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Continued from Page 4

As the 1950s continued, Ford evolved the Country Squire image in both lines with more refinement and some interesting changes in wood grains and framing styles. In 1957, Mercury took up the Colony Park tag for its upline woody wagons, which featured pillarless, hard-top styling and a very interesting reversed coved fin design.

The introduction of the Edsel in 1958 brought with it the top-of-the-line four-door Bermuda nine-passenger wagon which featured two-tone paint. It was one of the most interesting “fake” woody styles that ever mutated out of Detroit with its combination of multiple colors, fins, and wood trimming.

Ford continued to be the only manufacturer using wood trimming with the new, 1959 wagon featuring a huge section of simulated wood paneling surrounded by a heavy fiberglass fake ash frame.

Once again in 1960, the new line of Ford and Mercury Country Squire and Colony Park wagons featured fake wood paneling and framing. The Ford models used boat deck paneling, while the Mercury models were fitted with simulated grained mahogany. The Mercury was an interesting design with many compounded curves, wraparound windshields, and pillarless four-door styling. Through the sixties, Ford and Mercury continued to offer Country Squires and Colony Park models trimmed in wood.

Ford added Country Squire “wood packages” to the Falcon in 1952, the new Fairlane 500 in 1963, and Mercury Comet Villager in 1964.

Chrysler got back into the wood-wagon business in 1965 with a top-line version of its huge Dodge Custom 880 wagon. It featured a massive imitation mahogany panel that ran from nose to tail edged with a fine molding of chrome trim.



By 1967 Chevrolet, Pontiac, Jeep, and even AMC were chasing Ford with woody wagons, adding the Chevrolet Chevelle, Pontiac Tempest, Jeep Super Wagoneer, and the Rambler Ambassador to the growing list of woody look-alikes.



Designers must have been running out of ideas when Buick introduced its Deluxe Sportwagon in 1968. This full-sized wagon featured a Vista roof and a rolling wave of simulated wood paneling that crested at the leading edge of the front door and rolled down to a thin line at the rear wheel.

Even though GM offered quite a variety of simulated wood-sided vehicles, Chrysler did its utmost to chase Ford’s success with the Country Squire and Colony Park. Chrysler reintroduced the wood-trimmed Town and Country in 1969 fitted with a “Doorgate” rear door using the same body Dodge used for its wood-paneled Monaco model.

Wood, whether genuine or imitation, continues to be used as an embellishment on contemporary automobiles - mostly as interior trim on upscale models. ■

(1) *Wood Details*, Rob Leicester Wagner, Friedman/Fairfax, 2000

(2) *Woodys*, David Fetherston, Motorbooks International, 1995

A docent in-service will be presented by Gary Wright of the National Woodie Club on Wednesday, May 5.



The ol' Schoolmaster, Bill Millard, may physically be gone, but his legacy lives on through the through the museum's docent program and through his books, magazines, and model collections. He requested that his collection come to the museum, and that donation is now in progress.

His total book collection consists of 963 volumes, with about half of the books being new to the library. His interest in automobiles covered a wide span of automotive literature, from automobile history and marque histories to company histories, biography, and automobile racing.

Of course, there are lots of Corvette books in his collection. Some of the books may be a little older but they are in mint condition. On inventorying his books, I found many little note papers where he had written some notes on something that piqued his interest. In cataloging his books, his donations will be noted. 🇺🇸

Ron Grantz - CAM Librarian

Car Club Cavalcade

MAY

The California Capitol Chapter has been active in the Sacramento area since 1983 and has a membership of over seventy families. We are very active in the enjoyment, restoration, showing and driving of our Buicks.



JUNE

Our club members are a large group of British car enthusiasts. We welcome all who either own or are interested in a variety of makes and models of British cars.



DOCENT TRAINING SCHEDULE

Session 19 May 3rd	Indianapolis 500 & NASCAR (55) Mark Glover	Post WW2 Racing (30) Bill Sessa	Environment & Cars (35) Bill Sessa		120 Minutes + 10 minute intro & 2 10 minute breaks	8:30 pm adjournment
Saturday ** May 6th Optional Field Trip - subj to change	National Auto Museum, Reno - Meet in Reno at 9:30 am	1st Session (120) includes movie	Lunch TBD	2nd Session (60)		2 pm Approx finish
Finish Mentoring						
Return all Make-up DVD's						
Session 20 May 10th	Electric/Steam/ Cars (55) Neil Lubin	Hydrogen Cars (45) Glenn Rambach	Conclusion (10)		100 Minutes + 5 minute intro & 2 10 minute breaks	8:20 pm adjournment
Graduation Saturday May 20th	Graduation & Car Show 10 am - 1 pm	NOTES: The first 5 - 15 minutes or so of each session are administrative. All sessions run 6:00pm to 8:30 - 8:45 pm, except Saturdays, which are 9 am to about 12:30 - 1 pm. Number in Parentheses following subject means: Estimated Length in Minutes e.g. ("30"). - - **Blackhawk and National Museum field trips gather at those museums at 10:00am or 9:30am as noted	***For Model T session, we also enjoy Model T driving support courtesy of members of the Sacramento Valley Model T Ford Club.			Adjournment Times Approximate

Events



Ever wonder how the money you give to the Museum is spent? Sunday Drives, exhibits, event rentals, car shows, classes, and the general upkeep of our collection all take a considerable amount of funds!

With your help however, all of this is possible! And with Big Day of Giving coming up, you can ensure that it all remains possible. Early donations are also LIVE so if you want to give early, click the button below! We thank you in advance.

DOCENT CLASS OF 2023

GRADUATION & PICNIC

SATURDAY, MAY 20 @ 10AM

The 38th Docent Class graduation will be celebrated on Saturday, May 20th, 2023. As is customary, this event is celebrated by holding a graduation ceremony and picnic. The Docent Council will provide burgers & dogs. Everyone please bring a dish to share. The Show & Shine will be your chance to share your toys with the rest of us.

Graduation and other activities are open to members of the Class of 2023, their families, and friends. All other docents, and instructors are welcome. It's a wonderful opportunity to get to know other docents that you may not get to see on your appointed shift dates, as well as to spend time with members of your graduating class. We think you'll agree that the day is a lot of fun for everyone, and it is a great time renew friendships and welcome the new class. We're looking forward to seeing all of you on May 20th, beginning at 10:00AM. Please RSVP at the front desk.

Ricardo Conreras
Phil Jackman
Kimberly Leal
Karen Long
Cynthia Mills
Ron Medcalf
Scott Mikkelson

George Potiris
Jonathan Rees
Bill Sommer
John Strizek
Richard Sullivan
Bella Taylor
Helen Whelan-Bashaw



It's time to get revved up! Our Veterans' Memorial Day Car Show is back on May 29th from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m!

We will be back in the CalPERS lot under the overpass and as always, all makes and models are welcome. If it rolls, bring it by! Even if it doesn't roll but it's cool, tow it on down!

Pre-Registration is \$30 while Day-of Registration goes up to \$40 and will only be available from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. so don't procrastinate! Head to the link below and register that sweet, sweet ride for all to see. You know you want to!

Make your Museum visit extra fun with our Summer Art Fair! Shop from dozens of local art vendors while you explore our vast collection of classic cars!

Tickets include Museum admission and as always, this event is completely FREE to our members, and \$5 for non-members.



CAM profiles



Personalities at the California Auto Museum

GREG ALUMBAUGH

DOCENT CLASS OF 2014

EXHIBITS COMMITTEE

DOCENT OF THE YEAR 2022

Greg was born in 1951, and raised in LaPorte, Indiana. His first car was a '64 Pontiac Catalina convertible, but he recalls that a ragtop wasn't the ideal ride for the Northern Indiana climate.



After finishing High School in La Porte, Greg enrolled at Indiana University in Bloomington where he graduated with a BS Ed. He met Joyce, and they married in 1973. They moved to Virginia Beach Virginia where they both taught elementary school for four years.

During the summer of 1976, Greg acquired a yellow '64 Ford Econoline van. After repainting the van a more sedate gray and white, Joyce and Greg embarked on a cross-country journey that led to a decision to move to California in 1981.

Greg decided to give up teaching and began a career as an automotive insurance claims adjuster, assessing damaged cars and writing repair orders. Based in Chico, his territory covered most of Northern California and he put many miles on his company car, an '84 Mercury Topaz, on the back roads between Chico and the Oregon border. Along the way, Joyce and Greg raised 3 daughters, moving again to Cameron Park, and eventually retiring in 2013. They will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary this summer.

A reader of car magazines, Greg came across an ad in The Sacramento Bee for a docent training class at CAM, enrolled, and graduated with the class of 2014. His favorite car displayed in the museum is our '49 Buick convertible. Please join us in congratulating Greg on being chosen 2022's Docent of the Year. 🇺🇸

CAMprofiles



Personalities at the California Auto Museum

ROGER THIBAUT

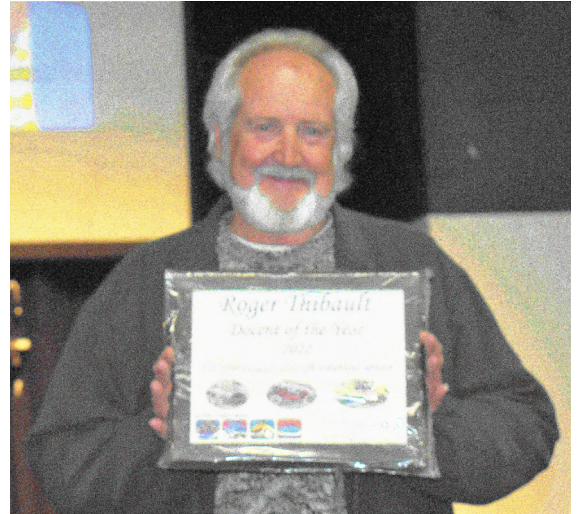
DOCENT CLASS OF 2016

ROAD CREW

EVENTS VOLUNTEER

DOCENT OF THE YEAR 2022

Roger was born in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. In 1955, at the age of 8, he and his mother boarded the California Zephyr for Sacramento. Three months later, after a cross-country drive in a '49 Hudson convertible, his dad joined them.



In 1964, Roger graduated from James Marshall High in West Sacramento. He then attended Sacramento City College while working at Tognotti's Speed Shop as well as the Shell station at 16th and L streets. During those years, Roger's rides included a '53 Ford woody, '56 Buick Century coupe, '30 Model A (Buick powered), a '39 Chevy Sedan Delivery (also Buick powered), and a Morris Minor woodie.

In 1966, the Selective Service "greeted" Roger, and he found himself reporting for basic training at Fort Lewis, Washington. Following basic, he was assigned to Fort Lawton in nearby Seattle as a personnel specialist. Further duties led to working as an optometrist's helper, and finally as an MP for the Provost Marshall's 74th Detachment.

After military service, Roger hitchhiked up and down the west coast working at odd jobs – picking apples in Washington and working on salmon fishing boats. Bringing a boat down the coast, he was caught in a gale off the Washington coast. He says that experience changed his life forever. In the late '70s, he bought his first salmon boat. He named her the "Salmonella." In the mid '80s, Roger and two fishing buddies sent their boat to La Paz and started a fleet of charter boats under the name "Mosquito Fleet."

Meanwhile, back in Sacramento, Roger enrolled at Sacramento State earning a BA in psychology concentrating in behavioral science and education. He tried teaching for a year at Davis High but decided that teaching was not where his future lay. This led to a career with Sacramento County Social Services as a social worker involved in adult supervision, protective services, and in-home supervision. Roger then got involved in union activities including forming the United Public Employees.

In 1985, Roger was getting an appraisal and met with Dick Ryder who invited Roger to the early meetings that led to establishing of the CVF. The following year, his fishing buddy and a Teamsters local union representative, told him that the head of the Western Teamsters Association, who was also a Model A enthusiast, gave him a phone number which he gave to Dick. Dick then went to San Francisco and met with the guy. Dick didn't think the meeting went all that well, but three weeks later, Hadley Auto Transport contacted CVF to say that they had 13 trucks and drivers ready to move the Towe collection to Sacramento.

Roger retired in 2005 and travelled, golfing his way around Ireland and Thailand. He re-connected with what was now the California Automobile Museum and enrolled in the Docent Class of 2016. Congratulations to Roger on being selected as 2022 Docent of the Year. ■

Docent Scrapbook



JOHN DILLINGER'S 1933 FORD V-8 GETAWAY COP CAR

If she were alive today, Lake County (Indiana) Sheriff Lillian Holley would no doubt be upset knowing that she and her stolen 1933 Ford V-8 have made their way back into headlines after 87 years. On March 3, 1934, Holley's vehicle was used as a getaway car by notorious gangster John Dillinger after he broke out of the supposedly "escape proof" jail in Crown Point, Indiana, by bluffing guards into believing a whittled wooden gun was the real thing.

Dillinger fled to Chicago, and after some close calls with FBI agents in the months that followed, he was gunned down outside a movie theater on July 22, 1934. The long-thought-lost Dillinger getaway car, found in Maine by Dillinger historian Mark Love and recently unveiled to the public, was a special guest at the annual John Dillinger Raid celebration in Warsaw, Indiana, where the gangster and his violent gang committed one of their many robberies.

During an eight-month period that began in September 1933, the Dillinger Gang killed 10 men and wounded seven others while robbing banks and police arsenals throughout the Midwest. Dillinger managed to break out of jail three times; his last escape was from the county jail in Crown Point, where he was sequestered while awaiting trial for the murder of an East Chicago police officer. After the jail break, Dillinger swiped Sheriff Holley's '33 Ford to get to Chicago. By crossing state lines in a stolen vehicle, he violated the National Motor Vehicle Theft Act and put the FBI hot on his tail.



Police surround the 1933 Ford V-8 that John Dillinger used as an escape vehicle and left running on a Chicago street.

According to the *Chicago Tribune*, those who knew Sheriff Holley say she was so disgusted by Dillinger that she didn't want his name spoken in her presence. Holley, who took over after her sheriff husband died in office, was exonerated of any blame in the jail break. She passed away in 1994 at the age of 103. Now, the discovery of Holley's '33 Ford has put the Dillinger story back in the public eye.

Love's father co-owned a collection of Dillinger artifacts, and he too is fascinated by the crime story, particularly the stolen Holley car. He searched for it for years, fearing it had been scrapped and that he was chasing a ghost. With the help of a detective, however, he learned that the car's VIN (256447) had appeared in the database of the Maine Department of Motor Vehicles. That led him to the owner and the car.

The owner told Love that his own father purchased the Ford V-8 at a police auction when they were living in Milwaukee, and he'd brought it to Maine intending to restore it. After the father's death, his son parked the car for a year before he too lost interest in reviving it. "Had Mark not discovered it," says Love's friend and fellow Dillinger historian Roger Pace, "there was a high probability of it being lost forever."

Continued on Page 13

Continued from Page 12

Love performed a long-overdue restoration on the Ford, using almost all original parts. The car's authenticity was never in doubt, since 256447 is stamped in three places on the vehicle and Dillinger's 1934 wanted poster mentions "he knowingly transported a Ford V-8 four-door sedan, motor number 256447, property of Lillian Holley, Sheriff of Lake County, Indiana from Crown Point to Chicago." Among the car's original attributes are its siren, a shotgun holster mounted on the dash, and even its original wiper blades.



Dillinger is brought to the county jail in Crown Point, Indiana. Sheriff Lillian Holley (left) doesn't look quite as jovial. Dillinger later broke out of jail and stole Holley's car. Bettmann Archive/Getty Images

Pace says that not only does the Ford draw attention to Holley, who was one the first female sheriffs in the country—perhaps even the first—but it serves as "a monument to all law enforcement organizations across the country whose citizens are grateful for their protection." And after a permanent home to display the car has been found, Love plans to auction original parts that couldn't be used in the restoration and donate the proceeds to Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS), a charitable organization devoted to helping families of fallen officers. "It's the most historically significant escape car in the country," Pace says. "Let's turn that negative into a positive." 🇺🇸

Jeff Peek, Hemmings Motor News, 09 September 2021



Docent Newsletter

The restored Ford was publicly unveiled at a parade and ceremony in Crown Point in April. The Discovery Channel is working on a documentary. "It was an act of God that I found it, and I wish my father were alive to see it," Love told the *Tribune*. "Today is surreal for me, and he would've been very proud." Dillinger's great-nephew Travis Thompson was among those in attendance at the Crown Point event. "(Dillinger) was the reason I become a police officer," Thompson says. "I wanted to give the family a different name than what people associated us with."

Not everyone believes celebrating the escape vehicle is a good thing. Love and Pace, who got to know each other after Pace purchased a 1933 Essex Terraplane from a Dillinger Museum, acknowledge the obvious negativity surrounding a murderous criminal who was once regarded as Public Enemy No. 1, but they're hoping some good can come from it.



Bank robber John Dillinger in court in Crown Point, Indiana in 1934. Chicago History Museum/Getty Images

This car will be arriving for display at the museum on May, 6. Brian Witherell Auctions will conduct an on-line auction of the car and other John Dillinger artifacts in August. Check out Witherell's upcoming auctions for the exact date, time, and other details.

May - June 2023

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