



news

www.PanteraClubNorCal.com

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Minutes of Meeting 29 January, 2009

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. sharp by new president Garth Rodericks. All officers were present except for Mike Drew. Garth was pleased to introduce his replacement as rafflemaster, Brent Stewart. There were 35 club members at the meeting, and five De Tomaso cars in the parking lot.

New Members/Guests: The club welcomed **Jeff Boschert**, Rich's brother. Additionally, longtime member Marcus Smith brought his son **Nathan** to his first club meeting.

Club Treasury Report: Steve reported on the various intake and exhaust from the club's checking account, and at the end of the month, was pleased to find that the treasury is still healthy.

Club Store Report: Rich brought a special orange Pantera shirt for display, and Marcus Smith bought it before it made it to the table!

Club Membership Report: Russ announced that the PCNC rosters were being printed. As many as possible will be distributed at the Super Bowl party, and the rest would then be mailed.

Club Motorsports Report: Larry Finch and Mike Drew drove up to Fernley to put 'boots on the ground' and inspect the track for themselves; they were joined there by Larry Stock and Julian Kift. Together the four of them spent about three hours examining the track closely. It offers upwards of a dozen possible configurations, and the goal was to choose one that would play to the Pantera's strengths, offering long straights, sweeping corners, and minimizing potential danger areas. Although the configuration they chose wasn't perfect, it's the best possible compromise, with the focus on safety. Without a doubt, it's far superior to either of the tracks that we have run in Las Vegas, so this event should be well-received by the participants!

About 75% of the track will be visible from the paddock, making it popular with spectators as well. The track is only about 30 minutes from Reno, and historically the average temperature there in June is lower than in Las Vegas in April, so it should be comfortable too.

Unfortunately, overall event costs will be up compared to years past, due to county requirements with respect to on-scene medical personnel that are more stringent than we have been accustomed to.

We will be using a new on-line registration system that is convenient for participants, and allows all the track committee members instant access to the various data that they need. We will still be offering a grossly discounted entry fee for first-time participants in an effort to get more people involved in the sport.

According to all the locals he spoke to, the road between Reno and the racetrack is a favorite hunting ground for the Nevada Highway Patrol. You've been warned!

Club Website Report: The events page of the PCNC website has been updated, and by the time you read this, all the information on the track event will be there as well. At the same time, the POCA website continues to grow every day. The photo-sharing portion of the site has proven popular, with over 800 member-submitted photos already uploaded. There is a searchable newsletter archive with all newsletters from 1988-2005 already available for download; the last several years of *Profiles* will shortly be added as well (newsletters and *Profiles* are available for POCA members only).

Past Events:

Christmas Party: A big round of applause and thanks were offered up for Garry and Sue Choate for all their hard work. Garth the rafflemaster was offered appropriate kudos, as well. A full review of the party appeared in last month's newsletter.

Upcoming Events:

Alignment Shop Open House — 14 March: Some of the people who used to work at Custom Alignment have opened their own competing shop, called Performance Art, in Gilroy, and they have invited the members of PCNC to attend an open house and alignment clinic. All the details can be found on the PCNC website.

Pacific Coast Dream Machines — 26 April: This is the biggest and arguably the best car show of the year. Held each April at the Half Moon Bay airport, traditionally it has conflicted with the Las Vegas event and thus PCNC participation has been limited. However, this year the Las Vegas event is in Reno, in June, so this show now is a viable option. Over 2500 vehicles of all types participate; besides cars of all stripes, the show features airplanes, motorcycles, farm equipment, tanks and armored fighting vehicles, steam engines, and on and on!

The show is a benefit fundraiser for the Coastside Adult Day Health Center. Entry (which includes two admission tickets) is \$30 before April 15, and \$35 thereafter.

A flyer appears elsewhere in this newsletter; more information can be found by surfing to: <http://www.miramarevents.com/dreammachines/index.html>

Last year, Larry Finch agreed to be the Parking Führer for the Pantera group, and hopefully will do so again this year. Although the event organizers don't normally allow groups to park together, it is hoped that a group of Panteras can gather outside the gates and enter together, taking up a lot of room and then progressively getting closer together to accommodate latecomers.

Larry has found a delightful bed-and-breakfast just outside the grounds of the show, and can give more information if anybody else wants to make use of it.

POCA Fun Rally — 10-14 June: Planning is moving forward for the new, improved POCA Fun Rally. It will feature a host of new events in addition to many of the traditional events that makes the Fun Rally the must-do event of the year. There will be plenty of opportunities to exercise your driving skills, including the two-day PCNC track event, a go-kart race, and a cruise around Lake Tahoe. Non-driving events include a comedy club night, dinner at the Harrah's car museum, and a shopping/tourist trip to Virginia City. There will be a street display near the Reno Arch, and at least a dozen top-flight De Tomaso cars will be on display in the hotel ballroom.

Details have been posted on the POCA website. Planning is underway for a scenic drive from the Bay Area to Reno, avoiding the boring freeway route. Watch the PCNC website and this newsletter for more details.

Club Business:

Kudos To Mark McWhinney: In his haste preparing for the Christmas party, Peter Kovacs forgot to formally engrave the perpetual President's Award trophy. This award goes to the club member who the president feels had the greatest positive impact on the club over the previous year. Peter awarded it to Mark McWhinney, and made the formal presentation at the club meeting.

Buy/Sell/Swap:

A/C Guides: Steve Liebenow brought a couple of Ford Air Conditioning course student guides, free for the taking. These provided good reference material for people interested in doing their own A/C work.

Konis Anyone?: Darryl Johnson has three (?) Koni replacement shocks for stock springs available. He also has a set of rebuilt stock brake calipers; contact him if you're interested.

News, Clues and Rumors:

Jacques Littlefield Passes Away: The club has enjoyed several tours of the fantastic private museum of tanks and armored fighting vehicles owned by financier Jacques Littlefield. He lost his fight with cancer and passed away not long ago. Apparently the collection has been protected by a trust and will continue to exist for the near future at least.

Sadness For Les Gray: Les is the onetime POCA president and marque expert who runs a Pantera specialty shop in Phoenix. He and his longtime girlfriend Jaye Lynn Lucas also ran the POCA store for several years. He came home to find Jaye had simply passed away in her sleep. She had no health issues that anybody was aware of, so her passing came as an incredible shock to everyone.

Bobby Byars On The Mend: Bobby Byars of Precision Proformance fell ill the day before Christmas, collapsed, and was rushed to the hospital. It turns out he had a blood clot in his leg, which migrated to his lung and effectively shut down the transmission of oxygen to the brain.

After a week or more in intensive care, he was transferred to a rehab clinic, and is now at home. He has suffered cognitive and memory problems; he knows who individual people are, but can't remember anyone's name, for example. He is getting better every day, but still has a long way to go. His doctors said he will be off work for at least six months.

Through The Looking Glass: Ron DeMaderios continues to struggle with the details of his Pantera restoration. The latest headache was the rear window glass. After struggling to figure out how to install it, he phoned Steve Wilkinson who told him the new gasket needs to be installed from the engine side, but that didn't work. Eventually he got it by holding in place and using a hook to fold the rubber over the lip in the sheetmetal; that only worked after he trimmed the rubber down slightly.

Ron had accidentally discharged his fire bottle while taking the car apart, and unfortunately genuine Halon is no longer available. He was able to get his bottle recharged with a product called FE36, but the cost was substantial (\$400).

Perpetual Mangusta Restoration Update: Never-say-die Mangusta owner Greg Taylor shared his latest progress with the group. Suffice it to say that the work is slow, tedious, and in some cases depressing, but the car is moving forward and will hopefully be returning to the road either this year, or next year.

Pantera Project Available: Larry Finch found a Pantera in Fresno advertised on Craigslist, and went to take a look. It's a stereotypical 'barn car' that has been sitting in a metal shed for 16-17 years. Although it's basically intact, and everything appears to be there, it is in need of a thorough recomissioning, and the paint is shot. It appears to be a great candidate for a track car, or for a do-it-yourselfer with a lot of restoration skills, patience, and a burning desire to return a Pantera to its former glory.

Driving For Dinner Raffle: The winner was Darryl Johnson

Raffle Results: Marking his inauguration as PCNC Rafflemaster, Brent Stewart (aided by Brett Santos) passed the hat, with the following results:

Float Charger — Greg Taylor
Pantera video — Tony Blevins
Shop light — Rich Boschert
Drill — Dan Lem
Andretti Wine — Connie Johnson
Matchbox Car — Dan Lem
Headlamp — Garry Choate
6-pack cooler — Rich Boschert
Knee Pads — Mark McWhinney
Poster — Tony Blevins, Chuck Melton, Ron DeMaderios
Digital Voltmeter — Steve Liebenow

The meeting adjourned at 9:04, with parking lot banter continuing well into the evening.

Membership News

New Members for February:

Sorry to say we have no new memberships to report this month.

February Membership Anniversaries:

We congratulate the following persons for the indicated years of continuous membership in the Pantera Club of Northern California:

Kay Schwartz & Doug Abadie: nineteen years
Lyn Murray & James Dursi: nineteen years
Michael & Roxanne Fertitta: sixteen years
Larry & Dee Dee Laino: fifteen years
Roger Whiting: eleven years
John & Merv Bentley: nine years
Hans Schulz: four years
Dennis & Mary Ann Antenucci: two years
Lee Farrell: two years

New Membership Rosters:

The 2009 Membership Roster was printed in time for distribution to those in attendance at the Super Bowl Party. The remaining 132 members' copies have been mailed. If you are a full club member and have not gotten your new roster, please let me know. Also, if you have received your copy and some or all of the information concerning you or your car is not correct or not listed, please let me know. I am Russ Britschgi, your friendly Membership Coordinator, and can be reached by mail, phone or e-mail at 143 Carlyn Avenue, Campbell, CA 95008 or 408/866-1677, or <RnDBrit@earthlink.net >.

Safe At Any Speed?

Story by Mike Drew

Photos by Mike Drew and Art Stephens

The performance capabilities of the Pantera are well-known to all Pantera owners. Although the cars were extremely fast even when bone-stock, they lent themselves to modification, and most owners have taken the opportunity to expand their car's performance envelope. With this increased capability comes increased risk should things suddenly take a turn for the worst.

TPOC member Art Stephens knows this all too well. He had invested untold hours in a painstaking restoration of his Pre-L Pantera. The paint was phenomenal, and his stroker 351C put out an incredible amount of torque. His ZF had been modified with both a 3.77 ring and pinion and a taller 5th gear, and as a result, the drivetrain was capable of propelling the car at incredible velocities.

Unfortunately, he failed to make simultaneous upgrades to the suspension, brakes, and most importantly, the aerodynamics of his car. The Pantera's shape was developed solely by intuition, with no reference to actual aerodynamics. Although by good luck it has



Mike Drew

Art's Pantera was truly a thing to behold, with a fantastic paint job in a very distinctive blue color, accented by Wilkinson Campagnolo replica wheels

a very slippery shape, at elevated speeds, front-end lift will develop unless some sort of aero modifications (i.e. spoiler or air dam) are fitted.

The De Tomaso factory knew this,

and all the factory race cars came equipped with some sort of lift-combating device.

After the Las Vegas event last year, Art was zooming around in the northern

Nevada desert at speeds that were, shall we say, rather elevated. Cresting a slight rise in the road, the car became extremely light, and a crosswind blew the car towards the shoulder. It then snapped sideways, rolled onto its roof, slid over 750 feet, then left the road on the opposite side and began tumbling end over end.

The result, as you can see, is not pretty at all. A passing tow truck driver found debris scattered all over the road, then came upon the wreckage lying in the desert. Amazingly, Art tilted over towards the passenger seat as the roof came crashing in, which saved him from losing his life. The tow truck driver ex-



Art Stephens

Repeated tumbles through the desert left Art's Pantera looking decidedly secondhand....



Art Stephens

Although repeated impacts bent the rear of the car into a pronounced 'V' shape, the cabin remained basically intact, other than the collapse of the roof. The rear suspension (next to the trunk tub) was torn off the car and flung far away from the rest of the wreckage, and the force of the impact was sufficient to completely rip the tire off the wheel!

tracted him through the windshield opening and called 911 for a life-flight.

Art suffered a punctured lung (from his ribs pounding against the center console) and a broken wrist. After a medevac helicopter flight, he spent just

a few days in the hospital, and was then released. He then went back to view the wreckage, and took the photos you see here.

There are many lessons to be learned here, both technical and philo-

sophical, but we'll forgo discussion of the wisdom of tearing around the deserts at high speeds. From a technical perspective, it's easy to see that there is great value in having a roll bar (or better yet, a four-point roll cage) to prevent the serious roof intrusion that Art experienced. Although the Pantera has performed quite well in crash tests in both frontal and rear-end collisions, and even in low-speed rollover accidents, the photos reveal the result if the car flips over at high speeds.

Tasteful spoilers (developed by the De Tomaso factory and available from all the vendors) cost as little as \$100 and can make a huge difference in the stability of the car at higher speeds.

The story has a happy ending; Art was able to find a very original replacement Pantera, and is now engaged in a campaign to fix it up. And he's learned a valuable life lesson, and will probably be staying much further away from the edge of the performance envelope in the future!



Art Stephens

Art cheerfully reunited with the tow truck driver that rescued him from the wreck

NEXT CLUB MEETING

**THURSDAY, February 26, 2009
8:00 P.M.**

**COCO'S RESTAURANT
1209 OAKMEAD PARKWAY
SUNNYVALE, CA
(Take Lawrence Expressway South Exit off Highway 101)**

UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

March 14 ————— Performance Art Alignment Open House (Garry Choate)

April 26 ----- Pacific Coast Dream Machines (Larry Finch)

June 10-14 ----- POCA Fun Rally (John Taphorn/Judy McCartney)

June 11-12 ----- PCNC Speed Trials (Larry Finch)

REMINDER — NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE BY 15th OF EACH MONTH

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