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PRESIDENT

Michael Fertitta
34943 Kinglet Court
Union City, CA 94587
(510) 489-5705
perfectcpy@aol.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Howard Renshaw
480 Dale Road
Martinez, CA 94553
(510) 372-7021

TREASURER

Bill Santos
948 Olympus Ct.
Sunnyvale, CA 94087
(408) 732-6468
bill.santos@pgtp.varian.com

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Capt Mike Drew
150 Westgate Dr.
San Francisco, CA 94127
(415) 334-7860
MikeLDrew@aol.com

**MEMBERSHIP
COORDINATOR**

Russ Britschgi
1618 Sparkling Way
San Jose, CA 95125
(408) 266-2055

**EVENTS
COORDINATOR**

Kathy Hills
445 Hale St.
Palo Alto, CA 94301
(415) 323-9409

RAFFLE CHAIRMAN

Larry Stock
42 Starlite Court
Mountain View, CA 94043
(415) 964-1531

NAME BADGES

Doris Britschgi
1618 Sparkling Way
San Jose, CA 95125
(408) 266-2055

LIBRARIAN

Sharon Renshaw
480 Dale Road
Martinez, CA 94553
(510) 372-7021

Minutes of Meeting 29 August, 1996

The meeting was called to order at 8:01 by president Michael Fertitta. All officers were present except Mike Drew who was in Italy; Judy DeRyke and her PowerBook ably stepped in and took notes for him. (Jack and Judy had just arrived after having a 'nice' dinner to celebrate their 37th wedding anniversary; their dedication to the club is duly noted and appreciated!). There were 29 members present and six Panteras in the parking lot. Ellis Woummn put a 'sad face' on the sign-in sheet in the spot where you check off if you drove your car to the meeting. (His Pantera had been involved in a slight accident the weekend prior).

New Members/Guests: The club welcomed **Lee and Heidi Hinckley** from Pleasanton. Lee's father has a Mangusta, and Lee has always had the urge to have a Pantera. He's currently looking

for a Pantera, something he's been doing for about eight years (!).

Changes to Last Month's Minutes: There were no changes noted.

Library Report: Judy didn't indicate whether or not there was a club library report; if Sharon was at the meeting, then there was; otherwise, there wasn't!

Club Store Report: Bill reported that now that the Monterey event is behind us, he's ready to start gearing up for our club store presence at the Las Vegas convention next year. He had poster-sized photos of the '96 Fremont Street Experience street display which are now available through the club store. He also showed the proposed design for the front of the 'That's Italian' t-shirt, incorporating the words 'Momma Mia!' He had a couple of different versions, one showing the interior of the car and one without. Members pointed out that the correct spelling of the phrase is 'Mama Mia!', and Bill will make the appropriate changes and bring in the new design next month.

Bill also mentioned that he still had several Swedish DeTomaso pins for sale.

Past Events:

Blast In The Grass Car Show: This event succeeded beyond Mike Coffel's wildest expectations. At least 18 Panteras were on display on the grass (of a total of about 100 cars present), and there was another one in the parking lot. About half the cars came from south of the Golden Gate. There were several north bay cars belonging to non-members of PCNC, and there was much pressing of the flesh and solicitation on behalf of the club by those members present. Mike Coffel had a tent and drinks set up for everyone, and goodie bags to take home. Everyone agreed it was a job well done.

Monterey Historics Weekend: This event went off without a hitch, although Ellis had to find alternate means to get to the hotel when his Pantera got hit in a gas station on the drive down to Monterey. The hotel was extremely cooperative, and we had 12 rooms plus a hospitality suite. The Saturday evening BBQ was well-attended, with over 50 people enjoying a great meal. Most of the rooms were filled with POCA members from outside the local area, including some from Florida. POCA board members Kent Snyder and Bob Reid were also there. The raffle proceeds managed to cover the event expenses with a few hundred dollars left over, which will be re-invested in next year's event, where we have 17 rooms tentatively scheduled. It was mentioned that the left-over liquor from the Las Vegas event was well-used by some of the POCA board members (shall we mention again those visiting board members?)

Upcoming Events:

Woodside Car Show — 22 September: This car show featured the Pantera last year, and all the proceeds went to benefit the kids at Woodside High School. Last month Bob Adams described some of the projects undertaken with the almost \$25,000 raised by last year's events, including installing computers and a LAN, and purchasing video and audio equipment, electronic scales and graphing calculators, even potting wheels for the art department. This show has quite an eclectic mix, featuring everything from exotic cars to tanks to antique machines to helicopters. Look for the flyer in last month's newsletter.

Mission City Classique Car Show — 28 September: Doris briefly mentioned this show to be held in Central Park in Santa Clara, benefiting the Santa Clara PAL and the SCUSD Education Foundation. Look for the flyer in last month's newsletter.

Checked Flag Open Track at Thunder Hill — 29 September: The Thunder Hill event is definitely a go, with 25 cars signed up to date. Be prepared for maximum track time and lots of heat! There is still room for late entrants; contact Ed Kornegay for details.

PCNC Christmas Party — 6 December: Sharon is hard at work organizing the annual club bash, which this year will be held in the soon-to-close Alameda NAS Officer's Club. Sharon is checking out prices at local hotels for those that might want to remain overnight. She also urges people to bring their favorite holiday CD's!

News, Clues and Rumors:

Cars For Sale: Jack passed around an ad he'd received for a '71 pushbutton car that's for sale in the East Bay. The price on the car is reportedly dropping continuously, and it looks like a fairly nice rig.

SMOG Issues: Forest brought information on the Association of California Car Clubs regarding the ongoing problems we're having with smog, etc. There was much discussion (again) on the current state of the smog inspection program, which some think poses a threat to the entire collector car hobby in this state. It was suggested that a sample letter be reproduced in our newsletter for members to copy and mail to their legislators.

Raffle Results: Larry once again did his thing, with the following results:

Pantera Tool Kit (Swiss Army Knife) — Kevin Sittner
Hot Wheels Pantera — Jim Kuehne
Bodyguard Defense System — Anita Kuehne
Flashlight — Brett Santos

The meeting then adjourned to the parking lot.

NEXT CLUB MEETING

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1996
8:00 P.M.

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

UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

September 22 ————— Classic Machines '96 Car Show (TBA)

September 28 ————— Mission City Classique Car Show (Doris Britschgi)

September 29 ————— Checkered Flag Open Track at Thunder Hill (Ed Kornegay)

REMINDER — NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE BY 15TH OF EACH MONTH

WARMING! WARNING!

New Gas Could DESTROY Your Pantera

by Mike Drew

With all the recent talk of the proposed SMOG II legislation, a far more insidious and potentially dangerous problem has been swept out of the limelight. After conducting some research I thought I'd share what I found.

I'm speaking of the dangers of the new gasoline which has been introduced into all of California starting in January of this year. Without bothering with all the politics associated with this dubious move, I'll cut right to the chase—this stuff can be downright dangerous in older cars. *Now* is the time for you to deal with it, before you drive your Panteras anywhere.

I was first tipped off by watching a 'teaser' for a news report on KGO, the local ABC affiliate. Their investigative news branch was asserting that there were some dangers associated with the new gas. I didn't actually see the report, and initially dismissed this as hysterical pseudo-journalism, but recent events have forced me to change my mind.

My mom's well-maintained '65 Buick receives regular use, but drives are of such short duration that a tank of gas can literally last months. Thus, back in July, she was on only her third or fourth tank of gas for 1996, when suddenly her fuel system began virtually erupting gasoline.

My investigation revealed that her fuel hoses were seeping all over the place, not just in one spot due to an insult of some type, but rather like a sponge. These hoses had been working fine since, well, since 1965 I guess (well, no, come to think of it the engine was rebuilt and new hoses fitted around 1980). Anyway, I just figured the hoses were tired and that this was to be expected, so I changed them and thought no more about it.

Then, a few weeks ago, I was riding my motorcycle across the Bay

Bridge when I spotted an absolutely immaculate '69 Chevelle SS convertible about a half-mile in front of me (yeah, I'm not a fan of the bow tie, but hey, it was a nice car nonetheless). While I admired the car, I noticed what appeared to be smoke streaming across the top of the windshield. The driver suddenly swerved over to the right lane (which was closed), and bailed out. As I drew alongside, I saw flames licking about six inches from his cowl-induction hood, which he opened as I passed. A few seconds later, I glanced in my mirror, and couldn't even see the car—it was *completely* engulfed in flames.

A few days later, I trooped down to Frey Racing and coughed up \$170 for a halon fire extinguisher which now resides on the driveshaft tunnel of my GT-350. That's only a partial solution for an apocalyptic situation that I hope to avoid entirely.

Wanting to get the Straight Scoop, today I phoned up KGO and spoke for about 30 minutes with the head of their investigative news branch, Kevin Keeshan. He told me that three of the California Air Resource Board's own investigators had concluded that the chemical composition of the new gasoline was extremely hostile to the rubber in all but the newest fuel system components. CARB had already decided to implement this new gasoline and didn't want to know. CARB asserted that it wouldn't be a problem "except for cars made in 1979 and prior", and who cares about them, anyway? These investigators reported problems in fuel systems right up to 1991 manufacture, however.

The investigators had concluded that the super-high concentrations of MTBE (whatever the heck that is; I think it's a derivative of grain alcohol) in the new gas were dissolving the elastomers in older rubber fuel lines and

causing them to become brittle and break down, leading to fuel fumes (and in some cases, actual liquid fuel) leaking and causing under-hood fires. CARB's directors took a dim view to this finding, and essentially said "S**t happens, increased fires are simply the price society will have to pay for cleaner air."

Chevron was the first major oil company to acknowledge the threat, and apparently (I haven't seen them myself), they now have disclaimers posted on all Chevron pumps, warning that the new gas may cause under-hood fires in older vehicles. Mercedes-Benz is reporting problems with some of their cars, and Nissan has actually issued a service bulletin to all their dealers, advising them to informally recall their customer's cars and change all the fuel hoses, as well as several other fuel system components.

KGO interviewed seven of the largest towing companies in the Bay Area, and concluded that under-hood fires have seen a three-fold increase in the first six months of 1996.

Bottom line: If you don't know for a fact that your fuel hoses were manufactured after 1991, just suck it up and go buy new ones. Fuel hose composition has changed dramatically in the past few years, and if you're using modern hose, you should be fine. Continuing to run older hose is taking a big chance, and with the cost of new hose so minimal (the guys at Grand Auto GAVE me the necessary hose to replumb my mom's Buick), there's really no excuse for not changing them.

On a related note, KGO also found that CARB's assertion that fuel economy would only be hurt 1%-3% by the new gas to be, quite frankly, a crock. This assertion was supposedly based upon tests on 800 cars, but apparently the actual data was derived only from

the best 100 cars of the 800 tested, with the data from the lower 700 simply tossed out. CARB then claimed that increased fuel consumption was caused by the higher speed limits, but CalTrans has stated that the actual speed of traffic on California's highways has increased only 1% since the new speed limits took effect. KGO then turned to the one group of drivers unaffected by speed limits—the cops. They're in the process of interviewing about seven different police departments, and so far, the cops are reporting their fuel economy has gone down by about 25% with no change in driving habits. KGO also did dyno tests down at the K&N air filter company's chassis dyno, and found about a 5-10% reduction in horsepower with the new gas.

Interestingly, when KGO first tried to talk to the three investigators, all sorts of subterfuge took place. KGO only had their pager numbers, and tried to page them. CARB monitored all incoming pages, and when they discovered that the media was after these guys, they suddenly packed them all off to the most south-eastern corner of California, ostensibly to work on a project, but the project had already been completed several months earlier. KGO sent a team of reporters to Yuma, Arizona (the near-

est motels) and tracked these three investigators down. One of the investigators freaked out and called his boss, and CARB then immediately brought them all back to L.A. KGO followed them, and finally officially requested an interview, which was granted. When the interview started touching upon the aforementioned issues, and the investigators started answering questions in a forthright manner, their supervisors suddenly up and terminated the meeting, saying it would continue the following day.

When the KGO reporters returned in the morning, they were told that the investigators had all been transferred to other parts of the state, and instead the interview would be conducted with a CARB spokesman. Yeah, right.

There's definitely something afoot here, but unfortunately there's absolutely nothing we can do about it. The oil companies are grooving on the whole thing, because even though they had to spend about \$4 billion to increase the efficiency of their plants, they're passing on that expense to the consumer by raising gas prices from 6¢ to 10¢ per gallon. The car companies are also pleased, because this new gas has taken the heat off of them to comply with the dreaded Zero Emissions Vehicle man-

date which was going to cost them a fortune. And Pete Wilson was digging the whole thing, because it gave him an environmental leg to stand on during his abortive presidential campaign.

Don't bother writing to your congressman; we're screwed. However, KGO is putting together a database of individuals who have experienced problems associated with the new fuel. So far, they've received about 220 letters, and over 30 of those described underhood fires.

If you've had any problems mentioned above, take a moment to detail them fully in a letter to:

KGO New Gas
900 Front St.
San Francisco, CA 94111

If you're completely committed to e-mail and refuse to lick stamps anymore, you can e-mail Kevin Keeshan direct at KKeeshan@aol.com.

This issue will continue to receive coverage by KGO, and if enough people experience problems, a ballot initiative may be created seeking to modify the standards back to something safer.

In the meantime, go change those hoses!
