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Packard Digest

"Compiled for Packard Enthusiasts Everywhere."

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On the Cover: Tom Skunda (left, with hose) and pal Chris Wooley give the Skunda's 1937 Packard 120 a well-deserved bath after completing the journey from Michigan to Lawrenceville, New Jersey.

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From the Editor / Kirk Seaman

The Scottsdale auctions ended with some sales that might be of interest to our readers. To put it gently, it was a great time to be a buyer. At Bonhams, a 1931 840 DeLuxe Eight 4 Passenger



*This 1931 840 DeLuxe Eight 4 Passenger Coupe sold for \$56,000 including premium.
Photo courtesy of Bonhams.*



*This 1939 Super Eight hearse by Henney sold for \$58,240 including premium.
Photo courtesy of Bonhams.*



*The front end of this '39 Packard is regally impressive.
Photo courtesy of Bonhams.*

Coupe (chassis no. 190041) sold for \$56,000, including premium. Under the hood is a 385-cubic-inch straight-eight with nine bearings



*The interior of the '39 Packard is plushly upholstered.
Photo courtesy of Bonhams.*



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This 1948 Series 22 Station Sedan sold for \$41,440 including premium. Photo courtesy of Bonhams.

paired with a four-speed manual transmission. The car has an older restoration, but presented well with a recent refresh to the fuel, cooling, brake, and wiring systems. The paint was also touched up in a few areas. The car showed minimal wear to the interior, while under the hood it was quite tidy,

A super-rare 1939 Super Eight Hearse by Henney (chassis no. 1703A2003) went for \$58,240, including premium; it stood out with its Super Eight motor in a Twelve frame. The car features a rear suspension with a hydraulic leveling setup that allows it to maintain a consistent ride height with a casket in the rear compartment. The vehicle cost \$10,000 when new—an exorbitant amount for the late 1930s. It served its original funeral home until the 1960s, where upon it suffered a cruel fate, serving as a touring vehicle for a rock band. It ended up in a wrecking yard in the 1970s, where it sat until it was sold again and sat for another 23 years. In 1998 it was sold for \$900. Many thousands of hours (and dollars) were spent bringing the car back to its former glory.

The deal of the show—at least from a Packard perspective—was a 1948 Series 22 Station Sedan (chassis no. 22934021) that



sold for \$41,440, including premium. The car is a highly original example that was owned by the same person for almost 40 years. It shows 55,560 miles from new and is a Packard Internationals Circle of Champions award winner. Under the hood is the 288-cubic-inch straight-eight, which pairs with a three-speed manual with overdrive. The car was sold new in Long Beach, California, and remained with that owner until 1984. The second owner kept the car until 1990; the third owner took possession in 1998. In addition to





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its Circle of Champions award, it also was displayed at the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles. Its history file contains a number of receipts from the 1950s, and mechanical work performed by the seller includes an engine rebuild.

A friend on the scene reports that while the 2019 Scottsdale auctions could be summed up with one word—bloodbath—this year the market seems to be regaining a certain degree of equilibrium. There has been a general softening in the market for American cars of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, but the classic market has not collapsed. People were paying good money for great cars; a 1948 Tucker 48 was estimated to sell for \$1.8–\$2.2 million and sold right in the middle, at \$2 million.

While it might be tempting to view these Packard prices as



The interior of the station sedan has a lovely patina. Photo courtesy of Bonhams.

alarmingly low, there is a silver lining to this otherwise gray cloud: The lower prices are making it possible for younger buyers to enter the market. Car clubs can't thrive in the 21st century if younger buyers can't afford those cars in order to join the clubs, and expensive cars put ownership out of reach of the young.



Director's Comments / Kevin Luedtke

This edition of the Director's Comments column finds us in an unexpectedly mild part of January, during a winter that's really only seen two substantial snowfalls so far. Will our luck hold out, or will February bring us some deep-freeze temperatures and boatloads of snow? Let's keep our fingers crossed for continued moderation!

Your new 2020 Board of Directors has already had its first meeting, and I am very pleased to say that I am extremely happy with the contributions already being brought to the table by our newest officers! Thank you, **Terri Coppens**, **Graham Kozak**, and **Dick Roth** for stepping up to keep MCP in its flagship status among PAC regions!

One of the top issues that your Board is looking to tackle early on this year is to re-energize our website. We have a good-looking framework and good bones for our site, but it is needing some reworking on the backend and the addition of some new functionality to keep it current. Our hope is to accomplish this with as small of an expenditure as possible, of course, but the website should be looked on as an investment since it will then make it easier for members to renew their membership, allow new people to join our club through the web, and enable us to sell our projects to people outside of MCP. I will keep you posted on the progress, but I am confident that we will be in good hands: Terri Coppens will be helping here. She has an established track record in website management at the Stahl Foundation, and we look forward to her expert guidance.

I've been told to keep my column to about 250 words and I'm already over-budget, so I'll finish. It's shaping up to be a great year for MCP. Our new Activities Director **Lois Porter** and team already have a full calendar of events planned for us! Keep working on your projects over the winter and make your preparations for spring, because we'll soon have plenty of chances for you to come out and drive your Packards!



Motor City Packards Annual Banquet a Huge Success / Lois Porter

The annual Motor City Packard banquet was held at the Packard Proving Grounds on December 1, 2019. I had been hoping to have the banquet here for several years and my wish was finally granted. My family has been attending and volunteering at car shows here since the late 1970s. Obviously we are all very pleased to see the transformation that has happened to the site in the last 10 to 15 years. Since Kevin Luedtke was out of state on the long



The volunteers did an exceptional job decorating, from the snowflakes to the twinkling lights.

Thanksgiving weekend, I took over as Master's of Ceremonies.

I can see why this is such a high-demand venue for weddings and other events. The Christmas theme was in full effect. We had a great crowd and everyone enjoyed the evening immensely. The social hour went from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., with dinner starting at 6 p.m. The drinks and hors d'oeuvres were excellent—just like the atmosphere.

The entire room was abuzz with great conversations amongst old friends and new members. Before dinner, the guests were welcomed



and **Ray Hollingsworth** said grace. Following dinner and dessert, we had an informative meeting about membership, budget, and the activities planned for 2020. The Cramer award was given to **Leo and Jennifer Shedden**. They have hosted the tech session and picnic at their home for several years. It was a much-deserved award.

We have several activities planned for 2020. The first is a visit to the GM Heritage Car Collection on March 28th. In April, we intend to visit a historic mansion in Pontiac; the date is TBD. May brings us our annual tech session and picnic at the Sheddens' on May 16th



Jennifer and Leo Shedden pose with the Cramer Award.

The Packard Motor Car Foundation also presented its annual Tolonen volunteer-appreciation award. This year the award went to **Tom and Kathy Mitchell**. Both **Tom** and **Kathy** have been long-time volunteers during the annual Cars 'R' Stars show.

Mark Smucker, the Packard Motor Car Foundation president, and his wife, Vicky, were in attendance this year. Mark gave a brief summary of the restoration of the Proving Grounds, including new improvements scheduled for 2020. At that time, MCP presented



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Mark with a check for \$5000 for the PMC Foundation.

Many thanks to my daughter, the master of ceremony, **Deb Bennethum**. I was unable to MC due to laryngitis. As the evening concluded, many folks were lingering, enjoying conversations and a final farewell. We look forward to a prosperous 2020.

Deb Bennethum performed MC duties for her mother, Lois Porter, who was out of commission with laryngitis. Thanks, Deb!

New members; left to right: Dana Davis, Amy Paul with friend Deb Bennethum in the middle.





Congratulations to Tom Mitchell, Recipient of the Packard Motor Car Foundation's Annual Tolonen Award! / Kevin Luedtke

Our Motor City Packards Membership Director, **Tom Mitchell**, has won the Packard Motor Car Foundation's Tolonen Award for 2019. Tom has been the co-chair or chairman of all 10 annual Cars 'R' Stars car shows. In addition, he has been chairman of 12 Packard Proving Grounds Fall Open House events. His wife, **Kathy**, also helps out by offering behind-the-scenes support, and working the entrance gates at the shows to successfully solicit donations from visitors!

The Packard Proving Grounds Open House events directly benefit the Grounds through on-site donations of several thousands of dollars. Additionally, the events gain more recognition for the site in our local community, leading to even more support. Over the years, these Open House events have grown from a cider-and-donut gathering of a handful of people and a few Packards to a sizable event with a live band



*Tom Mitchell poses with wife
Kathy and the Tolonen Award.
Photo by Bruce Webster*



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and 425 collector cars of all different makes and models.

Tom also has been a working member of the PPG Building and Grounds Committee since its inception. He has been instrumental in obtaining the Miss America X racing boat for display at the PPG and helped obtain sponsors that allow the PMCF to have the Johnny Trudell Band at the Open House every year. Thank you, Tom!

Ask the Man Who Owns One— (In England) / As Told by Tony Rostron

*We recently heard from one of our newer Motor City Packard members from across the pond, **Ronald Rostron**, via his son Tony. Ronald has been a lifelong enthusiast and is an inspiration to us all. Tony writes:*

A bit of background on Dad: Dad was born in 1925, although his driving license states 1924; he lied about his age so that he



Ronald Rostron, here at age 21, poses next to his 1930 Cadillac V-12 in Berlin, Germany, in 1946



Tony's mum poses with Ronald's first Packard, a 1936 120 sedan. Ronald bought it in 1955. Below: The car today in Ronald's garage.





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could join the Navy. He passed his driving test while with them. He volunteered to join the Royal Marine Commandos and was soon with a group of eight men fighting in Europe from 1942–45. At the end of the war, Dad was stationed in Berlin. It was here that he



Ronald poses next to his 1934 Buick 56c convertible.

obtained his first American car, a 1930/31 Cadillac V-12. He had this car for about eight months. He was demobbed (discharged) in late '46.

Dad had already met Mum before he joined up with the Navy and kept in touch with her during the war; they married in 1950. Mum was Irish/Italian and Catholic—all the credentials you would need for a large family, hence I am one of ten children. Sadly, we lost Mum in January 2017.

Between them they shared a passion for cars. In 1955, Dad bought a 1936 Packard 120 sedan for the princely sum of £75—



Ronald's 1936 1504 Club Sedan.

about \$100 U.S. Dad still has this Packard. It truly is a member of the family. Over the years, Dad has owned many cars—British and American—but his passion is American cars, in particular Packards.

Since Mum died, I have indulged Dad in his desire for more cars. Packards are not plentiful in the U.K., but I have located three over the last few years—two in California and one in Nebraska—and have successfully imported them.



Ronald's 1936 120b coupe.

I believe this is what keeps Dad going. He has many visitors and also exhibits at local shows. One in particular is the Rosemere Cancer Classic Car Show. We lost my eldest sister to cancer six



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years ago, and we are always keen to support the show.

Dad's cars are a 1936 Packard 120 sedan, a 1936 Packard 120b convertible, a 1936 Packard 120b coupe, a 1936 Packard 1504 club sedan, a 1934 Buick 56s sport coupe, and a 1934 Buick 56c convertible. He sold two other cars last year: a 1934 Packard 1102 limo and a 1935 Buick 60 club sedan. I have never been to America but it is on my list of things to do—hopefully sooner than later! Dad always says the real heroes of WWII are the guys who never came back. The ones that did return are the lucky ones. Many of the guys he grew up with didn't return, but he has never forgotten them. In November, the weather here is bitterly cold and windy, but on Remembrance Sunday, Dad still attends an outside service. As sons of WWII veterans we can only hold them in the highest esteem.

Tony, we thank you for this note sharing your dad's passion for vintage automobiles—especially Packards. I am sure I speak for all of the members of Motor City Packards when I say a heartfelt thanks to him for his service, and welcome to Motor City Packards!—Ed.

Sally and Tom Skunda's Excellent Road Trip Adventure! / Words and Photos, Sally and Tom Skunda

Friends of ours had been asking us for a while to come and visit them in New Jersey. When we finally decided to do it, we thought it would be fun to go via a scenic route with our 1937 Packard 120.

On the first day of our trip, which was August 12, we took I-69 to Port Huron and crossed over to Canada. Shortly after going across the Blue Water Bridge, we turned south and eventually got onto Route 3. We'd never taken this route before, and it turned out to be a keeper! It was a very nice two-lane, with picturesque towns and views of Lake Erie.

There is a pass called NEXUS that you can apply for that will expedite your crossings between Michigan and Canada. One of the



The Skundas point the nose of their 1937 Packard east.

perks is having a dedicated lane for entering and leaving the crossings. It was our first time using NEXUS and it was soooo nice to cut the waiting line! We ended our first day in the Buffalo suburb of Cheektowaga.

Our Day 2 started out wet, but we were lucky enough to drive out of it. We got onto Route 20 to cross the state of New York. We had taken this same route back in the late 1990s and it was still a great secondary road to travel.

We made a pit stop in Avon, New York, and were approached by a gentleman who inquired about our Packard. He said that if we had a few minutes, he would show us his 1934 Twelve that was just down the street. We accepted his gracious offer and we were introduced to Jim and Diane Biondolillo from Avon. It's a really great feeling when something like this happens! We ended the day in Skaneateles, New York.

We spent the next two days enjoying the Sherwood Inn, situated right across the street from Lake Skaneateles. The lake is one of the famous Finger Lakes. We had stayed at this same inn on a previous



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*Jim Biondolillo opens the hood of his
1934 Packard Twelve.*

trip out east, and found it to still be a great place to stay—but the rates are clearly not the same as 20 years ago!

The Inn was established in 1807, and has been one of the longest continually operated inns in New York. Although the structure has



The Sherwood Inn was established in 1807.



On the waters of Lake Skaneateles, this boat dates to 1937.

been rebuilt at various times over the years, it is still furnished with all period furniture and artworks.

Lake Skaneateles is 16 miles long, 1.5 miles wide, and 300 feet deep. There are two different tour boats that do a great job of pointing out the sites of interest. Skaneateles is a very walkable village with plenty of period 19th century neighborhoods to explore.



The streets of Skaneateles are quite picturesque.



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When we were here in the 1990s, there was a shop where we looked for restoration parts for our Dodge. We had to go back to see if it was still there, and we found out it is still in business! When the day came to leave the lake, we had already covered 700 miles. On this day we would drive the rest of the way to Lawrenceville, New Jersey. When our visit with our friends came to a close, we decided to change our return route as the temps had climbed into the 90s and we were ready to get back.



Sally poses next to the the 120 at the end of a successful trip.

We went interstates all the way—I-80, Ohio Turnpike, and US-23. Our return took us two days, and our journey covered 1,500 miles in total. Our trusty Packard used only eight ounces of oil and a quart of antifreeze! It was a total pleasure to drive !



2020 Motor City Packards Activities

- **March** / Saturday, March 28: GM Heritage Car Collection
- **April** / Proposed historic mansion tour in Pontiac date TBD*
- **May** / Saturday, May 16: MCP Annual Tech Session
- **June** / Sunday, June 14: Cars ‘R’ Stars at the Packard Proving Grounds
- **June** / Sunday, June 14: Wings & Wheels, Willow Run Airport (*Courtesy listing*)
- **July** / MCP Ice Cream Social: Site, date, and time TBD
- **August** / August 14 - 23: 10 Days of Packard

**Event currently under study*

Welcome New Members

Matthew Chase of Lyon Mountain, NY / chasemh1@verizon.net
518-561-4231

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ajrostron@hotmail.co.uk (Son Tony’s email; he handles email duties)

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Neal Porter III of Lake Orion, MI / mntnhuntr@sbcglobal.net;
248-343-3648

Amy Jacob Paul of Rochester, MI / amyjppaul@yahoo.com



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Packard Club Advertisements

Early Packard Parts: Priming cups for 6-, 8- and 12-cylinder cars, some motor fastener studs and nuts, door lock lever, shackle bolt grease cups, Prestolite parts, head light connector parts. Have two pads of prints for 1903 Model F. Looks to be every print needed to reproduce a Model F.

Pre-War Parts: Lug bolts, bumper bolts, shackle bolts, Trippe light bolts and nuts, every motor fastener, AC spark plugs, open car wiper arms, 900 and 10th series taillight stanchions (ready to mount), V lenses and bezels, 33 & 34 battery box covers and Super 8 fender lights, 32 & 33 runningboard moldings, inside side cowl panel board with correct pattern cut in, all the parts for the Bijur system, many Stromberg EE series carburetor parts, tire mounting studs, late 30s auxiliary trunk rack hold down bolt.

Post-War Parts: 55 & 56 & Caribbean antenna nuts, 48-56 fender skirt bolts, over 200 different parts are in stock. Just about any machined part reproduced in stainless or as original. Email me for my pictured catalog. Send original part, part number or print. Have over 35,000 Packard part blueprints. Bruce Blevins, 9157 Timberline Dr., Grand Blanc, Mich. 48439, 810-287-7722, blevinsb33@aol.com

The Classifieds

Classified advertisements are available to members at no charge. Unless requested to do otherwise, the editor reserves the right to remove ads after a period of four (4) months.

Should you wish to place an ad, please email it to the editor at kirk@apexmotormedia.com.

1930s Packard engine block, head, crank \$200.00 and 1930s Hood with 110 oval crest \$175.00. Contact **Terry Kelly** 248-379-8276.



Motor City Packard Projects



Travel Mug Stainless
6-8-12 \$11.00



38-39 Shock Covers
\$350.00 per set
Shipping included
this item only



MCP Car Badge \$40.00

Allison Torsion-Level System DVD \$15.00

Fender Skirt bolts and washer 1948-54,
Brass or Stainless \$20.00 per set



21st-23rd Series Hood Support \$7.00

Shipping on items is extra, except shock covers.

Checks or PayPal accepted. Mail orders to: Motor City Packards, 9157 Timberline Dr., Grand Blanc, Mich 48439
810-287-7722, Blevinsb33@aol.com



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Authentic Reproduction Packard Key Case... The perfect complement for your Packard automobile...

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For International shipping quotes, and for ordering contact Bruce Blevins, 9157 Timberline Dr., Grand Blanc, MI 48439 / blevinsb33@aol.com



Dual Carb Air Cleaner Mounting Studs...

Exact reproduction of the studs needed to mount the Bat Wing air cleaner to the twin carbs on '55 and '56 Packard Caribbean... *except Manufactured from stainless steel*. All pieces made from Packard blueprints. / \$35.00/each.



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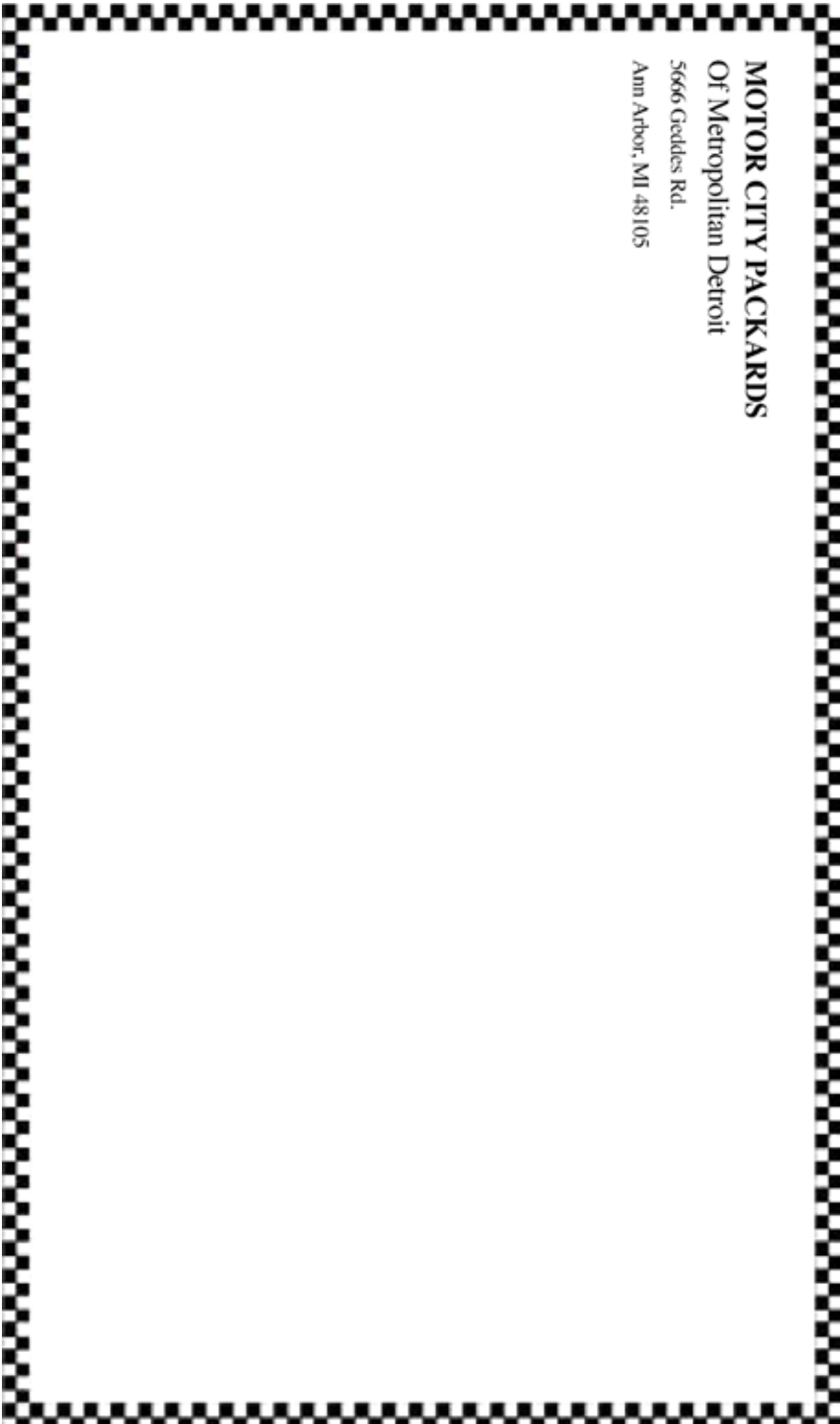
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