



Bay Area  
Horseless Carriage Club

# GOODGUYS

# Concours d'Elegance

June 4-5, 2011

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The Goodguys Rod & Custom Association represents auto enthusiasts of a different bent than those with which readers of this newsletter normally associate. In spite of the apparent differences, there are threads of common interest that run through all variations of the hobby. There are many techniques and skills that cross over, common interest in legislative actions that impact us, some components and suppliers that serve multiple purposes. Owners of custom cars are often quick to appreciate original, unmodified autos. Owners of unmodified cars are not all pure and often make changes to their autos for improved safety and performance even though they may be subtle and hidden. Instead of being polar opposites, they are points on a continuum. Both variations on the theme are richer through a better understanding of the activities of the other. For a second year, Goodguys made a special effort to reach out to the larger collector car community and should be commended for their actions. They solicited exhibition of unmodified and classic cars in a Concours d' Elegance at their 18th Summer Get-Together, at the Alameda County Fair Grounds in Pleasanton.

In addition to the Bay Area Horseless Carriage Club (BAHCC, with which I participates with *Annie*, our 1914 KisselKar Touring) and the NorCal Region of the Classic Car Club of America (NorCal CCCA, with which I participates with *Bugsby*, our 1924 Kissel "Gold Bug" Speedster), I recognized cars and owners from several other area car clubs such as the Packard Club and the Cadillac-LaSalle Club. This special concours was not judged and limited to 50 cars.

For those of you who have never attended a Goodguys show, you would not fail to be impressed by the large and youthful crowds that they typically draw (weather permitting). Many of us can point to a particular past event, often as a young person, that planted the seed that grew and blossomed to our current interest in old cars. This special concours was a rare opportunity for us to help plant that seed in a new generation of collectors. Our involvement is an act of enlightened self interest and an investment in the future of our hobby. Eight

cars from the BAHCC signed up (eight cars made it to the show floor); seven cars from NorCal CCCA signed up (four cars found their way to the show floor).

To enhance the educational opportunity, an 8.5"x11" informational placard was created for each car. The poster for each car was different, but all displayed the year/make/model of the car, car owners and a picture related to the car. A couple of paragraphs of text briefly overviewed some information about the car, the owner, the marque or some bit of related automotive history. It's been my experience that many spectators are more likely to stop and read this kind of information than to initiate a conversation with the owner. After the written "introduction" to the car and some common points of reference, it is easier to "break the ice" with follow-up questions that can lead to a meaningful conversation.

In fact, I think *all* collector cars should have some kind of informational placard or window sign displayed whenever the car is viewable by the public. This is a low-cost, high-impact way to help others identify and appreciate our vehicles. (If you're prose challenged, do a Google search on your year and make, or do a search in Wikipedia. You'd be amazed at the relevant information you'll find.)

To hold the placards, small acrylic sign holders are purchased and stands are fabricated from PVC pipe. I received some financial support for this effort from both the BAHCC and NorCal CCCA, but also spent additional personal funds to realize this vision.

The cars and owners that sign up for the show from the BAHCC were:

- 1906 REO Model B—Don & Joyce Azevedo
- 1908 REO Gentlemans Roadster—Joe & Esther Sernach
- 1909 Ford Model T Touring—Bill Austern
- 1910 Mitchell—Charles Ebers
- 1910 Pratt-Elkhart Touring—John & Carol O'Neill
- 1912 Ford Model T Delivery Car—Bill & Kaaren Brommer
- 1913 Apperson Touring—John & Carol O'Neill
- 1914 KisselKar Touring—Lynn & Jeanne Kissel

On the face of it, this two-day weekend show was a disaster.

Rain was forecast for the entire weekend and a steady rain falls for most of Saturday. The resulting crowds are a small fraction (1/6th? 1/10th?) of what one normally finds at the show. Only about 1/4 or less of the expected vendors show up for the swap meet and the huge swap space is largely bare. Sunday is better but not good. The sun is occasionally seen between clouds and the rain holds off in the morning and more people are seen at the show. But many of the vendors have not come and the crowds are thin.

Still the weekend was filled with many bright moments. The concours is held inside a building and our cars are high and dry. Many of the people that do attend are channeled into the buildings increasing our contact with them.

Many of the people stop to read the informational placards and ask questions. The concours car owners are great spokespersons, engaging with the crowd in animated discussions. Tables are setup for each club distributing literature and information.

I was particularly gratified to see Carol O'Neill's interaction with many young visitors. More than once I saw her propping young people in the front seat of her horseless carriages. Now that's the kind of experience that's going to leave a lasting impression! Way to go, Carol!

Carol wasn't the only owner that engaged visitors with energy and enthusiasm. Bill and Kaaren Brommer, dressed as bakers to go with their Pie Wagon, were a prime photo op. I overheard Bill solving some Model T issue with one visitor. Don Azevedo was being all Don, of course, engaging people with his usual witty, fast paced stories about old cars. In fact, Don told me such a good joke that I needed to write it down so that I could later tell it to my wife. She laughed, too.

All participants at the Goodguys Concours received an award of excellence; some cars receive special recognition, such as a "class act" award.

During the week after the show, I received a letter from the Goodguys, thanking us for our participation. They stated that "our 2nd Concours d'Elegance (was) the best display of cars that Goodguys has ever promoted." Although the weather didn't cooperate, the concours "was the hit of the event."

Indeed, it was a memorable weekend and I will long remember my involvement at the Goodguys Concours d'Elegance. Did the event succeed in planting any seeds in future collectors of horseless carriages or classic cars? We may never know. But I do know that we need to keep trying.

