

# The Owner's Manual

## The Official Newsletter of The Lone Star Packards



Summer 2017

By Ben Carter

### Evergreen Historic Autos

Whenever people who love classic cars travel around the U.S. they inevitably try to visit any collection in the area. Janice and I have made several trips to Western Missouri over the past 2 ½ years. Two years ago we found a collection of Packards in the tiny town of Afton, Oklahoma on old Hwy 66. Last year on our trip to Missouri we heard there is a collection in Lebanon, Missouri. As it turns out we know someone in Lebanon we could contact about seeing this collection. The collection is owned by Mr. Steve Plaster, who with his late father Robert, has amassed a beautiful collection of restored classic cars, mostly convertibles.



Our friend did not know Mr. Plaster but was willing to call him to see if we could see the collection so we could write this article for The Owner's Manual. Our friend did call and Mr. Plaster said to call him direct - which I did. Mr. Plaster was gracious and we talked about his collection. He said we were welcome to contact Mike Rhodes, Director of Automobile Portfolio. Mike invited us to see the cars and we made an appointment. We headed north on Mo. Hwy 5 to Lebanon. Mike met us at the Empire Ranch gate and led us up a very steep hill to get to the "Barn" which is a 150,000 sq. ft. building at the top of the hill. Mike gave us a private tour that took us into the building through the restoration shop and introduced us to staff members. Several of his staff has attended McPherson College in Kansas, which is the only College in the U.S. that offers a four year degree in auto restoration. From the restoration shop we boarded a golf cart to tour the Evergreen Historic Autos which covers about 1.6 miles. We saw an amazing collection of significant cars. If you like convertibles, this is the collection to see! There is not enough space in this article to describe everything we saw. This is the largest collection of cars over 100 years old.

Mike was very knowledgeable and has done his research. You can be sure what he says about these cars is factual. He made this visit much more interesting as he knew the history and story behind each vehicle.

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Mike knew our interest is in Packards. The Packards were generally together with a few exceptional cars in a show room area of the building. All of the 30 plus Packards are convertibles and all beautifully restored. *Beautiful, fantastic, amazing*, are all I can say and this does not adequately describe the Packards and the more than 500 other cars in the collection. We have included photos of several of the Packards and one Pierce Arrow that is the largest roadster we have ever seen.

For about an hour and a half Mike drove us through the building. The collection is divided into sections e.g. U.K., France, Ireland, German, Brass era cars. Then up to the second level and - oh what a site – this floor is dedicated to all cars made in America! Mr. Plaster loves convertibles and has an extensive collection of Corvettes which includes one of every model made. There are GM, Ford, Chrysler, Packard, Studebaker, Pierce Arrow, Cord and other U.S. cars. There are many one of cars to see and cars owned by famous people like Carroll Shelby, Sam Sneed, Alan Jackson and Rod Stewart. There are also movie cars like *Gone in 60 seconds*, Clint Eastwood in *Trouble in the Curve* and many others. By the way, all the cars are in running order.

If you plan to be in Missouri you need to set up an appointment to see the Evergreen Historic Auto collection. If you look on the web you can watch a video about the collection that was made by their local Fox affiliate. Lebanon is about 60 miles East of Springfield, Mo. on interstate 44. The web address is [www.evergreenhistoricautomobiles.com](http://www.evergreenhistoricautomobiles.com).

Mr. Plaster also owns [Passport Transport](http://PassportTransport.com) which is a premier automobile transportation company. If anyone needs to ship a collector car, check out their website.

I hope to visit the collection again when it is open to the public.



### Packards from Evergreen Collection



## Restoring a Family Heirloom By Ben Carter

In August of 2015 we welcomed new member, Dr. Dan Grilli, a Pediatric Dentist in the Clear Lake area and owns a 1949 23<sup>rd</sup> series Super 8 Packard. I contacted Dr. Grilli and he shared the car's history.

He has owned this Packard for many years, but it had not been driven for a long time. His Great Uncle in North Carolina purchased the car new and it had always been garaged. Dan purchased the car in 1981 and drove it to A&M in 1983. While attending the university he started the A&M Antique Auto Club with a friend who had an Edsel. In 1990 he parked the car and it has not been driven since.

I asked if I could see his Packard and take photos for our club's web site. Dan invited me to his office in Webster where the car was located in a large store room. We uncovered the car and below is the photo.



Dan would like to get the car running and asked if there was someone that could be trusted to take a look at the engine. I mentioned several restoration shops that I trusted and were honest, and two owners were LSP members. Our member, Jeff Pate, owner of Classic Cars of Houston was interested and would call Dr. Grilli. However, it would be awhile because he had a lot of projects in house. Dan was happy to hear this and that Jeff also owned two Packards and was very knowledgeable about these cars.

Several months later I saw Jeff at Keels & Wheels Concours d'Elegance in May 2016 and asked him if he had been able to help Dan. Jeff said he had the car in his shop since September and Dr. Grilli decided to have a complete restoration.

Then a few weeks later I went by Classic Cars of Houston to see the progress and saw the restored chassis. It looked brand new! At that time the body was in the body shop and still needed extensive work.



The next time I saw the car was the 2017 Keels & Wheels. Jeff was showing his work on the chassis with the body on a stand next to it. The set up drew a great deal of attention. I saw the car again a couple of weeks ago and the body is now on the chassis. It is almost complete and should be the best 1949 sedan in the country. Our club members will be looking forward to seeing this at future club meetings and maybe Keels & Wheels 2018.

Dan is anxiously waiting to drive this family heirloom again!

### Jeff Pate's Classic Cars of Houston

Jeff Pate has been working on cars since he was 14 years old when he acquired a 1966 Oldsmobile. He has always had an interest in classic cars.

Jeff did not start out to have a career in auto restoration having attended the University of Houston majoring in Business Administration. After college he got his first job in a restoration shop at age 21. Experience working with auto restoration has allowed him to be a self-taught expert in the field and has grown Classic Cars of Houston into a multiple award winning restoration shop.

Many of the jobs at Classic Cars of Houston are to correct work done poorly by others. Anyone who owns an antique classic has heard horror stories about auto restorations.

Jeff has done work for several LSP members who have all been pleased with the results. He joined the Lone Star Packard Club several years ago after acquiring his first Packard which is a beautiful 1954 Caribbean Convertible.

He now owns two additional Packards:

A 1949 2 door coupe and a 1937 4 door sedan.

To find more information visit Jeff's website at [Classic Cars of Houston](http://ClassicCarsOfHouston.com).



### Two LSP Members Elected to National Board

Acting Director Tommy Baccaro and Jerry Ehrman were elected as trustees in the National Board of Directors of Packard Antique Classics.

Both Tommy and Jerry attended the national convention in South Bend, Ind. In June and were introduced to the board at the Presidents reception for trustees.

Trustees are elected by a ballot of all PAC members.

### Jeff Pates' Classic Cars of Houston



## John Lortz and His Packards

By Janice Carter

John's story of his life with Packards starts back in his father's mechanical and body shop in downtown Cleveland, Ohio. Since John was 10 years old he was working on cars with his dad after school and weekends. He worked for his dad until he went into the Army in 1966.

When John returned home from his stint in the Army in 1968, the family garage had burned down, but his Dad moved to a body shop in Medina, Ohio and started over. He learned everything about mechanics from his dad who also taught auto mechanics at one time.

He didn't have any special vehicle, but his dad owned Packards. So this was his first introduction to what would become his favorite car. He remembers his mother's Packard was pink and white!

John got his first Packard when he was 15 years old. He traded points, plugs, and condenser for a '51 Clipper.

While in the Army he was stationed at Fort Hood, TX, and after the Army went thru aircraft school at Hobby Airport. By this time his Dad and Mom had moved to Pasadena, TX and opened another car repair shop.

He had a '53 Packard when he met Vivian in Pasadena in late 1969 and they married January, 1972. They have three children – Kevin, Annett, John Henry and six grandchildren and two great granddaughters. They moved to Porter, TX in 1982 and have their close knit family nearby,

He worked for Beechcraft Airlines for a while, then mechanic/supervisor for Grocers Supply vehicles, and Fleming Foods vehicles.

John started his career at Continental Airlines as a mechanic on their ground service equipment in 1990. He preferred working on ground equipment rather than aircraft and retired from Continental in 2008. As a Continental retiree he and his family have complimentary travel on what is now United Airlines.

He has been a member of LSP for about 15 years. He found the club when he stopped by Ron Jordan's motel out by the airport where there was a meeting to get some information.



Few years later found a '51 and bought it. Then back in Nebraska visiting family he was looking through a magazine and found a Patrician in Michigan. He and Vivian flew to view it and decided to purchase. At the time there was about 3 feet of snow on the ground so he knew there was no way he was going to drive it back to Texas. He found a guy to bring it to Houston for \$700 and then he joined LSP.

He has had numerous vehicles along the years but stuck with Packards. Vivian says "**John is a true Packard man**". He has his own auto shop and has worked on several members cars through the years. He is the Post War Technician for the club.

John and Dale Musgrove became very close friends. The first time he attended a LSP meeting he visited with Dale and they just clicked! He says, "**Dale knew more about Packards than anyone I have ever met**". John called Dale almost every night to check up on him and talk about cars. He really misses his good friend.

John and Vivian currently have a '53 convertible Briggs, '54 3313 P 4 door sedan, and a '54 super clipper 4 door sedan.

John is currently going through some health issues and we all wish him well and are praying for him.



## Memorial

Lone Star Packards was saddened at the loss of a valuable long time member Dale Musgrove on July 18, 2017. Dale was our go to member with any problems with a post war Packard.

Dale taught auto mechanics for many years in the Lamar Consolidated School District and he used Packard automobiles in his classes which introduced his students to this iconic classic car. Dale helped countless LSP members solve mechanical issues with their cars.

He served as District Director and Post War Technical Director of LSP. Dale is survived by his wife Janice and four daughters, five grandchildren and one great grandchild. Clinton Dale Musgrove was 80 years old.



## UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Auctions, swap meets, rallies, misc. that may be of interest to LSP members:

**Car Show - Ride to Rosenberg** Saturday, Sept 9 from 10 am–4 pm in Historic Downtown Rosenberg, Car Show registration \$25 per vehicle, pre-registration \$20. Payments and forms can be dropped off at Another Time Soda Fountain. Free T-shirt with registration. For more information contact Erica 832-945-0954 [sociallyelevatd@gmail.com](mailto:sociallyelevatd@gmail.com) or Renee Butler [reneeblr@yahoo.com](mailto:reneeblr@yahoo.com).

**Bites & Brews 2017** hosted by the Fort Bend History Association benefiting The Fort Bend Museum. **Saturday, Sept. 23 from 6:30-10 pm.** Museum would like as many antique cars as possible. Contact Ron Orr for more information.

**Congregation Emanu El Classic & Collectible Car Show** Free Admission. **Sunday, Oct 22 from 11 am to 2 pm.** Enjoy classic rock music from the 50's, 60's and 70's. There will be food trucks on site so don't worry about lunch. This event benefits the Houston Food Bank and everyone is encouraged to bring a non-perishable food donation.

Traders Village Swap Meet	Sep 23-24	Traders Village Houston
Humble Swap Meet	Sep 25	Humble Convention Center
Cruisin' the Coast	Oct 6-8	Biloxi, MS
Conroe Swap Meet	Nov 4-6	Montgomery County Fairgrounds

## Lone Star Packard Membership Update:

At this time we have a total of **87 members and 82 cars**. We are happy to have so many members of LSP, and we would love to see more of you at our meetings. Our members live all over the Houston Metro area and we like to move monthly meetings around Houston and outlining suburbs to make it convenient for everyone. Remember this is your club and we can only keep going if everyone participates. If you have a suggestion for a possible tour or activity that would be fun and interesting, please bring it up at our next meeting or contact Tommy Baccaro at [Baccaro3@verizon.net](mailto:Baccaro3@verizon.net).

### **Recent Past Meetings & Tours – 2017**

**January** at Ole Railroad Café and tour of Rosenberg Historic area – hosted by Ron & Patricia Orr

**February** at Fudruckers in Greens Point and Gateway Classic Cars – hosted by Tony & Shirley Darrow

**March** at Los Cucos in Humble, TX – hosted by Ron & Juanita Jordan & John & Vivian Lortz

**April** the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Texas Packard Meet – Kerrville, TX

**May 20** - Joe's BBQ and tour of Dave & Sandra Lucas' car collection in Alvin, TX

**June** – no local meeting due to National Meet

**July** – Meeting Cancelled

**August 20** – Jay's Country Café, Needville and back to Del Webb community in Richmond where Lenny & Paula Holzband live and provide desserts at their community Lake House.

### **Upcoming Meetings & Tours - 2017**

**September** - Open

**October** – Open

**November** – Open

**December** – Christmas Lunch/Meeting - Open

## July

17 Todd Bates  
17 Ron Orr  
25 Maureen Carlson  
31 Shirley Darrow



## August

7 Rich Trokey  
19 Ron Scarbro  
21` Dee Wanderman  
29 Bill Anderson  
29 Pauletta Jeter

## September

3 Martha Roberts  
5 Gregg Jeter  
10 Bailey Pate  
13 John Lortz  
15 Janice Carter  
15 Cathy Grilli  
15 Ann Stebenne  
19 Jamie Roberts  
25 Doyle Hinds  
25 Richard Mitchell

### A Little Financial Advice

Why is it handy to have these coins in your pocket?

Three quarters, one dime, two nickels and four pennies?

Answer: You will have exact change for any purchase!



