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Contact information for club Leadership can be found on our **Club Website:**
www.sharktoothsportscarclub.com

Webmaster: **Jen Maher, Maverick MKG**

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INTRODUCTION

It is on behalf of the Club's Leadership Team, that I would like to wish all the Shark's and their families, an incredibly Happy New Year and best wishes for a healthy one as well!

There are a number of factors that go in to making our club a success. It starts with the people, you, the members. From there it goes to the Leadership Team who have responsibility to bring us all together so we can not only enjoy each other's company, but to participate and/or experience events that we can all enjoy and well, just have fun!

Janice recently asked everyone to suggest events that you would like to see selected as a monthly event. Mary listed all the events and then asked that you select your top six (6). The complete list of events and the top six (6) vote getters are now listed on the website. I encourage those that have been assigned an event this year, to look at these top vote getters as it indicates an elevated level of interest among the members that in theory will assure a good turnout for your event.

Lastly, as reported in our November meeting, there will be some changes in our Leadership Team. Janice Love, who has been our Social Coordinator for the last couple of years will move to Membership Director, filling the position that I have temporarily held following the resignation of Bill Mendes. Mary Bimonte will assume the position of Social Coordinator. I look forward to working with both ladies in their new roles. Ed Cashman who has served as our Secretary these past two years, has indicated that he would like to step down. Hence, there is a need for someone to succeed Ed as Secretary. If you have an interest in this leadership position, please let me know.

Ken Maher



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



When walking through a parking lot or when stopped at a light, have you taken note of how many white cars there are? Well, you might not have, but I certainly have. But then again, both Kathy and I may be more aware since we both drive white cars and my last three out four cars were white, with the exception being silver.

So how popular is white. Well, in Florida white cars are the most popular color and has a 27.9% market share. But what about nationally? What are the top colors for 2024? White again is the most popular color nationally with 34% market share followed by:

- Black 22%
- Silver 14%
- Gray 10%
- Blue 9%
- Red 8%
- Green 1%
- Violent 1%
- Beige 1%

If white, black, and silver are so popular, does color impact resale value? In all likelihood, selecting a popular color today will probably make your vehicle more popular to buyers five (5) years from now. But, getting outside the norm and selecting what might be a trendy color, could negatively impact the resale value of your vehicle as color trends change.

Have you ever not selected a color because of how hard it is to maintain? **Black** comes to my mind. A black car looks fantastic on almost any car. The color however, is a double-edged sword. It looks best when fresh right after it is washed.

But park under a tree, go through a puddle, and here in Florida with our rainy season, it does not take long for it to look dirty again. But what about the other colors. Well,

- **Gray:** This color is easiest to clean. Dirt and dust can hide nicely on these surfaces and look cleaner for longer.
- **Silver:** Like gray, silver hides dust and dirt longer.
- **White:** Cars in this category are also easy-to-care-for. However, this color shows mud and splashes more easily than gray and silver. White, however does hide swirl marks that result from automatic car washes, and this color tends to look newer for longer.
- **Green:** An easy to maintain color, but the color shows imperfections more readily than gray, silver and white.
- **Red:** Certainly, a flashy color but becomes dull if dirty.
- **Blue:** This color is rising in popularity. It is just harder to keep clean. Blues tend to show water spots easily. Scratches and swirl marks also appear quickly with this color.
- **Yellow:** This color stands out and easily hides dust and pollen. Yellow however, emphasize mud splashes when you drive in the rain.
- **Orange:** This color commands attention, but it is not easy to keep clean.

So gray and silver colors are the easiest to keep clean. These colors hide things like dust and give the appearance of looking clean, even when they are not.

What you might also want to consider is what colors get stolen the most. According to *National Insurance Crime Bureau*, black, silver, white, green, and gold cars are the most stolen. As a side note, 85% of reported stolen cars get recovered, with 34% recovered within a day of the vehicle being reported stolen.

What does it say about your personality based on the color you selected. Here is what I picked up online:

- **Red** Highly sensual and like to be the center of attention. They are high-energy, dynamic, and love to socialize with new people.
- **Black** Ooze sophistication and have great style. They also appreciate control, but often take a reserved approach, avoiding any unnecessary drama.
- **Silver/Gray** Have a sensible nature, often considering practicality over desire. They keep their word as they are very reliable and tend to conform to society, often shying away from the spotlight.
- **Blue** Calm confidence and unlikely to be fazed. Trustworthy and faithful friends.
- **Orange** Unique and creative
- **White** Tend to be clinical, highly organized, and strive to achieve a high status within society.
- **Yellow** Have a sunny nature. They are bursting with energy and always look on the bright side of life.
- **Green** Well-balanced life and extremely down to earth, Grounded and humble, know for taking a very simply and understated approach to life.
- **Purple** Wants to be perceived as original and unique – they love to make a statement and stand out from the crowd.

Do you agree? Ask your spouse and see if they agree.

Lastly, there are more matte paint finishes being seen on vehicles today. No comment. I'm old school. Cars are meant to have a shine and just like black wheels which seems to be everywhere today, wheels should be chrome or polished. Oh well, to each his/her own.

Ken Maher

YOLO
(You Only Live Once)

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well, here we are; the end of another year and the beginning of a new set of opportunities. As I am writing this, I am in the Southwestern US looking forward to the upcoming Christmas with family. Outside, the temperature has risen above the freezing mark and it is bright and sunny. A very nice day in the desert SW.

Last week we had a great Thanksgiving with family members in Texas. It makes me realize how fortunate we are to be able to enjoy such special times. I suppose for most people the Thanksgiving through Christmas Holidays are the favorite, most special times of the year. I hope that you experienced the same kind of special season.

As you are reading this, the new year is upon us with the promise of lots of new adventures waiting in the wings. I hope we can all make the best of it. I know the club members will be doing their best to come up with great ideas for events, dining venues and pop-up events. I know I am eager to see what is in store for us all. We already have several events scheduled for 2025, starting with the Kissimmee Mecum Auction in January. This promises to be a really good time. Shortly following that will be 2 more auctions where we will be driving, Premier and Carlisle. What a great opportunity to provide us with the revenue that will allow us to continue with Benevolent endeavors during 2025. Also, later in the year and still in the planning stage, will be the road trip to Charlotte and Savannah. There has been some mention of possible pop-ups to Tarpon Springs, Tallahassee and St. Augustine. Could happen, who's knows?

I was trying, and failing, to come up with another spectacular article for this issue of Shark Bites. We recently had some discussion about this very topic. It seems that a wise thing to do is to ask you, the members, to let us know if there is something you might like to see in the Newsletter. So, I'll ask you now - Have you got any ideas? If there is something that you have wondered about, have an interest in or just think might be an entertaining subject, let us know. We'll be happy to do some research and let you know what we find out. We try to keep the topics somewhat related to Sports Cars or at least automotive related. However, if you have an idea that is of general interest, let me know. Maybe I can look into it.

On a similar note, we always welcome articles from any of you. If you have an idea for an article or maybe a story from your past, write it up and submit it. Who knows, you may become a famous published author!

So let me just wish all of you a Happy New Year. I hope your year is filled with lots of fun adventures and experiences. After all, the primary purpose for our club is to enjoy our cars and the camaraderie with our fellow Club Members. Having fun is the top of the list! Lets make 2025 a great year.



Dave Love

What Do You Know? (About The Cars In Our Club)

Each issue, we'll focus on a car, chosen at random, that has a representative in our club. It won't be your specific car, but rather a generic description of the Year, Make and Model.

This month's spotlight - 2024 AUDI S5 Cabriolet

The AUDI brand has been around for more than a century, having gotten its start early in the 20th century. Audi was started and still has its headquarters in Ingolstadt, Bavaria, Germany. They have 9 production facilities throughout the world.

The AUDI brand has a very lengthy and complicated history. Here is a shortened, VERY simplified and loosely described version of the history: (Thanks to Google and Wikipedia)

Early in the 1900s, the basis of the company was founded by an engineer named August Horch. In 1932, 2 other companies, DKW and Wanderer, joined him in the foundation of Auto Union. Auto Union was absorbed by Daimler-Benz and in 1960 sold to the Volkswagen group. Volkswagen merged Auto Union with NSU Motorwerken in 1969, creating the present day form of the company.

Contrary to lots of popular theories, the name AUDI is actually derived from the surname of the

original founder, August Horch. In German, the word Horch means to hear or to listen. Due to some legal boundary, August was not able to continue using the Surname Horch as the name of the company. The Latin translation of the word Horch is Audir, to hear or to listen. The name was shortened to AUDI. The 4 rings of the logo represent the 4 original companies that started Auto Union - AUDI, Dampf-Kraft-Wagen (DKW), Wanderer and Horch. Audi is now one of the best selling luxury brands in the world.

The original AUDI (Horch) automobile was a 2612 cc 4 Cylinder vehicle, released in 1915. AUDI has been a popular and competitive vehicle ever since, both in general sales and in sporting events. The AUDI brand has undergone many many changes throughout the years. The modern era began in 1968 with the introduction of the AUDI Fox. The line evolved into the AUDI 80 and 100, which ultimately became the AUDI A4 and A6.

So, what about the modern AUDI S5? The S5 was originally introduced in 2007 at the Frankfurt Motor Show. It was released for sale in 2009. The S5 is the High Performance variant of the A5. Most S5s are built at the Ingolstadt factory, however, the S5 Cabriolet is produced in Neckarsulm, which was the former NSU plant.

The S5 is available in Coupe, Cabriolet (convertible) and 5 door Fastback versions. The S5 is available only with AUDI's Quattro All Wheel drive system, with a Torsen center differential. Compared to the A5, the S5 has a more aggressive body style with different grill, trim and badging. The S5 has side skirts, larger air intakes, LED running lights and larger wheels, tires and brakes. There is a long list of high performance and luxury options such as Driver Assist, Heads Up Display, Virtual Cockpit and Flat Bottomed Steering Wheel.

The engine in the Cabriolet is a 3.0 liter Turbocharged V6, which was co-developed with Porsche. It is direct injected with a twin-scroll turbocharger. The Quattro AWD splits power front and rear at 40%-60%. Three transmissions are available, a 7 speed manual, 8 speed ZF Tiptronic auto and a 7 speed S-Tronic Dual Clutch semi automatic. The coupe has a 4.2 liter naturally aspirated V8. The 2 engines, Turbo V6 and NA V8 are almost identical in power output. The V6 produced 349 hp and 369 lb/ft of torque. Performance, according to Car & Driver actual testing is:

With the heavier Cabriolet - zero to 60 - 4.8 seconds. Top speed approximately 155 mph

The ride is described as "firm but compliant. The interior feels expensive and very comfortable". Cargo capacity is top rated. All in all, the S5 is a very comfortable, very spirited and very drivable vehicle. Add in all of the available technology and electronics and you have a really desirable and exciting car!

By: Dave Love

CAR SHOWS



STSCC Area Car Show Schedule 2Q'24

The following listing is accurate as of the date of this publication. Check the club's Monthly Meeting Minutes under "Club Admin" on our [website](#) for updated listings of STSCC suggested area car show events.

ONGOING EVENTS

- Cruisin' on Dearborn 1st Saturday Each Month. Dearborn St in Englewood. 2-8pm
- Wellen Park Cars & Coffee Downtown Wellen Park 1st Saturday each month 8-10am
- Northport Cars & Coffee @ Cocoplum Village \$10 Donation. 1st Sunday Each Month 8-10am
- UTC Mall Cars & Coffee @ Ford Garage. \$10 Donation. 2nd Saturday Each Month. 8-10am
- Stingray's Bar & Grill Cars & Coffee 3rd Saturday Each Month. 8-Noon
- Lynche's Pub St Armands. Cars & Coffee. 3rd Saturday Each Month 8-10am

- AACA Cars & Coffee @ Ideal Classic Cars
4th Saturday Each Month 9-1pm

LANCE'S AREA CAR SHOWS

- Every 1st Saturday Hooters, Sarasota -
US41 @ Clark Rd 5pm-8pm
- Every 2nd Saturday Ideal Classic Cars,
Venice. 9am-1pm

UPCOMING CAR SHOWS SW FLORIDA

- 1/11/25 Car & Art Concours de Caractère.
Sponsored by Porsche of Ft Myers. Peace River
Botanical & Sculpture Gardens, Punta Gorda,
FL 8:30am - 3pm
- 12/15/24 Big Top Brewer Monthly Car Show
3rd Sunday Each Month.
2507 Lakewood Ranch Blvd
- Judges Car Shows are resurrecting some of the
Premier Car Shows. Dates will follow. Bell
Tower Show in Ft Myers on January 11 and
again in March, '25. Others will be added.
- April 27, 2025. 64th annual Devereaux-Kaiser
Collector Car Show. Sarasota Fair Grounds

QUARTERMASTER'S CORNER

Since losing our Club Shirt supplier we have formed a Shirt Committee to review our replacement options. We will be presenting the results shortly.

I would like to thank all of you who responded to my shirt survey. Your input was very helpful.

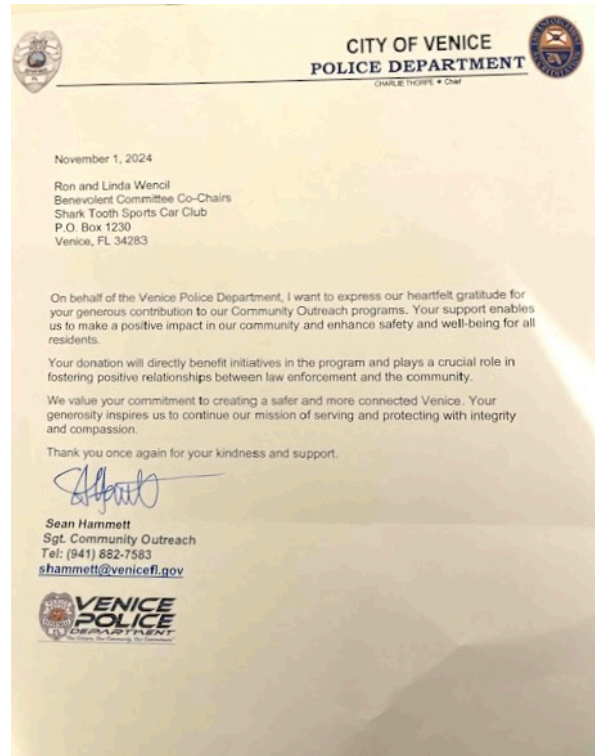
Embroidery of our logo on items (hats, visors, etc.) is still available at \$10.70 per item.

Margret Barcelo

BENEVOLENT FUND NEWS

October - Venice Police Department's Six Community Outreach Programs:

- The Benevolent Committee, on behalf of the Sharks, donated \$500.00 to VPD's Community Outreach Programs to be allocated amongst their six programs where needed.



November - Southwest Florida Honor Flight:

- The Benevolent Committee, on behalf of the Sharks, donated \$500.00 to Southwest Florida Honor Flight.

- Our Club Members brought unwrapped toys to our November Club meeting as a donation to VPD's Blue Santa Program (one of the 6 programs implemented by VPD). The Benevolent Committee thanks our generous Members for supporting this great and worthy program during the Holidays which benefits children who live in Venice.



December - No donation made in December.

List of 2025 Approved Donations:

- Backpack Angels
- Venice Area Pregnancy Care Center
- Venice Area Mobile Meals
- South County Food Pantry
- Venice Police Department Community Outreach Program
- Venice Challenger Baseball Field of Dreams
- Southwest Florida Honor Flight
- The 8th donation for 2025 would be a repeat of a prior donation or a special event/TBD

To the extent possible, in 2025 we plan on funding two donations per quarter.

Thank you again to our Members who have so kindly supported those entities whom the Benevolent Committee have recommended for donations. Many of those you have helped support over the last two years (going on three years!!) are non-profits and are managed (some primarily) by teams of volunteers who willingly give their time and talents to help and improve the daily lives of many families in the Venice/Sarasota County area. We appreciate each Member's initial annual contribution in January designated for "Benevolent" purposes, and also your willingness to attend the various car auctions throughout the year to help fund more donations. Kudos to all of you!!!

Reporters: Ron & Linda Wencil

SOCIAL EVENTS

Hello Sharks. What a great year it has been! Highlights from Shark activities in 2024 include:

- The James Museum of Western Art in Tampa
- Captain Jack's Dinner Cruise at Marina Jack's
- Southeastern Guide Dogs in Sarasota
- Tampa Bay Grand Prix Indoor Go-cart Track in Clearwater
- The Venice Water Treatment Plant Tour
- Visani's Italian Steakhouse and Comedy Theater
- The Gamble Plantation Historic State Park
- As well as a Road Rally around the Venice area and several pop-up activities

We continue to enjoy our monthly dinners and have visited:

- Osteria500
- Libee's
- The Columbia
- Oak and Stone
- Made in Italy
- Stottlemeyer's Smokehouse
- Lickety Split
- Bodrum
- Deep Lagoon
- Artur's
- Anna Maria Oyster Bar

A special thanks to Kathy Maher for setting up our after-meeting dinners, every month of the year! And thanks to the following Sharks for hosting either a dinner or an event in the last quarter of the year.

- Ron & Mary Bimonte
- Dave & Janice Love
- Rick & June DiLella
- Skip Ackerman & Cindy Buckheit

And a special thanks to Ken and Kathy Maher for once again hosting our Holiday Dinner Event at the Boca Royal Country Club.

The following Sharks will be hosting upcoming dinners and events in the 1st quarter of 2025. Watch Team Reach for specifics and signup.

	2025 Events	2025 Dinners
January	Wencil	Gruenberg - Jan 20
February	Maple	Bimonte - Feb 17
March	Ferega	Gambino- Mar 17
April	Lytle	Royal - April 21
May	Love	Parkinson - May 19
June	Rossi	Iannone- June 16

Monthly Dinners – Date Predetermined – Third Monday of Each Month

To review, monthly dinners are always held on the third Monday of each month. This was decided upon by Shark Tooth vote so that members can plan in advance. We’ve had a few requests from hosts in the past, to change the date for the dinner. Rather than change the date, the Social Coordinator will work with the hosts to find a month where the third Monday is more convenient for them to host. The host chooses the location for the dinner and provides the details for publication to the Social Events Coordinator. As the hosts, you will coordinate with the restaurant, check Team Reach for RSVPs, maintain the attendee list, and assist the members in seating at the restaurant.

Monthly Events – Host to Select Date and Venue

As the hosts of the monthly event, the venue is your choice, as is the date. Keep in mind that the dinner that month will be held on the third Monday and the membership meeting will be held on the second Wednesday. As with the dinners, you will send the event information via email to the Social Coordinator for posting on Team Reach.

All dinners and events will also be listed on the club calendar located on the website. We all have busy schedules, so we ask that you have your event details and dinner locations in place three months in advance. This will give everyone an opportunity to reserve the date on their personal calendars.

Smile, you may be on Candid Camera! As the host of an event or dinner, we ask that you take

photos and write a short note about your dinner/ event for our quarterly newsletter and for posting on the website. Please send a picture and the information to the Social Coordinator, who will forward the info to Steve Bieglecki for our newsletter and to Jen for the Shark Tooth website.

Thanks Sharks for being so easy to work with the past 2 years while I have been the Social Coordinator. And a big thanks to Mary Bimonte for taking over this position in 2025!

Janice Love
 Social Events Coordinator
janicesharktooth@gmail.com



Sharks met at Deep Lagoon for the September monthly Club dinner.



October dinner at Artur's in Englewood



In October, Sharks had a great day at the 4th Annual Foxbrook Car Show in Parrish, FL.



CELEBRATIONS

Happy Birthday



January

- 14 Steve Bieglecki
- 18 Mike Ferega
- 21 Rick DiLella
- 29 Sandy Ferega
- 31 Tom Lupica

February

- 9 Ed Cashman
- 22 Bill St Clair
- 24 Linda Wencil
- 25 Linda Wachman
- 27 Ron Wencil

March

- 4 Michele St Claire
- 9 Rodger Maple
- 21 Ken Maher
- 21 Gary Westfall
- 30 Carol Parkinspm

Happy Anniversary



March

- 16 DiAngelo
- 17 Maples
- 26 Ferega

MEMBERSHIP

Membership Facts

22 Full Memberships (+3 Associate & 1 Sponsor)

52 Members

38 Cars



Manufacturers Represented

Alfa Romeo - 4C

Aston Martin - DB11

Audi - S5

BMW - 8, 6, 4 & 3

Chevrolet Corvette - C7, C6, C5, C3

Dodge - Challenger Wide Body

Ferrari - 308 GTBi

Ford - Mustang

Jaguar - F Type

Mercedes Benz - C & SLS

MG - B

Countries Represented

United States, Germany, United Kingdom and Italy

Primary Sports Car Colors

6	Red	5	Blue
5	White	2	Green
2	Silver/Grey	1	Black
1	Yellow		

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

My Sports/Cop Car Story

By: Steve & Michelle Iannone

On a warm spring morning as I sat drinking coffee with my wife Michelle beside me and our Golden Retriever Fiona, at our feet, I found myself reflecting on how fortunate I am to be here, now. When Michelle and I decided to relocate to Florida 8 years ago after I retired from the NYPD we were concerned that we may not have as many friends here as we did back home in N.Y., but pickleball and my love for cars changed all that. Pickleball not only helps to keep us active, but it has also helped us make new friends, additionally my interest in cars of all kinds brought me to The Shark Tooth Sport Car Club where we've made even more friends. The club seemed to be more cautious than pickleball in accepting me, and knowing me, who can blame them. I required a sponsor to bring me into the fold. Funny, I always thought I would need a sponsor for something more ominous like gamblers or alcoholics anonymous, anyway you can blame Gary for this. Now I spend my time either playing ball or going to car shows, both activities often include Michelle and Fiona. As long as there is a good restaurant nearby.

Once the caffeine started to kick in at about my second cup, I thought about all that I have experienced and accomplished in my life and how my career as a New York City Police Officer afforded me the opportunity to own several of my favorite cars.

I started systematically reviewing the timeline, the year, the make and model of the 16 or so cars and SUVs that have occupied my garage over the years, that led me to think about the RMP's (Radio Motor Patrol cars) I drove during my almost 30-year career. Granted that on a job as large as mine, I didn't see a regular radio car assignment for the first 2 years, but when I did, I started to settle into what I always pictured I would be – a Cop on motor patrol. Some cars were marked, and some were unmarked, even a undercover taxi - that comes with its own stories,

S



Some were cool, like the 1986 -1990 box Chevy Caprice, a tank with a big motor and lots of get up and go and the 1982 – 1989 Plymouth Gran Fury, a car with a 318 ci plant and a dashboard where I could wedge a cup of coffee during a pursuit and never spill a drop - you tend to think differently about what's important when you are cop.



Then, some were not so cool like the early eighties Reliant K Car and the 1998 Chevy Lumina – um, 'nuf said on that.



I even realized that there were some pretty cool muscle cars that were pressed into service as well. The NYPD seized a 1990 Mustang GT in an arrest that was repainted PD colors and used for high speed pursuits and parades. Several departments used these type of radio cars and some even made it into movies and tv shows. So, let's take a look back at what I like to call the evolution of Police Pursuit Muscle Car.



In the beginning of motorized policing at the end of the 19th century, law enforcement in America needed a faster and more efficient way to get officers from point A to point B. Innovative ideas began to emerge like the first motorized vehicle. An electric powered wagon that was put into service in Akron, Ohio in 1899. It reached speeds of 16mph, pretty fast for those days. This was a great way to accomplish what was needed and it covered more ground than was expected.

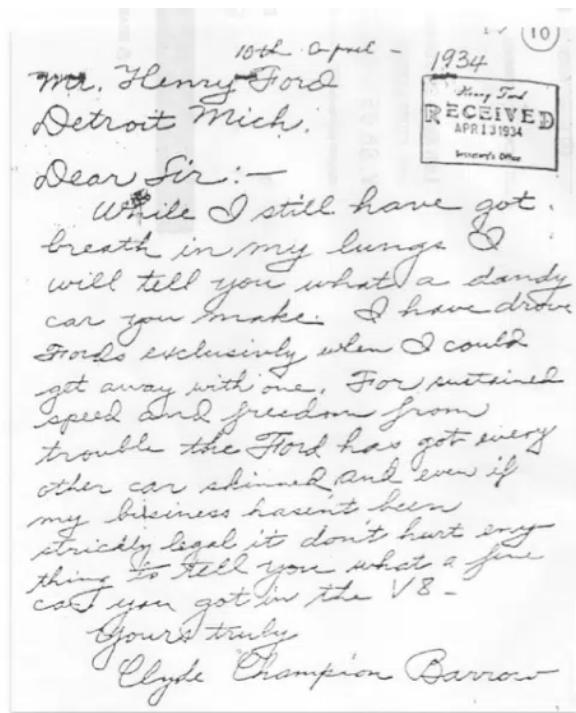


Bicycles and motorcycles soon followed to move a single officer around faster, but the birth of the police pursuit vehicle began when criminals started using powerful getaway cars. The police simply needed to keep up!

Depression era gangster John Dillinger triggered several reactions among the American law enforcement community because he robbed dozens of banks and police stations across several Midwest states during a time when communication between local Police Departments were fragmented at best. During his reign as "Public Enemy No.1" the Federal Government formed the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as a tool to hunt down John Dillinger. In a now famous confrontation with the FBI, Dillinger used a 1930 Ford Model A, and a Thompson Sub-Machine gun, to escape the law.



In 1934 Bonnie and Clyde stole a Ford Deluxe Sedan to commit their Crime spree. Both Dillinger and Clyde Barrow who loved their Fords, wrote Henry Ford praising him for making such a powerful and “dandy” car in which they were able to escape in.



Even NASCAR legend Junior Johnson who was not an infamous gangster but considered to be a criminal by Federal standards used a supped up 1940 Ford Deluxe Coupe to outrun the law during his bootlegging exploits that led to the birth of the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing.

By now the 1920's and 30's saw Police Departments across the country on patrol in automobiles. Using cars like what the criminals were using with the only difference being various lights and Police markings. It wasn't until after WWII that auto manufacturers offered a “Police Package” that included what most departments

were special ordering for themselves. Ford introduced the first “Interceptor” police package that included a 110 hp V8 engine. Chevrolet responded with their Police Package in 1955 that included a small block V8. The same year Buick released their lightweight Model 68 Century, a special two door sedan made for the California Highway Patrol that housed a 322 ci V8 that produced 236 hp and had Roadmaster brakes.



The big 4 automakers (before Dodge and Plymouth combined under the Chrysler banner) were now fully engulfed in an all out battle to see who would be the top dog auto maker and that meant that Dodge now offered their Police Package on the 1956 Coronet, even Studebaker responded with their package - the 1956 Champion. Plymouth, who had a history of producing fleet cars for use as taxis threw their hat into the ring with the 1957 Fury.



The Industrial Revolution of the 1950's was coming to an end, the 1960's in The United States gave birth to a decade of unrest and political protests. Police Departments across America settled into a style of policing that required a large dependable cruiser, predominantly produced by GM, Ford and Chrysler, now known as The Big 3. These cruisers were virtually unchanged for ten years and were able to perform patrol duties as well as transport criminals and respond to riots

and protests while carrying several officers. This was also during a time when federal emissions regulations, that started in California in 1963 hadn't spread across the United States yet. Most of these cruisers were produced with large motors that could reach speeds in excess of 150mph, which was sufficient to chase down any fleeing felons of the time. But as the years went on Law Enforcement realized that keeping up with hot rodders was becoming more difficult. John Delorian and the Pontiac Motor Division had already released the 1964 GTO, a car that sparked the fuse leading to the birth of the muscle car. The late 1960's exploded with Chevelles, Mustangs, Camaros and Road Runners to name a few. The next 10 years, however, held some interesting changes and the birth of the Police Pony Car was just around the corner.



My first memory of police muscle was the 1971 AMC Javelin. A car introduced into state law enforcement in some regions to combat the overflow of fast cars on American roads and highways. This first version of police power appeared as a loaner on Alabama roads in a deal struck by the Alabama Public Safety Department and AMC, the American Motors Company. A sweet deal by any stretch because most Departments didn't have a large budget to purchase the cars from the Big 3 that were needed to accomplish this task. Sadly, this anemic and underpowered version of the Javelin was quickly discarded by the rank and file because of its 304 ci, 2-barrel motor. It was just too slow to keep up with the competition. The next version was done right. The replacement Javelin was a donated, not loaned pony car that housed a 401 ci motor with a 4-barrel carburetor and dual exhaust. A formidable rival that became known on the streets as the "Alabama Hamma" and it couldn't be out run. As a result of this project 132

Javelins made their way into service with the Alabama State Police. There are even unconfirmed stories that this monster topped 170mph at the Talladega Speedway!



Finally, the police were cool! The love affair with American Muscle has begun. Movies and T.V. shows started to pop up with muscle cars. Movies like Dazed and Confused, At Close Range, Bad Georgia Road, Cannonball, Dirty Mary and Crazy Larry, The Vanishing Point, Smokey and the Bandit. T.V. shows like The Dukes of Hazzard, Batman, The Monkeys, The Rockford Files, The Mod Squad, Starsky and Hutch, Route 66. The list goes on and on.

Unfortunately, the days of the big gas guzzling V8 muscle cars were short lived. In the 1970's the United States supported Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. As a result, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in the Middle East refused to sell the U.S. crude oil. The oil embargo began and the U.S started looking for a more economical car that used less fuel and was more efficient. The last movie monster police car was a repurposed 1974 Dodge Monaco driven by Ellwood Blues in The Blues Brothers...it had a 440cu in cop plant. It's got cop shocks, cop tires – well you know how the rest goes.



By the mid to late 1970's the American Muscle car was all show and no go. For example, even though the Smokey and the Bandit movie catapulted Trans Am sales thru the roof, you couldn't buy the same car as the customized movie Bandit. What was available to the consumer was a heavily detuned V8 with only a mere 200 hp. Things would only get worse from there as the muscle car would whimper into the 1980's. The big 3 had all but abandoned high performance. Muscle cars turned into front wheel drive Plymouth Lasers and Eagle Talons, heck even the Mustang GT had only 200 hp in 1986. But something interesting was about to happen at GM. The Buick Regal, wanting to showcase its success in NASCAR from 1982 through 1987 introduced the Regal T-Type that eventually became the Grand National GNX. A turbo charged V-6 with 276 hp and 360 lb ft of torque. The race for performance and horsepower was back on!

Police cruisers through the 80's were mostly big sedans with little performance. Most cruisers came with either a V6 or a small block V8. Anything larger than that would be the top tier of the police package that was reserved for State Police Agencies and Highway Patrol Units. To my memory, the exception was the California Highway Patrol and across the country at the New York State Police. Both Departments experimented with a small lightweight pursuit vehicle to be used on the open road. The NYSP chose the 1988 Fox Body Mustang GT Notch Back and the CHP went with 2nd and 3rd generation Camaro B4C. Two muscle cars that were more than capable of carrying out their duty assignment.



This was the beginning of the next generation of Police Muscle Cars. Cars that will soon be on the cutting edge of technology mixed with performance. Computer systems were rapidly becoming standard equipment in all cars around the globe, police vehicles were no exception. With the advancement of small onboard computers and the modern motors and drivetrains used in cars from the 1990s through today, police cars are

once again in the forefront of performance, technology and fuel efficiency. The Mustang and the Camaro would remain the standard of Police Muscle, but the introduction of the “throwback” or retro Mustang in 2005 would reignite the rivalry between the Big 3 once again. Ford saw great success with their Mustang, Dodge was the second on the scene reintroducing the Challenger in 2008 and the Charger in 2009 and Chevy rounded out the field with the 2010 Camaro. As far as Police Packages go, Dodge had been out of the Police Cruiser game since the late 80's to early 90's, Ford's last Crown Victoria, a police model was in 2011 and Chevy's last Police Caprice was in released in 2015. In my opinion the only sedan left that was equal to the task of serving the needs of Police Departments in this country was the Ford Taurus. A capable 4 door sedan that met standards, but it was a small car – not like the sedans of days past. The car was fine, but it was hard for even the smaller Officers to get in and out of wearing a 40 lb. gun belt and a bullet resistant vest.



Now there were still plenty of Crown Victorias and Caprices on the road because larger Departments would often buy cars in bulk to save money and smaller Department's cruisers had an easier existence with less day-to-day punishment causing them to last longer. A temporary solution was to transition to SUV's. Ford Explorers and the Chevy Tahoe were fast becoming the main go to for Departments across the Country, but they were big, bulky and had a high center of gravity that making them poor candidates for pursuit vehicles. There was still a need for a sedan that was big enough and fast enough to accomplish this. In steps the Big 3 once again to solve the problem. With the introduction of extremely popular “retro” muscle cars Ford, Chevy and

Dodge quickly reintroduced their versions of new Police Packages that were quickly adopted by police departments. Now Ford and Chevy have decided that their most profitable option lies within the SUV market, so they stayed with the Explorer and the Tahoe. Both introduced a Police Interceptor package. A terrific option for day-to-day patrol capable of seating 1 or 2 officers along with all the equipment and firepower that's necessary for today's Law Enforcement Officer (LEO). You may still see some Camaros and Mustangs on the street today that are reserved for special duties and public relations events like Community Affairs Details but the most popular vehicles by far for the day-to-day grind of patrol and pursuit readiness is the Dodge Charger and Challenger.



Granted that there are more Chargers on the road than Challengers because they are just better suited for patrol, but State Police and Highway Patrol Departments across the Country have several Challengers within their ranks for that high-speed pursuit when needed. New patrol cars of today have an array of on-board technology equipment at the operators' fingertips making them some of the most sophisticated Law

Enforcement Vehicles ever to be produced. Now these cars can reach 60 mph in under 5 seconds and have a top speed that's north of 150 mph. Now that's pretty good considering all the extra weight and equipment that's in every car, but this poses another problem. Should police departments chase suspected criminals at speeds exceeding 150 mph? How far do we take it before it's too dangerous to the public at large? The answer to that lies within the rules and regulations set forth by each department. These rules consider the surroundings of each community. For example, the use of Helicopters equipped with Forward Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) Cameras paired with ground units and K-9 Officers make for a good solution to avoid putting civilians at risk.

The point here is that Law Enforcement vehicles are some of the most technologically advanced vehicles on the ground and in the air. The next chapter of this story lies within the EV or Electric Vehicle market. Departments from coast to coast are experimenting with this new technology to see if it can work for law enforcement. Right now, EV's play a small role in the Police world, in my humble opinion I don't think the technology is quite there yet for widespread adoption but it's a step in the right direction of helping to reduce the carbon footprint left behind of large departments.

I hope you've enjoyed this stroll back in automotive time as it's seen thru a Police Officer's eyes.

...and just think – we haven't even spoken about the Police Pursuit Hyper Car Yet! Maybe next time.

Fraternally,

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