

# NORTHSTAR NEWS

## My Pride and Joy



### Steve Allen’s Beautiful Barn Find

This month we are reprinting a story from the September 2018 issue of the Road Race Lincoln Registry magazine, VIVA CARRERA, courtesy of Mike Denny, publisher. It is an interesting saga about one person’s passion for a very particular automobile, a 1953 Lincoln Capri. Here is the story as presented by the owner of this fine Lincoln — Steve Allen.

Anyone with a passion for history and antique automobiles, inevitably finds themselves daydreaming of their idea of the perfect barn find. The reality is that it rarely plays out as you envision. However, there are those exceptions that come along when you least expect it. Take my 1953 Lincoln Capri Convertible, for example.

My wife (Marie) and I had been discussing the long list of possibilities for what was to be the second car in our small collection. The problem was that we had such a wide range of likes, we found it difficult to zero in on any one choice.

One evening we were watching an old Lucille Ball, Desi Arnaz movie called the “Long Long Trailer.” It was a comedy of a newly married couple; who pulled an oversized trailer across the country and it nearly broke up their marriage. The car that was used in the film was an early 1950s convertible. “That’s it!” Marie said, “That’s the kind of car I’d like own. What is it?” Being the all-knowing, wise man that I am (more like wise guy), I quickly whipped out my smartphone to look it up.

I found an article that described it as a 1953 Mercury. It went on explain that in the scenes where they were crossing the Rocky Mountains, they used a 1953 Lincoln Capri and dressed it up to look like the Mercury. The reason for this was that the Mercury, still

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*Welcome to the Northstar News, the monthly publication of the Northstar Region of the Lincoln and Continental Owners Club. We value your opinions and appreciate your input concerning this newsletter and the operation of the club. This is your club.*

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*Trivia from the Internet*



**Preston Tucker  
1903 - 1956  
Automotive  
Visionary**

*Hailed as a visionary by some and a con artist by others, Preston Tucker (1903-1956) was the man behind an innovative, futuristic-looking car that debuted amid great fanfare during the summer of 1948. Within just a couple of years, however, the Tucker Corporation had folded in the wake of suspicions about its founder's business practices.*

*With the postwar economy booming during the summer of 1948, American consumers were in a buying mood, especially for cars. But the people crowding dealers' showrooms were yearning for something more exciting than the offerings of General Motors, Ford and Chrysler; whose designs seemed old-fashioned and uni-*

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*Editors Message*

*October 2018*

Gentle Readers...Our seasons are changing and fall is upon us. We have had a lot of real hot weather this summer and my power bill reflects the usage of the air conditioning to make my home livable for both Olga and I.

It looks as though October will be a cool month. Let's hope that we get more than our allotted share of mild, dry, sunny days so we can take out our favorite classics for a few runs before the dreariness of winter sets in.

Olga, however, looks forward to the much cooler temperatures. As many people say who like the cooler temperatures, you can

always put some more clothes on, but you get to a point, where less clothing is not always socially feasible. And Olga's is sort of stuck with what she has, while well suited for the cooler climes, she is not a fan of sunny, 90 degree days.

Our feature article comes from Mike Denney, publisher of the Road Race Lincoln Register news magazine. It is a nice story about a man and his dream of finding a 1953 Lincoln Capri. Over the years, Lincoln has turned out many interesting automobiles, and while the 52 through 55 Lincoln never approached the sales that Cadillac did, it was every bit as fine an automobile. These were drivers cars and the people who went out of their way to buy them, were rewarded with many miles of very pleasurable driving a smooth running car, capable of covering many miles each day, in comfort and style, second to none. The fifty's repre-

sented the pinnacle of American automotive supremacy when there was nothing finer in the entire world than a vehicle made in Detroit, Michigan.

I am very pleased to be able to pub-

lish another "Coming of Age, My First Car" feature this month. And we have another two articles for our November and December issues. If you would care to write a short story about your first car, it would be greatly appreciated by both your editor and our readers. We all have fond memories of that time in our life when were "set free" by



*Sweet Olga is enjoying the first day of fall out on the front yard. It is a beautiful day to spend some time outdoors. She was able to greet some of the folks in the neighborhood ;who were out for a walk with their canine companions. Man or beast, Olga enjoys them all.*

having that set of car keys in our pocket. While we had the keys, we might not always have had a few dollars for gas to run it. Although, back in the mid-fifties, gas was only about 20 cents per gallon. But then, we were not making much either. It is all relative, and that can be said about any number of things.

Our beloved LCOC really needs some more new members. The best way to gain members is for our existing North Star members to actively recruit those folks out there who have an interest in Lincolns to come and join the club. Owning a Lincoln is not a necessity, but while it does help, the social experience that the LCOC and its underlying regions is well worth the yearly membership. Do your part, find us a new member in November. And the region dues are waived for new LCOC members for the first year.

*Till next month, David and Sweet Olga, the Samoyed...*

*Directors Message by Bob Johnson October 2018**(Continued from page 2)*

*maginative. Into this void stepped Preston Tucker, a brash entrepreneur and master of promotion; who insisted that he had just what Americans wanted — "The Car of Tomorrow Today." His namesake automobile boasted a radical new aerodynamic look and a number of innovative safety features. At first, it seemed that Tucker had indeed tapped into the public's growing desire for a sleeker, safer car; his company was flooded with orders in a matter of just a few months. Ultimately, however, his inability to deliver on his promises cost him his business, as well as, his reputation.*

*Preston Thomas Tucker was born September 21, 1903, on a peppermint farm in rural Capac, Michigan. He grew up in the suburban Detroit community of Lincoln Park where, even as a child, he was fascinated by anything having to do with automobiles. He learned to drive at the age of 11 and quit school two years later to become an office boy for Cadillac. Tucker subsequently worked at a number of other automobile companies, including Ford, Studebaker, Chrysler, and Pierce-Arrow. Although he began his career as a mechanic and test driver, he eventually moved into sales after attending De-*

*(Continued on page 5)*

It is hard to believe October is just about here. The weather for our Morries West End Lincoln car show, September 15, was just like our weather at the July Mid-America Meet — hot 93 degrees and humid. But this week has really cooled down. The leaves are turning colors, so the fall signs are here. The Morrie's show had less than expected turnout by our members with only 23 classic Lincolns and their owners in attendance. We were a bit surprised to see 15 Lincoln's first time this year. We had 12 persons attend our show for their first event of 2018. Jay White's Suicide Slab side group from Face Book had four beautiful Convertibles at the show. Morries West End Lincoln dealership General Manager, Lennie Checheris, was happy with the turnout and invited us back to do car show again next year.

Our Annual North Star Potluck at Morries Car Collection will be Sunday, October 7, 2018, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (No potluck or Auction this year) at 2605 Wayzata Blvd, (old Highway 12) Long Lake, Minnesota. ***In lieu of the traditional potluck, the North Star club will be treating our members to a free, fully catered dinner and will be limited to North Star members only.*** The menu will feature roast beef and turkey with side dishes. It is our thank you for your fine support over the past years and especially for your support of our very successful Mid-America meet this past July. You must **RSVP by Wednesday, October 3**, if you plan to attend. Call or email Bob Johnson at 651.157.1715; email: [arborbob41@aol.com](mailto:arborbob41@aol.com). Tour Morrie's car collection from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., dinner will be served at 12:30 p.m.

Two sets of pictures and one video are now available for your viewing pleasure. Greg Gjerdingen's, pictures on flickr of the 2018 Mid-America meet can be found at [flickr.com/photos/greggjerdingen/sets/72157693262571250/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/greggjerdingen/sets/72157693262571250/)

Jacob Dout's video is at [youtube/t15PsgqOFWE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t15PsgqOFWE). Jay White's pictures are on Face Book **North Star Lincoln Continental Car Club** [facebook.com/minnesotalcoc/photos](https://www.facebook.com/minnesotalcoc/photos)

Greg Gjerdingen's pictures present us with an opportunity for us to take advantage of. When you are at a car show of any type, we would like you to be a Lincoln club recruiter. Please get from anyone on the board of Managers a blank LCOC membership applications and give to or put on a Lincoln car that you know is not in our club. Please write down the name of the person, if it is available, and pass it on to Bill Holaday. We need to call every person you can find to tell them about our club. Our personal contact is the really the best way we can grow our Lincoln club. Please help us out and be our star recruiter. Please call me if you have any suggestions on how to find new Lincoln owners for our club.

Our year-end Brunch at Dangerfield's in Shakopee, Sunday, **November 11** at 11:30 a.m.

We are now in the process of planning our activities for 2019 so please contact one of the North Star Region Board members if you have a suggestion for next year's events.

As always, keep the journey continuing in our marvelous Lincolns.

*Bob and Mary Johnson*

## Board Of Directors - 2018

Title	Name	Phone Numbers	email	Term Ends
Regional Director	Bob Johnson	H(651)257-1715	arborbob41@aol.com	2041
Secretary	Roger Wothe	H(952)473-3038 O(952)583-5339	rwothe@gmail.com	2020
Treasurer	Matt Foley	C(612)280-4930	mcfoley@earthlink.net	2019
Activities Director	Jay White	H(612)559-3219	jay@jwhiteandassoc.com	2018
Director	Bob Roth	H(763)475-1429		2018
Publications/ Membership	Dave Gustafson	H(952)435-1919	davidwgustafson@att.net	2019
Director	Tom Brace	H(651)644-1716	trbrace@comcast.net	2019
Director	Bill Holaday	H(763)402-1171	bill.holaday59@gmail.com	2020
Director	Larry Sasse	H(952)440-5024	fordpeople@msn.com	2020

Members and guests are welcome to attend the Board Meetings. Our meeting location, unless otherwise specified, will be held at Bloomington Lincoln in their conference room. Meeting time will be 6:30 pm on the first Thursday of each month, except December.

Articles and other information for the newsletter should be sent to David Gustafson, Editor, at 308 Brandywine Drive, Burnsville, MN 55337. email: [davidwgustafson@att.net](mailto:davidwgustafson@att.net)

### More 1953 Capri

*(Continued from page 1)*

sporting the flat head V8, didn't have enough power to pull it up the mountain. The Lincoln, on the other hand, was equipped with the new Y block, overhead valve V8 engine; which was more than ample to get the job done.

Fast forward about three weeks to August 2017. I attended a local car show in a nearby community consisting of about 75 cars. An older gentleman approached me and struck up a conversation. We talked about my Mustang and the Lincoln Premier he brought to the show. He explained that he was in his mid-80s and his children were on him to clean up his "junk pile" because they didn't want to get stuck with cleaning it up after he was gone. He described himself as a buyer and over the years rarely, if ever, sold anything, so he had a lot of stuff. He agreed to show me his collection after the event wrapped up.

It was like walking into a combination of an American Pickers episode and historical museum. But it didn't take long for me to realize that I wasn't just standing in any museum, this was a museum of his life. I was drawn in by the stories he told about every item as he picked them up and showed them to me. There were more than just cars. We were surrounded by antiques of all types. There were pedal cars, signs, collections of various car parts, even an antique snow mobile.

In the first barn (of four we'd see that day) was the very first car he ever owned. It was a 1928 model; which he traded off for a new car when he was young. The dealership placed it on display in their showroom for 40 years.



Steve Allen behind the wheel of his 53 Capri

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*troit's Cass Technical High School.*

*During the 1930s, Tucker dabbled in a number of unsuccessful business ventures, most of them automotive-related. In 1935, for example, he teamed up with famed engine designer Harry A. Miller to build Indianapolis 500 race cars for Ford Motor Company. But none of the ten cars they completed managed to make it across the finish line, prompting Ford to withdraw from the project. Then came World War II, during which time the major automobile manufacturers dedicated their assembly lines to the war effort. From 1942 until 1946, no new models were introduced. Thus, by the mid-1940s, American consumers were desperate for cars. Spying an opportunity to challenge General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler for a share of this eager, fast-growing market, Tucker formed his own automobile manufacturing company; which he named the Tucker Corporation.*

*As envisioned by Tucker himself, the "Tucker Torpedo" (as the concept vehicle was known) represented quite a departure from*

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## *Northstar Monthly Board Meeting Minutes*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

September 6, 2018

Regional Director Bob Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at Bloomington Lincoln. Board members present were Bob Johnson, David Gustafson, Bob Roth, Jay White, Tom Brace, Matt Foley, and Roger Wothe. Other Regional members present were Mary Johnson and Olga. The minutes of the previous meeting and the agenda of this meeting were approved.

### DIRECTORS' REPORTS

Regional Director Bob Johnson reviewed a final Mid-America Meet snapshot. The Meet was profitable for the North Star Region. There will be a car show for the Grand Opening of Morrie's West End Lincoln dealership Saturday, September 15, with breakfast at Perkins (next to Menards on I-394) at 8 a.m. Members are encouraged to bring cars for display from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the dealership. Bob will handle the catering by HyVee for the Morrie's Fall Potluck Sunday, October 7, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. which will be free for members of the North Star Region. Please RSVP to Bob Johnson. The year-end brunch will be at Dangerfield's in Shakopee Sunday, November 11, **not** Saturday, November 10, as previously announced. The 2019 activities will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

Secretary Roger Wothe will provide coolers and coffee for Morrie's Fall Potluck.

Treasurer Matt Foley reported the treasury balance to be \$5,695.39 (including the Meet proceeds) and all bills are paid.

Activities Director Jay White provided a video display of the Region Facebook page and encouraged everyone to "like" the page.

Nominations: There will be three positions on the Board of Directors available at the end of this year. Any member may nominate their self or have another member nominate them. The position is for three years. Please call Roger Wothe at 952-473-3038 or email: [rwothe15@gmail.com](mailto:rwothe15@gmail.com) with nominations by the end of September 2018.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m. The next meeting will be at Bloomington Lincoln at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, October 4.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Roger Wothe.

## More 1953 Capri

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the standard fare offered by the Big Three automakers. Long, low, and substantially wider than other large cars then available, with sleek lines reminiscent of a rocket, it had doors that slid up into the roof and six chrome-plated exhaust pipes. Its unique safety features included headlights mounted in fenders that moved with the front wheels to illuminate the road as the car made a turn, a windshield made of shatterproof glass, seat belts, disc brakes, and a heavily padded dashboard to protect front-seat passengers in the event of a collision. In another unusual twist, the driver's seat was positioned in the middle rather than on the left, with separate passenger seats on either side.

Engineering-wise, too, the Tucker was different. It boasted a gigantic, fuel-injected, six-cylinder engine mounted in the rear that its creator claimed could hit a top speed of 130 mph, maintain a cruising speed of 100 mph, and deliver an astonishing 35 mpg gas mileage. In addition, it sported a revolutionary power delivery system of "hydraulic torque converters" that

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When they closed their business, he bought it back. There was the 1948 Mercury that he and his wife drove on their honeymoon, his first Mustang (1965) and an eclectic collection from nearly every decade through the 1980s.



I.D. plate from Allen's 53 Capri

It was what we found in the second barn that really got my attention. He unlocked and entered the structure through a small entry door and asked me to wait while he raised the overhead to let some light in. As the door went up, there it was! Covered in a tarp was a shape that caught my eye. I knew it was something special but couldn't identify it immediately. The bumper peeked out from below and was covered in a dull gray patina. As he peeled the cover back, I saw the letters span the width of the hood L-I-N-C-O-L-N..! It was then that I became educated on Lincoln's road race heritage and just how special this 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition really was.

Since he had reluctantly promised himself to sell something, we agreed on a price.

After sitting in a barn for the past 15 years, I committed to first get it into a running state before deciding on the level of restoration it would receive. With some help from my local mechanic, we dropped the gas tank and had it acid dipped to clean out the sludge and varnish from the gas that had previously been in the tank. We replaced the transmission seal, wheel cylinders, brakes, gas and brake lines. We rebuilt the carburetor and fired it up. Outside of a noticeable exhaust leak near the manifold, it sounded great and drove just as well.

The wiring was so brittle, the insulation crumbled in your hands. Nothing that a replacement wiring harness couldn't fix. The motor controlling the "Elevator Seats" needed to be replaced as well and the window relays were cleaned and contacts burished.

The paint was rough to the touch, and I was resigned to the fact that it would need to be redone. I knew it would require a lot of work to remove the massive amount of trim and to do the prep work that would be required, so I thought I'd experiment with a little sandpaper and cutting compound to see if I could possibly make it look a bit better. I was shocked by the outcome. My silver dollar sized experiment actually shined through! I committed myself to wet sand the entire car and worked on it whenever I had a few spare moments throughout the winter months. A few hundred hours later it was done, wasn't perfect, but turned out to be a better than average sixty-five-year-old automobile.



The Desi-Lucy Trailer movie, for some shots, the car was a 53 Lincoln Capri

The gray patina on the chrome polished away into a brilliant shine, and the more I ran it, the more things began to work. Gauges that had been stuck in the same position for years once again began to move. The radio that hadn't played for more than one and a half decades was now covering the latest Cleveland Indians ballgame.

As for the level of restoration it will receive, I've made my decision — I'm preserving it just the way it is!

*“Madman Muntz” and the Muntz Jet*

*(Continued from page 6)*

*Tucker said would eliminate the need for a clutch, transmission, drive shaft and differential.*

*The American public responded with unbridled enthusiasm to Tucker's "car of tomorrow" and buried him in an avalanche of letters and inquiries. But first, he had to secure some factory space in which to make his fantasy a reality. Under the auspices of the War Assets Administration (WAA), the federal government leased him a former B-29 engine plant outside Chicago, Illinois. Because the deal was contingent upon his ability to raise \$15 million in capital by March 1, 1947,*

*Tucker then set about lining up potential investors. However, he soon found out that in return for their financial support they expected him to surrender control of his company, a notion he found intolerable.*

*Tucker then came up with a rather creative way to finance his dream. Although he had produced nothing more than an idea, he began selling dealer franchises and quickly amassed some \$6 million that was to be held in escrow until he delivered the first Tucker. But the scheme prompted an investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the first of many such probes.*

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*Story by Dan Jedlica and featured in the Chicago Sun Times back in 2007.*



Earl “Madman” Muntz

Madman Muntz was a marketing genius and could easily sell refrigerators to Eskimos and umbrellas to people living in the Sahara desert. In the early 50s, he built and sold a Lincoln powered sports car named the Muntz Jet. Here is more about the car and “Madman.”

You name it, and Earl “Madman” Muntz built it—or so it seemed. His creations included a racy four-passenger sports car called the Muntz Jet—actually a 1951-54 four-seat sporty luxury car derived from a two-seat sports car built by American genius race car builder Frank Kurtis.

The Jet was America’s first post-World War II “personal luxury car,” arriving long before the first four-seat Ford Thunderbird; which debuted for 1958.

The flashy Jet cost \$5,500 when a Cadillac convertible—America’s most widely desirable car--was \$3,987.

Muntz told me in a 1969 newspaper interview that he lost \$1,000 on each Jet made because he could “never get production volume up to a profitable level.” Labor costs were a stiff \$2,000 per car because it was basically hand-built by craftsmen who were essentially race car builders. The pleated custom upholstery, alone, cost \$600 per car.

A total of 394 Jets were made. Celebrity owners included actress-princess Grace

Kelly and other celebrities, including singer Vic Damone. A Jet officially was valued in 2009 from \$50,000-\$85,000, although I’ve seen really nice ones easily sell for more than \$100,000.



The Lincoln Powered Muntz Jet

The Jet was just perfect for early 1950s Hollywood and was in major movies. It had potent Cadillac and Lincoln V-8s, a removable padded “Carson” steel top, custom upholstery and a minibar.

Many Jets had wild pastel body colors—purple, blue, salmon and pink. Interiors also were colorful, featuring synthetic snake or iguana skin, besides leather. A padded dashboard and seat belts were safety items ahead of their time.



Muntz Jet Dashboard

The dashboard was filled with race-style Stewart-Warner gauges in a machine-turned fascia. There was a tachometer (when only sports cars had one) vacuum gauge, two temperature gauges (one for each cylinder head) and a 160 mph speedometer.

“I called it the Jet because jet planes were just coming in, and it was the

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## Muntz Jet continued...

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Tucker then devised a new strategy that involved issuing \$20 million in stock. Before the SEC could rule on his plan, though, the head of the National Housing Agency demanded that the WAA cancel its deal with the Tucker Corporation so that the Lustron Corporation could use the factory to make prefabricated metal houses.

By January 1947, Tucker had won the right to remain in the plant he had leased. In addition, his March 1 capital-raising deadline was extended to July 1. (The SEC's decision on selling stock in the Tucker Corporation was still pending.) But all of the setbacks and squabbles had greatly undermined the public's confidence in the would-be entrepreneur, and the struggle to underwrite the cost of his venture continued.

Meanwhile, efforts to come up with a prototype were underway. Tucker hired noted designer Alex Tremulis to head the project in late 1946, and he and his colleagues managed to fashion a sheet-metal version of the car by hand in less than 100 days, a truly astounding feat. Affectionately known as "The Tin Goose," it went on display in June 1947 as a 1948 model. Many of the revolutionary features Tucker

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speediest word you could think of," Muntz said with a grin in the 1969 interview.

Muntz was accompanied by publicity whiz, Mike Shore; who helped turn him into a madcap used-car impresario and an entity in Southern California. Muntz flooded the radio with zany commercials and was pictured as a zany cartoon character on billboards, wearing red flannel underwear, boots and a Napoleon hat; which was Muntz's trademark. He pioneered oddball television commercials with his wild "Madman" persona; which got publicity from unusual stunts and costumes.



"Madman" Muntz Logo

It all led to good-natured jokes about Muntz heard on national radio programs such as "The Bob Hope Show." Hollywood tour buses put his huge used car lot on their itineraries.

Muntz was a shrewd businessman behind his wild Hollywood persona. He sold cars and consumer electronics from the 1930s to the 1970s. He died from lung cancer in 1987 at age 73 and accomplished more in his lifetime than virtually all men do in one.

Cars and electronics were Muntz's true loves. A high school dropout to help his parents' business, he became fascinated by electronics at an early age. He built his first radio at age 8, then one for his parents' car at 14. He also bought old Ford Model Ts, fixed them up and sold them at a profit.

Muntz opened his first used car lot in his hometown, Elgin, in 1934, but found during a California vacation that used cars in that state were selling for a lot more than in Illinois. He thus flooded his

newly established used car operation in the Los Angeles area with thousands of autos from Illinois.

You have to understand the man, Muntz, to understand his car. A born promoter, Muntz made and lost fortunes and was married seven times. He dated the world's most glamorous actress, Ava Gardner, and other celebrities, including comedienne Phyllis Diller. He was part of Hollywood's celebrity crowd and knew everyone from Dick Clark to famous cowboy movie star/singer Gene Autry.

Muntz lived in a house in the West Hollywood hills in which everything was painted or upholstered in white. He also maintained a home in the Chicago area.

The Jet was one of many Muntz projects, although one of his favorites. Besides operating his used car operation in the L.A. area, Muntz was an air conditioning manufacturer and an all-aluminum house and motorhome builder.

Other car ventures included being a dealer/distributor in California and New York for the new, successful Kaiser-Frazer auto operation when new cars were in great demand after World War II. His new and used car businesses were said to be grossing \$72 million annually by 1947.

Often ahead of his time, Muntz later was a wide screen television producer and early cellphone promoter. He invented the Muntz Stereo-Pak 4-track tape cartridge. It was a predecessor of the Stereo 8 cartridge, also known as the "8-track" developed by U.S. inventor Bill Lear, of Learjet fame.

Muntz also designed a car stereo tape player that could play an album without changing tracks or turning the tape over, without skipping. Muntz reportedly sold \$30 million worth of car stereos and tapes in 1967.

One of Muntz's most famous creations was the first low-priced television receiver. It sold in the early 1950s for the then-unbelievably-low \$99.95. Others

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## More Muntz Jet

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had touted in his original concept vehicle proved unworkable and were revamped or scrapped. Yet it was still an eye catching car, especially with its distinctive, Cyclops-like third headlight mounted in the center of the grill that moved with the front wheels. The public's response was overwhelming, and the company was flooded with orders. On July 15, the SEC finally cleared the way for Tucker Corporation stock to go on sale.

By the spring of 1948, Tucker was ready to go into production with his car despite some lingering financial difficulties resulting from insufficient stock sales. In need of some quick cash, he came up with a new fundraising tactic that offered Tucker buyers the opportunity to pre-purchase certain accessories such as seat covers, radios, and custom luggage. But SEC officials took a dim view of his plan given the fact that not a single vehicle had yet rolled off the assembly line. In May 1948, working in conjunction with the Justice Department, they launched a major investigation into Tucker's business practices and the viability of his car. The bad publicity and lawsuits that ensued effectively disrupted production, spooked creditors

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cost three to four times as much. In 1952, Muntz TV Inc. grossed nearly \$50 million.

The sets worked best in metropolitan areas close to TV transmission towers, where signals were strong. That was OK with Muntz because most who bought his televisions were urban dwellers with marginal incomes. As with his used car operation, Muntz TVs were given wacky promotions. (Muntz is credited with inventing the abbreviation "TV," and named his daughter "Tee-Vee," although she preferred "Tina.")

Muntz was the country's fourth largest television set producer before major television producers forced him out of business.

The Muntz Jet was derived from a low-production 1948-49 two-seat American-engine sports car from Indianapolis 500 race car builder Frank Kurtis, of Glendale, California. The car got good reviews, but Kurtis decided to concentrate on race cars, so he sold the sports car operation to Muntz for \$200,000. Muntz had bought a 1941 Buick show car designed by Kurtis and was intrigued by the Kurtis auto operation of the late 1940s.

While the basic styling of the Kurtis car was retained for the Jet, Muntz knew there was more of a market for a four-seater. So he had a top American auto race driver Sam Hanks help him redesign the car, stretching the wheelbase to 113 inches and installing the new Cadillac overhead-valve V-8. He quickly named the car the Muntz Jet. The first 28 Muntz Jets were built in California with aluminum bodies, but Muntz soon moved production from Glendale to Evanston, where Jets were built in a large warehouse.

The Jet's wheelbase was increased another 3 inches and **Lincoln V-8s** were used in place of the Cadillac V-8, which has hooked to a General Motors HydraMatic automatic transmission.

The Jet never had a conventional convertible top, so its removable top had to

be left at home if taken off because there was no place to store it in the car. Body construction was switched from aluminum to steel, which was more durable and cheaper. The car was incredibly strong. For one thing, its stretched box-section perimeter frame looked as if taken from a heavy duty truck.



Lincoln 337 flathead engine at home under the hood of the Muntz Jet.

But all that made the Jet much heavier than the Kurtis two-seater had been. And adding to the weight were such items as the minibar and, of course, a super Muntz radio in an elaborate underdash console. Although the Jet had grown heavier than the Kurtis model, Road & Track magazine wrote in 1961 that the Jet was "a deluxe high-speed convertible touring car in the American manner" and offered "the fastest acceleration and highest top speed of any American-built car available from the salesroom floor today." (Muntz actually sold cars directly, without showrooms.)

Indianapolis 500 winner Wilbur Shaw wrote in Popular Science magazine that the Jet "corners beautifully" with "no sway on a hard, flat turn." Racer Sam Hanks reportedly took a Jet with an aerodynamic undercarriage to 128 mph on the Bonneville Salt Flats. That was really moving in those days, especially for a luxurious, heavy four-seater.

Losses from the costly Muntz Jet operation finally caused Muntz to close it. Decades later, he still spoke fondly of it.

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and sent the company's stock price plummeting. Finally, in January 1949, the Tucker factory was forced to close, and Tucker was ousted from his own organization and replaced by two court-appointed trustees.

In June 1949, Tucker and seven of his associates were indicted on charges of mail fraud, stock irregularities and conspiracy to defraud. The trial began that October, with government prosecutors using "The Tin Goose" rather than one of the actual production vehicles to try to prove that the Tucker could not be built or perform as promised. But many of the 70-plus witnesses called to testify against the company actually hurt rather than helped the government's case.

Tucker himself hinted darkly that the Big Three automakers and their supporters were behind the attempt to destroy him because of the threat he represented to their domination of the market. Indeed, some evidence suggests that officials of both General Motors and Chrysler actively sought to make it more difficult for Tucker to succeed. Whether they also tried to influence the government to pursue him is less certain. There is no question, however,

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## Pictures From Morries Car Show



Al and Kathy Longley's 1947 Continental  
First place winner



Scott and Jenni Johnson's 1946 Lincoln  
Second place winner



Jim and Anna Taplin's 1957 Premiere



Larry Gordhammer's 1992 Mark VII  
Long distance award winner



Jeff Eisenberg's 1962 Continental



Bill Holaday's 1959 Capri hardtop



Roger Wothe's 1942 Continental  
Third place winner



Morries Lincoln West car show pictures courtesy of Jay White and Greg Gjerding. We thank them for their hard work and great pictures.



## Welcome Wagon

(Continued from page 10)

that Tucker had made some powerful enemies in Washington; who repeatedly denounced him as a con artist.

The trial dragged on until January 1950. In the end, the jury found Tucker and his associates innocent of all the charges against them. However, Tucker was left bankrupt and with his reputation in tatters; as a result, he was forced to sell his remaining assets, including the 51 vehicles that had been completed before the plant was shuttered. They would be the only Tuckers ever manufactured.

During the early 1950s, a more subdued but still optimistic Tucker tried one more time to develop and market a new kind of car. Before he could pull together all of the necessary financing, however, he was diagnosed with lung cancer. He succumbed to the disease in 1956 on the day after Christmas, at the age of 53. Tucker is buried at Michigan Memorial Park in Flat Rock, Michigan.

Tuckers are now prized by car collectors (around 47 are still known to exist), most of whom are active members of the Tucker Automobile Club of America. Meanwhile, the debate continues over Tucker's place in automotive his-

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by Francis J. Kalvoda, Willmar, Minnesota 320-235-5777 [fjk@charter.net](mailto:fjk@charter.net)



The Welcome Wagon

Fall is upon us, and the beautiful autumn colors are everywhere. The 1956 Lincoln wagon pictured here sports fall colors. Read about this Lincoln in the new Continental Comments. This month we welcome new North Star members; they both have recently purchased Lincolns formerly owned by Minnesota Lincoln enthusiasts.



Scott and Jenni Johnson

Our first new members are **Scott and Jenni Johnson**, and their sons **Austin** (19) and **Zane** (15), 1576 Snelling Drive, Falcon Heights, MN 55108. Contact them at 651-917-9678, 651-210-1782 or [astro-scottjohnso@aol.com](mailto:astro-scottjohnso@aol.com) About 20 years ago the Johnsons enjoyed a 1964 Continental sedan, but recently they acquired a 1946 Model 66H Lincoln sedan. North Star members may recognize the car. It was formerly owned by Julia and the late Jack Vanatta. Jack and Julia enjoyed this very original Lincoln for many years and drove it everywhere. We hope Scott and Jenni will enjoy the original 70+ year old Lincoln for many more years... when they have time. Scott is a physics and astronomy instructor at Inver Hills Com-

munity College and Dr. Jennifer Marker Johnson, DDS, has her own dental practice: East Dental, 1346 Payne Avenue, St Paul, Minnesota 55130, [\(651\) 774-6085](tel:6517746085). I warned Scott and Jenni that when they attend the October 7 North Star LCOC Picnic at Morries, there may be people needing jaw drop repair after viewing the collection.

Our next new members acquired their Lincoln in January, but you may have seen it before. **Dr. Louis and Judith Cosentino**, 20640 Linwood Road, Excelsior, Minnesota 55331; contact them at 952-250-0971 or [lcoseno100@gmail.com](mailto:lcoseno100@gmail.com). Lou and Judi's collector cars include a 1948 Jaguar drop head coupe, 1955 Oldsmobile, 1955 Dodge convertible, 1956 Plymouth 4 door hard top, 1956 Dodge, 1957 Buick, 1963 Plymouth Fury convertible, 1973 Cadillac Eldorado convertible, 1932 Auburn, 1931 Packard Phaeton, and saving the best for last, the 1932 Lincoln Model KB Sport Phaeton – body designed by Murphy. .



Louis and Judith Cosentino's 1932 Lincoln KB Sport Phaeton, body by Murphy

Some of us saw Lou and Judy's '32 Saturday morning at our Mid-America National LCOC Meet in July. Others may have seen the car when it belonged to Jim Griffin from Minnesota before the car went to Maryland and now back to Minnesota. There were only 13 of these beautiful Sport Phaetons made, and this is the only known survivor. Thirty additional 1932 Lincoln Phaetons were produced in the more formal Dual Cowl configuration. It is hard to believe that components

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tory. His detractors still consider him a fraud who tried to pass off what was basically a lemon as "the car of tomorrow." His fans regard him as a visionary; who was brought down by sinister forces with money and power. Others believe the truth lies somewhere in between those two extremes. Even if his ultimate goal was to strike it rich, they argue he was sincere about his desire to build an exciting, innovative new vehicle that offered a level of comfort, safety, and affordability not available in any other car at the time.

What they do fault is his naivete and lack of business sense; which left the Tucker Corporation woefully undercapitalized and in a constant state of financial crisis that doomed it to failure.

Yet as Tucker himself once observed, as quoted in *American History Illustrated*, no matter what the obstacles, it was unthinkable not to try to make his fantasy come true. "A man who has once gotten automobiles into his blood can never give them up," he said. "A man with a dream can't stop trying to realize that dream.... It's no disgrace to fail against tough odds if you don't admit you're beaten. And if you don't give up."

*From the internet..*

*More Morries pictures...*



Above and below, 1996 Lincoln custom bodied funeral coach. Perfect for the last ride and owned by Tony and Kim Karsnia, of East Bethel.



Peter Hill and Kathlean Zinnel's 1956 Mark II.



Above and below.. Dave and Sally Barry's 1962 Continental sedan



Webster Peterson's 1976 Continental



Bob Johnson presenting the North Star commemorative plaque to Lenny Checheris of Morries West End Lincoln

*More Welcome Wagon*

*(Continued from page 11)*

of this car once ran a sawmill. The car underwent a comprehensive nine year restoration. If anyone should ask you "what is a classic car?", show them a photo of Cosentino's '32 Lincoln. Lou and Judi invite North Star members to see their collection on the last Saturday of the months April – September at the Autoplex in Chanhassen (1850 Audubon Road). They look forward to visiting with you at the October 7 North Star picnic at Morries in Long Lake. Come early to view Morrie's collection from 10-12:30 and be sure to contact Bob and Mary Johnson (651-257-1715 or [Arbor-bob41@aol.com](mailto:Arbor-bob41@aol.com)) for reservations for the catered picnic! See you there. Enjoy cruising in your Lincolns this fall.

## My First Car by Fred Syrdal

Ah, that first car, remembering it should be as clear as the memory of that first kiss, but, alas it is not. So, I'll assign the first of about 250 (maybe a few more) cars to the 1929 Model A Coach purchased in 1958 from a cousin of my brother-in-law, down in Faribault County Minnesota when I was spending a little time away from the Twin Cities working on the farm.

I had seen this car at Duffy's (my brother-in-law's cousin) farm and immediately thought it would make a great hot rod. It had some history with it, as it had been purchased new by my brother-in-law's parents and driven by his mother into the 50s. By the time I saw it, it had fallen into some disrepair, the top fabric no longer keeping any weather out. No matter, I was 15, and it made no difference. I paid the \$10 for the car and dragged it a few miles to my brother-in-law's place. After a session with a local mechanic (a rather infamous one named Jesse, but he



Fred's Ford awaiting engine transplant.

was cheap and made "house calls"), it was determined that the venerable 4 cylinder was not worth rebuilding at a cost approaching \$100 for the job. He did say that a local named Herb had a '35 Ford with a pretty good V8 in it, and better news, it could be had for \$10. This sounded even better as the engine purchase also included a lesson in arc welding, which was put to immediate use with the engine

exchange. A friend in the Southern Minnesota community volunteered the use of his father's shop at the local hardware store for the engine transplant. We then took a few leftover paint cans, dumped them together, and I now had a lavender Model A - cool! The addition of 14" wheels, a used set of tires, and some really neat moon hubcaps made things look pretty good (to this teenager).

Following all that work, I had to head back to the big city to continue my schooling, and the car sat next to the shed at the farm for the winter. In the spring, I enlisted the help a friend in the cities, and we grabbed his tow-bar and made the 140 mile trek back up to St. Paul. The car then was located in our backyard, while my mother made disparaging remarks about what happened to the view of her bird feeder. My mother and I spoke to each other much more than we had before the addition of the Ford. I think that the new communications were good, although she might have challenged my assessment. I continued work and got the project running and semi-drivable just in time for a buyer to think he could do better with the car. The young man that had the car next changed the '35 motor for

a '48, did more work and sent the car on its way. I heard no more about the A and didn't give it much thought.



The "Lavender Prize" in reposeful form next to the shed in Fred's yard. It is just hibernating for the winter.

Fast forward to the 2000s, Back to the 50s event and there was a '29 Model A just down from where I was parked. I looked at it, a pretty red coach with the obligatory Chevy small block and struck up a conversation with the owner, mentioning that I had a '29 coach 40 plus years earlier. When I mentioned a body welding job I had done on it, the owner stopped my story and said to me "do you have any idea how much it took to undo that?" Further research indicated that this is the same car. I had taken some pictures and sent them on to a now very much older Duffy of his mother's Model A. He got to see pictures of the car, and was delighted that the family Ford survives yet. Come to think back, maybe that wasn't my actual first car, but it's a much better story that a short-lived, '50 Pontiac.



1950 Pontiac sedan, a car much like the car that started Fred Syrdahl on his automobile odyssey. It was some what lackluster in comparison to that hotrod Ford V8.

I'm pretty sure that the 1950 Pontiac straight stick, straight 8 I got from my aunt preceded the Model A. - oh well, too many cars have passed through since then.

Ed. Note.. Our thanks to Fred Syrdahl for his contribution to this "First Car" series.

## *North Star Fall Lincoln Car Show*

Saturday, September 15, was very hot and muggy, with near record 93 degrees, only slightly tempered by a little breeze. Fortunately, we were in the shadow of the dealership building and not subject to the direct rays of the sun.

A day filled with firsts, one being a North Star show at the brand-new Morries West Lincoln store in St. Louis Park. It was also the first for a few new members and for some longtime members attending a North Star event this year.

Lenny Checheris, General Manager of Morries West End, did his very best to welcome our members and served up a nice lunch; which was well received by all.

Jay White did some advertising on Facebook; which we believe was responsible for a few more cars showing up. One of our newest members, Greg Gjerdinger, came over from Willmar and captured some really good photographs which are now displayed on his Flickr website. Greg does some great work with a camera, and one of his Flickr albums features some very good coverage of our recent Mid-America show.

The People's Choice awards voted on by participants for this show were: First Place Best of Show, Al and Kathy Longley, Dayton, with a Red 1947 Cabriolet, first time shown at a North Star Car Show; Second Place Best of Show, Scott and Jenni Johnson, Falcon Heights with a Grey 1946 Sedan just purchased from Julia Vanatta; Third Place Best of Show, Roger and Barb Wothe, Wayzata, with a Maroon 1942 Cabriolet. Our Long Distance Award goes to Larry Gordhammer, Ogilvie, with a Blue 1994 Mark VII.

Our Car Show had 23 Lincolns entered, and 15 were shown for the first time this year or in several years.

We had a lot of fun, and it was nice to be able to see several long time members again at this show.

Our fall show next year maybe held on a different weekend. We will need to take a closer look at what might work better and with fewer conflicts for those planning to attend.

We thank Lenny Checheris and his staff at Morries West End Lincoln for hosting this event.

### Show attendees and their Lincolns

Dave and Sally Barry	Robbinsdale	1962 Continental sedan	
Brian Carlson	Oakdale		
Eric Chinquist	Minneapolis	1962 Continental convertible	
Keith and Jill Danner	St. Paul	1964 Continental convertible	
Brad Dopp	North Branch	1964 Continental convertible	
Jeff Eisenberg	Plymouth	1962 Continental convertible	
Mike Fiterman	Minnetonka		
Bruce Freiberg	Buffalo		
Greg Gjerdinger	Willmar		
Larry Gordhammer	Ogilvie	1992 Mark VII	Long dist. winner
David Gustafson	Burnsville	1995 Mark VIII	
Peter Hill and Kathleen Zinnel	Bloomington	1956 Mark II	
Bill Holaday	Monticello	1959 Capri hardtop	
Charlie Johnson	Plymouth	1964 Continental convertible	
Bob and Mary Johnson	Shafer	1989 Mark VII convertible	
Scott and Jenni Johnson	Falcon Heights	1946 Lincoln sedan	Second place winner
Tony and Kim Karsnia	East Bethel	1996 Town Car hearse	
Mike Lamora	Ham Lake	1962 Continental convertible	
Al and Kathy Longley	Dayton	1947 Continental Cabriolet	First place winner
Rob Meyer	St. Louis Park	1947 Continental Cabriolet	
Webster Peterson	Golden Valley	1976 Continental sedan	
Bob Roth	Wayzata	2015 MKC	
Larry Sasse	Savage	1989 Town Car	
Jim and Anna Taplin	Champlin	1957 Premiere	
Cory Wagner	Woodbury	1962 Continental convertible	
Jay White	Apple Valley	1964 Continental convertible	
Roger and Barb Wothe	Wayzata	1942 Continental Cabriolet	Third place winner

# Preview of Coming Events

- October      **Annual North Star Potluck, Sunday, October, 7, 2018** (No auction this year)  
at Morries in Long Lake, Minnesota. Catered lunch by North Star Club.  
Members only — must RSVP.  
**LCOC Western National Meet, Albuquerque, NM, October 17 - 21.**
- November    **Year end Sunday Brunch** at Dangerfield's in Shakopee.  
**Sunday, November 10, 11:30 AM**
- December    No North Star events planned for this month. Take some time to celebrate with your  
relatives and friends.



## For Sale

### 1990 Mark VII Bill Blass

Good condition, runs and drives great. 47K miles \$5,000 — Call Clarence Stender, 952.467.2883 or Cell 612.247.4828



## For Sale

1983 Lincoln Mark VI coupe. Nice red car with white top and white leather interior.. New exhaust, EGR valve, plugs, dist cap and wires. New valve cover gaskets. New tires. New fuel injector regulator. Runs and drives great. Nice paint and interior. 47,000 miles. \$5,500.00.

Jim Christenson 320-262-3288

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[www.northstarlroc.org](http://www.northstarlroc.org) Click on publications.

Issues are in PDF format and may be printed on your color printer.

# North Star Activities

## FALL NORTHSTAR LCOC Potluck

**This will be a fully catered FREE event for members only and to provide for more time for socializing, there will be no auction.**

Sunday, October 7, 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, Morrie's Conference Center  
2605 Wayzata Boulevard (Old Hwy 12), Long Lake, MN

*In lieu of the traditional potluck, the North Star club will be treating our members to a free, fully catered dinner, and will be limited to North Star members only.*

The menu will feature roast beef and turkey with side dishes. It is our thank you for your fine support over the past years, and especially for your support of our very successful Mid-America meet this past July. You must RSVP by Wednesday, October 3, if you plan to attend. Call or email Bob Johnson at 651.157.1715; email: [arborbob41@aol.com](mailto:arborbob41@aol.com)



**Dangerfields Restaurant,**  
1583 First Avenue East, Shakopee, MN

Mark your calendars now....

**\*\*\*Our Last Brunch for 2018\*\*\***  
Sunday, November 10, 11:30 AM

No Activities planned for December, to permit you to spend plenty of time with family and friends. Enjoy the holiday season and we will be back with a fresh slate of activities beginning with a January brunch to help all our members celebrate the New Year.

Members with ideas about events for 2019 should get in touch with your North Star Board of Directors and let us know what you would like us to do. Keep in touch, we value your opinion.