

NORTHSTAR NEWS

My Pride and Joy

As told by B. Mitchell Carlson...

“What era of cars do a certain age group of people like”? Since I am a contributing writer to several vintage automotive publications, I can easily respond to anyone who asks this question with “simple, what was popular when they had just earned their driver’s license”. To the brunt of collectors nowadays (i.e. where most of the money is at), the muscle car era is the hottest now, since those folks are now affluent enough now to purchase them without encumbrances of kids, college for said kids, etc., since these cars were new when these folks were in high school.



1978 LINCOLN MARK V

For someone like myself, who was in high school in the late 70’s to the early 80’s, this is very much a gray area. Not only is my age group just starting to get to the aforementioned status, but quite frankly the cars of our era were rather dismal for the most part. The first oil crunch, emissions controls, and the initial onslaught of the Safety Zealots were making cars more akin to appliances. Lackadaisical quality control, not just from Detroit, Inc. but on a global scale, also were making these vehicles a lot less desirable to keep. Sure there were still Camaro’s, Mustangs (albeit Pinto-ized as Mustang II’s) & Trans-Am’s that were coveted by my peers, but for this kid in rural Sauk Centre, Minnesota, his heart’s

fancy was for Lincoln’s. LINCOLNS – you mean those Grampa cars who’s extreme bulk was just as endangered as a Brontosaurus? You bet!

A Lincoln was fairly exotic for Sauk Centre. Sure, the local lawyer had an all cream yellow 1977 Town Car. He lived near the Minnesota Home School (nee. State Juvenile Low-Security Correctional Institution) so it was the escapee’s getaway car of choice.

It must have been stolen at least a dozen times a year!

What appealed to me about the Continental was its “styled like a cinder block” design. Crisp and clean, massive but not overly bulky. Plus a bulletproof 460 CID V-8 under that loooooong hood. When the Mark V’s came out in 1977, I also liked the more squared-up look over its predecessor Mark IV. The local Ford-Mercury dealer, John Wiese Ford, would occasionally get one in on a special order or as a used factory executive car. That year found myself in my first year of Lutheran Confirmation studies, and John was the Confirmation class instructor. Being the owner of the dealership, he always brought the latest and greatest from his inventory to drive each Wednesday evening to class, and when a Lincoln was fresh in, the boss had to drive it! Especially when he found out that the only car nut in his

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Welcome to the new 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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Board Of Directors - 2001-2002

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Members and guests are welcome to attend the Board Meetings which are held the second Thursday of every month except December at 7:00 PM at Whitaker Lincoln-Mercury on South Robert Street just north of Highways 110 and 1494 in Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota.

Facts and Figures - 1978

In 1978 Lincoln offered three models, the Versailles, the Continental, and the Continental Mark V. The Versailles was Lincoln's answer to the Cadillac Seville, which was a smaller, and supposed to be a more personal type of luxury vehicle. The Versailles, while a nice car, was priced at \$12,529 (factory list) and unfortunately not well received by traditional Lincoln buyers. Some 9,000 were produced in 1978, about two thirds of what was sold in 1977. By contrast, Cadillac sold almost 57,000 Sevilles, at a higher price of \$14,710. Other Lincoln models fared much better in the market place. The Continental, offered as both a coupe and 4 dr sedan, sold about 89,000 units. About 72,600 Mark V's were produced and sold in 1978. A Diamond Jubilee Edition was available. It was sprayed in Diamond Blue or Jubilee Gold paint, the limited edition coupe had a Valino grain Landau vinyl roof and twin coach lamps. Beveled-glass opera windows featured a simulated diamond chip, laminated into the glass. Padded vinyl covered the trunk lid. Sculpted bucked seats and "Tiffany" carpeting added to the plush experience. There was also a Cartier Edition coupe sporting a champagne colored body and vinyl roof, but a plain painted roof was available at no extra charge.

Some Statistics are:

Model	Wght	Price	Production
Versailles (wheelbase 109.9)	3,759	12,529	8,931
Continental (wheelbase 127.2)			
Coupe	4,659	9,974	20,977
4 dr sedan	4,660	10,166	67,110
Continental Mark V (wheelbase 120.4)			
Hardtop Coupe	4,567	12,166	72,602
Engines:	bore x stroke	bhp	model
302.0	4.00 x 3.00	133	Versailles
400.0	4.00 x 4.00	166	Cont & MKV
460.0	4.36 x 3.85	210	Cont & MKV

The Year - 1978

World

Events...Rhodesia's Ian D. Smith and three black leaders agree on transfer to black majority rule. US Senate approves the Panama Canal treaty and to turn the canal over to Panama by 2000. Former Italian Premier Aldo Moro was kidnapped by left wing terrorists and was found slain on May 9th. Pope Paul VI, dies at 80, and new Pope, John Paul I, 65, dies unexpectedly after 34 days in office. He was succeeded by Karol Cardinal Wojtyla of Poland as John Paul II on October 16th. Jim Jones's followers commit mass suicide in Jonestown, Guyana on November 18th.

In the U.S.

President Carter chooses federal Appeals Court Judge William H. Webster as FBI director. US Supreme court in Bakke case, bars quota systems in college admissions, but affirms constitutionality of programs giving advantage to minorities. Federal Spending was at \$458.75 billion. The

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Editors Message

December is a quiet month for car club activities. Perhaps this is good, as we get to spend some time with our non-automotive friends and relatives and broaden our horizons a bit. It is Christmas day evening as I am writing this, having spent a quiet day at home with Marion and Alexander. We did have a good holiday, I got some car books, and Marion some more bears for her collection. Alexander, received a few more dog toys, but was more interested in spending time on the couch watching me type out this message.

The new Lincoln Town Car (2003) will be out in mid-season. Word has it that it will be more traditionally styled from the 1998-2002 models. A hood ornament will return, along with other time honored styling cues. It should be a great car to own or lease. Hopefully, our friends at Lincoln will send us some more information as soon as it becomes available so we can do a feature on it. Lincolns just keep getting better and better. Most of us hope to see a model in between the LS and the Town Car when the Continental is discontinued at the end of the 2002 model year. The Continental is an excellent name, it should be reintroduced along with the Mark series sometime in the future.

Our Next event will be at Lake Elmo Inn. There is more information on this on the back page. We hope to see many of you there. It should be the first of many great events for

2002. Also in January we will be sending out our club membership renewals. Dues will remain at \$15 again for this coming year. We would appreciate your completing the information blank so we can update our membership directory which will be published later this spring. Let us not forget that spring will be along in about 90 days. Please be sure to include your email address if you have one.

As a continuing reminder, our board meetings are on the 2nd Thursday of each month, at 7:00 PM at Whitaker Lincoln-Mercury, in Inver Grove Heights. The meetings are open to all members, and you are all welcome to attend.

Our feature this month is on the Pride and Joy of Brian Carlson. A 1978 Lincoln Continental with a great story. I remember looking at them in the dealers showroom when they were new. The price was a bit of a stretch for us at the time, and I wound up with a Oldsmobile Regency at about half the price. I am anxious to see this car turn up at our events when the weather turns nice. Our Lincolns of the 60's and 70's have some really great looks, do drive nice, and are affordable.

Thanks again for your support this past year. Marion, Alexander and I wish you all the best for the coming New Year. Till next month...

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Directors Message

The Holidays are now over, and we did have a White Christmas. What a busy time of the year. My Dad was right when he told me that the older you get the faster time goes.

First, I want to thank Jim French for his time and efforts as Director of our club, and also Tim Purvis for all the work he did as Activities Director. Second, I want to remind everyone about our next event, a brunch at the Lake Elmo Inn, on Sunday, January 27th at 12:30 PM.

During the month of December, I have been trying to get up to speed on the tasks that are needed to be done for our Mid-America National meet at Treasure Island Resort and Ca-

sino, August 22-25, 2002. I have reviewed all of the past documentation that Jim French gave me at the December meeting. After reading Dick Larson's write up on the 1996 meet held in Plymouth, I really have some big shoes to fill. Dick Larson did a terrific job. Also Dick Koop who did registrations in 1996 has moved to Verona, WI, was also one of the best. I'm about the only rookie, and I'm sure glad that we have experienced people chairing most of the meet activities. Between now and April 1st, we must get information together to begin registrations for the August meet.

Keep the Journey continuing in our marvelous Lincolns. Bob Johnson

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 Federal debt was at \$776.6 Billion. Median Household Income (in current dollars) \$15,064. Unemployment was at 7.1%. The cost of a first-class stamp was \$0.13 and went to \$0.15 on May 29th.

In sports: Dallas defeated Denver 27-10 for the Super Bowl. World Series, it was the Yankees over the LA Dodgers (4-2). Affirmed won the Kentucky Derby.

Entertainment... Sony introduces the Walkman, the first portable stereo. Top movies included The Deer Hunter (which won the Academy Award for Best Picture), Midnight Express, Heaven Can Wait, and Coming Home. Grammy Award for Record of the Year went to Billy Joel for "Just the Way You Are". Books included John Irving, The World According to Garp, Peter Matthiessen, The Snow Leopard, and Herman Wouk, War and Remembrance. 1978 CMA Awards included Dolly Parton, Entertainer of the Year, Single of the Year, The

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 class liked Land Yachts. I always waited for him to show up, to see what he would drive this week, before I even thought about going into the classroom.

In the fall of 1977, my family took our annual vacation to the East Coast. With all five of us piled into the 1972 International Travelall with pop-up camper in tow, the final leg of the trip took us to Detroit, namely the Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum. While my dad was most taken with the elaborately woven brick wall surrounding the neighboring Ford Test Track, I ended up being most smitten by what was inside the Ford Visitor's Reception building across the street from the museum. Inside this building was where arrangements were made to go on the tours of the River Rouge complex, plus about a dozen examples of FoMoCo's current rolling stock. Right there, smack dab in the middle of the building was the most beautiful car I'd ever seen: a 1978 Lincoln Continental Mark V Diamond Jubilee Edition in Jubilee Gold! Sure, I'd gotten one of each of the 1978 Lincoln brochures from the dealer in St. Cloud (dealer brochure collecting was perhaps my first hobby, and I still have the 1971 Ford wagon catalog folder that started it all) and had seen the photo of one in it. I had also read snippets about it in Motor Trend and Car & Driver, but seeing one in person was love, if not lust, at first sight.

For those of you who aren't familiar with these, the Diamond Jubilee Edition was the highest level trim package ever offered on a Mark V. Commemorating Ford Motor Company's 75th anniversary, it was obviously a one year only package, available in either Jubilee Gold Metallic or Diamond Blue Metallic. The Collector's Series offered after it in 1979 was an offshoot of the Diamond Jubilee's, using a lot of the extra trim pieces and patterns to "clear out" those remaining items before the end of Mark V production later that year. Stuffed to the brim with unique trim and most features that were options on more pedestrian Mark V's, the only options were powertrain (Limited Slip differential and a 460 CID engine, with or

without dual exhaust), moon roof, and upgrades of the AM/FM/8-track sound system.

Atypical of Diamond Jubilees, this one on display was fully loaded, with a 460 and an opened moonroof to boot. All the cars in the building were unlocked and could be sat in, and that's exactly what I did. My driver's license was nearly two years away, and I could hardly wait! My dad took some photos of me in "that car that costs more than I paid for my house" (at \$20,099 base, it was the most expensive domestic car in '78), then we went on with the tour and museum. While watching Mustang II's being assembled at River Rouge, all I could think about was that big, beautiful Lincoln.

Fast-forward several years and decades. Other cars had come and gone of all kinds and varieties, but an interest in late 70's Lincoln's always remained. I even test drove a '78 Town Coupe sitting forlorn on an off-base used car lot in Germany when I was first stationed there in 1985 (perhaps too much bulk and fuel appetite in compact Europe, plus over-abundance of cheap BMW's ruled the day then). Lincoln ownership commenced in 1993, when I bought a friend's 1978 Town Car. While liking the styling, locomotive-esque power and durability, I still kept an eye out for a Diamond Jubilee Mark V. I moved up to a 1974 Mark IV in 1998, with 136,000 less miles on it than the Town Car's 204,000 (but still a strong runner!). Nice second-owner car, but still not a DJE. Selling the 1974 Mark IV in May enabled me to go full steam in search of what I really wanted.

My requirements were Jubilee Gold with a 460 & a moon roof, preferably with 30,000 to 70,000 miles. However, in searching the most recent Continental Comments, Old Cars Weekly, Hemmings, and various web sites, I was hard pressed to find one with that MANY miles on it. Since most of these were lightly used from day one, low mileage is now the order of the day (the regularly used ones have now all been turned into Rebar). The most promis-

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 Kendall's "Heaven's just a Sin Away", Album of the Year "It Was Almost Like a Song" by Ronnie Mil-sap. And Instrumental Group of the Year, the Oak Ridge Boys.

In Science:
 Three Albuquerque, NM men, Ben Abruzzo, Larry Newman, and Maxie Anderson, make the first successful transatlantic balloon flight in the Helium-filled Double Eagle II. Balloon angioplasty is developed to treat coronary artery disease (Many of us over 50, including your editor, are grateful for this invention).

Further Trivia, since 1978, as least 37 people have died as a result of shaking vending machines, in an attempt to get free merchandise.

Those who left us included: our own Hubert H. Humphrey, Anastus Mikoyan and Norman Rockwell, whose beautiful artwork graced the covers of the Saturday Evening Post for many years.

Information from the Internet.

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 ing one was listed on classiclincons.com, which met all my criteria with virtually all options added to it, plus was located in Nebraska (unlike all the others, which were basically on either coast). Conversations with the owner led me to believe that this was the car for me. She and her late husband bought it from the original owner in 1994, at that time with 18,000 miles on it. He bought it specifically on the condition that she drives it, rather than storing it. After he passed away two years ago, she no longer wanted to have it around, so she parked it in a neighbor's pole building put it on the web site. With nearly 27,000 miles on it, the car wasn't perfect; but then again, I didn't want a perfect one. I passed up Milt Peterson's DJE on several occasions because it was such a nice original car that I would spoil it by driving it. The lady's minimum taking price met my maximum-I'd-pay price exactly, so one of my co-worker's and I make the 8-hour road trip down to Clay City, Nebraska to get it. While the described "ding" in the right rear trim molding was worse than I expected, a new one was sitting in the trunk, so I bought the car and had an 8-hour trouble-free drive home.

Since then, I've replaced the timing chain, water pump, and radiator (the road trip forced the issue of an iffy water pump sitting for a year; it started leaking the day after I got home) in addition to the "dinged" rear molding. The only issues that I've had with the car are directly due to the hack that she had work on it while in her tenure. Most of those have been resolved, such as a return to dual exhausts, with only the ubiquitous Motorcraft 4-barrel carburetor quirks to be resolved this spring by John Wiese Ford's service department.

Subsequent sleuthing on it has revealed that it was originally a factory executive car (DSO of Detroit, shipping invoice indicating that it was sent to L-M's pet dealer in Dearborn for prep work, and the build sheet indicating NO MONO-

GRAM DESIRED). It was built in December 1977 then sold to the original owner in Grand Island, NE in October of 1978. The only option the car DOESN'T have is limited slip differential, although the built-in CB wasn't on the original invoice (they were commonly added at the dealership, and this car is configured in that manner). It is an absolute joy to drive, even if the moon roof option has a lot less headroom than I remembered (then again, I was shorter in 1978). I'll be continuing to tweak and polish "The Diamond" over the course of the next nine months, in preparation of the Midwest Regional Meet at Treasure Island in August.

Editors Note...We are grateful for the fine article about Brian's latest Lincoln. We look forward to seeing it in the spring, and perhaps additional articles from his fine pen.

Special Note....

For Sale:
 1956 Lincoln engine and Transmission.
 1956 Lincoln ornament, 1 set of 1956 fender skirts. 1 1946-48 front axle complete.

Wanted:
 For 1946-48 Lincoln, 26 tooth cluster gear for transmission, 1 set V12 front motor mounts, 1 set of rear fender gravel guards.

Please call Ted Anderson at (763) 561-8143, or write to him at 6224 Brooklyn Drive, Brooklyn Center, MN 55430.

Wanted:

Someone driving to the Frederic, Maryland area. I need two car wheels and a box of automobile items picked up for me. Call Harvey V. Oberg at (651) 739-9754.

Members are invited to send in their ads to the editor for publication in future issues.

Preview of Coming Attractions

The following are the scheduled club events, please call Jay White at (952) 432-5939 for information and directions.

- January 27 Brunch at LAKE ELMO INN. Meet at Inn at 12:30 PM. Good Food...Good Service, you will enjoy this. See you there. This is a club event. Lets all turn out for this first function of the new year. You will have fun, socialize with your friends, and not go away hungry. They have the kind of food that will make your cardiac specialist wince.
- February 9-11 39th Annual World of Wheels... St. Paul River Center, St. Paul, MN
- February 23 Annual potluck supper with the CCCA at Ellingsons car museum at Rogers, MN. More information to follow. This is always a fun evening to start off the new year with. Plan to attend and meet your friends from the CCCA.
- March Club Event... To be determined
- March 3-11 28th Annual St. Paul & Minneapolis Auto Show
Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, MN
- April 28 Sunday Brunch at Tobey's by the Lake.
- May 12-13 31st Annual First Fifty Auto Show & Swap Meet
6:00 am - 5:00 pm Minnesota State Fairgrounds, St. Paul, MN
- May 19 Annual Car Show at Whitaker Lincoln Mercury 10:00am - 3:00pm
Whitaker Lincoln Mercury, Hwy 110 at South Robert, Inver Grove Heights, MN
All years of Lincolns, Continentals and Zephyrs welcome. No entry fee. Prize drawings
- June Back to the 50's car show at the Minnesota State Fair Grounds.
- August 25-28 Mid America National Lincoln and Continental Owners Club Meet at Treasure Island hotel and casino, near Red Wing, MN.
- September 22 Annual Northstar LCOC Picnic at Environments.