

Collection of Misfits



Richard Koop — What was he thinking!

I started collecting cars in October 1980 and my first purchase was a '56 Mark II. I was fortunate enough to find a DSO (Dealer Special Order) car that had a unique all leather one-color roof liner, door panels and seats. It was originally ordered by a farmer and his wife in Iowa thru the Stivers Lincoln dealership in Des Moines, Iowa. The wife wanted a special color red leather to match the lipstick she used. Because of the special treatment, Lincoln wanted to show their affluent customers (Think Black Label Program-not Hormel bacon-today) they would do these special requests. A tube of lipstick was sent to Ford, and the leathers (Bridge of Weir) were dyed to match the lipstick. I remember taking the MK II to a meet in Delroy, Ohio not much after I bought the car. I was trying to learn all I could about these cars and I met Jim Roll; who was probably one of the most knowledgeable leather and upholstery guys I have ever met. He stopped by and asked what my plans were for the leather interior. It was showing some fading and a few minor cracks in the leather so I said I would probably re-dye and replace some of the leather sections. He looked at me and said Well, what he said I shouldn't repeat, but he "expressed" displeasure with my plans. I thought about his "advice" and decided maybe I should just clean and treat the leather with conditioners and oils; which is what I ended up doing. The MK II is pretty much all original outside of some door ding repairs and where the paint has started to crack. The only mechanical work I've done has been suspension; which was showing its age. The car has only 56,000 miles on it in spite of trips to national meets in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Duluth, Minnesota, Bloomington, Minnesota, Lincoln, Nebraska, Detroit, Michigan, Indianapolis, Indiana, Delroy, Ohio, and many other meets over the last 37 years. But enough about the MK II.

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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



Phil Silvers
American Actor
1911 - 1985

Phil Silvers was an American entertainer and comedic actor, known as "The King of Chutzpah." He is best known for starring in The Phil Silvers Show, a 1950s sitcom set on a U.S. Army post in which he played Master Sergeant Ernest (Ernie) Bilko.

Born Philip Silver or Philip Silversmith May 11, 1911, in Brooklyn, New York, in the working-class Brownsville section, he was the eighth and youngest child of Russian Jewish immigrants, Saul and Sarah Silver. His siblings were Lillian, Harry, Jack, Saul, Pearl, Michael and Reuben Silver. His father, a sheet metal worker, helped build the early New

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Editors Message

Gentle Readers... We are beginning a new year, one which I hope will be filled with good health, interesting experiences and opportunities for all of our members and friends.

Richard Koop, long time member of the LCOC and the North Star Region has collected cars for some time. Yes, he does have a few very nice Lincolns, including a Mark II, a Kennedy era convertible, a Versailles, and a couple of MKZ hybrids. He also has some very interesting and somewhat off-beat cars, usually not found in most collections.

These are all nice cars and can be driven anywhere at any time. Dick likes to find fairly low mileage examples and ones that are fairly well sorted out mechanically. It is usually cheaper, in the long run, to buy something in nice shape, rather than go through the time and money to make it top drawer. He writes a bit about his collection for the cover story this month and we are very grateful for him doing so. We can always use feature articles for our newsletter and Dick came through for us this month. We have added somewhat to his article by focusing on two particular cars, the Allante (by Cadillac) and the relatively short-lived AMC Pacer, the last hurrah of what was once a great automobile company. While the Allante and the Pacer are not related to Ford and Lincoln in any shape or form, the story is somewhat interesting and does, in fact, help your poor misguided editor fill up the pages of this newsletter. If you are adverse to these types of stories, you can easily fix that by sending in an article about your pride and joy. See, you

brought it on yourself.

We did make it through December relatively unscathed. There was a lot going on, and it seems as though there was not enough time to do it all. Olga and I am feverishly working on the newsletter with the hopes of getting it in the mail by the end of the month. Olga is watching, and her dad is doing, that is how the division of labor works in our home. If she only had thumbs, she might be much more useful. Cold weather has come upon us during this last week in December. Record lows are being forecast, with temperatures matching those we last had in 1996. But, do not despair, it cannot last forever. If we can just make it through January, it truly is all downhill



It is so cold here in Burnsville, polar bears are starting to show up. Olga was somewhat surprised to see one outside our door. Always one to make new friends, she is wondering if we feed it, will it stay. She hopes so.

from there. In spite of what you might think, spring is on the way, along with warmer weather.

If you have some time, stop by your friendly Lincoln dealership. Our two favorites are Luther North Country Ford Lincoln and Lincoln of Bloomington. These fine dealerships support the North Star Region and in turn we support them. They are great folks and will really help you with your purchase or lease of a new Lincoln or the purchase of any one of their fine used cars. The new Lincolns are terrific automobiles. They must be driven to be fully appreciated, stop by your dealership and take one out for a trial drive. You will enjoy the experience.

Till next month... And be kind to one and all.

David and Sweet Olga, the Samoyed

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York skyscrapers.

Silvers started entertaining at age 11, when he would sing in theaters when the film projector broke down (a common occurrence in those days), to the point where he was allowed to keep attending the same movie theater free of charge, to sing through any future breakdowns. By age 13, he was working as a singer in the Gus Edwards Revue and then worked in vaudeville and as a burlesque comic.

Silvers next worked in short films for the Vitaphone studio, such as *Ups and Downs* (1937), and on Broadway, where he made his debut in the short-lived show *Yokel Boy* in 1939. Critics raved about Silvers; who was hailed as the bright spot in the mediocre play. The Broadway revue *High Kickers* (1941) was based on his concept.

He made his feature film debut in *Hit Parade of 1941* in 1940 (his previous appearance as a 'pitch man' in *Strike Up the Band* was cut). Over the next two decades, he worked as a character actor for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Columbia and 20th Century Fox, in such films as *All Through the*

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Directors Message by Bob Johnson January 2018



Mary and I hope that you had a very joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year. It was a very cold Christmas week. For the persons who enjoy cold weather and a lot of snow, this has been a perfect time of year. The older I get, the less I enjoy the winter season, but it is my choice to tough it out here in Shafer, Minnesota. We are looking forward to going to Florida for a week in January. When you look at all the weather problems across our great US, we here in Minnesota have it very good — that is what I keep telling myself.

Our January Sunday Brunch will be at the Roasted Pear, in Brooklyn Park, 9690 Colorado Lane on January 7 at 11:30 a.m. Please RSVP to Jay White by Wednesday, January 3, 612-599-6219 or email jay@jwhiteandassoc.com if you plan on attending. Again RSVP now. We will have a nice private room to enjoy great food, good service at reasonable prices. Consider bringing along a friend that may be interested in the Lincoln club. You do not have to own a Lincoln to be a member, just an interest in fine automobiles and interesting people

On behalf of the North Star board of directors, we want to thank all of you who hosted, planned and worked on our activities in 2017. It truly was a great year, and it would not have been possible without your hard work and enthusiasm. Being your Region Director really gives me the chance to meet all our members and it has been very rewarding. The effort and work we put in these activities is well worth the time spent. Mary and I have many fond memories about what we did in 2017 — we enjoyed our Mark VII convertible while traveling all over the North Star Region, what a great Region.

The North Star Region big event for 2018 is to host the 2018 Mid America National Meet in the Twin Cities area, July 11-15. Our host hotel is the Marriott Minneapolis West, located at 9950 Wayzata Blvd. St. Louis Park, Minnesota. The meet information and registration PDF form is posted on our **NEW** LCOC website, www.lcoc.org. At the bottom of the page, "[Click to download the Event Registration Form](#)" Matt Foley will be our Meet Registration Chairman and he can be reached at 612-280-4930.

We always need "Our Pride and Joy" articles about your Lincoln. This winter is a great time to write that article about your car that you keep putting off during the summer because you were too busy. Please share your story about your car with all of our members. We would like to know how you got it, what you enjoy about it, what you have done to it or have left to do. Please send your article to Dave Gustafson — he can only do the newsletter with material that you send him, so get busy.

Our North Star Region will have four members attending the winter National LCOC Board Meeting - Thursday 1/11/17 through Saturday 1/13/18, in Tampa Florida, Dave Gustafson, Dick Koop, Jon Wessel and myself. If you have any suggestions as to better the LCOC, please send them to any one of us to take to the Board Meeting. Note on Jon Wessel: he and Deb joined the North Star region in 2013 after attending their first LCOC national meet in Bloomington, Minnesota. Now Jon has taken on the new duty Vice President-Regions LCOC along with being [Midwest Region](#) Director.

As always, keeps 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@mchsi.com	2020
Treasurer	Matt Foley	C(612)280-4930	mcfoley@earthlink.net	2019
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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 7:00 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.

Richard Koop's unique cars

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My next car was a 1990 Chrysler TC by Maserati. I saw the car and bought it new in White Bear Lake, Minnesota. It was advertised in the Wall Street Journal and was one of only 701 that had the Maserati engine and five-speed Getrag transmission. This 2-seat sports coupe was a joint venture with Chrysler and Maserati. Lee Iacocca and Alejandro de Tomaso were two head strong leaders that argued about who would take the lead and the end result was a car that looked like a Le-Baron. My guess the two had a few martinis when they collaborated on this joint venture. One positive note; the Italians really know how to do interiors. The leather in this car is the finest I've ever worked with.

Not long after that, I decided a Cadillac Allante was a car I "had to have." They were selling new at the time in the \$60,000+ range and the car was panned by most motor magazines as being underpowered with a spartan interior for a car with his price. I found a very low mileage red one with the removable hardtop. The body was designed by the Pininfarina studio in Italy. In spite of the negative press, Cadillac finally put in the NorthStar engine and mated it with an upgraded interior and better transmission in 1993. I decided I had better get one of those also so now I ended up with two of them.

Next was a vacation to the Florida Keys where a low mileage DeLorean was for sale. (By the way, did you know that John DeLorean is the only guy in the world who made the car and the license plates?) Drove it back from Keys to Pompano Beach, Florida where I found another car I had always liked. A red 1988 Fiero GT with just 2,000 miles on it. About this time my wife was saying, "Where are you going to put all these cars?" Fortunately, our home in Stillwater could accommodate eight cars; which was not a problem — but, I still had to make room for our two daily drivers. Not a problem — yet. I was also in the process of restoring a 1964 Corvair Spyder convertible in that garage so now things were getting tight. I had the Corvair almost completely apart, and I knew I had better get that car back together and running; which I did. I sold that car and regretted it to this day. It's the only car I've ever sold in my collection of cars in 37 years. I had that Corvair about as perfect as you could get a Corvair.

Well, a job change and now it's time to move to Madison, Wisconsin. There I bought a building and with the purchase, came buying more cars: Edsel station wagon, Yugo, AMC Pacer, AMC Marlin, Cadillac Cimarron, 1968 Subaru 360, Ford

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Night (1942) with Humphrey Bogart. That same year, he played a scene with W. C. Fields in *Tales of Manhattan*, which was cut from the original release but restored decades later in home video issues. Silvers also appeared in *Lady Be Good* (1941), *Coney Island* (1943), *Cover Girl* (1944) and *Summer Stock* (1950). When the studio system began to decline, he returned to the stage. *Cover Girl* demonstrates that Silvers was an accomplished dancer, performing flawlessly in quick-tempo trios with famed dancers Gene Kelly and Rita Hayworth.

Silvers wrote the lyrics for Frank Sinatra's "Nancy (With the Laughing Face)." Although he was not a songwriter, he wrote the lyrics while visiting composer Jimmy Van Heusen. The two composed the song for Van Heusen's writing partner Johnny Burke, for his wife Bessie's birthday. Substituting Sinatra's little daughter's name Nancy at her birthday party, the trio pressed the singer to record it himself. The

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More Koop's Cars

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Pinto station wagon, 1968 Thunderbird 4 door, 1963 Studebaker Avanti R2, 1985 Mazda RX-7, Dodge Lancer, Buick Reatta, Honda S-2000, Lincoln Versailles and most recently some Shelby GT 500's.

If you follow the majority of these cars, the theme of what I was trying to do was a collection of failures. I wanted 13 since that is for most, an unlucky number. Well, you all know there were more than 13 failures over the last 30 years. (I'm still looking for the elusive Pontiac Aztek)

Probably my favorite car is the one I didn't buy. It was my Dad and Mom's '63 Lincoln Continental convertible. Dad asked that I take the car as he was unable to keep doing the needed work because of his age. That '63 Lincoln has been in more weddings than I can count. It rides like a dream and brings back so many great memories of the different car gatherings my Dad and Mom would attend. It will always remain in our family and my siblings know that is the only car that is never to be sold. I've gone thru it and rebuilt the carburetor, new exhausts mufflers and resonators, switches, fuel pump, shocks and had John Cashman spend a day at my building getting the convertible top working with his magic. Will probably drive this one back from St. Louis where I live now, to the 2018 July Midwest LCOC Meet in Minnesota next year.

I have for daily drivers Lincoln MKZ Hybrids. They are so comfortable and quiet. Yes, I am first a Lincoln believer, but I still like to dabble in other cars. I just wish Lincoln would build a car that has some passion when you see it. They've done it with the Mustang and introducing one could really propel Lincoln for the future.

I could go on and on, but I'll leave you this one last thought. The '79 AMC Pacer is that light blue color that was popular in the 70s. When people see this car, they ask, "Why I would buy a car with such a bland color?" I answer them by saying "It matches my Leisure suit!" Now you know the rest of the story.....

Editors note... We are now going to focus on two cars in Dick's collection, the Cadillac Allante and the AMC Pacer. We

will look a little at their history and what led to their demise. Perhaps, in a future issue we can look at a few more of these automotive oddities.



1993 Cadillac Allante

The Cadillac Allante. You could say the Cadillac Allante was an attempt to distance General Motors' luxury brand, much like what Cadillac is trying to do with its move to New York City, exclusive engines and more.

But, the Cadillac Allante was certainly not the most business-savvy way to go about positioning Cadillac against the Mercedes-Benz SL and Jaguar XJS, as told by *Motoring Research* originally.

You see, Cadillac decided to team up with Italian-based coach builder, Pininfarina, for an exclusive convertible; which shared no components with any other General Motors Corp. branded vehicle.



Allante engine bay with the Northstar V8

Cadillac had Pininfarina build the bodies of the Allante, paint them, trim them and, finally, install their convertible tops. Then, the cars would hop a flight from Tu-

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Koop's Cars continued...

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song became a popular hit in 1945 and was a staple in Sinatra's live performances. Toward the end of the World War II, Silvers entertained the troops during several successful overseas USO tours with Sinatra.

Silvers scored a major triumph in *Top Banana*, a Broadway show of 1952. Silvers played Jerry Biffle, the egocentric, always-busy star of a major television show. (The character is said to have been based on Milton Berle.) Silvers dominated the show and won a Tony Award for his performance. He repeated the role in the 1954 film version that was originally released in 3-D.

According to the documentary on the DVD of *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*, Silvers was not a traditional comedian: he was a comic actor. Silvers never did stand-up, and, out of character, he was not known for cracking jokes.

Silvers became a household name in 1955 when he starred as Sergeant Ernest G.

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rin, to Detroit via a jumbo jet airliner, where the sub-frames, suspension, drivetrain and other components would be installed.

And, thus, a Cadillac Allante was born. Though, it could have really been called anything, as the Allante name was selected from a list filled with 1,700 random computer-generation names.

In the end, it simply wasn't enough. Pininfarina's convertible tops were known to leak substantially and General Motors Corp. pushed the car out to production anyway after identifying the issue, tarnishing the Allante name from the start. Despite improvements each year, the convertible couldn't truly contest the SL and XJS.

Cadillac wanted to sell 6,000 examples each year, but its best selling year saw merely 4,670 units sold in the end. If one still desires one of these unique vehicles today, low mileage examples can still fetch \$20,000.

Exclusive and extremely expensive to produce, the Allante proved a reach for Cadillac. Though important to maintaining its prestige in the face of a strongly expanding import challenge, just over 21,000 were built during its seven-year production run.

1993 was the last model year for the Allante. Allante was scaled down to just one model that year, the soft-top convertible priced at \$59,975 (not including a mandatory \$1,700 gas guzzler tax for vehicles sold in the United States). The removable 60.5-pound aluminum hardtop was now a separate option, as well as the \$495 LCD digital instrument cluster in place of the standard analog instruments. A \$700 pearl coat paint option (in Flax or Canyon Yellow, with Hawaiian Orchid, added midyear) was available. Also optional were chrome squeeze-cast aluminum wheels. For its final model year, Allante received the 4.6 L (280.7 cu in) Northstar DOHC V8 engine. This engine was rated at 295 hp at 5,600 rpm. Torque output was 290-foot-pounds at 4,400 rpm. A new unequal-length control arm rear suspension, shared with the Seville and Eldorado, was also introduced that year. Also, new for the small Cadillacs was Road Sensing Suspension, an active

damper management system, and revised disc brakes. The 1993 model used General Motors Corp.'s Delco "Premium Symphony Sound System." Other changes for the Allante included a revised variable-assist power steering rack, deeper front spoiler and single-piece side windows; which did away with the stationary forward vent window. Production for 1993 was the highest. Of the 4,670 Allantés manufactured for the 1993 model year, 115 were for export – France (1), Austria (2), Belgium (5), Germany (5), Switzerland (6), Japan (11), and Canada (85).

The 1993 Allante was also chosen as the 1992 pace car for the 76th Indy 500 Indianapolis 500; the pace car was driven by Bobby Unser. There were three modified 1993 Allante Pace Cars that had only seat belts, lighted roll bar, and air intake modified from a stock production Allante's.

Those three Allante Pace cars were provided for the race, as well as, just 30 stock 1993 Allante's used as Festival/Pace Cars and 58 stock 1992 Allante Festival/Pace cars that were used by drivers and crews at the opening parade and the closing of the race. Al Unser Jr's 1993 Allante Festival/Pace car was featured at both 2012 and 2013 Keel's & Wheel's Concours D'Elegance in Seabrook, Texas. Bobby Unser was Grand Marshal in 2012 and Al Unser, Jr was Grand Marshal in 2013.

The last Allante built was flown from Turin, Italy July 2, 1993, and completed at Detroit-Hamtramck 14 days later. With 21,430 built, assemblies averaged just a little more than 3,000 a year throughout the car's lifetime. Production officially ended July 16, 1993.

The AMC Pacer. The Pacer was launched by AMC to an unsuspecting American public in the spring of 1975. Into a sea of large, square and wallowy cars they floated a design so cutting edge, it took the breath away. A small car that was wider than it was tall; 2 feet wider in fact, with a huge wrap around the three-piece rear window that gave it the appearance of a spaceship. The car had 70 percent more glass area than the average car in its class. And along

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Bilko in You'll Never Get Rich, later retitled *The Phil Silvers Show*. The military comedy became a television hit, with the opportunistic Bilko fast-talking his way through one obstacle after another. In 1958, CBS switched the show to be telecast Friday nights and moved the setting to Camp Fremont in California. A year later, the show was off the schedule.

Silvers returned to Broadway in the musical *Do Re Mi* in December 1960, receiving a nomination for the Tony Award for Best Performance by a Leading Actor in a Musical. Stanley Green wrote, "It was particularly blessed by offering two outstanding clowns in Phil Silvers as the pushiest of patsies and Nancy Walker." Throughout the 1960s, he appeared in films such as *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1963) and *40 Pounds of Trouble* (1963). He was featured in Marilyn Monroe's last film; the unfinished *Something's Got to Give* (1962). In the 1963-1964 television season, he appeared as Harry Grafton, a factory foreman interested in get-rich-quick schemes, much like the previous Bilko character.

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Still more Koop's cars

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with the futuristic styling came the promise of technology to match.

The press fell in love with the car. Motor Trend magazine enthused, "*American Motors' new Pacer is the freshest, most creative, most people-oriented auto to be born in the U.S. in 15 years.*"

Car and Driver was just as fervent, stating, "*American Motors has decided conventional looks are passé, but comfort and room for four are here to stay. The result; our first real urban transporter.*" "*AMC said it was the first car designed from the inside out. Four passengers were positioned with reasonable clearances, and then the rest of the car was built around them as compactly as possible.*"

Road & Track magazine described it as "*fresh, bold and functional-looking.*" Popular Mechanics wrote: "*This is the first time in the history of the American automobile industry that a car manufacturer has said in advance of bringing out a new product that some people may not like it.*"



AMC Pacer - The fish bowl car.

There was no denying the mood of optimism as the Pacer was launched to the press by AMC chairman Roy D. Chapin Jr. in January 1975.

It was a moment also charged with trepidation as this was American Motors last roll of the dice.

It was hope and fear all rolled into one after a topsy-turvy year in which AMC's sales were down 50 percent on the previous year in a tough environment where sales across the industry were down 29 percent.

Everybody was doing badly, but AMC

was doing the worst. The Arab oil embargo had actually meant AMC increased sales by 15 percent against an industry fall of 21 percent as customers scrambled for small cars, but then the company had been crippled by a three-week strike in September.

There was a bunker mentality at the Plymouth Road, Detroit headquarters as they mixed it with the big boys.

And so, fighting for their lives, AMC threw everything at the project including the kitchen sink. So much so that they made a car that looked like the kitchen sink. In fact, one of its nicknames became the upside down kitchen sink.

Not to mention the upside-down bathtub.



Conceived from the inside out the Pacer was designed to be small but roomy, as the company blurb said, "*Because Pacer is the first wide small car, it's also the first small wide car.*" In other words, the car would offer the handling and maneuverability of a small car while giving the benefit of the interior space normally only found in a large sedan. And it that respect it succeeded.

It would have succeeded even more if AMC had not had to change the engine shortly before production.

The power unit was to have been a cutting-edge rotary Wankel engine purchased from General Motors. The car was designed around that engine. Unfortunately, General Motors Corp. withdrew, as the Wankel was proving neither reliable nor fuel efficient, and in the wake of the 1974 Arab oil embargo, this was now an issue. The engine also produced high

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ter, in CBS's 30-episode *The New Phil Silvers Show*, with co-stars Stafford Repp, Herbie Faye, Buddy Lester, Elena Verdugo as his sister, Audrey and her children, played by Ronnie Dapo and Sandy Descher. In 1967, he starred as a guest in one of the British Carry On films, *Follow That Camel*, a Foreign Legion parody in which he played a variation of the Sergeant Bilko character, Sergeant Nocker. Producer Peter Rogers employed him to ensure the Carry On films' success in America, though Silvers' presence did not ensure the film's success on either side of the Atlantic. His salary was £30,000, the largest Carry On salary ever, only later met by the appearance of Elke Sommer in *Carry On Behind*.

Silvers was offered the leading role of conniving Roman slave Pseudolus in the Broadway musical comedy *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Silvers declined, and the role went instead to Zero Mostel; who was so successful in the role that he repeated the role in the 1966 film version. By this time, Silvers realized his error

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Even more about strange cars

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amounts of NOx gasses that would not comply with the new emissions regulations.

So AMC put their standard tried and tested 3.8 liter 232 cu.in. straight six under the hood. It was a tight fit, but they squeezed it in. This change compromised the interior space and effectively rendered it a four-seater as it necessitated the use of a drive tunnel to get the power to the rear wheels which took up space in the rear seating area. The Wankel; which would have been front wheel drive would have needed no such tunnel. The car was still roomy, but not as roomy as it might have been.

The engine change also fundamentally altered the nature of the car's dynamics. What was meant to be a nippy little go anywhere kind of a car was turned into a heavy, slow kind of a car. It was a personality change that would come back to haunt AMC.

The car was an instant hit with the public selling 145,000 units in its first year. They loved the looks, the visibility, the space, the sense of the future and the quirkiness exemplified by the uneven door lengths. The passenger door was 4 inches longer than the driver's door to allow for easy entrance and exit; perfect for the urban Mom dropping the children off. The doors were also hinged to move out slightly from the top as they opened, to make sure junior didn't hit his head. The people also loved the small turning circle; which was due to the rack and pinion steering that utilized the extra width of the car to great effect. It was design features such as these that made for the initial success.

The Pacer was a little sparse on equipment though with an extras list that would make even present-day Audi or BMW blush. The automatic transmission was an extra \$299 and air conditioning \$399.95 – more than a tenth of the base price of \$3,299. An eight-track AM/FM radio was \$239.

Ah, where would a 70s car be without an eight-track.

The "Announcement Package 1," of tinted window and power steering was

\$139 and "Announcement Package 2" of a front sway bar, steel belted radial tires, and power front disc brakes was \$203.45. So in order to get your Pacer up to scratch, you had to part with the best part of \$1,300, taking the price up to about \$4,600.

Some of those extras were vital. The huge glass area made the air conditioning and the tinted glass essential while the power brakes, given the car's weight, were a necessity in order to stop the Pacer without developing thighs the size of Steve Austin.



1975 AMC Pacer Dash

The engine was just one element that led the "Flying Fishbowl" as Car and Driver nicknamed it, to weigh in at over 3,200lbs. All that glass added to the weight, as did all the much-hyped safety measures. AMC wanted to stay ahead of the game and so incorporated a lot of features that were expected to be required over the coming few years, such as a roll bar, which gave rise to the huge, thick B pillars – the ones just behind the driver's door, and the massive doors designed to take side strengthening beams.

The car lobby won the day, however, and the new regulations were not as draconian as at first feared. However, this meant that AMC was left with a car that was heavier than it needed to be. So it was wide but small... And heavy.

In the second year, around 120,000 Pacers were sold, but the cracks were beginning to show. The engine was slow and unresponsive, the car taking over 14 seconds to get to 60mph and it only clocked around 16mpg, less if you used the air conditioning; which you did because of all that glass. It was hard to park because of the

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and agreed to appear in the film as a secondary character, flesh merchant Marcus Lycus. When actor-producer Larry Blyden mounted a Broadway revival of *Forum* in 1972, he wanted Phil Silvers to play the lead and this time Silvers agreed. The revival was a hit and Silvers became the first leading actor ever to win a Tony Award in a revival of a musical. Silvers also guested on *The Beverly Hillbillies*, and various TV variety shows such as *The Carol Burnett Show*, *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In* and *The Dean Martin Show*. He appeared as curmudgeonly Hollywood producer Harold Hecuba in the classic 1966 episode "The Producer" on *Gilligan's Island*, where he and the castaways performed a musical version of *Hamlet*. (Silvers' production company Gladasya - named after his catchphrase "Gladdaseeya!" - financed the show.)

Phil Silvers was married twice, to Jo-Carroll Dennison and Evelyn Patrick. Both of his marriages ended in divorce. He had five daughters — Candace, Cathy, Laurie, Nancey and Tracey Edythe — all by his second wife, Evelyn Pat-

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Strange cars continued

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width and weight, and mechanical faults were beginning to show through. The electrics were proving unreliable, and there were reports of the steering seizing and failing due to the extra weight and strain imposed on the steering rack by the heavy engine.

Pacer sales in the third year dropped like a stone to around 20,000 and then to below 8,000 in the fourth, 1978. The writing was truly on the wall.

To address the lack of power, the car was given a larger, even more, uneconomical straight six, as well as, a V8 but when the second energy crisis hit in 1979 as a result of the Iranian revolution, the Pacer was officially fighting a lost cause. Production ceased in December 1979 with sales



continuing into early 1980.

American Motors exported the Pacer to several European nations. Jean-Charles, the AMC distributor in Paris, France, compared the rounded body of the new Pacer to the buttocks of an attractive woman in magazine advertisements. Cars exported to Europe were available in higher trim levels. Sales were not spectacular, however, as late as 1983, Belgian shoppers could still buy a brand-new Pacer from stock.

The level of current European interest in Pacers is indicated by the number of

European nations listed in the AMC Pacer Registry, the members' cars in the Swedish AMC/Rambler Society, a German Pacer enthusiast internet site, and the fact that a former AMC dealer in Germany stocked an inventory of original parts up to the early 2000s. A private museum in the Netherlands exhibits a Pacer wagon. AMC itself struggled on for eight more years under different management arrangements with Renault, the French manufacturer, before finally selling out to Lee Iacocca's Chrysler.

In the years that followed, the legacy of the Pacer started to take shape. Derided and loved in equal measure, the Pacer began to carve a unique place for itself in American automotive history.

The Pacer gained fame, almost a rebirth, in the 1990s when it featured as Wayne and Garth's light blue "Mirthmobile" in Mike Myers's *Wayne's World*, taking a starring role in the famous "Bohemian Rhapsody" scene.

Rapper Eminem also used a Pacer to perform donuts in a car park in the video for "The Real Slim Shady."

Homage to the Pacer can also be found in 2011's video game "Driver, San Francisco."

The Pacer represented an effort to create something different. The concept was great; it was just the execution that went awry.

So, we are left still waiting for that truly great urban vehicle that will carry us around like Neil Armstrong on acid — casting aside those common enemies of traffic congestion, noise, pollution, and energy shortage.

For one moment in time, the Pacer nearly did all that. It very nearly was tomorrow's car.

As the brochure said, "When you buy any other car, all you end up with is today's car. When you get a Pacer, you get a piece of tomorrow." Nearly, but not quite.

Like all brilliant engineering concepts that burn brightly before burning out, the Pacer has been thrown onto the scrapheap of heroic failure.

Sometimes it seems we are too conser-

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rick.

Like his alter-ego Ernie Bilko, Silvers was a compulsive gambler, and also suffered from chronic depression. He suffered a nervous breakdown in 1962 while performing in Spain. While staying in Reno, Nevada, in the 1950s, he would often gamble all night. On one occasion, at the tiny Cal-Neva Lodge in nearby Lake Tahoe, Nevada, Silvers spent an entire night playing craps until he lost all his money and then went through \$1,000 in credit. A taxi was called to return him to Reno. It was "one of the worst nights of my life", Silvers told the driver, adding, "Don't wait for any lights and don't wait for any tip . . . I left it at the Cal-Neva!"

His memoirs are titled *This Laugh Is On Me*.

Silvers suffered a stroke during the run of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* in August 1972. He was left with slurred speech. Despite his poor health, he continued working, playing Harry Starman in the 1974 "Horror in the Heights" episode of *Kolchak: The Night Stalker* starring Darren McGavin. His

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More about strange cars..

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vative for our own good. It is one of the ironies of capitalism that the very freedom to experiment with a fresh idea sometimes provides the agent for its demise, for in the end everything is determined by profit and loss. It is the first rule. Something cannot merely exist because it is aesthetically beautiful or conceptually brilliant; it has to make money. It is the price we pay.

The Pacer should have been given wings and been set free to fly. But as with other great but ultimately commercially flawed concepts such as Concorde or the Hovercraft, instead of having the courage to push on and build something greater, we let it crash upon the altar of capitalism.

And so instead of leading us into our Utopian future where we all zip around like the Jetsons, the little car just faded away.

Classic car publication *Hemmings Motor News* noted that small cars have always played a role in the U.S. automotive history, and that "among those produced during the late Seventies, the AMC Pacer was an economical giant, in a manner of speaking." Now old enough to be a "classic car," the Pacer has come to be regarded in some quarters as a 1970s design icon. According to *Business Week*, the 1970s were "infamous for disco, Watergate and some of the ugliest cars ever." Most cars in the U.S. from the early 1970s are noted more for their power than their styling, but they even lost their power by late 1970. Many automobiles began to lose their character and looked the same across brands and automakers, as well as focusing on "luxury" features such as vinyl roofs and non-functional opera windows.^[81] The "roly-poly" Pacer was one of the few of that era that had "real personalities," and it embodies a sense of "artful desperation" making it "stand out from the crowd and epitomize at once the best and worst of the seventies."

Nevertheless, in spite of their bad reputations, cars of the 1970s era such as the Pacer are becoming collectors' items. *Business Week* reported that the rising values of so-called "nerd cars"—ugly 1970s-era cars—prompted the CEO of a major collector-car insurance company to buy a Pacer; which has "inexplicably appreciated sub-

stantially beyond the \$2,300 that he paid for it in 2004." In 2002 he said, "In what can sometimes be a sea of automotive sameness, the AMC Pacer continues to turn heads even today," and he put the value of a "mint Pacer" at "between \$4,000 and \$6,000," saying that "the increased value is fueled solely by the heart."

The Pacer has been described as one of the formerly unloved cars from the 1970s that are enjoying a resurgence in both collectibility and auto restoration—especially among fans of cars from that era. The Pacer is one of several 1970s cars that were always thought of as cheap vehicles; therefore they were poorly maintained; which reduced their life expectancy. Also, the heavy engines used in the car put more load on the front suspension than intended; which caused the rack and pinion steering to fail frequently on Pacers built in 1975.



One collector-car expert says you will pay just about the same, around \$20,000, for a complete restoration, whether it's on a \$1,000 1978 AMC Pacer or a \$5,000 1969 Chevrolet Camaro. When restored, the value of the Pacer may be about \$4,000, compared with the Camaro's \$25,000. Today the Pacer's originality, as well as its deficiencies, are appreciated, if not loved, by car hobbyists and serious collectors alike.

Although "automotive oddity" is a recognition that the Pacer gets for its contribution to history, some owners appreciate them and have also upgraded them with the modern AMC 4.0 Jeep engine as a "low-buck, dare to be different" automobile. A few owners have further modified Pacers into drag cars.

Information for this article supplied by Richard Koop and internet sources.

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guest appearances continued into the early 1980s, including co-starring in *The Chicken Chronicles* (1977), an appearance on *Fantasy Island* as an old comic trying to reunite with his old partner, and on *Happy Days* as the father of Jenny Piccolo (played by his daughter Cathy Silvers). In 1978, Silvers played the cab driver "Hoppy" in Neil Simon's send-up of hard-boiled detective films, *The Cheap Detective*, which starred Peter Falk. In his cab, Silvers can be heard (three words) and seen turning his head towards the camera and breaking into a smile (1/4 fps) at the movie's ending immediately before Falk entering "Hoppy's" cab. His final appearance was in an episode of *CHiPs* (entitled "Hot Date") in 1983.

On November 1, 1985, Silvers died in his sleep in Century City, California. According to his family, Silvers died of natural causes. He was interred at Mount Sinai Memorial Park Cemetery in [Los Angeles](#).

In 1996, TV Guide ranked him number 31 on its 50 Greatest TV Stars of All Time list.

In 2003, *The Phil Silvers Show* was voted

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The Welcome Wagon

By Francis J. Kalvoda, Willmar, Minnesota 320-235-5777 fjk@charter.net



The Welcome Wagon

My new year's resolution is to NOT look for a full-time job. Veteran LCOC members will find enough new members to keep me busy contacting those new members and have a column ready each month. For the first two months of 2018, my job looks secure.

Our first new member of the new year is Chris Augustine, 1814 31st Avenue South, Fargo, North Dakota 58103, email iainlincolnman@gmail.com. With that email address, is there any doubt that Chris is truly one of us? Chris' current Lincoln inventory includes 1973 and 1975 Lincoln Continental Mark IVs, a 1979 Lincoln Continental Town Coupe, and a 1984 Lincoln Mark VII LSC Diesel.



Chris and his yellow '73 Mark IV

Here is what Chris says about his interests, especially Lincolns:

I have fun with my hobbies, and I buy things that I like, but I do not worship them, nor do I insist that everyone else envy anything. I don't participate in shows, but I generally do enjoy them. I find that connecting with people over shared interests is much better than having them look up to me over stuff. I like vehicles as the complex mechanical things that they are, demanding a wide range of skills from their owners if repairs

are handled in-house.

I was born in Fargo, North Dakota and have never really moved away. I have spent a few months other places over the years, but I have always lived in the same area. I was always interested in how things worked and was determined and meticulous when I had reason to be even from a very young age. I dismantled a lot of things over my childhood, not all of which pleased my father. When I was 12, I took an interest in music (though I have no skill myself) and this led to collecting stereo 1970s vintage equipment (primarily Kenwood). I collected bicycles for a few years (I must have owned a couple of hundred over the years) until I was old enough, to begin with, cars. My father had always been interested in cars, but I was unable to participate much beyond attending shows with him until I was 16 when I bought my first car - a yellow 1973 Lincoln Mark IV. I had been looking for a full-size Ford product from the 1970s for three years, and I have to say that the patience really paid off well. I had not even tested for a learner's permit, but I could not have been happier to have found and brought home that car! It was all a forward sprint from there with the automotive hobby, and I would say that at this point it is a fair assessment that I find interest in all sorts of vehicles. In my early twenties, I took an interest in motorcycles. I started out with motocross and moved into street bikes, settling mostly in the Japanese "muscle bikes" of the 1980s.



Chris with his black 1975 Mark IV

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*Best Sitcom in the Radio Times Guide to TV Comedy. In a 2005 poll to find The Comedian's Comedian, Silvers was voted #42 on the list of the top 50 comedy acts ever by fellow comedians and comedy insiders. Dick Van Dyke; who made his TV debut on *Bilko*, says he "was always fascinated with Phil's sense of timing. Incredible."*

*Voice actor Daws Butler employed an impression of Silvers as the voice of the Hanna-Barbera cartoon character Hokey Wolf and also used the same voice in numerous cartoons for Jay Ward. The premise of *The Phil Silvers Show* was the basis for the Hanna-Barbera cartoon *Top Cat*, for which Arnold Stang moderately imitated Silvers' voice for the title character. The 1993 cartoon series *The Adventures of Sonic the Hedgehog* featured a character called Wes Weasley, who had a very similar appearance and voice to Silvers.*

From the internet..

*Happy New Year
From the
Northstar News*

More Welcome Wagon

(Continued from page 11)

In more recent times, my father and I have purchased a long defunct old Ford (tractor) dealership in a small town and are in the long, slow process of getting it up to where we can use it for a workshop.

Most importantly to this day, I continually like to learn how things work. Almost anything.

Chris may be calling some of the veteran club members if he has some Lincoln problems. I told him that LCOC also stands for Lots of Clever Owners of Continentals with Lots of Cool Old Cars.

Our next new members are Lyle and Terrill Stratton, 1116 Highland Circle, Farmington, Minnesota 55024, 651-214-5234, email midgetmech@cs.com. Lyle served in the Navy from 1965 to 1992; we thank you for your service!



Lyle owns this neat '41 Ford Tudor

As Lyle's email address suggests, his short stature came in handy when repairs were needed in tight places on ships and airplanes. The Stratton Ford collection includes a 1927 Ford Model T Touring, 1931 Model A Ford Briggs Sedan, 1941 Ford Tudor, a Model A chassis which will be a pickup, and the latest acquisition, a 1947 Lincoln Continental Coupe. Lyle has retired a couple of times but keeps finding part-time jobs

to support his old Ford addiction. I think Lyle is in good company in the Northstar LCOC and is the therapist; who can relate to us. Lyle and Terrill have been married for 47 years. Lyle says that their key to happiness is that Terrill always knew there was a Ford in their future, and now a Lincoln Continental!!



Lyle and his wife, Terrill also own this very fine 1947 Continental Coupe. We will look forward to seeing this Continental at one of the LCOC events in 2018.

I will be introducing more new members next month (and with your help every month). Here is just a 'little' teaser for next month. What is the difference between a Chrysler K car and a Lincoln K car? Please don't dodge the question.



Look for more information on this very special Lincoln K next month. There will be no mistaking this with a Chrysler K car. Francis Kalvoda will be at the ready to help clue you in.

Winter is a great time to recruit new club members. Lincolns are in their future! Have them check out Northstar LCOC on the internet. Check out our events. Our 2018 National LCOC meet in Minnetonka.

****HAPPY NEW YEAR!****



**THE LINCOLN
MOTOR COMPANY**

For Sale — All Good Lincolns



FOR SALE: 1997 Lincoln Town Car - Signature Series. Show Car - 1st Place 2012 LCOC Mid-America National Meet. Pearl White exterior and Light Gray interior. Absolutely looks and drives like new. 76,000 miles. In heated storage and rust free. \$9,450 Call Rolland Toenges 952-938-6200 or email: rptoenges@aol.com



Travel in comfort — Arrive in style!

FOR SALE: 2011 45 ft Tiffin Zephyr, one owner, non-smoker, \$249,500 with 36,000 miles. All serviced ready to get out of MN for the winter.

Call or text Roger 218-966-7640 for more information and more photos.



FOR SALE: 1937 Lincoln K 2 window sedan. This car is one of three known and has been a show winner and a very reliable tour car. It has a high speed rear end and has been completely restored to a very high standard. It has won the Edsel Ford trophy and has been a runner up to the Bell award. I am offering the car at \$59,500 and am looking for good home with someone who will enjoy it as much as I have. If you are interested, please call Tom Brace at 651-644-1716 or email trbrace@comcast.net



FOR SALE: 1978 Mark V. White with blue, full padded top. Blue leather interior. Excellent condition, both inside and out. Smooth running 460 makes it a pleasure to drive. Air blows very cold. Truly would be a joy to own. 54K miles, it just don't get much better. Fairly offered at \$9,950.

Call Dennis Owens at 612-269-6482 to talk more about this Mark and the price.

You May Be Interested in these Items for Sale

Wanted.... Car club badges and patches. New and Used. Call Harvey Oberg, 651-739-9754

Wanted... NOS exhaust resonator for a 1974 Lincoln Town Car. Part Number D4VA5E272AA
Call Vaughn Ebbighausen at 218-736-4049 or email vemsp294@gmail.com

For Sale - 1965 Lincoln Continental Convertible



This beautiful, fully-restored, 100-point car (Lincoln show standards) is now available. Equipped with the whisper-quiet, smooth 430 V8, rare silver blue bucket seats and steel belted radial tires. Stainless exhaust system and detailed engine bay and undercarriage. Drives perfectly. Call John Palmer at 218-389-6189 or 218-380-3239.



1994 Lincoln Town Car Executive loaded with options. The car has two air bags, key-less entry, air suspension, moon roof, four wheel disk brakes, cassette tape player and 1-1/8" white wall tires. Second owner since 1999. Car gone over by Lincoln dealer. Rare gold color with matching interior. Must see to appreciate. Asking \$9,500.

Call Richard at 651-351-2855.



Northstar Region grille badges are now available. To obtain yours, contact Bob Johnson at 651.257.1715.

Now Available - Lincoln Caps and Shirts

Mens shirts with pockets, Ladies without pockets.
All Sizes, one price \$25, Caps, \$10.



Call now, operators standing by: Bob Johnson
651-257-1715 or email: arborbob41@aol.com

Preview of Coming Events

- January **Sunday, January 7th, Sunday Brunch at the Roasted Pear** in Brooklyn Park, 9690 Colorado Lane, at 11:30 AM.
- February CCCA Potluck/Auction, Firefighters Museum, 664 22 Avenue NE, in Minneapolis on **Saturday, February 17 at 5:00 PM.** More information in February issue.
- March **Sunday Brunch, March 11, Jax Café, Minneapolis, at 11:30 AM.**
- April **Car detailing seminar,** Date, Time and Location in our February Newsletter.
- May **10th Annual Memorial Day weekend car show, Bloomington Lincoln,** Bloomington, MN, Saturday, May 26, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Know some other event that may be of interest to members of the North Star Region? Let us know and perhaps we can work it into our event schedule for this year. Do you have a special burger place that we can cruise to some evening? Tell us about it — maybe we can do it. Good friends and nice Lincolns make for some fun times.

The all new 2018 Lincoln Navigator, available shortly at your nearby Lincoln dealer.



BACK ISSUES OF THE NORTHSTAR NEWS ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE
ON THE NORTHSTAR LCOC WEB SITE.

www.northstarlcoc.org Click on publications.

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

North Star Activities



Get 2018 off to a good start and join your North Star family for the first brunch of the New Year on Sunday, January 7, 2018, at the Roasted Pear, 9690 Colorado Lane, Brooklyn Park.

Be there at 11:30 AM, don't miss out on all the fun!
Door prizes for those who attend. Please RSVP by
January 5th to Jay White at 952-432-5939
or email: jay@jwhiteandassoc.com



Upper Midwest Region of the Classic Car Club of America

POT LUCK DINNER AND AUCTION
Saturday, February 17, 2018 5:00 PM
To be held at the Firefighter's Museum
664 22nd Avenue NE, Minneapolis
Details in the February 2018 Newsletter
North Star LCOC members are invited.



Join us for brunch on March 18, 2018, 11:30 AM
at Jax Café, 1928 University Avenue NE,
Minneapolis, MN

See you there on March 18, for the best brunch in town!

Today, the rich history of Jax Cafe has served the families of Northeast Minneapolis faithfully for 75 years. Bill Kozlak, Jr. follows in his father and grandfather's footsteps by preserving the rich tradition of Jax cafe while continuing the promise of uncompromised service. Known for a warm welcome and traditional atmosphere, Jax Cafe serves only the finest menu of premium cuts and fresh seafood flown in from all over the world. Recognizing that fine food doesn't require flash and trend — Jax Cafe impresses with the best ingredients, immaculate preparation and the heart of a dining experience crafted through three generations.