



news

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Volume 29

Issue 6

June 2002

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Minutes of Meeting 30 May, 2002

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 by President Steve Liebenow. It was quite a mob scene, with some 16 De Tomasos and almost 50 people present. The start of the meeting was delayed by the presentation of a birthday cake to Steve, along with free pie for all members present, courtesy of the restaurant!

All officers were present except for Dave Crego and the Renshaws. Charlie and Karen Puckett made a rare guest appearance to discuss the track event.

In fact, our meeting boasted several people clearly vying for some sort of longest-distance-travelled award. The Pucketts came down from Petaluma, Mark Tumbarello drove from Modesto, Mike Drew came from Vacaville, Larry Finch from Fresno, Cal Eustaquio all the way from San Louis Obispo, Larry Stock from Reno and John Hansen flew in from Wyoming!

New Members/Guests: Among the myriad of faces, we had one visitor—**Victor Zeve**, the Camaro owner who hosted Greg Jacobs' multiple ZF-pulling tech sessions.

Changes To Last Month's Minutes: There was some confusion in the reporting of officer attendance—it was reported that quite a few officers were meeting, instead of *missing*.

Treasurer's Report: After the influx of cash from the track event and club store sales in Las Vegas, and deposits for the Monterey event, our treasury is bulging. However, we have some fat checks to write to the hotel soon. We're still in good shape, however.

Club Store Report: John reported that this year's PCNC store sales were by far the highest ever recorded. He also determined that *anything* that was red and had "Pantera" on it would sell immediately, so next year he intends to seriously bulk up on red t-shirts, golf shirts, hats, etc. etc.

It cost only \$160 to ship items from the manufacturer directly to the hotel; it arrived before the majority of the PCNC members did, and most of it sold that morning! To avoid the hassle of schlepping it ourselves, he suggested we try to make this a standard practice.

As an aside, the Fertittas manned the POCA club store for the entire weekend; Michael joked that they didn't even have a room, they just stayed at the store! They also reported substantial sales after the banquet, which is something we may want to consider for the PCNC store in the future.

Past Events:

A/C Tech Session: Roger reported that a total of 33 Panteras and a half-dozen street rods attended the tech session immediately prior to our trip to Las Vegas. He had hoped for more street rod attendance, but many local owners drove to an event in Redding instead. He plans to hold another dual event in the future.

Las Vegas Speed Trials: Charlie gave a brief report on the track event, which was a resounding success. We haven't conducted a final numbers crunch, but participation was up slightly and it appears that we made a slight profit, thankfully. He is already thinking of new ideas for next year's event, leaning towards the notion of turning it into a two-day event, and trying to shift the focus towards the B and C group drivers, to increase total participation. If necessary he hopes to ridicule or embarrass people to get their cars out there on the track, to try out their \$3,000 brakes and \$10,000 motors!

Las Vegas Fun Rally: A great time was had by all, and we were relatively free of mechanical problems. Brian Bernard blew a radiator hose on the way home, but some passing POCA members from Bakersfield fetched him a replacement, and then the main PCNC contingent assured he was topped off with water and he made it home successfully. Mad Dog's water-to-oil cooler turned into a water-to-oil *mixer*, resulting in chocolate latté for coolant! Many, many hours of flushing and bleeding later, he thought he had it licked, but it overheated just outside of town. One more round of bleeding did the trick, and he made it home in one piece.

See Russ Britschgi's article elsewhere in this newsletter.

Speedring Karting Challenge: 15 people showed up to compete for glory on the tight, twisty indoor kart track in Santa Clara. Anita Kuehne reported that it was a high-testosterone affair! Mike Drew took the pole and initially ran away from the pack, but Terry Morofsky overcame a poor qualifying effort and made an epic charge through the field from the back of the

grid, working his way all the way to second place, then performing a highly strategic pass to take the win on the last half of the last lap!

Incidents were few, although Greg Jacobs' father stuffed himself so hard into the tire wall that he was buried up to his chest!

Following the race, we retired to Bennigan's for a fantastic lunch where our exploits were revisited for several more hours.

The track management liked us so much that they invited us to put together a team to compete in a monthly team race series.

Nevada Open Road Race: John Bentley and Dennis Antenucci both started and finished the companion race to the fall Silver State, held on the same highway in Nevada. Due to unusually strong winds (gusting to 65 mph), the Unlimited class didn't run, and everybody else showed unusually high oil temperatures as the wind was mostly a headwind. John averaged something around 135 mph while Mad Dog was down around 125 or so.

One Corvette crashed in a big way (with the differential coming to rest against the engine!) but the drivers were treated and released.

A film crew was present to shoot footage for a documentary, and as the two Panteras were the *only* vintage cars present, they were chosen to be featured heavily.

Upcoming Events:

Hole In The Ground Tour — 29-30 June: The Fertittas passed around a sign-up sheet. So far 27 people have registered and 14 rooms are booked (of the 24 available). As rooms may fill up quickly, it's advisable to book your rooms immediately if you intend to come. Michael also needs the box lunch order soon. See the flyer elsewhere in this issue.

Monterey Historic Race Weekend — 15-18 August: An extensive flyer for the Monterey weekend appears in the POCA newsletter. Tony advised that this year's dinner will have a Hawaiian theme, and as the city of Pacific Grove is having a Hawaiian event sometime prior to ours, he has arranged to snag all their props for our use!

Even if you are not planning on attending the entire weekend, the Friday evening dinner is a fantastic party, and well worth the drive down. We can accommodate up to 130 dinner guests but reservations *must* be made in advance; we simply won't have the ability to accommodate walk-ins.

The large-size suites are still available, and are an excellent choice for a group of bachelors to share. If they are not sold by the end of June he will turn them back in to the hotel.

As always, the hospitality suite will be open to all, and Todd Glycer will be our host. And of course, Jack DeRyke will coordinate the on-site car show, and is apparently cooking up a new trophy as well.

A brief show of hands revealed that most people present were planning on attending.

Club Business:

POCA Dues Going Up?: Dennis Antenucci spoke briefly to the crowd, and told them that dues hadn't been raised in ten years, but expenses have continued to climb. At the POCA president's breakfast in Las Vegas, he offered two choices to the chapter representatives: Raise dues by \$15 (with an additional \$5 returned to the chapters), or cut back on production of the newsletter and/or quarterly magazine. The unanimous opinion was that a dues increase would be preferable; he then conducted a poll of the PCNC crowd with similar results.

News, Clues and Rumors:

Bad Boy At Boyd: Tony Harvey drove his Pantera down to Southern California to attend a tour of Boyd Cunningham's wheel manufacturing facility, and he arrived over an hour early. He saw a raffle jar for a free set of wheels, and the receptionist told him there was no limit on entries, so he passed the time by filling out entry forms.

And of course, he won!

However, afterwards a representative from Boyd's told him that only one entry per person was allowed, so he was disqualified and another drawing was held, which of course, he didn't win. Still he had a great time and learned a lot about wheel manufacturing.

Brian Bernard Needs To Fly Next Time: Brian Bernard wasn't at the meeting because he had just returned home from a trip to Las Vegas. This time he drove his ZR-1 Corvette, which managed to break down only about two miles away from where his Pantera had stranded him last time!

Group Road Trip To Las Vegas?: Tony Harvey always takes a very roundabout way to reach Las Vegas; this year he went to Palm Springs, Sedona, the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, before finally turning west and driving to Las Vegas.

He is thinking of organizing a long-distance tour for next year, perhaps going up through Wyoming. Roger Sharp and Jim Kuehne are thinking of making a run to Oklahoma and back!

CB Tech: Jim Kuehne installed a new fixed antenna on his car, connected to his hand-held antenna, and his was the most powerful radio of the bunch! This is because he has the instruments needed to fine-tune the antenna. Radios have become quite cheap now, but antenna setup is the key to high performance. We may have an antenna tuneup clinic at the next tech session.

Local Panteras For Sale: Longtime-ago club member and noted engine builder Al Leist has his yellow Pre-L Pantera for sale. He has owned it almost since new, it has 24K miles, a monster motor with nitrous, big brakes, etc. Everybody then asked Larry Finch why he hadn't already purchased it! He took the information and will be looking at it soon.

Marlin Jack drove his second Pantera, a GT5 conversion, to the meeting wearing a "For Sale" sign. Contact Marlin for information.

Other Collector Cars For Sale: Chuck Melton drove a '69 Cadillac convertible to the meeting, which has a new motor, new top and new tires. No asking price was given. Tom Hasenberg has a '67 Ford Galaxie 500 with 18K original miles, equipped with a 390, in mint condition, asking \$8500.

Driving For Dinner Raffle: Larry passed out tickets to everyone who drove his De Tomaso to the meeting (Tony Harvey wanted a fistful of them!), and Kaizer Albino won—he had only had an ice cream though!

Raffle Results: Larry Stock once again passed the hat, collecting for the club raffle. In a rare sight, Mike Drew was seen actually reaching into his pocket and parting with his own money; this inspired by the presence of a pair of nice Cobra posters among the available prizes. Larry joked that Mike would probably win the *Profiles* centerfold instead—which, of course, is exactly what happened!

Cobra poster (large) — Mark Tumbarello
Cobra poster (small) — Rich Boschert
Sports Car Graphic Mangusta poster — Chris Schimonsky
POCA Centerfolds — Steve Liebenow, Mike Drew
Kirk Evans video — Daryl Johnson
Bonneville program — Bob Benson
Woodcut Pantera Si key chain — Mark McWhinney
ARP catalog — John Hansen

The meeting was adjourned to the parking lot for plenty of car-gawking and tire-kicking.

Switched On

(Electrifying bedtime stories from a DeTomaso owner)

By Steve Bogart

After building a new engine for my '71 Pantera last summer, I was more than ready to get to the fun part—breaking it in. But the combination of hot weather and a 393 stroker turned out to be too much for my stock cooling system. I ordered up the Hall lay-forward radiator and new cooling fans to remedy that issue.

With the new cooling system installed, I could really smoke 'em. Trouble is, the smoke was coming mostly from the fusebox, not the rear tires. It seems that fuse #7 would intermittently overheat and although not actually “blowing”, it would melt the plastic core and thus break connection. That started me on a somewhat extended mystery tour of my car's electrical system. A little of what I learned might be of use to others, so here's the whole story.

I bought my car in 1998, and it is very original (see the aforementioned reference to the stock cooling system). In my efforts to clean things up and make it as reliable as possible (no snickering, please), I replaced the ancient ceramic-core fuses with new ones all of the correct rating as listed on the fuse box cover. The new fuses have a plastic core.

Now there are probably those who would consider the problem described above and decide to just go back to an old ceramic fuse to replace the one that kept melting. After all, they are both 25 amp fuses in a 25 amp slot. Ceramic can't melt, so that would solve the melting problem. But in my view, that's the automotive equivalent to putting a penny in a household fuse box. Even if I can get the fuse to survive, there still must be an underlying cause. Fuse slot #7 was so hot you couldn't touch it even under normal driving conditions.

To find out the problem, I started with a thorough check of the fuse box. I started checking the amperage drawn by each accessory and made a list. In the process, it became clear that whoever wired the car back at the DeTomaso plant had used the listing on the fuse box cover merely as a vague recommendation, not the gospel. Some were misleading, others omitted, and a few were just plain wrong.

Omission is easy to deal with. For example, the clock was not listed on the cover, but it sure shut down in a hurry when fuse #7 is out. As for misleading, the A/C fan is listed only under fuse #10, but that really only controls it's relay. The actual power for the A/C fan comes from fuse #7 but the list doesn't even mention

that.

But my troubles came from the fact that some very power-hungry accessories were simply connected to the wrong fuses. Fuse #7 had the three most powerful accessories in the car (5 amps each) connected to it. Both radiator fans, and the A/C fan ran through this fuse for a total continuous draw of over 15 amps. This is not even considering the clock and horn which were also on that circuit. That flow of power turns the fuse into a little toaster. With the box closed and covered, it had no place to dissipate that heat, and that was causing the fuse core to melt.

The remedy was simple enough. I pulled the wire powering the two radiator fans off of the #7 lug, and moved it to #11. The #11 fuse had been saddled with the enormous task of powering the manual radiator fan relay (0.4 amps) and the parking brake warning light (0.2 amps). Now instead of having #7 powering 15-20 amps and #11 powering less than 1 amp, it's more balanced. Fuse #7 will see 5-10 amps, and #11 will tip in at 10-11 amps.

So that brings me to the issue of load balancing. Having done a bit of home wiring I've got a little understanding of what the objective is in any fuse or breaker box. There are two key objectives. First, you want to balance load among the fuses in a “share the work” type of manner. This keeps both fuses and wires from overheating. Secondly, you want to know the maximum load at each circuit, and choose a fuse that is close to, but slightly more than this value. That way, when a short occurs, the fuse responds (blows out) quickly.

Take for example, the way my car was previously set up. In addition to the melting problem at fuse #7, fuse #11 was a danger too. It was specified on the box as needing a 15 amp fuse, but in reality it would never see more than 1 amp of current flowing. This means that in the case of a short in the wiring, it could draw up to an additional 14 amps without blowing the fuse. This is more than enough to heat up a wire and cause an electrical fire, but the fuse would not have stopped it. So the name of the game with fuses is to know the normal amperage of the circuit, and choose a fuse accordingly.

In order to check my entire fuse box for load balancing and the correct fuse specification, I checked the current (amperage) for each and every accessory.

The table below shows my findings. These may be useful to some as a guideline, but remember that your mileage (amperage) may vary if you are using non-stock items (e.g. halogen headlights). Also, I found some difference in identical accessories (e.g. left vs. right low beam) just because of manufacturing variances. Furthermore, later cars used a slightly different wiring scheme (the radiator fans are on fuses #11 and

#12 for example) so you should compare this table's results with your own wiring schematic.

If you'd like to have your own light show, there are a few ways to check the amperage. I started out the easy way, simply by using a multimeter. But this solution runs out at 10 amps since very few multimeters can stand to run more than 10 amps through their internal circuitry. This is where my friend Chris Clark

1971 Pantera Current Loads

Fuse #	Circuit Components	Amperage
1	Left High Beam and High Beam Indicator	4.2
2	Right High Beam	4.4
3	Left Rear and Right Front Parking Lights, and Right License Plate Light, Instrument Lights Back-up Lamps (note: function only when parking lights are on)	3.4 2.8
4	Right Rear and Left Front Parking Lights, and Left License Plate Light, Parking Light Indicator	1.9
5	Left Low Beam	3.4
6	Right Low Beam	2.4
7	Clock	0.5
	Horn	5.0
	A/C Fan Main Power	5.0
8	Hazard Lights	2.5
	Wipers	4.0
	Radio (AM/FM CD Player)	3.0
	Door Safety Lights	0.6
	Courtesy Light in Cockpit	0.3
9	Lighter (didn't test this, don't smoke)	0
10	Concealment Device	2.5
	Heater Blower (1.4 amps on low, 2.4 amps on high)	2.4
	A/C Fan Relay	0.1
11	Manual Radiator Fan Relay	0.4
	Manual Radiator Fan Main Power	5.0
	Automatic Radiator Fan Main Power	5.0
	Parking Brake Warning Light	0.2
12	Turn Signals	3.0
	Battery Charging Indicator Lt	0.7
	Brake Lights	3.1

Total : 65.8

stepped in. Chris helped me in the dyno room with my new engine and being an electrical engineer he's the first one I called with this problem. Chris explained that you can rig up a system to safely calculate amperage without actually running large amounts of current through the meter. The process is simple enough and requires only a small apparatus that you can build for less than \$1.

As electricity runs through a wire, the voltage stays pretty much the same unless it comes to some resistance. The resistance will effectively choke the flow of electricity. You'll see this as voltage when measuring from above to below the resistor with a volt meter. The measured voltage can be used to calculate the amperage. Since most of the power is running through the resistor and not your multimeter, you can measure much higher amperages this way. I didn't take it to the limit, but you could probably get away with at least 20 amps.

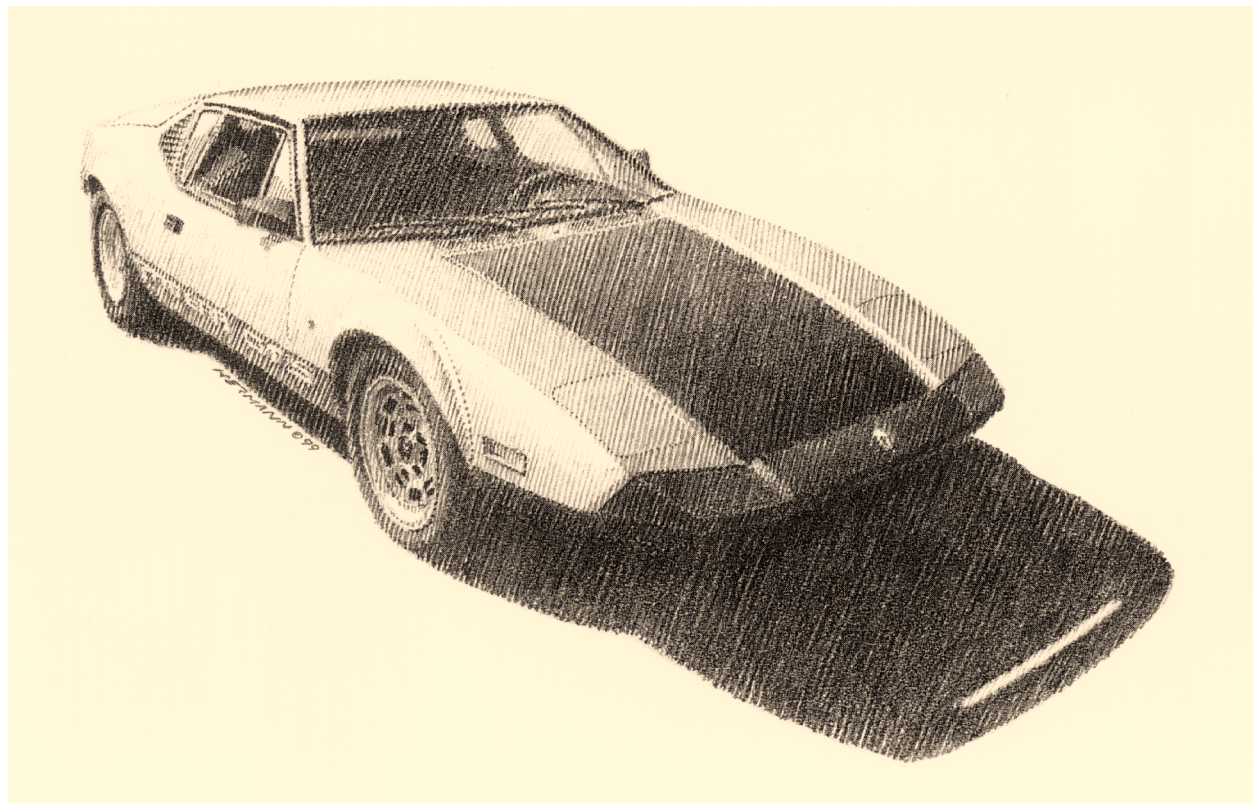
The test rig consists of a resistor (not surprisingly), two short wires and two alligator clamps. To make the calculation simple, use a 1 Watt, 1 ohm resistor with .01% tolerance (very important). These are uncommon, but electrical supply houses like Haltec have them, and they cost less than a dollar.

Chris built my test rig for me, and sent it over so I

didn't even have to fire up the soldering iron. To build your own, simply take the resistor and solder a 6" wire to each end. Then put an alligator clamp on the end of each wire. You're done.

To use it, start with all accessories off, and your car's battery fully charged. Choose an accessory to test, and find it's corresponding fuse. If it's not listed correctly on the fuse box, this can take some trial and error. Once you've found it, remove the fuse, and clamp one of the alligator clamps to each lead that is supposed to hold the fuse. You have effectively now replaced the fuse with a resistor. Next turn on the accessory ñ it should work normally with its power now coming through the resistor. Now set your multimeter to test voltage at about the 1V level. Touch a probe to each of the alligator clamps and note the voltage reading across the resistor. That reading times 10 is your amperage. So for example, if your volt meter shows .45 volts, then the accessory is drawing 4.5 amps.

If you've had any fuse box issues, I recommend going through this exercise. In about two hours I was able to build a complete table of all accessories, how much power they draw, and what fuse they were connected to. With the load re-balanced, I'm more confident in my wiring system holding up a bit longer, and the fuses will respond quickly if a short occurs.



Reno-Tahoe Pantera Fun Rally

Story and Photos by Mike Drew

I got home from a trip late on a Wednesday evening, just in time to take a quick nap, then jumped in the GT-350 and hit the road. The Reno-Tahoe Panteras fun rally was underway!

I had been told that the gang would be driving on Hwy 4 to Alpine Lodge (near the Bear Valley ski resort) and having lunch at 11:00 a.m. I was running late, but instead of taking the freeway for a couple of hours, at my first opportunity I turned onto the twisty roads and then did my best to make good time.

I had to really work to get around some slowpokes, but

as one rental car (Joe Russo from Chicago) and Utah's Russ Jacobson and his wife in his Honda S-2000 (since his Pantera motor blew a head gasket in Vegas).

Still, it was a wonderful day, with absolutely stupendous weather, and this nice small group of enthusiasts sat down to a delicious sandwich lunch. Just as we were finishing, Bill Gagnon and his girlfriend came roaring in, driving one of Steve Wilkinson's modular-motored cars; they had driven straight through from Los Angeles. So we extended our lunch stay a bit, and then it was time to head back down the hill.



The gang stopped in Markleville on the way down the hill, for a quick ice cream break

I finally got an open road for about 30 minutes, and drove just about flat-out, which felt marvelous. I came roaring into the Alpine Lodge at noon, to discover only Jim Nowlin's Pantera present.

I rightly guessed that Jim had similarly put the hammer down from the other direction, and the others were still to come. My timing was perfect; he'd only been there two minutes, and the rest arrived a few minutes later.

I was surprised to see how small the group was; I presumed that the crowd would be substantially bigger than last year, especially since Larry Stock told us at the PCNC meeting that they were expecting upwards of 100 people. But only seven Panteras made the speed run up the hill this day, as well

down the hill as opposed to just touring, so I made a point of getting right on his butt as we left the parking lot.

The road is rather unique among those I've travelled in California; it's so narrow that it doesn't warrant a centerline, but instead just two white lines on the shoulders. It is filled with whoops and dips and horrendous off-camber curves; it's really nothing more than a paved trail, barely wide enough

I knew that Jim Nowlin (event organizer) had set a blazing pace up the hill, both because he knows the road intimately, and also because his car is set up with trick shocks, 17-inch wheels, and a motor that generates a whopping 437.6 horsepower at the rear wheels! I had no hopes of keeping up with him, but I knew I wanted to blaze



Larry entertained the masses in his Reno Pantera shop, and even sold a few parts

for two cars to pass.

So of course we were hauling!

The steep downhill was marked with seriously tight corners, first-gear stuff when climbing, no doubt. That coupled with the speed and thin air meant the brakes took a pounding; I started to smell brakes, and although my pedal got slightly mushy, I don't know if it was mine I was smelling, or Jim's.

Jim, in the meantime, was being quite nice to me, and slowing down to 55 mph on the straights to let me catch up. He said he'd look in his mirror, and after a few seconds he'd seem me come barreling out of the corner, then he'd mat it and blow my doors off again.

We stopped in a small town, and when the others caught up (15 minutes later or so), we all continued on, then encountered a massive construction zone, with the road covered in gravel for miles. To prevent broken windshields, Cal-Trans had a pilot car shuttling back and forth, so we crawled along in first gear for 10-15 minutes or so.

Then it was back up to pace, and after a gas stop in Carson City, we blazed to and through Reno, and arrived at Pantera Parts Connection to find a much larger group of cars assembled—I'd guess 20 De Tomasos and a handful of Brand X cars.

Larry had laid out a terrific lunch buffet, and thankfully there was some still left. We then got a tour of his shop, there was an informal dustbowl car

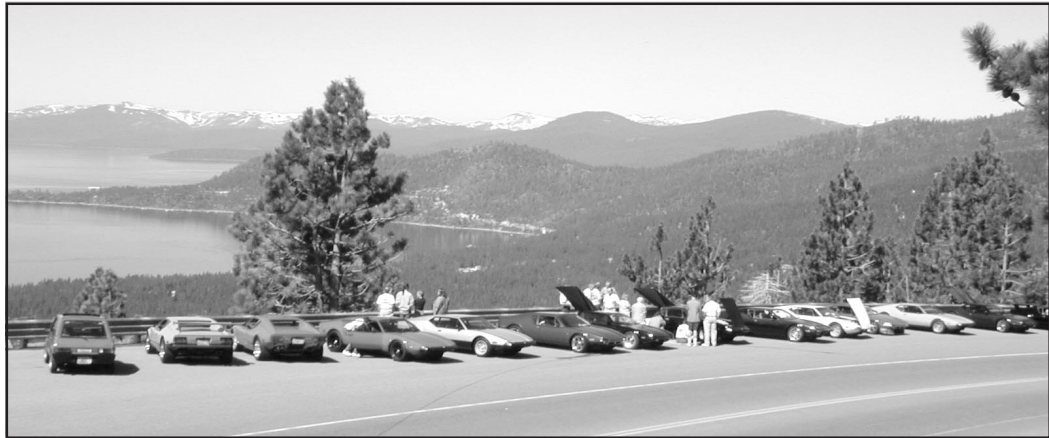
show (with the usual "best whatever" categories, as well as categories like "Baldest Tire" and "Foster Farms Chickens Award—Most lived-in Interior").

After several hours of hanging out, one by one we left and made our way to the Cal-Neva hotel. I was pleased to discover that we had the entire bottom floor of their underground parking lot all to ourselves. The entrance was more or less unmarked, so it's very well-hidden. Roll-up doors lock the cars in at night, and frequent security patrols ensure they are safe at all times. I'm at least as confident about my car's safety as I am in Las Vegas.

After checking in, I reported to the hospitality suite, where a small group of people knoshed on snackage, bought (very nice) shirts and discussed the events of the day.

The next morning, after a sumptuous 99-cent breakfast in the hotel restaurant, we gathered in the parking lot for a quick driver's meeting before departing for our cruise around scenic Lake Tahoe.

Jim Nowlin's Pantera picked up an expensive-sounding ZF noise (we all suspect broken ring gear bolts, surprise surprise) so he borrowed Larry Stock's DeTomaso Mini turbo



The next morning, we stopped at this scenic overlook alongside Lake Tahoe



After this car sprung a leak, everyone pitched in to get it back on the road

to lead the pack!

Unfortunately, the Mini developed some engine issues because somebody had pulled the manual choke all the way open, and thus it wasn't the rocketship it normally is, at least on the uphills (although Jim was filled with praise at its handling on the downhills).

I elected to leave my GT-350 in the garage, and bummed a ride in Jerry Brubaker's beautiful green Pantera, equipped with Viper seats, which are some of the most comfortable I've ever experienced in a Pantera (although a bit lacking in support, compared to Recaros etc.)

We stopped at a scenic overlook to view the lake, but soon discovered another lake forming underneath a Pantera. The car is owned by a couple from Maui, who

store their car at PI Motorsports, and fly to the states to drive it once or twice a year. It therefore receives little to no regular maintenance, and its age started to show, as an ancient cooling hose developed a pinhole leak.

Jacks and wheel chocks appeared instantly, Bill Gagnon crawled underneath and found the leak, and then a combination of duct tape and hose clamps was employed to form a temporary patch. With the radiator cap left loose, they then fired up and coasted downhill and into a local club member's garage, with the hopes that a nearby Napa could provide a substitute hose.

In the meantime, the rest of us went on our way and stopped at yet another overlook. After a brief wait, Jim Nowlin showed up, this time driving his pickup truck, as he'd parked the Mini in his own garage. (He lives in Incline Village).

The tour continued around the lake, with a stop at



We did manage to get a few high-speed miles on a clear section of road, thankfully!

Harrah's for a monster buffet lunch. I then hopped into Phil Camp's Pre-L Pantera to continue the tour.

The pace was quite sedate (unlike the day before!), both by design and by the simple fact that traffic prevented anything resembling speed. That's okay, it was a great day to look out the windows and admire the scenery.

We got into a seriously steep and windy section of road, with stop and go traffic, and there I saw a sight I'd never seen before and hope to never see again. Larry Stock had loaned his red race Pantera to Daryl and Connie Johnson, whose car was up on jackstands in his shop. Larry's car is (by his own admission) optimistically fitted with an ultratall 3.20 ring and pinion. First gear is thus about the same as second gear in a normal Pantera. When stuck on this road, it required brutal clutch slipping to get underway.

Daryl was doing everything he could to take care of the car, but at one point, the clutch was simply fried—literally. Phil and I were amazed to see a *huge* cloud of smoke suddenly come flying out of the engine bay—we both thought that he'd had a catastrophic coolant overheating episode. But



Daryl and Connie Johnson struggled to limp Larry's Pantera up the steep hill in stop-and-go traffic

no, that was *clutch* smoke we were seeing! The thing got so hot that it literally would not move the car—he had to just sit and let it cool off for awhile. But eventually he made it to the top of the hill, and the car recovered nicely.

Near the end of our drive we finally found some clear roads, and Phil and I found ourselves doing some serious corner-carving behind GoNancy Haney and Mike DeRyke (just back from their wedding in Venice), and Jim and Amanda Seiferling from Rio Vista (in the Sacramento delta).

The Seiferling car was a big of a success story—it was Steve Wilkinson's personal car and his very first restoration, and he sold it for outrageous silly money back in the '80's. It passed through several hands, and most recently was neglected and allowed to sit for many years. The Seiferlings bought it and have had to suffer with the issues normally found when resurrecting a car which has been idle for too long. It has been an ongoing wrestling match, but they finally managed to get the car running—one day before the event. It has performed flawlessly on its shake-down cruise.

Speaking of flawless performance, we soon came upon the formerly broken black Pantera, travelling at speed in the other direction! They had been successful in getting it fixed, and had gone backwards around the lake to catch up with the group. They flipped a 180 and followed us back to the hotel without further incident.

Once back at the hotel, after a quick shower and change, we walked a short distance along the river to the world-famous National Auto Museum. This museum contains about 250 cars, the majority of which are from the former 1200-plus car Harrah's collection. They cover the entire spectrum of the automobile from the very first cars of the 1800's up to a few cars from the '60's.

Inside the museum, tables were set up for a banquet. They had appropriately chosen an Italian theme, and I was extremely surprised at how absolutely delicious the meal was—my expectations for group meals are normally rather low, but I can honestly say that this dinner was as fine as any I've ever had in a normal restaurant. And of course, you can't beat the ambiance and the company!

Bobby Byars and Laurie Basile wandered in just in time to enjoy the grub after flying up from LA, and the three of us then toured the museum for a few hours. We stopped at the 1899 Winton, a car which has been ‘adopted’ by Reno/Tahoe Panteras. Club members volunteer to come in and periodically clean and generally look after this car—chosen because it’s the earliest mid-engine car in the museum!

Following our stay there, we ambled back to the hospitality suite where the stories went on well into the evening....

The last day was extremely laid-back. I had stayed up late the evening before, and didn’t roll out of bed until 10:30 in the morning. There was a small vendor display set up in the hallway outside the hospitality suite. Larry had a small display with a few parts, a laptop showing a slide show of photos, and a few ads. Bill Gagnon was representing Panteras by Wilkinson and was showing off their new rear swaybar cover with integral De Tomaso plaque. Theirs was copied directly from Bobby Byars’ (which in turn was originally from Pantera East), but in a tip of the hat, Bill also had one of Bobby’s on display so customers could compare them directly and choose which design they liked best (only the engraving is different).

And of course the Reno-Tahoe Panteras club store had a table covered with various shirts, etc. I don’t think anybody didn’t buy at least one!

During a lunch break, Jack and Judy DeRyke and I shuttled

over to Larry’s shop to help ferry cars back to Virginia Street for the upcoming car show. One of the available cars was Larry’s beautiful maroon Mangusta (displayed in the ballroom in Vegas this year), and I leapt at the chance since I’d never actually driven a Mangusta before.

Knowing the general state of repair of most of Larry’s vehicles, I offhandedly asked if the car had any brakes, since I know this was an issue several years ago. “One, I think?” he replied.

This analysis itself proved to be a bit optimistic. While he was talking about frozen calipers and booster leaks, the problem was instantly obvious to me, especially since I’d suffered an identical problem in the Scirocco of Doom—the master cylinder was completely shot, bypassing all the way. Even though the system was fully filled and bled, stepping on the pedal resulted in the pedal going straight to the floor.

Okay, let’s go! Once underway I tested the pedal and discovered that once it had reached the floor, if I then pressed on it very hard, I could get a minimal amount of action from the totally unloaded right front wheel, which would start to howl as it skittered across the ground, but performed very little by way of stopping action.

Right! Now let’s turn onto the freeway!

To say this was a harrowing drive is a massive under-



The museum’s on-site catering put on a splendid dinner

statement. I was supposed to follow Larry since I didn’t know where I was going, but we were quickly separated by traffic. I limped along trying to keep *lots* of space in front of me, and then made a wrong turn—thankfully Jack and Judy were behind me, and were able to zip ahead and get me turned around.

When braking wasn’t a consideration, the Mangusta was an absolutely wonderful drive, though. They are similar in some ways to the Pantera, but very superior in others. The aural qualities were especially appealing—the car is *quiet!* Oh, you can still



Reno-Tahoe Panteras adopted this 1899 Winton because it’s mid-engined

hear the sound of big-time power (this car was equipped from new with a solid-lifter 289 Cobra motor sourced from Shelby), but it’s an understated sort of sound, very muscular but sophisticated. The motor has plenty of poke, those few times where I dared stand on it. The steering is light and communicative, but far, far too slow—I forget how many turns lock-to-lock, but it’s way too many—if you ever got this car out of shape there’s nothing in the world you could do to recover. The ride was smooth and firm, but not abusive. My only criticism was a lack of headroom—my head was hard against the roof even though I rarely touch in a Pantera.

Oh well, that’s what I get for not being born a 5 foot 9 Italian, I guess!

Against all odds, we finally made it to the hotel, and after a driver’s meeting, we rolled out and drove around the block to enter Virginia Street from the north. Due to congestion it took about 10 minutes to drive two blocks, but thankfully the Mangusta’s cooling system was up to the job (although I did see a couple of Panteras get a little misty).

Driving down Virginia Street, four-abreast, brought back many fond memories of the Fremont Street display of yore. To say we stopped traffic is an understatement—the casinos emptied, and a chili cookoff festival taking place on the



Driving down Virginia Street was like the good ol' days....

Harrah's plaza was soon deserted, as hundreds of people lined the sidewalks to see what the fuss was all about.

Once parked, the people flooded the cars, and questions rained down upon the owners like confetti. All afternoon, admirers of all stripes gazed in wonder and awe. I was surprised when a few people knew exactly what the Mangusta was.

After a few hours, we vacated the street, and I again took my life in my hands and drove the Mangusta back across town (surface streets, this time.) Once on the broad and totally abandoned street in front of Larry's shop, I really booted the gas, and the car just hunkered down and squirted ahead, feeling much faster than my GT-350 (with similar motor and weight), although that may be down to lower gearing. I wanted to see how long it would have taken to stop from freeway speeds with no brakes.

Answer: about half a city block.

I then jumped into the Mini to give Larry a ride back to the hotel. Oh, by the way, once the choke was closed, the car ran great!

I giggled all the way back to the hotel, and when we got there and learned that the raffle prizes had been left back at the shop, I was only too happy to drive it back there, and back again. What a hoot!

Another fantastic banquet was then laid out before us, with a chef cutting a delicious roast to our taste. B.J. Filarski handed out the awards from the dustbowl concours, and Jim conducted the raffle in an expeditious manner.

This was one of the most memorable events I've ever attended. Jim and the Reno-Tahoe crew spent untold time planning and organizing, and it came off great. The thing I

like about this event is how incredibly low-key it is. Many if not most of the events I've attended can be grueling endurance contests, as you find yourself rushing out of bed at the crack of dawn, and then rushing from one place to the next into the wee hours, trying to cram it all in.

This event was the first *relaxing* Pantera event I've ever been to! Everything happened kind of slowly, leisurely, casual-like. Holy smokes, I felt like I was on *vacation!* Normally I need a vacation after I get home from an event like this!

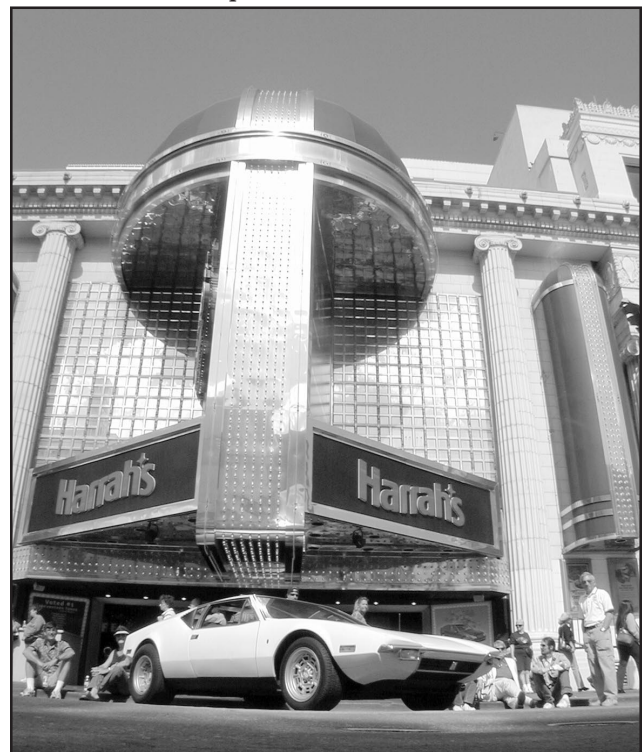
Unfortunately, attendance was down from the previous, initial year, which mystified everybody present. With lots of advance notice, great publicity from the year before, etc. everyone assumed that it would be bigger. Perhaps the June date is simply too close to the Las Vegas event. Whatever—I would hope that more of you would consider this not as an

alternative to Las Vegas, but rather as a worthwhile addition to your calendar.

At least partly due to accommodations which merely aspire to Plaza levels of opulence (but which suited each of us just fine, since we only used the room to sleep in and store our stuff anyway), the cost of the event is very, very low. Again, hats off to Jim and the Reno-Tahoe guys, and I hope to see a bunch of you there next year!



The crowds thronged around the cars as soon as we parked



NEXT CLUB MEETING

**THURSDAY, June 27, 2002
8:00 P.M.**

**COCO'S RESTAURANT
1209 OAKMEAD PARKWAY
SUNNYVALE, CA
(Take Lawrence Expressway South Exit off Highway 101)**

UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

June 29-30 ————— Hole In The Ground Tour (Michael Fertitta)

August 15-18 ————— Concorso Italiano/Monterey Historic Races (Tony Harvey)

**REMINDER — NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE BY 15th OF EACH MONTH
www.PanteraClubNorCal.com**