

news

www.PanteraClubNorCal.com

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Minutes of Meeting 29 July, 2024

The meeting was called to order by the president at 7:41 p.m., a bit late due to the late arrival of some of our meals. There were 20 people in the room, plus seven additional people attending virtually via Zoom. There was one Pantera in the parking lot.

New Members/Guests: We were pleased to welcome Eric Nichols to the crowd. He told us he has wanted a Pantera his entire life, and in fact he first learned about them at a PCNC meeting at Coco's restaurant when he was only eight years old! He was transfixed by that encounter and never forgot them. His parents were both into musclecars so he has been around them his whole life. He met Ken Bredlau at a car show, after leaving his card on Ken's Pantera. Unfortunately his Pantera budget has been blown on the recent acquisition of a very rare six-speed Dodge Hellcat, so he figures

it will be at least another year or two before he can come up with the needed cash to scratch his Pantera itch also.

<u>Changes To Last Month's Minutes</u>: Steve Liebenow had a few comments—he claimed that the rapid alignment of the clutch and gearbox was all down to talent and skill, not a miracle! He also said that the Mustang he bought had a three-speed automatic installed, which he intends to convert to a manual. Additionally, Dennis Valdez also represented the De Tomaso marque with his Pantera at the Hillsborough Concours.

<u>Club Store Report</u>: There was no report this month.

<u>Club Treasury Report</u>: Larry said there was minimal activity with our account this month, with only minor income and expenses.

<u>Club Membership Report</u>: There was no membership report this month.

<u>Club Motorsports Report</u>: Checkered Flag Racing Association is hosting a 105db day at Laguna Seca on September 8th, with several PCNC members planning to attend. This conflicts with the Nor-Cal Shelby Club Fall Classic, which will be at Sears Point on September 7th and 8th. The reasonable response would be to run at Sears Point on the 7th and Laguna Seca on the 8th!

<u>Club Website Report</u>: The transition from the old to the new website has been ongoing, and should be nearly complete by the end of August.

<u>Club Library Report</u>: There were no further additions to the library, whose contents remain available and accessible for checkout for any PCNC member.

Past Events:

<u>Larry Larsen ZF Tech Session</u>: The club successfully gathered to help install Larry's rebuilt gearbox, and the day was fully documented in the July newsletter.

Upcoming Events:

West Coast Pantera Rally — 13-16 September: The long-discussed informal gathering of California Pantera clubs has come together, and we are hoping for a good turnout for this event which aims to sort of replace the POCA Fun Rally for west coast residents. The Sunday rally route was originally going to be led by Erik Kolstoe but a schedule conflict has prevented him from being able to attend. Mike Drew then stepped up to try to fill in his shoes, and subsequently a POCA member living in Paso Robles has agreed to take on the responsibility, and has provided an improved route using his local knowledge. A flyer with the basic information appears elsewhere in this newsletter, and all the details have been (and will be) transmitted via e-blast. Make your hotel reservations now!

<u>Ironstone Concours — 26-28 September</u>: Steve Dalcino noted that as part of the Ironstone weekend, there will be a vintage back roads tour on the Friday. This means that anybody who wanted to take part would either need to leave home extremely early, or go up on Thursday instead of Friday. Already there are four PCNC Panteras signed up for the drive.

<u>Little Italy Festival — 6 October</u>: This street festival in the Little Italy neighborhood of San Jose celebrates all things Italian, including their automobiles. Established in 2016, it draws an estimated 15,000-20,000 visitors. It features authentic Italian cuisine, music, wine tasting, arts and crafts, cultural exhibits, and an Italian farmers market. On Saturday there is a car show that highlights the more humble, pedestrian Italian cars like Fiats and Alfa Romeos, as well as Italian motorcycles, while Sunday's car show is for Supercars of Italy.

Several PCNC members have already signed up to show their Panteras on Sunday. More information, and event registration can be found at www.LittleItalySJ.com.

<u>PCNC Christmas Party — 7 December</u>: The party is scheduled for the same place as before, this time on the 7th of December.

<u>New Mexico Rally — Spring TBD</u>: A professional event planner who lives in New Mexico and owns a Pantera is making noises about hosting a POCA Fun Rally-type event, except it wouldn't be a POCA event. The details are still quite sketchy but it might even incorporate a track day at the Sandia Speedway in Albuquerque. More details will likely emerge at the end of this year.

Buy/Sell/Swap:

Garth Garage Cleanout: Garth Rodericks brought a bunch of stuff to sell, including a large-scale Hot Wheels model, two aftermarket shift gates, a Veglia oil pressure gauge, Ghia badges, Pantera pins, a shift knob, luggage tags and a stock charcoal canister. Many of the items found new homes but others are still available; contect him if you're interested.

News, Clues and Rumors:

<u>Tragedy Strikes</u>: Many of us know Gray Gregory, the Houston-area Pantera owner and vintage racer who attends the Monterey weekend each year, racing in one of his two Chevron

two-liter sports racers. He is a regular at the PCNC dinner, as well as Garth's trackside BBQ, usually driving his multimillion-dollar 1961 Ferrari 250 Short Wheelbase Berlinetta. Astonishingly, earlier in the year Gray was diagnosed with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, an especially cruel disorder of the nervous system that is incurable, and fatal. Since his diagnosis, the disease has progressed rapidly, impacting his ability to speak, and to eat (since it starts in the neck area and progresses throughout the body).

Gary has shown remarkable resilience in the face of his terminal diagnosis. He had already entered one of his cars in the Brian Redmon vintage race at Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin. He had been helping former POCA President John Taphorn to find a similar car so they could race against each other; in response to his condition, he instead sold his car to John and included entry in the race.



John Taphorn and Gray with Brian Redmon

Mike and Lori Drew flew out to Chicago to both cheer on John, and spend time with Gray, who had purchased a motor home and set off on a giant road trip, incorporating the race. His condition had notably worsened since Mike saw him just a few weeks earlier, but his spirits and overall demeanor remained high. He spent the weekend motoring around on a golf cart, visiting with his friends and former competitors, along with the various POCA members in attendance.

He had another car entered for the Monterey event, and planned to attend this as well, with a guest driver campaigning the car for him. He also expressed his intention at visiting with us at the Tony Harvey Good Times Dinner, even though his condition renders him unable to eat. It's almost assured that this will be the final opportunity most of us ever get to see him....

Pantera Workstand: Many years ago, Johnny Woods devised a workstand to enable one to work in the Pantera's engine bay in comfort. He crafted a jig and flew to California, where he and Mike Drew created and sold 40 of them. The enterprise took two weeks, and netted them exactly zero profit, but it was a great exercise, and a lot of fun. He left the jig behind in case there was any further interest.

Dennis Valdez learned of this, and having recently taken up welding, decided this would be a worthwhile project. So Mike brought the jig along with an example of the workstand to the meeting for a handoff. Dennis plans to use it as a starting point, perhaps incorporating his own improvements. Watch for the results at an upcoming meeting.

<u>Pantera Parts Express</u>: Mike Drew's house often serves as a clearinghouse for other people's unwanted Pantera parts, something that Lori just *loves*. Recently, a club member was

passing through while Mike was out of town, and had some giant parts to pass along, including a pair of L-model bumpers. It was agreed that he would simply open the hatchback of one of the fleet of VW Sciroccos parked in (polluting) the driveway, rather than having Lori drag them into the house. A few days later they were up on E-bay, still residing in the back of a car. A PCNC member spotted them listed for sale in Vacaville and made the obvious conclusion, and an extra-Ebay deal was made.



He later drove up and picked them up personally and carried them off, so they came and went without actually ever leaving the back of Mike's car!

Raffle Results: Lori and Brett did the honors, with the following results:

Original POCA patch and stickers — Erik Kolstoe
\$50 Pantera Parts Connection gift certificate — Ken Bredlau
\$25 O'Reilly Auto Parts gift card — Ken Levin
De Tomaso flower vase — Eric Nichols
Pantera GTS model — Forest Goodhart
Golden State Warriors hat — Erik Kolstoe (donated to megafan Dennis Valdez)
Indian motorcycles hat — Garth Rodericks
De Tomaso polo shirt — Brett Santos

The meeting adjourned to the parking lot at 8:40 p.m.

Membership News

New Members for August:

We have no new members this month.

August Membership Anniversaries:

We congratulate the following people for the indicated years of continuous membership in the Pantera Club of Northern California:

Jack DeRyke: 44 years Forest and Judy Goodhart: 36 years

Tom Galli: 24 years

Corey Price: 13 years

Walter Miranda: 10 years

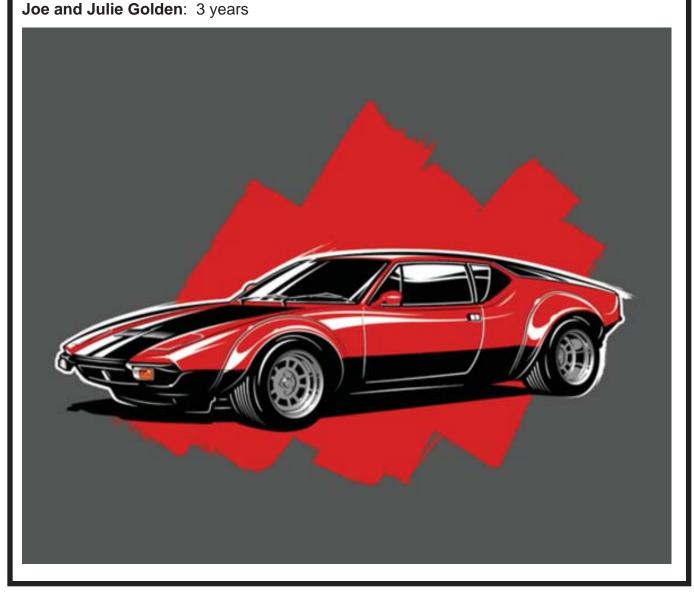
Denny and Bonita Morse: 13 years

Dennis and Liz Valdez: 10 years

David and Pam Lindsay: 9 years

Shawn Conway: 5 years

Paul Fahndrick: 5 years



In Memorium

Roger Sharp

5/1/1945 to 7/13/2024

Story by Diane Dean Photos by Diane Dean and Randy Welch

Roger Elwyn Sharp was born on May 1st, 1945, and throughout his life he played hard, worked hard, and partied hard, thoroughly accepting whatever life threw at him. He did many kind, generous and charitable things for people that he never mentioned and that most people never knew about.

Roger passed away in his sleep, at home in Lake Havasu, on July 13, 2024, after battling esophageal cancer. He was married to Stephanie for the past 12 years. She took wonderful care of Roger through all his trying and near-death experiences in his cancer battle.

Roger worked forty-plus years for PG&E, starting as a lineman. He worked in a variety of positions over the years, including management, training and supervisory capacities. One of Roger's assignments had him collecting on past-due PG&E commercial businesses. We are talking about past due bills in the \$25,000 and above ranges. PG&E was more than extremely sur-

prised when Roger had a 98% collection rate of bills being paid off. Businesses learned that when a 6'5" PG&E uniformed man walks into your restaurant, at lunch time, and talks to the owner saying he's going to immediately turn off their power, somehow they were able to pay their bill that very day.

Roger was a bold personality who one never forgets. He was a great car enthusiast and mechanic, belonging to PCNC for many years, serving as club president, raffle master, and chief mechanic, always with his best buddy, the recently deceased Jim Kuehne.

Roger was also a Ford Model A enthusiast. After selling his Pantera, Roger



Roger could always be counted on to dance like nobody was watching....





Roger's favorite pastime was helping others work on their Panteras. He was never shy about resorting to tools of destruction to get the job done!



Roger was inseperable from Jim Kuehne, his best friend for decades. Together with Anita Kuehne, they travelled to countless Pantera events and always had a terrific time

returned to motorcycling, purchasing a Harley-Davidson. He rode with friends to the Black Hills of Sturgis, South Dakota for the annual week-long motorcycle convention.

After selling his Harley (and

Roger's engaging smile and hearty laugh will never be forgotten

Stephanie's) upon relocating to Lake Havasu, Roger bought a speedboat. Of course, it had super, souped-up engines he loved (which he changed to his lik-

ing). Roger had been into boating in his younger days so it was only natural for him to return to cruising (and occasionally terro

sionally terrorizing) Arizona's waterways.

Roger wished to be cremated, and he didn't want a funeral service of any sort, nor any flowers. Roger selected this charity: Hospice of Havasu, P.O. Box 597, Lake Havasu City, AZ, 86405-0597, with tax ID 94-2836972, and asked that donations be made there in lieu of flowers. Stephanie found the right urn for Roger, a biker at the foot



Roger and Randy Welch working on Diane Dean's Pantera together

of a mountain, which she will keep at their Lake Havasu home.

If one wants to send a card or note to her, the address is 1873 East Savannah Bend, Lake Havasu, AZ 86404.

Roger lived life to the fullest on his terms, having lots of fun throughout the years. His unforgettable, outgoing, bold and brash personality, never one to mince words, never afraid to speak his mind, had a significant impact on many people who will miss him and never forget him.

For sure, he left a lasting legacy within PCNC and we are fortunate to have known him.

Signs of Real Estate Empire's Unraveling Emerged at Bay Area Vintage Car Dealership Story and Photos by Julie Johnson, San Francisco Chronicle

Sheryl Lawless spent three months in 2023 trying to get Specialty Sales Classics in Pleasanton to pay her the \$25,000 the vintage car dealership owed her for her late father's 1972 Datsun 240Z.

Employees told her they were waiting on the one man who could pay owner Kenneth Mattson.

Robert Brassfield said he got the same run around, two years earlier, after entrusting his 1967 Chevrolet Corvette Stingray to Specialty's Pleasanton dealership to sell on consignment. By law, the business had 20 days to wire him his share of the \$105,000 sale — but two months later, he still hadn't received his money.

Brassfield googled Mattson's name, and what he discovered struck him as odd. The car dealer who owed him had been making headlines in small-town Sonoma, where he had amassed a real estate empire worth hundreds of millions of dollars.



An old Ford Mustang drives by the empty Specialty Sales Classics showroom in Pleasanton, whose customers had complained of shady practices

"I was surprised a guy that seems to own all of Sonoma can't pay his bills," Brassfield said.

Brassfield and Lawless eventually got paid, but the money arrived months late and only after they filed complaints with the California Department of Motor Vehicles and the Alameda County District Attorney's Office. Contacted this week about Specialty Sales and Mattson, a District Attorney spokesperson declined to comment "on matters under ongoing investigation."

As it turned out, the issues at Specialty Sales - including lawsuits and scores of bruising online complaints from dissatisfied customers, which culminated with the closure of the business last month — foreshadowed bigger problems for Mattson.

The 62-year-old Sonoma investor and businessman is embroiled in a widening scandal that cracked open six weeks ago when his longtime business partner, Timothy LeFever, accused him of engaging in a "secretive scheme" to siphon investors' money into his own accounts and away from their real estate partnership, LeFever Mattson, and associated businesses.

Soon after that, the FBI raided Matt-



Sonoma developer Kenneth Matson owned Specialty Sales Classics, which faced a series of customer complaints before shutting down

son's Sonoma County home. In a lawsuit filed this month, LeFever claimed that Mattson had "duped" him and more than 100 investors by "secretly funneling at least \$75 million to himself." Mattson has sued LeFever, claiming his former friend and longtime business partner was deeply involved in their business operations and privy "to all material decisions."

LeFever's accusations threaten to topple the duo's \$413 million California real estate portfolio that grew to include some of the most iconic properties and businesses in historic Sonoma.

Years before, Mattson had seemed unstoppable. LeFever said in his law-suit that Mattson had earned a reputation as a "financial genius" with an uncanny ability to predict economic trends. Their real estate ventures for years delivered monthly distributions to a deep bench of investors.

In 2011, Mattson took on a side project: The classic car dealership with several East Bay showrooms full of Corvettes, Cadillacs, Mustangs and other collector models.

And in the rarified world of vintage cars, Mattson developed a reputation as an absentee boss and owner who dodged calls when it was time to pay, according to interviews with clients and former employees, as well as a review of court records and customer complaints with the Better Business Bureau.

Specialty Sales went out of business



A Specialty Sales Classics showroom sits empty on the corner of First Street and Kottinger Drive in Pleasanton

on May 4 after exhausting its \$50,000 surety bond "to settle claims from customers," according to a spokesperson from the DMV. California requires dealerships to hold bonding insurance to protect consumers who fall victim to negligent or fraudulent dealers.

The DMV had already placed Specialty Sales' license on probation in October 2022 for eight counts of failing to pay within the state mandated timeline, according to the DMV. All told, the DMV had 21 cases on record related to the dealership and said the agency does not comment on any open investigations.

Mattson, through an attorney, declined to comment on his management of the dealership and accusations from employees and customers about late payments.

Some employees said Mattson's absentee management style and close control of business finances, including routine customer transactions, created a stressful environment.

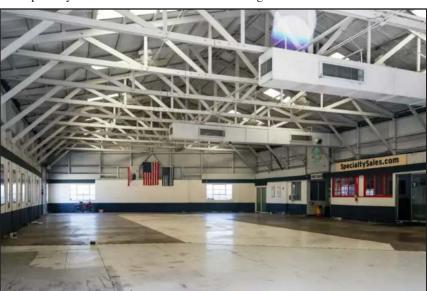
"I quit because of him," Trevor Gaspari, a former sales associate, said of Mattson. "I was tired of getting calls from people wondering where their money was."

But one former key employee told the Chronicle that the customer complaints made in lawsuits and to the BBB were outliers, not the norm.

"At the end of day, everyone got paid," said Joseph Smith, the company's former general manager, who worked at Specialty for 13 years.

Mattson did not always respond to messages, Smith said, but he assumed that was due to his responsibilities at his other businesses.

Opened 1978 in Pleasanton, Specialty Sales had become a Bay Area institution for classic cars. The company catered to buyers and sellers of high end classic models that sometimes sold for six figures. A previous owner, Steve Barlow, bragged to the San Jose Mercury News that Specialty Sales' clients



The inside of the cavernous Specialty Sales Classics showroom in Pleasanton is now completely empty

included Neil Young, Jay Leno, Bruce Springsteen and the Sultan of Brunei.

The consignment dealership for vintage and exotic vehicles, which also offered auto repair services, had showrooms in Benicia, San Carlos and Fairfield in addition to its Pleasanton site. For classic car connoisseurs, finding the right buyers and handling high-dollar sales can be difficult. Consignment dealerships like Specialty Sales handle the marketing and selling the vehicle, receiving a commission on the sale after it is completed.

Brassfield's Corvette sold for \$105,000 in July 2021; he was owed \$95,569 from the sale while Specialty was to keep about \$16,400, sales records show. In Lawless' case, she had agreed to receive a fixed \$25,000 from the sale, and Specialty listed a sales price of \$32,990, according to the consignment agreement.

Mattson had acquired the business in 2011, and quickly set about expanding with a showroom in a former Walmart site in Fairfield. He exhibited many of his own classic vehicles in a special portion of the building, employees said.

The company's social media pages were filled with dozens of gleaming convertibles and roadsters, among them a 1972 Datsun 240Z; a 1987 Mercedes Benz 560SL Convertible, and a 1970



The fading and decaying painting atop the door of the Pleasanton location is emblematic of the demise of the longstanding business

Dodge Challenger Hardtop.

LeFever was initially listed as an agent on Specialty Sales' articles of incorporation in 2011 when Mattson bought the business, but it wasn't clear whether he was ever involved in the business.

LeFever did not respond to questions about Specialty Sales, but in his lawsuit against Mattson, he said Mattson "owns an exotic car company, although it was recently shut down by the DMV."

The venture seemed to fit Mattson's luxurious lifestyle and love of classic cars.

Mattson drove multiple Bentleys and "at least one Rolls Royce," LeFever said in his lawsuit. Mattson, who split time between multi-million-dollar mansions in Piedmont and Sonoma, also had vacation homes in Del Mar "that touch the sand" and reported a net worth of \$250 million in 2021, the court filing said.

"By all accounts, Mattson is a very wealthy man," LeFever said.

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Challenges arose in the early days

of Mattson's tenure with Specialty Sales.

In 2012, an employee died after crashing a car that he had taken on a test run. Officials from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration investigated and eventually fined the business \$5,450.

Clients began to complain that the dealership was happy to take their cars — but then failed to pay them their portion of the sales proceeds. A state law requires dealerships to make such payments within 20 days. According to the DMV, failure to pay "is cause for suspension or revocation of the dealer's license."



Specialty Sales Classics, which operated this Benicia showroom, went out of business in May

Angry customers vented their frustration in public, filing blistering reviews with Yelp and the Better Business Bureau, resulting in an "F" rating from the nonprofit, which grades businesses based on ethical advertising, selling and customer experiences.

Alma Galvan, communications manager for the BBB's San Francisco region, said the low rating resulted from customer's complaints being "completely ignored."

Specialty was taken to court at least ten times for breach of contract, nonpayment, and poor workmanship, court records show. Four cases were handled in small claims court for matters less than \$10,000. In

another four cases Specialty was sued for larger sums for late payments or nonpayment.

In one case, the California department of labor ordered Specialty Sales to pay an employee more than \$8,100 and when it did not pay a judge ordered the company in 2016 to pay \$11,453 for back wages, commission and interest.

Customer Ken Matye sued the dealership in 2020 for false advertising after buying what was supposed to be a



Mark Vegesky stands with his 1971 Chevy Stepside truck outside of his home in Vallejo. He took the truck to Specialty Sales Classics for work and said he had forked over about \$15,000 before realizing, 11 months later, that the repairs were faulty or incomplete. He settled for a \$2,000 payment from the company in a small claims court lawsuit

1967 Pontiac GTO convertible with alloriginal parts for more than \$125,000.

Matye accused Specialty Sales of outfitting the vehicle with an engine meant for Pontiac Firebirds built a decade later. There were other problems with the vehicle, which wasn't actually legal to drive in California, Matye claimed. Matye's attorney declined comment. Matye settled the case in August 2023 after Mattson agreed to pay him \$160,000. But court records

show Matye's attorney returned to court and in May, asked for permission to sell the car because they hadn't received the promised payment and because Mattson's own attorney told them that the businessman "has simply stopped communicating with him."

Matye's experience mimicked that of two other clients, Fred Reineke and Darrin Okimoto.

Specialty Sales sold Reineke's 1957 Pontiac Chieftain Catalina for \$65,000. Reineke sued the dealership in 2021, after failing to receive his payment and running out of patience. The two parties settled the case a year later. Okimoto sued the dealership in January, after waiting several months for the dealership to pay him the proceeds from the sale of his mother's 1968 Shelby GT500, court records show. In May, a Solano County judge ruled in Okimoto's favor.

Another customer, Mark Vegotsky, brought his 1971 Chevrolet Stepside truck to Specialty Sales for repairs in 2019. Vegotsky told the Chronicle that he had forked over about \$15,000 before realizing, 11 months later, that the repairs were faulty or incomplete.

"They were not doing anything and asking for more money," Vegotsky said.



The sign painted on the window of the Benicia showroom promises great things, but the company consistently failed to deliver



Sheryl Lawless shows a picture of her late father's beloved car, a 1972 Datsun 240Z as it sat on consignment inside Speciality Sales Classics in Pleasanton. After the car sold, a delay in payment from Specialty Sales led her to complain to the Department of Motor Vehicles

Vegotsky said he settled for about \$2,000 in small claims court and had the case dismissed. He just wanted to move on.

Sheryl Lawless described a similarly frustrating experience after entrusting the dealership with her father's car in June 2023. She received a text on July 20 from a sales rep that the car had sold.

The next day, Lawless signed the forms to have the money wired to her bank. Twenty days passed without payment. By September, Lawless was enraged. Her family was waiting for this payment to finalize her father's estate.

"I just felt something was off," she said.

She wrote a scathing review on Yelp, submitted a complaint to the Better Business Bureau and criticized Specialty on social media. Gaspari, who had quit the year before, saw Lawless' post and sent her a message recommending she file a complaint with the DMV, which she did.

Gaspari said Specialty employees were routinely recommending customers file complaints with the state, which he said would trigger a notice of inspection from the DMV that seemed to be the surest way to get Mattson to pay.

"I felt bad for her," Gaspari said.
"I told her to file a complaint (with the DMV) because I told everybody to do that."

Specialty began calling customers in April and telling them to collect their cars, emptying its remaining showrooms in Fairfield and Pleasanton (Benicia and San Carlos locations had closed). By the time it closed last month, the company only had five employees, down from about 30, a former employee told the Chronicle.

Employees who spoke to the Chronicle said working at Specialty Sales should have been a dream job, with its beautiful cars and customers who loved them.

Instead, they said they found themselves fielding calls from clients

wondering where their money was — money needed for medical procedures, or estate planning, from clients who were often elderly and couldn't advocate for themselves, former employee Rich Gega said.

Gega said he was also disturbed by an unwritten policy at the dealership of encouraging employees to hold off telling customers when their cars had been sold, and making excuses or delays about when they would ultimately receive their payments.

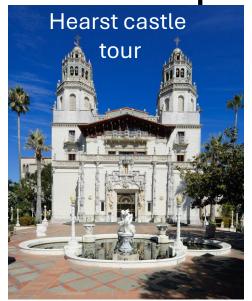
The impression among staff, he said, was that "Ken will pay when he has the money — and until then, the client will have to wait."

Gega and Gaspari described interactions with customers who grew irate or tearful when the business failed to pay.

"We felt bad. We all knew the day was coming to where the customers would be calling about the money," Gaspari recalled.

"It sucked."

The 2024 West Coast Pantera Rally September 13 – 16





Saturday - Hearst Castle Tour and Car Showcase by the Sea Sunday - Back Roads Rally to Woodlands Auto Display & Estrella Warbirds Museum

Preferred Lodging – Cavalier Beach Resort Please make your own reservations Pricing varies on room type and location

Nightly Gatherings
for
Pantera Camaraderie
Please RSVP
To Dennis Valdez
PCNC.events@gmail.com

To help us plan



www.PanteraClubNorCal.com



Brent Stewart 1239 Valley Quail Circle San Jose, CA 95120



NEXT CLUB MEETING

Thursday, August 29th, 2024 7:30 P.M.

BLACK BEAR DINER 174 W. Calaveras Blvd, Milpitas

NEW MEETING LOCATION!

UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

13-16 September — — — — — — West Coast Pantera Rally (Mark Bailey)

27-29 September — — — — Ironstone Concours Weekend (Steve Dalcino)

29 September — — — — — All-Italian Car Show In Alameda (Ron Southern)

REMINDER — NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE BY 15th OF EACH MONTH