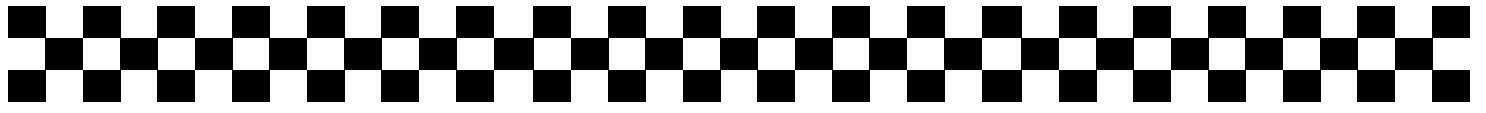


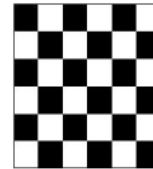
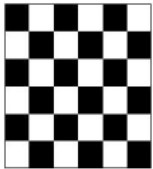
THE CHECKERBOARD

NEWS



“A Checker Owner Is Never Alone”

Spring 2009



Liberal Trunk Space

Nine in Comfort

Small Truck for Freight

Six in Comfort

Three in Comfort

Ten Truck Capacity

Suggested Uses

- equipment salesman's car
- cabby car for clubs or country estate
- delivery car weekdays—family use week-ends
- car for the town, to country cottage when inseparable. Bulky things must be stowed.
- car for trips up-state when you bring home a barrel of apples, etc.

Suggested Uses

- ideal as a station wagon
- general all-around family car
- school bus—would hold a dozen if seats be
- delivery car where the use of an ordinary car would be objectionable
- car for taking your boy or girl to and from boarding school

HERE is a car of beautiful appearance, of luxurious riding quality—that by a momentary shifting of its seats, without use of tools of any kind or removal of any part, is converted into a car for business purposes and heavy duty without sacrificing its appearance or riding qualities.

The Checker-Utility car is a finished product. Everything entering into its construction has stood the hardest tests that a car can be called upon to stand. Back of it is the twelve years' experience in making Checker Cabs—designed for comfort—for economical operation—and for long life. Thousands of Checker Chassis have withstood the rigors of 150,000 to 300,000 miles of taxicab service.

The Checker-Utility will fill your passenger car and commercial needs—two cars with the upkeep and depreciation of only one.

Back open, showing the maximum truck capacity. It is over 7 ft. from the tip of the tailboard to the back of the front seat. This space (over 100 cu. ft.) will carry over a ton of freight.

The car may be operated with back closed—for 9 passengers or for 6 with small truck space or 3 passengers with full capacity truck space.

With 9 passengers inside, the tailboard is extended and ample space for baggage is provided.

The spacious, luxurious interior of the Checker-Utility—wide, comfortable seats upholstered in genuine leather.

Six passenger accommodation plus liberal trucking space with back open for rear end loading.

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(A Not-For-Profit Corporation, incorporated in the State of Indiana)

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"Cab Driver"

Words and Music by C. Carson Parks
Official theme song of the
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Submissions can be emailed to jweinhoft@checkercarclub.org or mailed to the editor's address listed above.

GREETINGS FROM THE EDITOR

April, 2009

This issue should be in your hands by the beginning of April. The next issue will be the normally scheduled Summer 2009 (July) edition.

Enclosed in this issue is a bright yellow convention registration form. This year the show is in Arcadia, California, a suburb of Los Angeles.

I would like to note the story on professional Checkers by Patrick J. Martin starting on page 4. When this story was brought to my attention, I contacted Patrick and asked permission to reprint it and edit it to remove some general Checker history information. Patrick graciously consented to this and reviewed the final version for any errors. He did find some typos on my part which, I think, have been corrected. Anyone interested in having a copy of the longer original article can contact The Professional Car Society for a reprint.

The newsletter is a joint effort by many club members. In this issue, we have two short articles by Ben Merkel on pages 24 & 25, one about the Checkers built the last day of production and the other some more history on Checkers as cop cars.

I know you are probably tired of reading this paragraph every issue, but this newsletter is for you, the members, to share your stories. Every member has Checker knowledge they have acquired, usually through the school of hard knocks. You can help by contributing articles and photographs. You don't have to be a writer. Don't worry about the structure; just get the content into the article. We can edit any submission.

Ideally, submissions will be in electronic format, preferably Microsoft Word, although we also accept hard copy by mail. Photos should be original and as high a resolution as possible. All electronic submissions should be sent to: jweinhoft@checkercarclub.org

The newsletter will continue to evolve. We improve by comments from our readers. If you like what you see, tell us. If you don't like what you see, tell us also. I can be reached at the address on the left or by phone: (Home) 217-744-2986, (Verizon Cell) 217-494-2986

About the cover ... Ad for a 1931 Checker Utility. You could argue this was the first factory conversion van. More details about this and other professional cars can be found in the article by Patrick J. Martin starting on page 4.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

April, 2009

By the time you read this, it should be almost time for spring. If you live in the Mid-West, you know that this year we had a real winter.

Now is the time to work on that Checker to get it ready for the summer car shows. If you don't take your Checker to car shows, how do you think the public will know anything about the great Checker car and some CMC history? If you see a teenager looking at your car, remember that he was born after Checker stopped production of the car. And the numbers do not match up to the production of the Big Three.

If you are reading this newsletter, then Thank You for renewing your membership. All dues from this time forward will be due in February each year. This will be important information for your Board to take us through the year. How many members do we have? And how much money do we have to print the newsletter? Last year, when we printed the forty page newsletter, everyone liked it; without money that is hard to do. Printing costs go up and postage keeps increasing. More information on members and money in the bank in the next newsletter.

Have you made plans to attend the National Checker meet? Remember, it is being held in California this year. In 2011 it will be in Springfield, IL and 2010 is still up in the air. Variety of venues, more exposure, new people, new friends; all a great way to expand our interest with Checker.

Also, if you have a nominee for the board, please send the name to me.

The newsletter is a joint effort by many club members. Every member has Checker knowledge they have acquired, usually

through the school of hard knocks. (Ed note: four of the articles in this newsletter were submitted since the last newsletter; three written by club members.) You can help by contributing articles and photographs. You don't have to be a writer. Don't worry about structure and just get the content into the article. We can edit any submission. Ideally, submissions will be in electronic format, preferably Microsoft Word, although we do accept hard copy by mail. Photos should be original and as high a resolution as possible. If the photos are not original, please identify the source so reprint permission can be obtained; same for copies of stories from other publications. All electronic submissions should be sent to: jweinhoeft@checkercarclub.org

If you have a comment, or a question, or even criticism, feel free to contact me. My address and email are on the inside cover. Home phone 269-782-0635, Cell 269-462-3444.

Ron Leatz

Below: The club President driving someone else's Checker at the 2006 convention. Ron finally got his own Checker in late 2008. Maybe we'll get a photo of Ron in his own Checker in time for the Summer issue? Photo by the editor.



THE PROFESSIONAL CARS FROM KALAMAZOO

by Patrick J. Martin

(Ed. Note: An expanded version of this article originally appeared in The Professional Car Number 3 First Quarter 2002. Revised / reprinted with the author's permission.)

For most people, the name Checker brings only one image to mind, the Taxicab. Some may also recall that Checker offered private versions of their car to the general public as the Marathon. Few, however, realize that Checker manufactured an interesting variety of specialty vehicles over the years, and that although it was not widespread, a few coach companies chose the Checker as the basis for conversion. After all, Checkers had size, rugged construction, and a taxi-service-proven chassis that showed time and again that it was capable of surviving a quarter-million miles and more in some of the most punishing conditions imaginable. If anything, it shouldn't be a surprise that there were Checker professional cars, but rather that there weren't more of them.

Limousines

Checker built a number of limousines over the years. To meet the Parmelee Transportation Company's passenger requirements, Checker manufactured



long wheelbase versions of their cars with either three or four full-width bench seats. Since Parmelee was the only customer for these extended cars, their production numbers were low.

Checker would also customize their cars for a number of clients over the years. One of the earliest,

and perhaps the best known, was a limousine built to special order for utility magnate Samuel Insull in 1931. Insull ordered a bulletproof, landau-topped, seven-passenger limousine built on Checker's Model M chassis. However, Insull enjoyed the car for only a year before his business empire collapsed and he left to hide in Europe. His unique Checker was lost to history.

Although very much a conservative company, Checker did spring a few surprises from time to time. One was in 1947 or 1948, when a Checker nine-passenger convertible was seen at a Swiss car show. The fate of this show car is unknown.

Another customer that Checker customized a small fleet of cars for was the Kay Den Beauty Salon in Chicago. Kay Den catered to the rich and famous, and purchased their unique Checkers in the 1950's to use as limousines in picking up and dropping off their clients. Although they were private limousines, the cars were also used for publicity, and were made to look like taxis complete with rear luggage rack and a roof light that had "KayDen" scripted on it. The cars also wore a two-toned color scheme, but the colors were orchid and lavender, again with an eye towards publicity.

Beginning with the 1956 introduction of the Model A-8, and ending with the 1961 introduction of the Aerobus, Armbruster-Stageway of Fort Smith, Arkansas stretched Checker sedans into eight-door limousines. These cars were built for export to Turkey for jitney service, and had a luggage rack on the roof with a

two-piece ladder running over the trunk and rear window. Checker's standard equipment at that time was a six-cylinder 226 cubic inch Continental engine producing 89 horsepower with a three-speed standard transmission, which these large, heavy cars continued to use, making them too slow for American roads, but fine for the Mid-East. It is reported that many Checkers, as well as other 1940's and 1950's vintage American cars, are still in commercial service there.

In 1961, Checker was ready to introduce a long-wheelbase version of their latest car, but in the interest of branching out from manufacturing only taxis, they decided to offer this car to the public rather than limiting it to only Parmelee. These new cars were available in six-door, nine passenger or eight-door, twelve pas-

senger configuration, and found a ready market around the world. Using the station wagon's body panels to accommodate the passenger's luggage, the cars rode on a 154.5 or 189-inch wheelbase respectively, and with an overall length of 270 inches, the twelve-passenger version was the world's longest production car. These cars were not simply stretches of the of Checker's standard models, but were completely unique vehicles designed and built from scratch for their duties. The first of these new cars went to Chicago for use transporting pilots back and forth from the airports, and this service gave the cars their name, Aerobus. In 1972, Checker tried to market a special Aerobus named the Convoy to law enforcement agencies. It was an eight-door car with bars over the rear windows intended for transportation of prisoners. It would appear there were few, if any, takers as the Convoy was not heard of again.

Medical Vehicles and Hearses

Checker's first attempt at marketing to the general public took place in 1931 when a vehicle called the Utility was introduced on the Model M chassis. It was sort of a cross between a station wagon and a utility truck, with four side doors, a rear tailgate / lift gate combination, and foldaway passenger seats. The idea was that a customer could readily modify it for a number of different uses in minutes without tools. The car could be set up as a nine-passenger limousine with

three rows of seats, a six-passenger sedan with ample luggage room, or a one-ton delivery truck with only the front seats. When used as a delivery truck, removable panels could be placed over the rear windows. An article on the new car that appeared in the August 8, 1931 issue of Automotive Industries stated that a number had been made into combination ambulance-hearses for undertakers. However, the Utility was an idea whose time had not yet come and production ended in 1932 after only about 1,000 had been made.

In 1937, Philadelphia's Yellow Cab Company bought a fleet of Briggs-bodied Plymouths specifically for the transportation of invalid people. Painted black with a yellow stripe that ran from forward of the rear wheel to the upper corner of the windshield, over the roof, and down to forward of the rear wheel on the other side of the car, these cars, named Cabulances, would be a common sight on Philadelphia's streets for decades.

In 1956 it was time for Yellow to acquire some new Cabulances, but with the discontinuation of the long-wheelbase Chrysler products in 1954, they turned to the largest sedan left, Checker. Checker agreed to help Yellow, and sent stock sedans to their New York shop for conversion. It was a straightforward conversion that involved replacing the front seats with a single bucket seat for the driver, installation of a flat floor made from linoleum-covered plywood, and adding the

necessary tie-downs for a stretcher and wheelchair. The rear seat was left intact. A-A Ambulance of Bronx, New York, also bought some Cabulances so that they could leave their ambulances for emergencies.

In 1963 Checker also introduced their 9 inch stretch E-model sedans, and suggested a number of uses for them in their sales brochure. Although not mentioned in their brochure, Checker also realized these enlarged sedans were suitable for handicapped transport, and offered as options special floors to accommodate wheelchairs, loading ramps, and rear doors that would swing all the way flat against the front door when opened. Checker also offered them as a sedan-ambulance. The front bench seat was replaced with a

HERE is a car of beautiful appearance, of luxurious riding quality—that by a momentary shifting of its seats, without use of tools of any kind or removal of any part, is converted into a car for business purposes and heavy duty without sacrificing its appearance or riding qualities.

The Checker-Utility car is a finished product. Everything entering into its construction has stood the hardest tests that a car can be called upon to stand. Back of it is the twelve years' experience in making Checker Cabs—designed for comfort—for economical operation—and for long life. Thousands of Checker Chassis have withstood the rigors of 150,000 to 300,000 miles of taxicab service.

The Checker-Utility will fill your passenger car and commercial needs—two cars with the upkeep and depreciation of only one.

Suggested Uses
 —equipment salesman's car
 —utility car for club or country estate
 —delivery car, week-day—family use
 —week-end
 —car for the town or country storage when "unsuitable" bulky things must be carried—ideal when you car for trips to work when you bring home a basket of apples, etc.

Suggested Uses
 —ideal as a station wagon
 —great all-around family car
 —retract bar—would hold a dozen if needed
 —delivery car where the use of an ordinary truck would be objectionable
 —"take your boy or girl to and from business school"

Back open, showing the maximum truck capacity. It is over 7' 9" from the tip of the tailboard to the back of the front seat. This space also will carry over a ton of freight.

With 9 passengers inside, the tailboard is extended and ample space for baggage is provided.

Liberal Trunk Space

Nine in Comfort

Small Truck for Freight

Six in Comfort

Three in Comfort

Ton Truck Capacity

The spacious, luxurious interior of the Checker-Utility—fine comfortable seats upholstered in genuine leather.

The car may be operated with back closed—for 9 passengers or for 6 with small truck space or 3 passengers with full capacity truck space.

Six passenger accommodation plus liberal trucking space with back open for rear end loading.

bucket seat for the driver, thus making room for a stretcher next to the driver. A few conversion shops also offered Checker sedans with similar modifications.

Backing up slightly in time, in the late 1950's Patrick A. Seton opened the first Checker dealership in Sweden. Naturally, selling taxis was his main business but in the 1960's he began to see other uses for such a rugged car. He modified six-door Aerobuses into prisoner transport cars, and the Swedish prison system bought quite a few. He convinced the school authorities that the large Checker sedans, with some modifications, would make suitable school buses. Since children would be the passengers, the regular seats were removed and replaced with smaller ones. With the smaller seats, there was now room to add another bench seat in the car. The "school-cabs" could carry a driver and thirteen children. Station wagons were modified with the addition of seats in the cargo area, and they became small airport limos. A six-door stretch of a sedan was proposed, but it is unknown if it was built. Checkers converted into ambulances and hearses also became available.

Heinels, a coachbuilder in Malmo, Sweden, did most, maybe all, of the conversion work for Seton. Heinels used Model A-12E sedans as the starting point for the Checker hearses. The cars

were stretched 35-inches, the back seat was removed, small jump seats close behind the front bench seat were added so that the six pallbearers rode with the deceased, and custom coachwork was built behind the driver's door, although the rear fenders were reused. Station wagons were the basis for the ambulances,



which were available in three styles. The simplest was basically a wagon, but it had a slightly raised roof over the rear area. The top of the line ambulance was full



conversion. The wheelbase was stretched between the front and back doors, and custom coachwork that incorporated a significant raised roof was crafted above the belt line and behind the front doors. The interior was all ambulance and bore no resemblance to its station wagon origins.

Swiss coachbuilder de Giogi built a group of three Checker-based ambulances in 1966 for a client in Zurich. Rather than taking a station

wagon and stretching it, they used six-door Aerobuses with their extra heavy-duty chassis, and shortened it.



Except for the front end, front fenders, hood and bottom half of the front doors, the bodies on these Swiss ambulances were entirely custom built using aluminum, and featured an extreme raised-roof, made from laminated plastic. (Ed. note: the one known de Giorgi survivor has been restored and is shown to the left.)



Back in the United States, another Checker ambulance appeared in, or around, 1966. Checker Motors, with the unquestioned success of their taxicabs and the recent success of their Aerobus limousines, tried to break into other fields of specialty vehicle manufacture, namely police cars and ambulances. (Ed note: we've had a couple of articles by Ben Merkel about the Checker police cars)



Checker took one of their station wagons and modified it into an ambulance as a factory prototype.

The body and frame were left unaltered from the stock wagon. Only the addition of emergency lights and appropriate interior fittings, along with a white and red two-tone paint job, made this vehicle into an ambulance. Apparently Checker was not happy with this experiment as only the one factory ambulance is known to have been built.

In 1969 Checker took the E-models and their handicapped options a step farther and introduced the Medicar, a vehicle designed and factory-built expressly for the transportation of non-ambulatory persons. Billed as an ambulance-

limousine and using the same 129-inch wheelbase chassis, the Medicar incorporated the various handicapped options as standard features, along with one more feature unique to this special-purpose car, a roof that had been raised ten inches giving 54 inches of in-



terior height. The front passenger bucket seat was removable, and when so removed, the car could carry a stretcher or hold three wheelchairs. When not used for handicapped duties, the car could be used as an eight-passenger limousine. However, the Medicar was not a commercial success with only 100 having been made before it was discontinued in 1970. After the demise of the Medicar, Checker continued to offer the handicapped options on the E-models, except for the raised roof, all the way until car production ended, making Checker the last medical sedan.

Editor's Addition

As noted by the author in the following paragraph, at the time this article was written, very little was known about Checker based professional cars. Regular newsletter readers will remember the Pre-1960 Checker Survivor article in the Spring 2008 issue. The 1952 A-4 Uruguay open air hearse, shown below, was only recently discovered at the time of that article. Nothing else is known about this car.



Acknowledgments

The Checker story is a largely unknown one. Very little about the cars has been printed in the commercial press, and the few articles that have often provide conflicting information. Stories of special-purpose Checkers are often relayed by word of mouth, as documentation simply isn't known to exist. In cases where absolute facts were not forthcoming, I made assumptions based on what seemed logical to me, or what knowledgeable Checker enthusiasts believed to be correct. As with any assumptions, there may be errors in this article, which were certainly not intentional, but I apologize for any that may exist nonetheless.

In many cases, the author of a book or magazine article is simply the person who takes the time to put down on paper the knowledge of others. This article certainly falls into that category. It would not have been written without help from several people, none of whom is to blame for any inaccuracies, and I would like to extend a sincere "Thank You" to Michael Angelich, Jim and Dorothy Bonner, George H. Dam-

mann, Chad Elmore, Monty McCord, Ben Merkel, Chris Monier, Daniel Rowan, Robert Sinkus, Fred Stone, G. Richard Thomas. Terry Vaught, Bob Welsh, and Lars Wennerquist for sharing their stories, answering my questions, and opening up their photo collections to me. It is only with the sharing and help of these people that this article was possible.

(Ed. note on the photos: for whatever reason, the photo credits supplied by the author were not included in the original article. The best we can say seven years later is one or more of the above cited people probably contributed the photos. Based on the author's memory and some research, it is likely most of the photos were from the collections of Terry Vaught and Lars Wennerquist. Parmelee photo from G. Richard Thomas. Mediacar photo by Bryan Weinhoeft. Restored de Giogi photo by Max of ACT.)

Sources

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"Checker: The Rolls-Royce of Taxis" by Rod J. Walton, 1991 Cars & Parts Annual

"The Checkered History of the Cab from Kalamazoo" by John A. Heileg, Winter 1992 Automobile Quarterly

"The Checker King" by Michael Lamm, August 1998 Collectible Automobile

"1947-82 Checker: Rugged to the End" by Michael Lamm, June 200 Collectible Automobile

Also numerous issues of "Checkerboard News", a publication by the Checker Car Club of America

ERRATA ...

After retyping that many pages, even with multiple proofing passes, I didn't expect the Checker-Literature list to be totally error free. Terry Vaught sent a number of corrections plus some additions I was unaware of. As time permits, I will update the retyped list and post it online in the Checker Literature Photo Gallery.

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Dakota Moncrief
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Richmond, VA 23226-3401
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h 804-370-8512

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ABOUT THE CCCoA ROSTER

This roster is copyrighted 2009 by the Checker Car Club of America, Inc. and may not be used for commercial purposes. It has been positioned in the newsletter so it can be removed, should you wish to do so.

Anyone who renewed by February 23, 2009 is included in this list. On the 2009 renewal form, there was a check box to request your information not be published. A few members have requested that their information not be published; those members (or specific information) are not included in this directory. By request, home and cell phone numbers are included.

The roster is organized in the following manner: country or state mailing abbreviation, and last name sorted in ascending order. So it is not exactly in alphabetical order; you will find anomalies like Maine (ME) being listed after Massachusetts (MA).

Did you notice that twelve different countries are represented? There are four Canadian provinces and forty five American states represented.

You may also notice this roster is smaller than the 2008 roster. For whatever reason, a large number of members did not renew by the deadline for inclusion. We don't know if they are cutting back because of the economy but procrastinators are no longer being carried for extra issues as was the past practice. Anyone who renews or joins during 2009 will be sent the issues they missed.



CHECKER GOLF CARTS? by Rick Buck

Long time readers may remember the July 2002 cover (below)

showing past editor Roy Dickin-son's Checker golf cart. That one was checkerized primarily by Bob Kerkel with help from Mike Angelich, Ben Merkel, Joe Pollard and Bob Welsh. Unfortunately, that golf cart was stolen a number of years ago and never recovered.



However, it seems to have inspired at least one other Checker golf cart, as shown in these photos taken recently by Sharon Aney (Ed. Note: Rick Buck's cousin) in Ft. Myers, FL. She thought the club would enjoy the photos. Sharon says there are two golf carts running around her community but she has only photographed one of them.

Nothing is known about this golf cart. At four people, seating capacity seems to be a bit less than a full sized Checker.

While equipped with different wheels, side markings, stripes and body, it is in a

lot of ways reminiscent of Roy's.



A CHECKER IN GUATEMALA

by Alfredo Cohen

Pursuant to the gracious invitation of Mr. Ron Leatz, President of the Checker Car Club of America, we take pleasure in submitting to you the story of our experience with our Checker Marathon A-12 S/N A12-1138-13455-A bought at the factory in Kalamazoo on July 7, 1971.

ARRIVAL AND DELIVERY: Mr. C. M. Hi-cock delivered the car to me personally and, after complete settlement of the cost and extras, we drove it all the way to Richmond, VA., and from there to Miami, FL., where it was shipped by Coordinated Caribbean Transport to the Port of Guatemala. We drove it from there with an escort to the Custom House in the city, and subsequently paid as much in duties as in the purchase of the car.

CHARACTERISTICS, CHANGES & MAINTENANCE: The car has a V-8 engine, 240 H.P., 350 cubic inches and a 5 blade fan, is Tampico Tan in color with red interior upholstery and leather imitation and a gray plastic ceiling. The changes we have made are: a) 6 blade fan, plus an additional fan behind the grill and in front of the radiator, b) a K&N air filter and an Edelbrock carburetor that required the change of the manifold. We installed a Pioneer radio with cassette (which we plan to change again for a CD / MP3 radio). Likewise, we upholstered the trunk with carpet to fit the corners and a cover for the spare tire. We had the headlight rims chrome plated for better looks. All of which meet with our satisfaction!

FAULTS & DEFECTS: We need to repair or replace the windshield wiper motor, and the speedometer quit working for some time now, and therefore it stopped at 124,222 miles, so we estimate that it has something like 178,000 miles, hoping to have this repaired. The radiator had some problem and it was repaired, but it was suggested to change it for a three line water circulation instead of two lines in order to prevent it from overheating in traffic delays for long periods that cause the overheating.

FACTS & WORDS: Ever since the purchase of the car, we have driven and enjoyed it for 38 years consecutively, and have had very little maintenance to pay, but when we have needed special parts or help we have obtained from Mr. (Joe) Pollard.

Inasmuch as this is the only Checker car in the country (and most likely in Latin America), it draws the attention of many people, sometimes inquiring if it is not for sale or simply admiring it for the special looking car. Some call it a “jewel”, others a “relic” and others a “big, very big, car”. All in all, we appreciate the many expressions of congratulations.

Some friends think that it is the aspiration of all taxi-drivers and others believe that it is an older year than 1971. We must answer that although it may look like previous models, it does have the modern and advanced automobile engineering, such as power steering, automatic transmission, and power brakes. Some young people have never seen this type of vehicle. All in all, the engine is very quiet, smooth driving, and is impressive by design, efficiency, comfort and spacious inside!!!

We have, therefore, used it for special occasions, such as delivering the bride to the wedding, of which 5 weddings in the family have used it, and therefore no fees ... of course. However, there was one time when a fellow asked me if I could give him a ride from the airport to the hotel, which I gladly agreed and, upon arrival, the surprise was that he told me that he usually paid \$8 for the taxi, and he wanted me to take it, so he handed me a \$10 bill, but as “usual” the cab driver didn’t have the change, so he told me to keep the change.

There is hardly any rust because it has always been in a garage and everything else looks fine, as can be seen in the enclosed picture (below).



The “hamburger seats” were replaced with a bench which can seat 3 persons, especially youngsters, and in the engine the valve covers have been chrome plated, as well as the air filter, and the cover of the brake fluid reservoir, all of which gives us a satisfactory look. Therefore, we believe we have the most desirable car for our taste and service and fortunately it looks better than many newer models.

We did attend the convention in Kalamazoo in June, 1998, but we did not drive the car all the way there, since we, as pilots, have the advantage of owning a 1972 Beechcraft Bonanza A-36, and of course it is as useful and satisfactory as the car. We have, however, used three engines for the aircraft, and we have made improvements on it as well.

The only thing left now is to congratulate you and the Board of Directors for the wonderful and valuable job being done for all Checker car owners, and for the help and support you give all of us in keeping these good cars up to date. As your logo says, "A Checker Owner Is Never Alone". Thank you.

We look forward to the possibility of joining you for the Los Angeles convention on July 25, 2009.

NATIONAL CONVENTION IN CALIFORNIA— JULY 25, 2009

The 2009 National Convention will be hosted by the California Chapter of the Checker Club. Joe Pollard and Kathryn Bassett are providing the "on the ground" planning and coordination.

The meet itself will be a one day show from 8 AM to 3 PM. It will be inside (and outside if needed) the Ayres Building at The Arboretum of Los Angeles County located just off I-210 (Foothill Freeway) at 301 North Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia, CA, 91007.

Due to the (obvious) traffic congestion problems in the LA area, there are no formal tours planned. However, there are a number of important and interesting automotive sites nearby that could be visited in the days before or after the convention.

The Petersen Automotive Museum is located at 6060 Wilshire Blvd.(at Fairfax,) Los Angeles, CA 90036. You can find more information about the Petersen at <http://petersen.org/>

The Nethercutt Collection is located at 15151 & 15200 Bledsoe Street, Sylmar, CA, 91342 and is home to one of the best automotive collections (among other things) in the country. More information can be found at <http://nethercuttcollection.org/>

There are a large number of hotels in various price ranges conveniently located nearby. Unlike other years, there is no "official" convention hotel. This way

each member can choose what is comfortable for his or her pocket book. Rather than list all the available hotels, you can Google the address above for near-by hotels or check with your favorite hotel chain. Joe Pollard did arrange for a small block of hotel rooms at The Santa Anita Inn where the dinner will be held. King suites are \$85 and a standard room is \$69. Call the hotel direct at 626-446-5211, ask for Sergio and be sure to mention the Checker Car Club.

A Saturday evening dinner / get together has been planned. It will be a catered gourmet meal at The Santa Anita Inn. Cost will be \$45 per person.

Additional information, maps, and a registration form are now on the web site. To find the maps, go to Photo Gallery, National Shows, 2009 California Meet. A registration form is enclosed with this newsletter. You can also find a printable copy of the registration form in PDF format on the club web site by using the left side menu for Manuals, Marketing Materials. If you can reach them, Joe Pollard and Kathryn Bassett will also have additional information.

CHECKER FILES FOR BANKRUPTCY

Checker Motors Corporation filed chapter 11 bankruptcy in late January, 2009 to reorganize and protect themselves from creditors. They become the seventh major automotive supplier to file in the past year. News stories report lack of orders, high material costs and failure to reach a new wage agreement.

Checker survived two other brushes with bankruptcy, in 1921 as Commonwealth Motors and during the Depression when part of Cord. Since Checker listed more assets than liabilities, they are expected to work things out and reopen once demand picks up.

As anyone who picks up a newspaper or watches the national news on TV knows, the big three automobile manufacturers are having their share of problems. Most of the major assembly plants have been shut down until unsold inventory is reduced. This led to a lack of orders for the Checker plant, hence the bankruptcy filing.

Checker idled the Kalamazoo plant before Christmas. The plant was modernized last year. They are using the downtime to perform maintenance on the plant and equipment.

CHECKER LAW ENFORCEMENT VEHICLES, PART 2

by Ben Merkel

(Ed. note: part 1 ran in the Fall 2007 / Winter 2008 issue on page 12 and I misplaced / forgot about part 2 until now.)

While we have examined some of the 1982 Checker Police units already, there are some other police / security cars worth mentioning as they are all practically extinct today.

The nearby City of Tallmadge, Ohio ordered a 1981 A-11 in white with the 267 V8, air conditioning, left spotlight and 105 amp alternator. I saw this car after it had been painted yellow by the next owner, circa 1990, and turned into a hillbilly hotrod. It has since vanished and is presumed dead.

In Kalamazoo, Michigan, Upjohn ordered a white A-11 with 229 V6, air conditioning and left hand spotlight for a security car. After service, it was painted yellow and became a Kalamazoo Yellow Cab. It was auctioned off with a bad motor in 1988 but came with a rebuilt V6 to put in it. The buyer kept the rebuild for his wife's Chevy and threw the car away. Shown here in yellow at the 2000 show with owner Ron Mulvaney.



Timken Bearing had a 1982 blue A-11 with left spotlight for factory security work around Dayton, Ohio and it also had the V6 with air conditioning. This car, last seen in the early 90s, has vanished with the tin worm in hot pursuit.

The Checker dealer in Brookline, MA was, by Checker standards, a most prolific cop car dealer. In

1981, they sold four blue and white A-11 cop cars to the Chelsea, MA Police Department alone. They sprang for the 267 V8 and left spotlight but, surprisingly, skipped on the air conditioning.

Nearby Medford, MA also had to have one blue and white 1981 A-11 but they did opt for A/C along with the proverbial left spotlight .

The Exeter, New Hampshire Police Department also slipped into a blue 1981 V6 A-11 from Brookline with no air conditioning but they did pop for the left spotlight.

It appears that all Brookline police cars were ordered with the New York City Fleet Code 217 package and they insisted on clear dome lenses so officers could read a bit more, perhaps.

About 10 years ago (where does the time go?), Club Member Don Eckstrom from Boston came out to Kalamazoo with a nice, 1981 white A-11 with dual



spotlights (above). I believe he said it was fire chief's car somewhere in his area. He has since sold the car and it's status is unknown.

To wrap up this session, we turn our attention to the 1981 A-11 (below) ordered by the



Coburn, VA Police Department. They went for a white paint job and the 350 Olds Diesel motor as well as the left spotlight. This car wound up in southern Ohio and was last seen rusting away in the mid 1980s along with a couple of blue and white 1979 A-11 cop car diesels from Virginia also (below).



At this point in time, the only known survivor of the last two articles is the 1982 white and blue A-11 (shown below) from Key West, Florida. If anybody can shed some more light on any of these missing units, I'm all ears.



(Ed note: Ben's contact information is on the inside front cover under Vice-President)

Photos supplied by Ben Merkel

Police Car Ad from a 1960's Checker Brochure



WHO GOT THE LAST CHECKERS BUILT ON THE ASSEMBLY LINE JULY 12, 1982? by Ben Merkel

The following was compiled from the "Daily Report of Cars Built" form for the last day of production, July 12, 1982. A total of fourteen cars were built. All cars built the last day were A-11 Taxicab models.

PO # 6437, VIN CK001987 - CK001991, five built out of an original order of twenty one. All were white with black partition thin seats, gray door panels and jump seats, propane V6's. All were sent to Chicago as Floor Stock.

PO # 6436, VIN CK001992 - CK001995, four built. All were yellow with black interiors and jump seats, propane V6's. Sent to Yellow Cab of Raleigh, NC.

PO # 6435, VIN CK001996 - CK001997, two built. Both light yellow with black interiors, no jump seats, propane V6's. Sent to Taxi Service, Huntington, W. VA.

PO # 6434, VIN CK001998, one built. All white with black interior and jump seats, gasoline V6. Sent to Senior Sedans, Newark, OH.

PO # 6433, VIN CK001999, one built. Red and white with black interior and jump seats, gasoline V6. Sent to C & D Cab Co., Chicago, IL.

PO # 6100, VIN CK002000, one built. Green and ivory with gray interior and jump seats, gasoline V6. Ordered by Checker Motors, Kalamazoo, MI.

Of all the cars built the last day, only one is known to still exist, PO # 6100, VIN 1CMTS4129CK002000. This is the "Chicago Taxi" on permanent loan to the Gilmore Museum and currently has almost 10 miles on the odometer.

(Ed. note: sharp eyed readers of the For Sale ads will notice that 1982 A-11 VIN # 1986 is for sale by Ben)

PARTS FOR SALE:

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Or phone Joe at: **818-477-4386** or **818- 999-1485**

Gauges for All Checker Models - Brand new senders, fuel/oil pressure/water temperature gauges, early classic speedometers, gauge repairs, new movements, parts, etc. Ask about the exclusive Pro-Tec module to protect your early 2" gauges. Just Call CheckerBen! Ben Perlin **818-882-4670**

Front and Rear Seats - I have both front and rear seats. Shoot me an offer or welcome to any trades. Located in Phoenix, AZ. Back Seat in fair-acceptable condition. You won't need to recover both pieces, but the bottom cushion has a small indentation in the vinyl. It is also pretty dirty underneath and some of the netting is starting to break and rust out. Front Seat will need to be recovered. This seat has many rips located throughout the back, front, and bottom cushion. Side metal trimming in good shape to restore, but floor connections are rusted out and should be replaced. It is pretty dirty underneath, so please take note of that before bidding! Email sealmaniac@cox.net

New Chrome Grill New Old Stock - Gorgeous chrome grill, still in wrappings. \$755. New Old Stock painted grill also, \$500. Better hurry and put this back for a spare. Phone **317-655-5643** or email rwatson@wthr.com

Unobtainable New Checker Chrome Bumpers & Guards 71 and earlier - You could shave off of these in the morning. Set of two, front and back with guards. Not a ding or scratch in them. Cheaper than getting yours done and likely better. Phone **317-655-5643** or email rwatson@wthr.com

Rare Set of Stainless Checker Hubcaps - 4 Checker Stainless Hubcaps in excellent condition. These have been in storage and packaged nicely. \$400 plus shipping. Phone **317-655-5643** or email rwatson@wthr.com

New Old Stock Stash Available - Checker Right Front Fender. This is the one away from the driver, gets banged up the most. In New Old Stock condition. Never on car, factory grey Primer \$625. Phone **317-655-5643** or email rwatson@wthr.com

1978 Checker Parts - 2 used windshields in excellent condition. 4 doors complete, no rust. left & right front fenders, fair condition. Good trunk lid. Located in Phoenix, AZ. Priced

to sell. Ed Torel Phone **602-768-4156** or email bkset@live.com

PARTS DETAILING:

Ben's Automotive Painting Service - Specializing in the painting of Checker Motor Corporation Hood Emblems and Hubcap Emblems. For more information, please visit www.geocities.com/bspaul41/bensautomotivepaintingservice
Or email: bspaul41@yahoo.com

CARS FOR SALE:

1970 MARATHON - Damned nice Checker, Blue, blue interior. V8, Power Steering, Power brakes, Auto trans. AC. Located around Richmond, VA. Contact Robert or Alice **804-355-6785** or email arthurjenkins@gmail.com

Lost Storage - Must Sell 1971 A-12 - Make an Offer. Passenger vehicle, runs good, has some rust. Needs a little TLC, but not bad overall. Located in upstate New York. Was asking \$3,500, now I have no storage so make an offer. Will consider trade. Can drive it home! Phone **845-434-8262** or email checker52@verizon.net

1972 Checker A-11 - 1-owner New Mexico car. 155K miles; 10K on new 350 V8 engine and rebuilt automatic transmission. This car with jump seats was my mom's pride and joy, but she passed away last year and it needs a new loving home. \$14,000. Phone **505-845-9421** or email dchardi@sandia.gov

1982 Checker A-11 LPG - 1982 Checker A11, #1986, last car built on 7/11/82, latest Checker I've ever owned, factory V6 propane, was white, has reasonable black interior with working jump seats, never a taxi (roof taxi sign is not attached), needs restoration but all there. Not running. Comes with many body parts to repair. Selling because I have too many projects. Good Ohio title. Sold new and used in Chicago until the late 80s when it came here. \$850 firm. Additional photos in Member's Photo Gallery, Pg 5, "Last Propane Checker Built" Contact Ben Merkel, Middlefield, OH, **440-632-5419** or email twilitetaxiinc@nls.net

1981 Marathon - Never a cab however painted cab yellow. V-6, AT, PS, PB, elect door locks, A/C, oval side windows, jump seats, radio/heater, drives great with very little rust. Cloth interior. Price \$6,500. Bob Welsh. Phone **317-780-1937** Indiana or email checkercabnut@aol.com (also selling 1972 Airstream Trailer (30) mint).

1982 A12E Marathon - 1982 A12E Marathon Deluxe Sedan VIN#1CMME4222CK000244 , built 2/1982., V-8 w/ 129 Wheelbase. Paint: Green #87 Trim: Black Vin & Vel Code 34. All factory original. Factory Options: Auxiliary Jump Seats, A/C Dual, Aux Rear Heater, Tinted Glass All Around, HD Rear Springs, Rear Defogger, Oil Cooler Aux Trans, Rear Oval Windows, Tilt Steering, Full Carpeting, Electric Door Locks. Less than 50,000 original miles. One Owner. Additional parts purchased when new: Both front fenders (Inner & Outer), Two rear extended door skins, Hood, Two rocker panels, Two rear fenders, Front grill. Front hood ornament. Car has been garaged for the last 18 years. Need to sell. Lost space! Will send photos if requested. Titled in PA as Classic. Located 60 miles west of Philadelphia. \$9,500.00 Randy—Cell **610-585-6926** or rtrmail@gmail.com

1969 Checker 8 Door Aerobus - In pretty good shape. This is a California car, hardly any rust, has a 327 Chevy motor that runs! We started the car, but have not drove it. All interior is there, has front and rear AC. Has not been on DMV record since 1992. Please, I don't really know what it is worth, but I would like to sell it. Any offers? Phone **530-682-3247** Located near Yuba City, CA or email ramirez2towing@aol.com

1970 Checker Aerobus - Santa Maria, CA - My friend bought this with great idea for wine country limo business ... moving out of the country soon so this project needs new home! Here are some details, straight body and good glass on a rebuilt 350 engine. Car is running. Drum brakes, A/C & heater and its missing the 2 middle seats. Some work has been done and the usual under carriage rust. Please call Doug, owner, for more details Asking \$5,900 OBO. E-mails are to me at jjc93@live.com and I will forward any questions. Thanks! Phone **805-720-4711**

1978 Checker Taxicab - Was a taxi. Purchased new in Phoenix, no rust ever. Chevy 6, auto, A/c, P/S, P/B, body & paint work completed. Located in Phoenix, AZ. \$5,900 obo Ed Torel Phone **602-768-4156** or email bkset@live.com

1978 Checker Marathon - factory power sun roof, A/C, power locks, new V-8, auto, opera windows, bumper guards, chrome package, jump seats & more. Needs landau top & interior work. Strong runner, body & paint completed. Located in Phoenix, AZ \$6,900 or best offer, possibly trade for tin woodie station wagon. Ed Torel Phone **602-768-4156** or email bkset@live.com

CARS WANTED:

1973 or Newer: looking for running 1973 or newer Checker to restore. Contact Robin L.Matteson by email at r1m43@bellsouth.net or phone **985-960-7437**

CLUB MEMORABILIA:

Club logo **belt buckles** \$8.00, Logo **patches** \$2.50, Window **decals** \$1.50. All shipped First Class, Postpaid! Don McHenry, 460 Tremaine Avenue, Kenmore, NY 14217

Checker Cookie Jar, antique - Checker Cookie Jar. McCoy Original. Still in box with paper work. Awesome and functional I might ad, Gift for the Checker lover. \$ 100 Phone **317-655-5643** or email rwatson@wthr.com

D.C. OR BUST ...

Regardless of your political persuasion, you have to admire the spirit of adventure of two Detroit newsmen. Reporter Charlie LeDuff and photographer Max Ortiz are drove Charlie's 1973 Marathon from Detroit to Washington, D.C. for the Presidential Inauguration. They started out on Friday, January 16th to cover the 600 miles and reported as they go along. They did reach D.C. on Monday, Martin Luther King Day, and were in Washington on Tuesday for the swearing in ceremony. You can read their stories at The Detroit News web site www.detnews.com

GUIDE DOG BENEFIT ...

Tom Thornton wrote to tell us about their Contemporary Historical Vehicles Association car show scheduled for Sunday, April 19, 2009 in Chatsworth, CA. It will be at Boys Town / Rancho San Antonio, 21000 Plummer Street from 8 AM to 2 PM. Registration will be at the gate and costs \$15. All profits will benefit the Guide Dogs of America program. So if you are looking for something to do in the early spring, you might want to go and see the various cars. For more information, you can contact Larry Bauman by email at kalab@earthlink.net or phone 818-767-1857 or call Tom Thornton at 818-340-0392.

Some of the 2008 California Show Attendees

All photos by Joe Pollard

We expect to see these cars and more at the 2009 show.



Above: Joe Pollard's 1973 A-12W (photo not at show)

Below: Joe Pollard's 1966 A-12 inside Ayres Hall



Below: Fred Miller's Superba wagon inside Ayres Hall



Above: Blake LaMar's 1962 A-12 Checker Special inside Ayres Hall



Above: Jason Collin's 1969 A-12W8 Aerobus outside in the parking lot



Above: Chris Olson's 1977 A-128E Aerobus outside in the parking lot