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B&O Museum Show Features Baltimore's First Automobile



By Jerry Gordon
Photos By Buzz Diehl

This year's B&O Railroad Museum car show on Sunday, June 26th was unusual because of two historic exhibit vehicles brought by friends and acquaintances of the Club.

John Kelso, of McConnellsburg, PA, trailered his beautifully restored 1899 Crouch steam-powered automobile, which was manufactured in a Baltimore building that is still standing at North Ave. and Oak St. The Crouch is believed to be the first auto built in Baltimore and while it bears serial #3, it may have been

the only one actually produced.

The discovery of the Crouch rivals any barn-find story. The remains of the Crouch were found in the furnace room of the abandoned factory during WW II. Unlike most early autos, it was a buggy style vehicle with a body made with iron and aluminum instead of wood components. It was being carted away to a scrap metal drive common during the war when a local car enthusiast saw the vehicle and bought it for \$20, twice the going scrap metal price. Our own

Sterling Walsh knew about the remains of the Crouch and after many years managed to acquire it. John Kelso bought it from Sterling.

The Crouch attracted a lot of attention from everyone at the show. It was selected as the Sponsor's Choice by the B&O Museum's John Moranto.

The second historic vehicle displayed was the handcrafted replica 1904 Oldsmobile railroad inspection car owned

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Pictured at the top of the page is part of our car show in front of the Museum's outside locomotives. Shown on the left is the 1899 steam-powered Crouch automobile. John Kelso is at the tiller with passenger Larry Deshong in a demo drive around the show. On the right is Michael Wenderoth's handcrafted replica 1904 Oldsmobile railroad inspection car.





B&O Museum Show - continued

by Michael Wenderoth. This piece of equipment was known as the model #2 Tonneau and was sold exclusively by Railway Appliances Co. The car is mounted on tracks on a display trailer and has several restored antique track repair tools. The B&O Museum show was the perfect place to showcase this vehicle.

The weather was ideal, a nice clear day for members and guests to show their

vehicles and enjoy the displays inside the museum.

Showing vehicles were: Don Rhine, 1940 Buick; Paul Habicht, 1959 Cadillac; Chuck Talbert, 1939 Ford; Mary & Ed Allen, 1959 Buick; Lynn & John Horn, 1966 Thunderbird; Terry & Dan Materazzi, 1958 Corvette; Pat Wenderoth, 1969 Corvette; Dave Cavey, 1959 Edsel; Roger Frank & Tom Golden, 1965 Ford; Sylvia & Alan

Sandler, 1966 Buick; Jerry Ross, 1954 Kaiser; Jerry Gordon, 1984 Lincoln; Maddie Bechette & Nick Prevas, 1964 Chevrolet; Buzz Diehl, 1966 Pontiac; Diane Swintek & Russ Baer, 1959 Alfa Romeo; Ed McDaniel, 1951 Chevrolet; Read Van Zile & Joanne Day, 1959 Corvette; Jim Turner, 1953 DeSoto, Ray Arthur, 1962 Studebaker; John Skipper, 1965 Mustang; and Rose & Michael Polis, 1931 Ford.



Shown from the top left to right: Row 1: Terry & Dan Materazzi, 1958 Corvette; Read Van Zile & Joanne Day, 1959 Corvette – Row 2: Roger Frank & Tom Golden, 1965 Ford; Sylvia & Alan Sandler, 1966 Buick – and Row 3: Mary & Ed Allen, 1959 Buick; Diane Swintek & Russ Baer, 1959 Alfa Romeo.