

# inside OAKLAND

SPECIAL EDITION

A newsletter for Oakland University colleagues

July 2001

## Once upon a time...is here to stay

23rd Annual Meadow Brook Hall Concours d'Elegance evokes the glory days of the automobile

*"More than 70 years ago, in Parisian parks, in elegant European resort towns and on the French Riviera, there began a series of automotive exhibitions unlike anything the world had ever seen. The rich and famous of European society gathered to celebrate the latest automobiles and women's fashions as unique art forms. They called these events "Concours d'Elegance" or "competitions of elegance." Auto manufacturers, custom coach builders and haute couture designers were invited to display their creations before an adoring public and competed for coveted blue ribbons..."*

### From the Riviera to Rochester

So successful was the first Concours d'Elegance, that similar events spread all over Europe until the late 1930s. They would disappear altogether during World War II, but return years later after Europe began to rebuild. Then in 1948, the first Concours d'Elegance was held in the United States in Pebble Beach, Calif. — an added attraction to the Pebble Beach Road Races. While the races would be dropped, the Concours continued and eventually became the premier car show in the country.

Nearly half a century after the original Concours took off in Paris, France, the first Meadow Brook Hall Concours d'Elegance arrived in Rochester, Mich. The year was 1979 and the event, a benefit to mark the mansion's Golden Anniversary Celebration.

Meadow Brook Hall at 50 was still the jewel it was when first constructed between 1926 and 1929 for owners and OU founders Alfred and Matilda Dodge Wilson. Part of its mission as a historic house-museum had always been to celebrate and interpret that era through its collections of decorative and fine art, its archival materials



Portrait of John F. Dodge, 1928, by Louis Betts (American, 1873-1961)

related to the Dodge and Wilson families, and through the architecture of the building itself. It was an era that included the "glory days" of the automobile. Organizers thought it more than appropriate that the two should come together.

The idea of a small group of collectors led by the late Dave Holls, former design director of General Motors Corporation, was an immediate hit with collectors and spectators alike. And the Concours became, and continues to be, a cooperative venture involving MBH, Oakland University and the Concours Committee, a group of roughly 80 volunteers who serve with MBH



staff on the 10 committees that make the event successful: the Art Committee; Banquet, Fashion, Tours and Hospitality; Car Selection; Event Services; Graphics; Historic Races; Marketing; Planning; Public Relations; and Vehicle Database. Lee Iacocca, former president of what was then the Chrysler Corporation, was the first honorary chair.

"We have been very fortunate over the years to have so many hard-working and dedicated volunteers from the community devote their time, energy and creativity to the Meadow Brook Hall Concours d'Elegance," says OU President Gary D.



Concours crowds admire more than 200 classic and vintage automobiles each year.

Russi. "Their input is greatly valued." "MBH staff spend a considerable amount of time — the equivalent of 6.5 full-time people working for 12 straight

months — working on the Concours d'Elegance each year," says MBH Executive Director Lisa Baylis Ashby. "It is an incredible effort in which volunteer and staff teams become the event plan-





**The 2000 Cadillac DeVille was launched at the 1999 MBH Concours, extending this line of American beauties.**

ners and implementers.”

In addition to serving on the committees, MBH personnel garner sponsorships, give tours, set up and break down tables and chairs, and staff booths where Concours merchandise is sold.

Beth Wheeler, MBH project communications manager, works with long-time volunteer Graphics Committee Chair Gary Williams to organize the program book, invitations, posters and the like.

“It becomes her full-time



**MBH Concours judges award trophies based on the beauty, design and style of the cars.**

job from May to August and 30 percent of her job for the rest of the year,” Ashby says.

“Kim Zelinski, facilities operations manager, keeps everything working 24 hours a day. People working with her catch a nap and a shower in the old servants quarters when they can. Putting on the Concours is the equivalent of organizing five weddings at one time,” explains Ashby.

#### **From car show to Concours**

Over the years, Meadow Brook Hall has made continuous improvements to the Concours to make it special. The first Concours was an impressive one-day event. Ninety-eight cars were shown to about 2,500 vintage and classic car enthusiasts. By 1988, the crowd had grown to nearly 10,000, the number of cars exhibited to more than 200, and the day-long event, to a weekend affair. The growing reputation of the Concours drew higher quality entries from collectors around the country. In 2000, more than 20,000 spectators attended the MBH Concours, which had grown to a full week of related activities, including the Mode du Concours fashion show. This show and

other related events make the Meadow Brook Hall Concours d’Elegance a destination for spectators and collectors, not just a day.

Collectors show their vehicles at their own expense. For some, that may include the cost of some restoration work, the cost of transporting the vehicle from across the country or a continent, or paying a vehicle handler. While showing cars can be an expensive undertaking, collectors do so knowing that an appearance at Meadow Brook Hall or a trophy can add to their car’s credentials.

#### **What becomes a “classic”?**

Most cars exhibited by the Meadow Brook Hall Concours d’Elegance were designed and built before 1950. These include “classic” and “vintage” automobiles. But the Concours has always included some more recent cars.

“There has always been a smattering of different styles, years and makers at the Concours,” says Ashby. “And it’s perfectly appropriate to continue to do so. The hot rods of today are the classic cars of tomorrow. Showing them at the Concours is a way of reaching out to the public and to other collectors with whom they are very popular.”

Still, the Concours maintains its focus on the era known as the “glory days” of the auto industry – the same era in which Meadow Brook Hall was conceived and built.

“This is about a very unique piece of Oakland University called Meadow Brook Hall,” Ashby says. “It’s a celebration of the whole era of the 1920s and 1930s. It was such a turning point in the industry, in our country and in the metro Detroit area. It all fits.”

Exhibited cars at the Concours are valued at an average of \$300,000 to \$400,000. Some are worth well over \$1 million. Most collectors own more than one.

#### **The art of the wheel**

Fifteen years ago, MBH created an art component to the Concours. Sixteen local automotive artists were invited to donate a work for auction to raise money for MBH. In return, the artists would be able to exhibit other works for sale on Concours day and

awards were given. Today, artists from around the world participate, including this year’s featured artist, Alain Lévesque, from Quebec, Canada. Lévesque’s art deco design for the 2001 Concours poster expresses the style of the streamliners.

Artwork in all media is accepted. Sixteen pieces are auctioned off – one from each invited artist – at the art reception and gala evening. An additional 250 works from the 16 artists are exhibited during the Concours. The featured artist, selected a year in advance, produces art for event publications, including the poster. This artist is not paid, but receives a percentage of the amount made at auction. Although designs are usually in line with featured marques, artists have complete freedom.

#### **Mode du Concours**

More than any other complementary event, the Mode du Concours fashion show luncheon is a direct reflection of the first Concours d’Elegance. Begun in 1992, it has become one of the most popular Concours events and one of the premier fashion shows in southeast Michigan. The Mode du Concours has sold out in each of the last three years.

The 1994 Mode du Concours featured the fall collection of international designer Oscar de la Renta. Ever since, selections from a

single designer’s fall collection usually are featured. Last year, Dana Buchman fashions graced the runway. This year, fashions designed by Elie Tahari, will be featured. Tahari is known for combining “uptown chic with downtown flair. His signature feminine silhouettes mix modern fabrics and vivid colors with streetwise sensibility.” Tahari has outfitted Hilary Rodham Clinton and Leah Rabin.

#### **Meadow Brook Historic Races**

In 1985, under the leadership of Bob Larivee, a committee member, a vintage race was added to make the Concours a complete weekend of festivities. Vintage racing in North America is considered a tribute to the golden age of American Road Racing. The Meadow Brook Historic Races are held at Waterford Hills Raceway in Clarkston, not far from MBH.

#### **Best of show**

While many shows today judge cars on the basis of their authenticity and the quality of their restoration, MBH Concours judges award trophies based on the beauty, design and style of the cars, in keeping with the original standards set at the first Concours d’Elegance.

Three to four judges are assigned to each of the 11 marques or classifications of entries. Judges examine each car, evaluating body design,



**For the last 15 years, automotive art has been auctioned at the Meadow Brook Hall Concours d’Elegance. Additional works are exhibited. Proceeds benefit MBH.**

fabrication, engineering concept and innovation. Restored and original cars compete on equal footing. Equal awards are given to approximately 20 percent of the cars in each classification.

In addition, one car from each class also is chosen for special recognition. These are then judged again to determine the Best in Show entry, which receives the Founders' Trophy. A special People's Choice Award is voted on by all who attend.

#### At the end of the day

The MBH Concours d'Elegance raises an average of \$500,000 annually for MBH. Net revenues over expenses go to support the preservation and interpretation of Meadow Brook Hall.

Mounting the event costs about \$1.5 million. Hard costs are borne by the lead sponsor each year. Additional sponsors underwrite the rest.

Sponsorship of the Concours traditionally rotates between the Big 3 automakers, DaimlerChrysler Corporation, General Motors Corporation and the Ford Motor Company.

#### MBH Concours Events

The Meadow Brook Hall Concours d'Elegance includes a full week of spectacular activities celebrating the automotive art and design of the past. They include:

**Invitational Artists Exhibition**  
Saturday, July 21 through  
Thursday, Aug. 2

**Automotive Tour**  
Friday, Aug. 3

**Mode du Concours Fashion Show Luncheon**  
Meadow Brook Hall  
Friday, Aug. 3

**Artists' Reception**  
DaimlerChrysler  
Technology Center  
Friday, Aug. 3

**RM Classic Car Auction**  
(affiliated event)  
Shotwell-Gustafson Pavilion  
Saturday, Aug. 4

**Tour d'Elegance**  
(affiliated event)  
Friday, Saturday and Sunday  
Aug. 3, 4 and 5

**Meadow Brook Historic Races**  
(affiliated event)  
Waterford Hills Raceway  
Friday, Saturday and Sunday,  
Aug. 3, 4 and 5

**Art Auction and Gala Evening**  
(Gala Evening by invitation only)  
Meadow Brook Hall  
Saturday, Aug. 4

For additional information on the Meadow Brook Hall Concours d'Elegance please call (248) 370-3140 or visit [www.mbhconcours.org](http://www.mbhconcours.org).



Photo by Dennis Collins

2001 Concours Chair  
Rose Lieberman and  
Vice Chair Andy Agosta

## Q&A

### Concours Chair Rose Lieberman gives the inside view

Rose Lieberman is the dynamic spirit and driving force behind the 2001 Meadow Brook Hall Concours d'Elegance. Lieberman is the first woman to chair this event in its 23-year history. She also is the first woman volunteer chair of any Concours in the world. And, to add to her list of firsts, she also is past chairman of the Michigan Chapter of the New England MGT Register, the only woman to hold this position.

When not devoting endless hours to the Concours, Lieberman runs her Southfield insurance business, which she founded 21 years ago. She also volunteers for Gilda's Club and the Michigan Jewish Aids Coalition, and is a counselor for AIDS, cancer and Parkinson's disease patients. She holds a degree in dental hygiene from the University of Detroit, as well as bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Wayne State University.

So, what drew her to the Concours? *Inside Oakland* caught up with Lieberman to find out more about the woman behind one of the most prestigious automotive exhibitions in the world, ranked with the Concours at Pebble Beach, Calif., and the Bagatelle in Paris, France.

#### Q: When did this passion for automobiles begin?

**A:** I inherited it from my father, an auto enthusiast. I worked on my first car, a 1948 Willys Wagoner, while earning my dental hygiene degree from the University of Detroit. I kept a set of coversalls in the car to cover my white uniform because I frequently had to make repairs on a faulty accelerator while commuting to school.

#### Q: Do you collect cars?

**A:** Yes, I own a very special 1952 MGTD.

#### Q: How did you get involved in the Concours?

**A:** I began as a volunteer in 1992. I focused on developing Tour d'Elegance activities that are associated with the Concours, including the creation of the Tour d'Elegance Cruise which encourages the participation of car clubs from across the country. I'm proud to say that as a result, car club attendees increased to 1,000.

#### Q: It seems you have passed your passion for cars on to your son.

**A:** Yes, my son, Mark, is a noted Michigan collector of classic and vintage automobiles. It's all in the family.

#### Q: Who is on your Concours leadership team?

**A:** The Concours leadership includes Andy Agosta, my vice chair, the chairs of our subcommittees, and representatives from Meadow Brook Hall and Oakland University. Andy Agosta brings incredible knowledge and experience to this event. He is director of Event Marketing for Exhibit Enterprises, Inc., which represents DaimlerChrysler Corporation at marketing events nationwide. Prior to that he spent 37 years at Chrysler Corporation in the marketing and event management side of the business. He led Chrysler's involvement in all of the major Concours and vintage race events across the country. He knows them all and brings that experience to our event. He personally owns a 1970 Plymouth AAR Cuda and a 2001 Chrysler Prowler. He will take the lead next year and I know the event will be in good hands.

#### Q: How many other committee members are there?

**A:** There are more than 80 dedicated people supporting the 2001 Concours. Without them we wouldn't be able to bring this extraordinary event to Meadow Brook Hall. They work tirelessly on this event.

#### Q: Was there a split among some of the committee members this year?

**A:** It boils down to a difference in approach. Some members wanted to set up an independent 501 (c)(3) to operate the Concours. Essentially, Oakland University's Meadow Brook Hall would have become a rental facility for the Concours rather than an integral part of this important event. This was reviewed and a decision was made to continue operating the Concours this year in the same manner as it has been for the last 22 years – for the sole benefit of the preservation and interpretation of MBH. As a result of this decision, some volunteer committee members chose to leave.

#### Q: How much money is raised and what are some of the projects it has supported?

**A:** For the past few years, the Concours has raised an average of \$500,000 a year for the hall. A couple examples of where the money has helped is in the restoration of the Parducci ceiling and to support exhibits and elementary school educational programs. I must say that it is a remarkable thing to be able to use your passion to contribute to much to the Concours and Meadow Brook Hall. I am incredibly fortunate to have this opportunity.



Designer Dana Buchman and Patty Ilitch  
at the Mode du Concours 2000.



Sales of Concours and MBH merchandise give participants a memento of the day.

## 2001 Meadow Brook Hall Concours d'Elegance Committees

### Art

Dennis Audet  
Jon Block  
Barbara Heller  
Brandy Hirschlieb (MBH)  
Bob Larivee  
Rose Lieberman  
Denise Little  
Bill Mihalic  
Maura Overland (MBH)  
Michael Polis  
Jack Schwartz  
Fred Smith  
Gary Williams  
Tobin Williams

### Car Selection

Andy Agosta  
Art Cervi  
Randy Evans  
Patti Holls  
Mark Lieberman  
Rose Lieberman  
Jim Mattison  
Al Maynard  
Peter McLallen  
Maura Overland (MBH)  
Peter Pleitner  
Steve Pasteiner  
Mike Sheridan, Chair  
Bob Sirna  
Fred Smith

### Event Services

Robert Biskup  
Edward Burke  
Tim Cavanaugh  
James Clark  
Ken Conrad  
Bill Couch  
Karl Couyoumjian  
Stu Davis  
Terry Drosz  
Del Eastes  
Daniel Jakobiak  
Jim Klassen  
Dick Leonard, Chair  
Rose Lieberman  
Scott Lumsden  
Scott Manning  
Gordon Miesel  
Brian Milidrag  
Alan Miller  
Frank Moss  
Doug Nouse  
Ray Price  
Bill Rogers  
John Sanderson  
Mike Sheridan  
Greg Swett  
Frank Valdez, Co-chair  
Mike Villeneuve  
Donald Williams  
Tobin Williams  
Kim Zelinski (MBH)

### Fashion/Banquet/ Tours/Hospitality

Lisa Baylis Ashby (MBH)  
Jon Block, Co-chair  
Kelly Glaza (MBH)  
Rose Lieberman  
Lorraine Schultz

Ed Schwall, Co-chair  
Sally Victor (MBH)

### Graphics

Linda Ashley  
Dennis Audet  
Gary LaGuire  
Rose Lieberman  
Jerry McDermott  
Mark Peake  
Beth Wheeler (MBH)  
Gary Williams, Chair  
Tobin Williams

### Marketing

Lisa Baylis Ashby (MBH)  
Jon Block  
Steven Bobowski  
Mike Fellberg  
Matthew Larcinese  
Rose Lieberman  
Reid MacGuidwin  
Brian Milidrag  
David Murbach  
Doug Nouse  
Laura Respecki  
Dave Ross  
Ed Schwall, Chair  
Jack Schwartz  
Bill Scott  
Jim Sheridan  
Bob Sirna  
Paula Sutterfield (MBH)  
Karen Turner  
Sally Victor (MBH)  
Jamie Zeff

### Off-Site Activities

Terry Gonser  
Michael FairBairn  
Mark Lieberman  
Rose Lieberman  
Laura Respecki

### Planning

Andy Agosta  
Lisa Baylis Ashby (MBH)  
Jon Block  
Dick Leonard  
Rose Lieberman  
Mike Sheridan  
Ed Schwall  
Gary Williams

### Public Relations

Linda Ashley  
Austin Craig  
Bob Larivee, Chair  
Jodi Tinson  
Sally Victor (MBH)  
Beth Wheeler (MBH)  
Gary Williams

### Vehicle Database

Pete McLallen  
Karl Grange  
John Coughlin

# The Concours in the new millennium

## What's new for 2001

Extraordinary vehicles that have traveled the decades will stop for a moment in history on the grounds of Meadow Brook Hall on Aug. 5 for the 23rd annual Meadow Brook Hall Concours d'Elegance. It will be a celebration of the 100th anniversary of Mercedes, a salute to streamliner automobiles and a tribute to American-engined sports cars.

An estimated 20,000 people will enjoy this cooperative venture involving Meadow Brook Hall, Oakland University and an 80-plus member volunteer committee.

Wolfgang Bernhard, DaimlerChrysler Corporation's chief operating officer, is the honorary chair. Rose Lieberman, president of Rose Lieberman Enterprises Inc., will serve as chair. Lieberman has the distinction of being the first woman to chair any Concours of this stature.

In conjunction with the Concours, Meadow Brook Hall is displaying a collection of original Dodge Brothers Motor Cars photographs and documents. Included in the collection is silent film footage from 1915 highlighting – in what may be the first recorded crash test – a simulation of Dodge vehicle performance in poor weather conditions. This collection, never before seen by the public, will run through Sept. 30.

## The Cars...

Under Lieberman's leadership, vehicles from around the world will be on display, including:

Classic Mercedes-Benz vehicles on loan from the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart, Germany, compliments of DaimlerChrysler Corporation, the lead sponsor of the 2001 event.

**A 1953 Mercedes-Benz 300 S Cabriolet.** One of only 500 produced in 1953, this car was originally priced at \$12,500, more than 10 times the standard American luxury car of the era. This car has all the amenities, including a complete four-piece, fitted luggage set for the rear compartment.

**A 1937 Delahaye Type 135 Competition Court,** sometimes called the "Roadster Grand Sport." Extremely rare, only five of these cars exist today. This is just one example of the streamliners on display. Sleek, elegant, Italian art deco style streamliners appeared in the United States from the 1930s through the 1950s.

**A 1906 Queen Model K.** A magnificent brass era model, this car is one of only three in existence. Well-traveled, it has been featured at the Newport Beach Concours, and The Henry Ford and Petersen museums.

**A 1954 Hudson Hornet Convertible.** One of only six in Lipstick Red, this is a beautiful example of a Hudson Motor Car Company car.

## ...And more

For the third consecutive year, RM Auctions, Inc. will auction more than 65 pre- and post-war American and European vintage automobiles. Headlining the auction will be a 1934 Duesenberg Model J. Walker La Grande Convertible Coupe, one of only three built. The automobiles will be pre-viewed at the Shotwell-Gustafson Pavilion, on Friday, Aug. 3 from 6 to 9 p.m.; the auction is Saturday, Aug. 4.

For more information on the 2001 Meadow Brook Hall Concours d'Elegance, contact Meadow Brook Hall at (248) 370-3140 or visit the Web site at [www.mbhconcours.org](http://www.mbhconcours.org).



2001 MBH Concours d'Elegance poster designed by Alain Lévesque.



**INSIDE OAKLAND** is published each month September through May for the faculty and staff of Oakland University by the University Communications and Marketing Department (C&M). Special editions are published as needed.

#### Newsletter Staff:

Sheila Carpenter, editorial assistant; Dennis Collins, campus photographer; Lynn Metzker, art director; and Debbie Patrick, editorial director.

**Call:** 3185 **Fax:** 3182

**Write:** 433 Varner Hall

**E-mail:** [dpatrik@oakland.edu](mailto:dpatrik@oakland.edu)  
Printed on recycled paper

#### DEADLINES

Submit items for publication no later than the 10th of the month before the month of publication.

**Concours photos  
by Len Katz.**