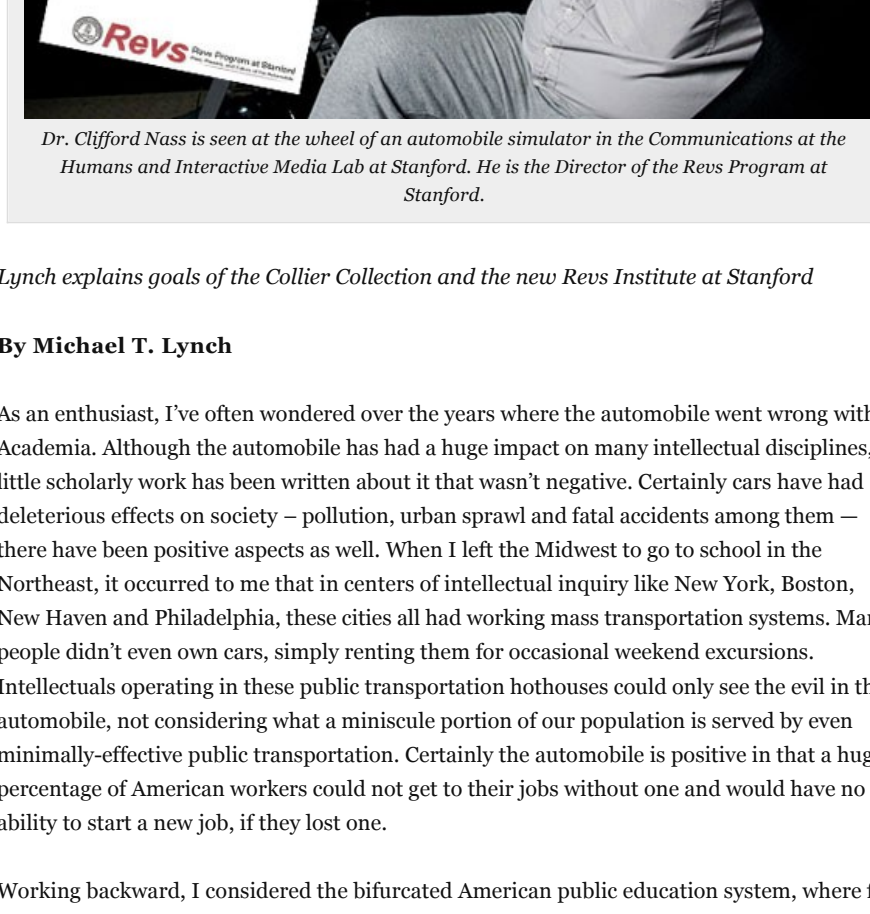


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Lynch on the Collier Collection and Revs Institute

By LYNCH on AUGUST 10, 2011



Dr. Clifford Nass is seen at the wheel of an automobile simulator in the Communications at the Humans and Interactive Media Lab at Stanford. He is the Director of the Revs Program at Stanford.

Lynch explains goals of the Collier Collection and the new Revs Institute at Stanford

By Michael T. Lynch

As an enthusiast, I've often wondered over the years where the automobile went wrong with Academia. Although the automobile has had a huge impact on many intellectual disciplines, little scholarly work has been written about it that isn't negative.

Working backward, I considered the bifurcated American public education system, where for many decades, smart kids in high school were put on a college track and those deemed slow learners were relegated to what was usually referred to as "shop" - technical training.

Recent developments that began in the enthusiast automotive community may have the effect of moving academia toward a more balanced view of the automobile.

Collier is American racing royalty in that his father, C. Miles and uncles Sam and Barron were founders of the Automobile Racing Club of America in the 1930s.

Although the ARCA wasn't always either an artistic or financial success, some impressive events were held with members entering European GP machinery.

Miles C. Collier became interested in road racing and he first built an important collection of Porsches which he raced in vintage events.

As Collier culled the collection over the years and added to it, he developed strong theories on the responsibility of collectors to form a rationale for their collections and to preserve the past.

By 2000, Collier began a series of biennial symposiums on collecting. These included faculty like historian Doug Nyce, driver/historian/restorer Phil Hill, restorer Paul Russell and others at the top of the collector car world.

Since then, Miles has expanded what he wants to achieve, which seems to be nothing less than the acceptance of the study of the automobile at the highest levels of academia.

In the immediate future, Nass and his fellow faculty and students will be involved in the feast of cars and car-related events during the week-long run up to the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

The Collier Collection will have two Porsches entered at the Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion.

I asked what he saw as some of the Program's first initiatives. He said he, "...wanted to bring the automobile to the center of the university, appearing in research and in courses of every discipline."

Because the automobile has had such a profound effect on technology, society and culture, Nass "...finds it remarkable that academia ignored the automobile as a subject of study and relegated it to lower pursuits."

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Another initiative is support the creation of new automotive-related courses across the curriculum.

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