

ACTOR, FROM PAGE A10

PL: I grew up in Southern California, Newport Beach and some other places. I didn't have the money to have a hot rod in high school. So it was only after I went in the Navy and got out and studied acting and became an actor and made a few bucks that I could get a hot rod or two, which I did.

**FW: What happened to the car you drove in "American Graffiti"?**

PL: That car was built for the movie by George Lucas, and Universal Pictures owned it.

**FW: What's your favorite type of car?**

PL: My favorite car, generally speaking, is Mustang. But I'd say for classic cars I prefer the '57 Chevy.

**FW: Did you relate to the era portrayed in "American Graffiti"?**

PL: That film depicted a world that was going out of existence by 1962 and '63, which was when I was surfing in Newport Beach, and learning acting in high school. So I missed the cruising era, although there were some car clubs in Newport Beach but I didn't have a car so I couldn't be a member.

**FW: What did your parents do professionally when you were growing up?**

PL: My stepfather was a nuclear physicist, and I had another stepfather who had been a boxer. And as a matter of fact I went into boxing briefly, and won an amateur boxing tournament — The Diamond Belt Tournament, in 1972 in Los Angeles.

**FW: Do you still box as an amateur or just for fun?**

PL: I work out at it, but I haven't hit anybody since the 1990s, or been hit.



COURTESY PHOTO

Paul Le Mat in a scene from "American Graffiti."

**FW: When did you start doing car shows?**

PL: The first one, I believe, was in 1999. I can make some money at it. I wouldn't call it a living. I met a lot of wonderful car people and continued to do it over the years.

**FW: Do people still recognize you from "American Graffiti"?**

PL: They do if they stare at me long enough

**FW: What has been your favorite role as an actor?**

PL: My favorite part was playing — oh heck, there's two of them: the part I played in a movie, "Aloha, Bobby and Rose." That came out after "American Graffiti." And then Melvin in the movie "Melvin and Howard" with Jason Robards as Howard Hughes.

**FW: What are your plans as an actor and otherwise?**

PL: I'm also a writer. I write fiction. I have four books on Amazon Kindle. They're e-books. And I've been getting good responses from readers. As far as acting, I'm waiting for my agent, God bless him, to get me another job. ■

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