



# The Steering Wheel

## February, 2019

Newsletter of the Midwest Antique Auto Club  
Not affiliated with any national club.

An independent group of collectible vehicle enthusiasts.

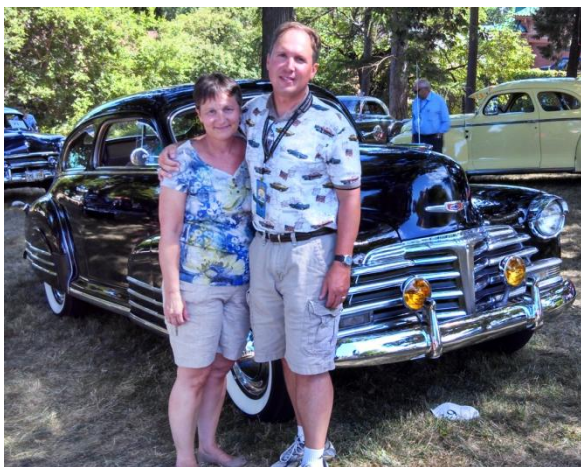
Dedicated to the preservation of the antique/collectible automobile.

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Meetings are held on the third Sunday of each month. The Board meets at 2:30 p.m. and the general meeting begins at 3:00 p.m. during the months of November, January, February and March at PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, Northwest Corner of 76th & Maple Streets in Omaha. During the summer months of April, May, June, July, August, September and October, there are no inside meetings. In these months we have "Official Car Tours" on the third Sunday of each month. Plus whatever extra tours may please us. There is no meeting in December, that meeting is replaced by our annual Christmas banquet. All vehicles are welcome, any year, make or model, but a drivable collectible/antique vehicle is not a requirement for membership.

The deadline for articles for the Steering Wheel is the last Saturday of the month.

### The President's Message



Hello Everyone,

Winter is finally here and boy is it cold! We have had to take some time away from working on my father's 47 Chevy since his garage is not heated. We are doing small projects like rebuilding the carburetor and the distributor. Plus we recently got new fuel lines and hope to have those installed when the weather gets above freezing. Our goal is to have the engine running this spring – we will see if the rebuilt engine will work after 7 years of sitting.

I would like to thank my wife, Karen, for allowing us to have our January MAAC meeting at our house. It turns out that our contact at the Paralyzed Veterans of America was on

vacation and didn't inform her replacement so we found a locked building on January 20. I appreciate everyone being open to moving our meeting to our house. We will plan to have the white elephant sale at the February meeting and BINGO at the March meeting.

I hope everyone stays warm and safe over the next few weeks. See you in February.

John and Karen Thurber ❁

## Coming Events

January 12<sup>th</sup>

SIOUX FALLS, SD — Race and Hi Performance Swap Meet, W.H. Lyons Fairgrounds. Contact: Bill Lev, 605-201-4545.

### February 17<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) 3:00 pm.

This is the third official indoor meeting of the season. This is the month for RED, Happy Valentine's Day! \*\*Please bring a red desert or salad. We will be having the Annual "White Elephant Sale" which was to have occurred last month and our general meeting. BINGO will be moved to March.

February 24<sup>th</sup>

SOUTH SIOUX CITY, NE — Original Sioux City Racers & Rodders Swap Meet. Delta Hotel Center. Information: Lloyd Schweigert, 712-239-6199 or 712-898-2943.

February 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>

MONTICELLO, IA — 50th Annual Rod and Custom Car Show, Monticello Berndes Center, 766 N. Maple St. Information: 319-465-5119 or <http://rodandcustomcarshow.com>.

March 3<sup>rd</sup>

LINCOLN, NE — 46th Annual Rocky Manginelli Memorial Swap Meet, Lancaster Event Center, 4100 N. 84th St. "The first and largest swap meet of the year held in Nebraska!" Contact: Frank Wimmer, 402-450-8490

June 1<sup>st</sup>

GRETNA, NE — Skills & Grilles, Car, Truck, and Tractor Show, Gretna High School. Registration: 9 to 12 am. Awards: 3 pm. Sponsored by Gretna High SkillsUSA and Meadowlark Model A Ford Club. Contact: Jim Musel 402-995-1005 or Bob McKinney 402-332-3993 or <http://meadowlarks.omahaneb.org>



## Member News

**\*\*DUES ARE PAST DUE! PLEASE SEND THEM TO DIXIE FOOTE IF YOU HAVE NOT YET PAID.**

\*\*The folks that we have not heard from are: Dena & Don Fey, Joe Gibbs, Delsa & Dave Hansen, Joan & Howard Hunter, Terri & Jim Miller, Richard Nimerichter, and Donald Schwalm.

We know we all get busy and forget or thought we did, when we didn't. Or there may be needed communication in case you did not get marked as paid, and did in fact pay. We don't want this to be your last newsletter.

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**REMINDER:** The Steering Wheel is in need of new Newsletter Editors. The Miller's are retiring from this position so their last issue will be November of 2019!



**THE HISTORY OF VALENTINE'S DAY:**

February is the special event of Valentine's Day. Valentine's Day is also known as St. Valentine's Day or Feast of Saint Valentine. According to Wikipedia this originated as a "Western Christian Feast day honoring one of two early saints named Valentinus. It is recognized as a significant cultural, religious and commercial celebration of romance and romantic love in many regions around the world, although it is not a public holiday in any country. "One story includes a written account of St. Valentine of Rome who was imprisoned for performing weddings for soldiers, apparently they were not permitted to marry (I did not know that !). He also (according to this source-Wikipedia) ministered to Christians persecuted under the Roman Empire. "According to legend (and Wikipedia), before his execution he wrote a letter to the judge's daughter whom he had cured of her blindness and signed the letter 'Your Valentine'. Now we move on to Geoffrey Chaucer, you remember the author of "The Canterbury Tales", this is in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. Courtly love was taking off and romantic love became associated with this "feast". By the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, "it evolved into an occasion in which lovers express their love for each other by presenting flowers, offering confectionery, and sending greeting cards (known as Valentines)" (Wikipedia). And as you can see this has changed to a more commercialized endeavor, but the thoughts of love and kindness are still there. Happy Valentine's to all, Sincerely, Esther Miller

**AUTOMOBILE TRIVIA AND WHATNOT**

I ran across one of my father's (Donald Cutler) many books and came upon an interesting little gem. It is not a big book, only 6 1/2 X 6 1/2 " and 3/4 " thick. It is called "Popular Mechanics AUTO ALBUM (The motor car in picture and story from 1769-1952) by Edward Throm and James Crenshaw (Popular Mechanics Press, USA, 1952). Inside the front and back covers they have a list of MORE THAN 2000 names of autos made from 1893 to 1952 that was compiled by Harry Rogan of the Automobile Club of Michigan; it is titled the ROLL CALL OF THE HORSELESS CARRIAGES. I perused this little book for some interesting facts to share with everyone. Chapter 5 (pg 65) of this little book has some interesting history. Racing started with

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“Hill Climbing Contests” to see who or what could make the grade in the 1890s. Power on hills was “as important in those days as the automobile’s speed” (pg66). Racing in Europe occurred first because they had the automobile first. The first recognized mile run, made in France in 1898 by driver Chasseloup –Laubat, averaged 39.23 MPH, an excellent clip at that time. A year later another French driver, Jenatzy, raised the mark to 65.79 mph. It wasn’t until 1903 that Barney Oldfield reached 64.516 mph in Henry Ford’s “999”. By 1900 Paris had become the starting point for many long road races, the most famous of these were the Paris—Rouen and the Paris--Bordeaux. Some of the courses were over 700 miles. And remember these were not run on smooth speedways like today. Many mishaps occurred. If you ever want to envision what these races were like rent “Those Daring Young Men in Their Jaunty Jalopies” by Paramount Pictures (1969) where the race takes place in the 1920’s to Monte Carlo. The following excerpt is from this book, and you can get the idea of what these races take, especially with the weather.

THE FIRST AMERICAN AUTO RACE was held in Chicago on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 28, 1895. The course was from Jackson Park to Suburban Evanston and back, about 50 miles. In summary: eleven cars entered, six actually started, two finished, and J. Frank Duryea, a co-builder of America’s first gas auto was the winner with an average speed of 6.66 mph., and he had a very good reason to be extremely proud of it!

No worse day could have been picked for the race. A severe snowstorm had covered the roads with 12 inches of snow a few days before, and most of the snow was still on the ground, some of it turned to slush. The temperature hovered between 30 and 39 degrees as the first contestant, Duryea, rolled out of Jackson Park at 8:55 a.m., the others following at short intervals.

The six participating “motocycles” (as the cars were called then) belonged to: the Duryea Motor Co., the De la Vergne Refrigerating Machine Co., Morris & Salom of Philadelphia, H. Mueller & Co., of Decatur, R.H. Macy of New York (yes, the department store) and Harold Sturges of Chicago. The two cars entered by Morris & Salom and Harold Sturges were electric cars, they were not able to finish the race because they were not able to arrange for battery – supply stations along the route. They entered merely to show that electric cars could run as well as the gasoline machines under these stern conditions.

Each car carried an “umpire” in addition to a driver and mechanic. Duryea was still in the lead when he passed 60<sup>th</sup> and Cottage Grove at 9:07 am, but his car broke down at Rush & Erie, on the other side of the Loop, and there the Macy car passed him. Duryea was 40 min. behind when he sped past Grant’s monument in Lincoln Park at 11:10 am. But at the first relay station, farther north he was only 22.5 minutes behind.

Duryea gambled on the constitution of his engine and chassis, and raced past the relay station without pausing. Thus he passed the Macy entry in Evanston at 12:50 am. On the return route, he drove past the second relay station without stopping, which was really crowding his luck. Running his car smoothly along the Clark Street car tracks, got 2 miles off the course. He got back on and was still in the lead, racing now at 8 mph ! One stop for gas and wait while a train passed a crossing were the rest of his delays, he reach the finish line at 7:18 pm.

The second starter, De la Vergne’s car boasted a Benz motor and had already won first prize in Paris. It was driven by the inventor, Frederick Haas, with umpire James Bate aboard. The car stalled in a bad stretch of road just outside Jackson Park, and Haas had to drop out temporarily, He eventually got the car out of the snow and started again, but at Michigan Ave and 16<sup>th</sup> St. it quit altogether. He pushed it off the road and watched the rest of the race.

The Macy Machine, next to start, had the worst luck of all. Jerry O, Connor drove, with Lt. Samuel Rodman, Jr . O’Connor passed Duryea at Rush & Erie, after having smashed into the rear of a horse car without damaging the Macy. O, Connor stopped at the first relay station, changed the oil and water, made examinations and a few minor repairs. Another forced stop later on cut his margin of lead. Then Duryea caught him in Evanston and passed him. Shortly afterward O’Connor smashed into a cutter which had overturned while following the race. Next he collided with a hack which would not give him the right of way in Rogers Park. Four of the Macy’s spokes were broken and the steering gear was bent. He then used the car tracks to get to the second relay station, where he stopped for an hour and 20 min. . Still trying, he

managed to cut Duryeas's lead to only 25 min. before the Macy's motor "gave a dying sputter and quit the race, a victim of 3 horse- drawn vehicles"!

Harold Sturges drove the 4<sup>th</sup> car, A Sturges electric wagon, only so far as Lincoln Park, where the battery gave out.

The Morris & Salom electric wagon, driven by Morris with Hiram Maxim as umpire, merely made a quick dash to Lincoln Park and part of the way back, making no effort to win.

The Mueller car, which finished second, did not arrive at the starting line for an hour after the race began. This car, driven by Oscar Mueller, with Charles Reid as Mueller's assistant and Charles King as umpire, had a Benz motor from Mannheim, Germany. Its entry was delayed by belts which would not work smoothly. Nevertheless the Mueller was the third car to reach the second relay station on the return trip, although the team had to make a number of stops to oil and fix the clutch and the right sprocket chain.

After about 35 miles of the race, Mueller & Reid traded places, with Reid doing the driving. Mueller then lost consciousness from exposure and King took over his duties-guiding- for the machine required both a driver and a "guider." Reid drove the car across the finish line an hour and 35 minutes after Duryea.

(Throm & Crenshaw, Popular Mechanics Press, 1952 , pgs. 68 – 74)



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