



The Steering Wheel

July 2020

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 1:30 p.m. and the general meeting begins at 2:00 p.m. during the months of November, January, February and March at the **NEW CASSEL RETIREMENT CENTER at 900 N. 90th St., Omaha, NE 68114.** 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,

I hope you are staying safe and healthy while we stay at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I have a feeling that we will be under the curse of COVID-19 for a number of months to go. Please be safe and protect yourselves as you go about your daily business.

We got great reviews from the retirement communities/assisted living centers. I really appreciate you participating on our little old car parade. I received many thank yous from the facility's leadership. We are planning to do something similar in Council Bluffs in July. I hope you can

join us.

Be safe and stay healthy

John and Karen Thurber

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 19th (Sunday)

We are planning to have a car drive by at Prairie Gate Retirement Community and visit a few other sites in Council Bluffs. We will meet in the parking lot at 1:00 p.m. at the Bomgaars on 2303 E. Kanessville Blvd, Council Bluffs. We will be leaving Bongaars at 1:30 p.m. will start driving our cars around the facility at 16 Valley View Dr, Council Bluffs. We will have maps available for the tour – again, we will maintain social distance by staying in our cars until the end of the tour. We will be visiting a few other sites in Council Bluffs and will end with a few treats.

August 16th (Sunday)

Tour is still being arranged and will be finalized and discussed in the next Steering Wheel.

Member News

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

June 20th Tour- Participants, Ed and Sandy Anderson (99 Prowler), Tom Beiriger (29 Ford Model A), Delmar and Roger Bunch (69 Chevy), Jim and Cheryl Cushman (39 Buick), Clif, Joyce and Lisa Ellis (51 Chevy), Ken, Dixie and Donna Foote (49 Packard), Monte and Marge Frost (50 Jeepster), Ed and Janet Hedegaard (59 Jaguar), Howard and Joan Hunter (55 Packard), Tom and Gloria Kannas (41 Buick), Charlie and Mickey Moriarty (49 Chrysler), John and Karen Thurber (47 Chevy), Frank and Elizabeth Van Doorn (52 Studebaker), Jerry and Connie Vincentini (52 Chevy)

We had a great time visiting four retirement communities. I received a thank you from three of them. I really appreciate everyone that participated.



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Hemmings Motor News Article

Tom and Gloria Kannas had a car mentioned in Hemmings Motor News in May. Below is the article about the car and information from Gloria (My father, Harlan Cratty, was a member of the Omaha Horseless Carriage Club and did many years of touring with that club in the Coupelet. I am sure a few of our current members would remember him. My son is Philip Berg contacted Hemmings about the car. He also is the one who has done the work on the car. He lives in California. The Coupelet is currently in our garage here in Treynor, IA)

The first car featured in Hemmings Motor News is still with the same family more than 60 years later By Daniel Strohl on May 26th, 2020

It's a common misconception that Hemmings Motor News for its first half-century or so only ran old-car classified ads and nothing else. That's certainly how Ernest Hemmings started the company in 1954. However, not long afterward, he started to feature readers' cars and, as it turns out, the first car he featured remains in the same family 60-plus years later. With our headquarters in Bennington, Vermont, still closed, we can't dig through our archives to confirm that Harlan C. Cratty's 1916 Ford Model T coupelet appeared as the first featured car in the October 1958 issue of Hemmings Motor News, but we kinda don't need to with the photos and information that Cratty's grandson, Phil Berg, recently sent our way. Those materials include a letter that Ernest Hemmings (then, as always, in Quincy, Illinois) wrote to Cratty (in Omaha, Nebraska) on September 30, 1958, in which Hemmings conducted some business with Cratty—the sale of a pair of camshafts for \$2—and then thanked Cratty for the photos of his T. "It is our aim to have a feature car each month and as your fine car is very usual (sic) thought it would be good to start out with," Hemmings wrote. He probably meant to write unusual.

It is understood the car was originally ordered by a doctor for use by his wife. But before the doctor took delivery of the car a rancher, who remained single all of his life, saw the car in the Ford garage and took a liking to it and ended up by driving it home. He used the car for his transportation until his death in the early 1950s. The car was purchased by the Gill Motor Company in Stuart, Nebraska at the ranch auction. Mr. Cratty purchased the car in December 1953 from the Gill Motor Co. It was in excellent condition and required only checking the oil, filling with gasoline, and putting air in the tires to ready it for the trip from Stuart to Omaha, a distance of approximately 225 miles. It covered the trip under its own power without mishap. All that Mr. Cratty has done is tighten the rods and main bearings. Also removing black paint from the brass trimming. Mr. Cratty is planning on restoring this car but have others in the restoration mill at the present time. But wherever the car is taken at the present time it always attracts plenty of comment and conversation due to the very unusual body style and excellent original condition.

Ernest then closed the story with a call for future Feature Car Of The Month submissions. According to Phil, his grandfather never did restore the coupelet. Instead, he drove it and a 1911 Model T touring that he owned in parades for the next several years before he decided the coupelet needed a new engine. Except "he wasn't the best mechanic," Phil said, so the rebuilt engine that went into the coupelet didn't run very well, leading Cratty to put the coupelet away in a North Omaha garage for the next 20 or so years. It fell to Phil's mother to retrieve the coupelet from that garage and then to persuade Phil to get it running again sometime around 2010.

The coupelet more or less as it appeared after decades of storage in Nebraska. In the years since, Phil has rebuilt the coupelet's original engine and replaced only what he's had to, including the roof and interior, before more recently turning his attention to his grandfather's 1911 touring.



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MIDWEST ANTIQUE AUTO CLUB



AN INDEPENDENT GROUP OF COLLECTIBLE VEHICLE ENTHUSIASTS