



The Steering Wheel

January 2022

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.

<u>Presidents</u>	<u>John & Karen Thurber</u>	<u>Ph. (402)-496-7701</u>
<u>Vice Presidents</u>	<u>Dave Hansen</u>	<u>Ph. (402)-350-6505</u>
<u>Secretaries</u>	<u>Gloria & Tom Kannas</u>	<u>Ph. (712)-566-9818</u>
<u>Treasurers</u>	<u>Dixie & Ken Foote</u>	<u>Ph. (712)-566-2803</u>
<u>Tour Committees</u>	<u>Ed & Janet Hedegaard</u>	<u>Ph. (402)-490-5909</u>
<u>Tour Committees</u>	<u>Jim & Cheryl Cushman</u>	<u>Ph. (402)-558-0150</u>
<u>News Letter Editors</u>	<u>We still need someone</u>	<u>Ph. (xxx)-xxx-xxxx</u>
<u>Historians</u>	<u>Clif & Joyce Ellis</u>	<u>Ph. (402)-397-4279</u>

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 everyone enjoyed the holiday season with your family and friends. With Covid still with us, we hope that you stayed healthy over the holidays and please watch yourself as infections continue to rise to new higher levels.

It was great to see the large turnout of MAAC members for our Christmas Party. Thank you to the Board for helping with the Christmas gathering at the Pizza King. Our continued activities could not go on without our strong board participation and help.

My brothers and I continue to work on my father’s car. I want to thank Dick Zuber for his help with aligning the doors, hood and fenders of the car. Dick spent a considerable amount of time with us over the holiday break and we made great progress with the car (see a couple of pictures on the next page). See you in January.

John and Karen Thurber



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January Indoor Tour – January 16, 2022

Our next indoor meeting on **Sunday, January 16 at 2:00 p.m. at New Cassell Retirement Center – 900 N. 90th Street, Omaha.** Please remember to wear masks while entering and exiting New Cassell. **Please enter via the Auditorium Entrance - north of the main entrance to the facility. We cannot come into the main entrance.** We will again be showing videos of old car commercials and events. Ed will bring chili and soup. Members, please bring desserts to the meeting.

****2022 MEMBERSHIPS ARE DUE - They are still \$25.00. Please send payment to Dixie Foote at 25127 Bentley Lane, Neola, Iowa – 51559**

February 20th Indoor Tour

More news to come on the February event – please see the February Steering Wheel for more information.

Member News

December Holiday Party

We had a great time meeting on December 18th at the Pizza King. We had almost 40 members attend the party. Thank you Hedegaards and Footes for scheduling the event. And thank you Board members for helping set up the party. I hope everyone enjoyed themselves and stayed healthy.

Sad News – I am sorry to announce that long-time member Dale Harding passed away in December. Our thoughts and prayers go to Marti and Dale's family. Dale was Past-Potentate of Tangier Shrine - 1989. Dale was a member of several clubs and units. He was most active in Mobile Nobles, Vintage Iron, Road Runners, and Flying Fez. In addition to Tangier Shrine, he was a member of John J. Mercer Lodge and the Scottish Rite.

VISITATION: Tuesday, January 4, 2022, 5-7pm, with MASONIC SERVICE at 7pm. SERVICE: 10am Wednesday, January 5, all at Roeder Mortuary - 108th St. Chapel. INTERMENT: Forest Lawn Cemetery, Omaha. In lieu of flowers, memorials to Tangier Shrine. Roeder Mortuary, Inc. - 108th Street Chapel, 2727 N 108th St., Omaha, NE | 402-496-9000

The Automobile Really Hit its Peak in 1940. Here Are Five Reasons Why.

By [David Conwill](#) at [Hemmings Motor News](#)

I recently read that Toyota has switched all its remote-starter systems for vehicles built after November 2018 [to a subscription-based model](#). Owners have apparently been finding that out the hard way as their three-year introductory period expires and suddenly their key fobs don't work.

Technically, I don't have a dog in this fight. I've never owned a Toyota or a vehicle with remote start. The times I've used such technology, it's been nice for cold days when you don't want to trudge out to warm up a cold car. On the other hand, a lot of jurisdictions are [banning that type of behavior anyway](#).

Still, I've seen the steady creep of subscription-based *everything* that has come in the wake of near universal smart-phone usage. Some of it makes sense. If something is being constantly updated and improved, that costs money. Somehow, though, I doubt remote start is changing much once it's installed in a car. Mostly, subscription-based models just seem like a way for companies to turn a one-time purchase into a constant stream of income and I'd rather opt out of that, thanks.

That got me thinking (or ranting) about how most improvements since 1940 have been mere refinements and how much I dislike forced obsolescence. In the interest of positive thinking, though, I decided to take the opposite tack. Here are five pieces of technology that were standard in U.S. automobiles in 1940 and have never really been improved upon, especially in terms of adjustability and rebuildability.

The Down Draft Carburetor

Up to 1932, virtually every automobile used some form of up-draft or side-draft carburetor. These were largely fine from a user standpoint and even had the advantages of packaging, gravity-feed fuel, and almost never flooding the engine, but they were a major airflow restriction. Chrysler introduced the down-draft carburetor in 1929 and the industry soon followed.

Carbs don't play well with modern emissions standards (at least not if you want any performance), but from a user standpoint, they're simplicity itself, requiring nothing more than a vacuum gauge to achieve near-peak tuning. The truly detail obsessed can use a wide-band O2 sensor to really get things dialed in, it's just a matter of turning wrenches and screwdrivers instead of inputting computer code.

The Headlamp

Headlights or headlamps, regardless of what you call them and even in six-volt 1940, the seven-inch sealed beam was perhaps the perfect lighting solution for 90-percent of American drivers. I suspect anyone who has driven in the past month likely knows how out of hand the modern lighting situation has become. We're glad you can see the road, folks, but the rest of us would like to as well.

It happens 1940 was the model year in which the sealed-beam headlamp became standard on automobiles. Later in the 1950s, smaller versions for quad applications became legal, and still later a rectangular version was the standard. Now there is no standard that's worth a damn, and nobody can see. Just buy a spotlight, people. It's what they did in 1940.

Charging

For many years, electrical systems were the biggest reliability gremlin in new cars. It's still far from a non-issue, but the basic standard electrical system of 1940 carried on for decades until all of you people started demanding your car navigate for you and order your latte ahead at the next exit.

Since the late 1920s, the charging element had been a standalone part of the engine system. By 1939, that charging element was a three-brush six-volt generator—by 1956 it had become a 12-volt generator; and in the 1960s a 12-volt alternator. Initially, battery charging was regulated by a simple cut-out—which usually [resulted in over-charging](#). In the

mid-1930s, the adjustable, mechanical voltage regulator had come along. It remained the standard through the 1960s and was replaced [more for manufacturing economy](#) than as a true improvement.

Plastic

Plastic is ubiquitous now, but was so novel in the 1930s they made jewelry from it. When car manufacturers used it, it wasn't so much because it was cheap and easy, but because it lent their product beauty. When it was used somewhere out of sight, it was because it was necessary. In both cases, it wasn't the oily or brittle plastics of today—it was probably phenolic resin. If it wasn't that, [it was probably made from soybeans](#).

Phenolics, of which the most famous are Bakelite and Catalin, were the first plastics after the highly flammable celluloid. Bakelite was created in 1909, [by Leo Baekeland](#), and Catalin came out in 1926. Although their star status has faded, phenolics are still incredibly useful—look under some hoods the next car show you're at and see if you can spot some carburetor spacers made from the stuff. It's an excellent insulator.

The Transmission

I maintain that if the first-gear synchronizer had debuted in 1937 instead of 1957 (1964-'65 for three-speeds), you would never have sold the American public on an automatic transmission. The basic three-speed, H-pattern transmission, in floor- or column-shift variety (the latter being standard in passenger cars by 1940) is essentially perfect for its task, with a low gear for starting from a dead stop, an intermediate gear for acceleration, and a direct gear for cruising.

Given a reasonable amount of power and an equally reasonable rear-axle ratio, a basic three-speed will do everything you ask of it, even on modern roads. If you're a speed or acceleration freak (and setting aside Ford and Auburn's use of [the Columbia two-speed rear axle](#)), the Borg-Warner automatic overdrive also existed in 1940, having been created by Chrysler in the early 1930s. It gave you overdrive on both second- and third gears, plus a kick-down when you floored the accelerator and freewheeling, which both conserved fuel and permitted downshifting into first gear while still rolling. Overdrive typically came along with a lower rear end gear, giving better acceleration and the same cruising speeds. It was the performance-buff's transmission of choice until the four-speed displaced it in the early '60s.

Finally, there must be an honorable mention to the original automatic transmission, the Hydra-Matic, which was available in the 1940 Oldsmobile. No slush box, the Hydra didn't even have a torque convertor, and became renowned for its robust nature. It was successful both as a tank transmission during WWII and in many drag racers. Like most things in the era, it's heavy, overbuilt, and probably a smidge less efficient, but it's also intended to be rebuilt over and over again—not scrapped at 250,000 miles.

The cars of 1940. You've really got to compare everything that has come since to them.



MIDWEST ANTIQUE AUTO CLUB

AN INDEPENDENT GROUP OF COLLECTIBLE VEHICLE ETHUSIASTS