



The Steering Wheel

February 2022

Newsletter of the Midwest Antique Auto Club

Not affiliated with any national club.

An independent group of collectible vehicle enthusiasts.

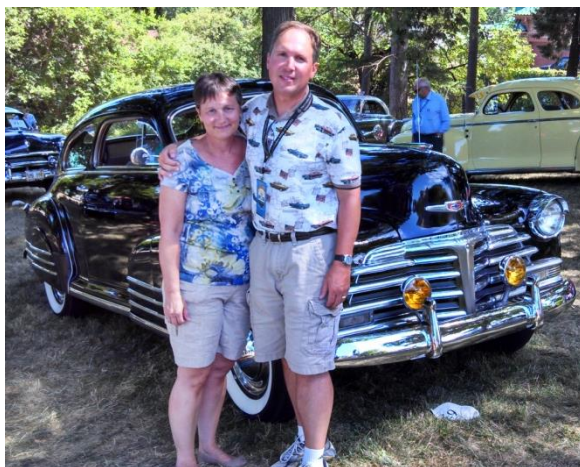
Dedicated to the preservation of the antique/collectible automobile.

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<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 is staying safe with the recent increase in COVID cases in the area. Fortunately, New Cassel will allow us to use their facility in February and March for our meetings. I really appreciate Monte and Marj Frost’s daughter’s help in getting access to the facility. As far as I understand, we are one of the few outside groups that are allowed access to their facility. Thank you, Monte, and Marj for your daughter’s help.

My brothers and I continue to work on my father’s car. The last 30 days, we put on the splash guards, finished aligning the fenders and hood, put on the door extensions and grill. Again, I really appreciate the support of all the MAAC members (recently Dick Zuber and Ed Hedegaard) who have helped us in working on the car. I shared a couple of pictures of our recent progress on the next page.

See you in March.

John and Karen Thurber



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February Indoor Tour – February 20, 2022

This is the second official indoor meeting of the season. Please join us at New Cassel (900 N. 90th Street) on February 20th at 2 p.m. to celebrate a late Valentine's Day! ****Please bring a red desert or salad. We will be having BINGO at this meeting.** Please remember to enter using the lower north entrance to the facility and please bring masks while entering and exiting the facility.

March 6, 2022

LINCOLN, NE — 49th Annual Rocky Manginelli Memorial Swap Meet, Lancaster Event Center, 4100 N. 84th St. Doors open at 7:00 a.m. “The first and largest swap meet of the year held in Nebraska!”
www.enwicc.com

****2022 MEMBERSHIPS ARE DUE - They are still \$25.00. I you haven't paid, please send payment to Dixie Foote at 25127 Bentley Lane, Neola, Iowa – 51559**

March 20th Indoor Tour

March MAAC Meeting, New Cassel, 2:00 p.m. Plan to join us to celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Corned Beef and Cabbage (and potatoes). Please bring a dessert or salad.– see the March Steering Wheel for more information.

Member News

For Sale – Engine hoist and engine stand - \$200 for both. Call John Thurber if interested 402-496-7701

Bob Chalek shared information from the June 6, 1944 (D-Day) want ads in the Omaha World Herald. You could purchase a 37 Buick convertible for \$700, a 38 Ford, 39 Mercury, 40 Plymouth, 38 DeSoto convertibles – all for \$695 each. By May 1952, the World Herald want ads indicated that you could purchase 47-51 Buick convertibles for \$1,095, a 47 Chevy convertible (just like my Dad's) for \$795 and a 48 DeSoto convertible for \$1,195. I was just looking to possibly purchase a 47 Buick Special convertible at the Kansas City Mecum auction for \$35,000 (it sold before I could make a bid). Prices have gone up a little in the last 70 years....

Hey, Automakers, Here's How to Get Around the Chip Shortage: Make De-Contented Cars Again

By David Conwill, Hemmings Motor News



During the Great Depression, Ford advertised its Standard line of stripped-down cars almost as heavily as the De Luxe versions most commonly seen today. The contemporary consumer would like a shot at this kind of basic transportation too.

Modern cars are more computer than machine, and the more gadgets and gizmos they have, the more computerized elements they require. Thus, when COVID-19 (and several other factors) caused a massive shortage of semiconductor chips and integrated circuits, it dragged down auto production just as surely as a glass, steel, or rubber shortage would have back in the vacuum-tube or transistor eras. I've got a workaround, though, and it will surely make a lot of Hemmings readers happy: Quit stuffing new cars with so much unwanted technology. Leave off the touch screens (BMW actually did), reintroduce wind-up windows and manual door locks, and see what else we can get away without. Back in the 'tube era, radio-delete plates were nearly as common as actual radios—so let's go back to vehicles without “infotainment systems.” Or how about HVAC? Arguably, there hasn't been an adequately decontented vehicle available since deleting the heater ceased to be an option sometime in the '60s or '70s. At one time, a windshield, top, and side curtains for your touring car or runabout were considered a luxury—now if you can't wear your basketball shorts to 7-11 in mid-February, there's something very wrong with your car. For sure, those of us in New England need a heater and defroster, but the SoCal market lived without for decades; likewise, Southerners may need AC, but most of us can just roll-down the aforementioned manual windows. Am I dreaming? Absolutely. There's no going back today—and maybe that's why so many of my neighbors seem to prefer side-by-side ORVs instead of passenger cars. Making every car more or less the same simplifies production and all that “content” justifies a premium price. It takes nearly as much money to build a cheap car as an expensive one, so simple machines don't have good profit margins. Luckily, this wasn't always the case, and the determined shopper can still find a low-content machines easily enough. Here are seven examples of low-content, high-quality vehicles automakers used to build. Which one would you want?

1918 Ford Model T coupe

1917-'25 Ford Model T Henry Ford's dream was individual transportation for the masses. To make it a reality, he made over the entire industry with the Model T. Keeping its rugged, simple technology in production long after it was considered obsolete by the competition permitted Ford to crank out millions of nearly identical Model T's at low, low cost. The most standardized, simple era of the T were 1917 to 1925 cars, the so-called “black-radiator” years. The only options, really, were electric start and demountable rims. An ammeter was the only instrument (and then, only if you got electric start), and you could get your T in any color you wanted—so long as it was black.

1938 Ford De Luxe (top) versus Standard.

1937-'41 Ford Standard The Model T eventually lost tremendous ground to the stylish, and better-equipped Chevrolet Superior, leading Ford to pull the plug in 1927 and institute a crash program to change over to the Model A. While the A was itself quite simple, it was a major step up from the T. Henry Ford never lost his soft spot for the common man, however, and bare-bones transportation remained a priority for the company. In the V-8 era, perhaps the best examples of a bare-bones Ford were the Standard series. From 1937 to 1940, the cheapest Ford cars came with the 60-hp V-8, a 136-cu.in. L-head engine that originally debuted in the European market, though the 221-cu.in., 85-hp engine was an extra-cost option. Standard Fords often came with a variation on the previous year's styling, less brightwork, and a simplified interior. Ford touted their economy of operation with the 60-hp engine, but the number of surviving 85-hp models suggest that many buyers just preferred the simpler, cheaper Ford to its De Luxe sibling, especially during the second dip of the Great Depression, circa 1938. When the Super De Luxe Ford line was introduced for 1941, the old De Luxe became the base model, and the Standard became a fleet-level vehicle that many don't even know existed. “The ‘Deluxe’ placed below ‘Super Deluxe,’” early Ford historian Bruce Lancaster once told me, “was the one for regular stingy people.” The V-8/60 was no longer available, and instead the base engine was the newly introduced 226-cu.in., 90-hp straight six. Other non-features of the '41 Standard were a steering wheel without a horn ring and a single windshield wiper and taillamp.

1961 Volkswagen Type 1

1949-'77 Volkswagen Type 1 “Beetle” For three decades, the beetle-shaped Volkswagen Type 1 sedan was synonymous with thrifty transportation. A true automatic transmission wasn't even available, to say nothing of things like air conditioning, power steering, power door locks, power seats, etc. During the years of the Super Beetle (1970-'76) the standard Beetle even lost much of its bright trim and the few options that had been added over the previous decades, making it a real stripper. Because of their cheap-and-cheerful

attitude, Bugs remained popular enthusiast cars even after production stopped. While they're not currently ubiquitous transportation anymore, their appeal remains. It's also possible Beetles could be poised to make a comeback, as they are one of the easiest electric conversions around. Even Volkswagen itself has started promoting such updates.

1951 Henry J

1951-'54 Henry J Like Henry Ford, Henry J. Kaiser wanted to build a car that the common man could afford to buy brand new. The original Kaiser program was intended to go that way, but wound up on the pricey side. Kaiser's next attempt was a compact, one of the first wave of compact cars that followed World War II. Unlike the contemporary Nash Rambler, the Henry J was positively spartan, in an attempt to keep it affordable. The initial Henry J was so light on content it didn't even offer a trunk lid (the trunk was accessed via the folding back seat), glove box, arm rests or opening rear windows. Later, items like the deck lid, along with desirable features like backup lamps or directional indicators became optional. As with many inexpensive cars over the years, rubber flooring was standard—a feature a lot of parents wouldn't mind seeing come back. Although the Henry J didn't take off (it was dropped in favor of the Willys Aero when Kaiser and Willys merged), its primitive nature was also representative of the cheapest versions of the second-wave compacts of 1960: the Chevrolet Corvair 500, the standard Ford Falcon, and the Valiant V-100.

1958 Studebaker Scotsman

1957-'58 Studebaker Scotsman The stereotype of the frugal, perhaps even parsimonious, Scot is almost forgotten today (did you ever wonder why Scotch Tape was called that?), but it was still alive and well in the 1950s. Studebaker struggled to build in the volume required to compete head-to-head with the Big Three or even AMC, meaning that its products typically cost more. To make its pricing more attractive, Studebaker marketed the Scotsman, a gutted version of its Champion and Commander lines (station wagon included) that was so austere it even featured painted hubcaps and grille. To drive home the point, the long-wheelbase, four-door sedan Champion-based Scotsman was subtitled the Econ-O-Miler. The Scotsman sedans didn't last past 1958, probably thanks the introduction of the compact Lark (which did retain the Econ-O-Miler designation for the long-wheelbase sedan) but the name was also used on an equally spartan pickup truck for one more year. Perhaps the most-famous purchaser of a Studebaker Scotsman sedan was former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. The Scotsman was also a popular platform for police cars and taxis.

1958 Rambler American Deluxe Club Sedan.

1958-'60 Rambler American It doesn't get much more cost-effective than reintroducing an old product into a willing market. Famously, American Motors was the only automaker to gain market share during the Eisenhower Recession of 1957-'58, which hit just as the 1958 models came out. To capitalize on the apparent rejection of chrome-bedecked barges by the buying public, AMC brought back the original Nash Rambler of 1950-'55, stripped down and lightly re-styled but still obviously the same car as before. Because AMC called all its cars Ramblers in 1958, the new/old model was called the Rambler American. Americans came in both Deluxe and Super trim. For 1958, the buyer could have only a two-door sedan body, but for 1959 this was joined by a two-door wagon, and for 1959 a four-door sedan. Also for 1959, a Custom trim line was introduced, above Super. Mostly, however, trim referred only to looks, with all Americans sharing similar, basic equipment. The concept was so successful that the company treated the little American to one more makeover, producing a squarer version of the same car from 1961-'63.

1961 Chevrolet Biscayne

1959-'70 Chevrolet Biscayne Although Chevrolet first found its place in the market selling fancier cars for not much more than a Ford Model T, the stripped Chevrolet goes way back too--back to the Chevrolet 490 of 1915-'22. Specifically spartan Chevys, however, are probably most recalled in the form of the 1953-'57 150 models (including the rarely seen three-passenger utility coupe—basis of the 1957 Black Widow racers) and the Biscayne of 1959-'70. Between them is the similar, but oft-forgotten 1958 Del Ray. Named for the sunny vacation beaches of South Florida, the Biscayne is best remembered as the lightweight potential host of a 409. The majority of these cars, though, were of the six-cylinder ilk, hosting first Chevrolet's venerable 235-cu.in. straight six, and then its 230-cu.in. successor. A column-shift three-speed manual was standard-issue, but the Powerglide automatic was a widespread upgrade, especially in later years. The Biscayne name actually persisted through 1975, but only on station wagons. Particularly distressing for the true strip-o-phile, V-8 cars became automatic-only after 1971. This is hardly a comprehensive list. Just off the top of my head, I'd have like to have gotten into the 1980-'83 Ford F-100, the 1977-'85 Chevrolet Impala, the Civilian Jeeps of 1946-'86, and the 1946-'68 Dodge Power Wagon. All have that bare-bones, no-nonsense vibe of good low-content transportation, easily understood and repaired by its owner for potential endless utility. What kind of de-contented machine, new or old, would you like to have in your garage?

MIDWEST ANTIQUE AUTO CLUB

AN INDEPENDENT GROUP OF COLLECTIBLE VEHICLE ETHUSIASTS