



The Steering Wheel

April 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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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,

Its time for our first outdoor driving tour of the year. We will be meeting on **SATURDAY, April 23rd** (weekend after Easter) at 1 p.m. at the Pizza King in Council Bluffs and then drive to the Hedegaard’s home for a late lunch and a chance to view Ed’s cars. I hope you can join us.

My dad, brothers and I continue to make good progress on my father’s car. In the last 30 days, we finished re-installing the rear windows and cowl vent, and hooking up the hydraulic lines to the convertible top. We also installed insulation on the floor. Next, we are working fixing a fender problem (with Dick Zuber’s help), painting the dash and installing the front windows and door latches. We should have a drivable car (without a new convertible top) by the next Steering Wheel.

See everyone in April at Ed and Janet’s house.

John and Karen Thurber



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

First Driving Tour – April 23, 2022

This is our first driving tour of the year. Our driving tour will be on **Saturday, April 23** (the weekend after Easter) to the Hedegaard's home in Underwood Iowa. **We will meet at the Pizza King at 1101 N. Broadway in Council Bluffs at 1:00 p.m. and leave for the tour at 1:30 p.m.** Weather permitting, we are planning to have food and kite flying – please bring a kite if you have one. If you feel comfortable doing so, you can bring a dessert or salad.

Show and Shine Car Show - April 24, 2022

A friend of Jerry Vincentini (Jordan Wrieth) is holding a Show and Shine Car Show from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday, April 24 at the old Nobbies at 120th & Center. I have attached a flyer of your interested in attending. It looks like a fun, free event to attend.

Cure Cancer Car Show – May 7, 2022

Peter Fink is hosting the Cure Cancer Car Show at his American Muscle Car Museum (5808 N. 90th Street) from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 7th. If you haven't been to Peter Fink's museum, it truly is outstanding. Wayne Carrini from Chasing Classic Cars will also be there. More information is at **pages.ils.org/mwoy/nbrska/omaha22/aleach**.

May 15th Driving Tour

More information on the tour starting point and time in next month's Steering Wheel.

Member News

The Skills & Grills Car, Truck & Tractor Show. Saturday May 14th at the Gretna High School, 11335 S 204th St., Gretna. This Show is put on by the Meadowlarks Model A Club and the Skills USA students. Help support the Skills USA Program by attending. Registration is from 9 – 11. All voting is done by the students. Voting ends at 12:30 pm. Awards at 2 pm.

Got Juice? Five Facts About Battery Chargers

By [David Conwill](#) Hemmings Motor News on Mar 22nd, 2022

I considered calling this piece “I’ve been charging my batteries wrong and four other facts about battery chargers.” In fact, a lot of this is going to come off as common sense for those who have taken the time to read the manual for their battery charger. That’s because it comes to us not only via advice from our friends at [Clare Automotive](#), but simply by virtue of a close reading of both the manuals for their "CHARGE IT!" line of [portable](#) and [wheeled](#) chargers, which have information specifically targeted at older exotic and classic cars and tractors, and a review of the instructions for my own DieHard charger, a circa-2010 legacy of my father, which seems to no longer be in production. They’re interesting and useful tidbits that may have eluded those of us who learned how to charge a battery via instruction or intuition.

1. There’s a reason for the range of amp-selection choices

Your charger, like mine, probably has several different settings to choose from. As seen below, mine has 2A, to use for smaller batteries, like those used in motorcycles and lawn tractors, and in certain other instances; 12A, “Fast Charge” for automobile starting batteries and marine/deep-cycle being charged with no special urgency; 30A, “Rapid Charge” for attempting to get a car or boat started in a hurry; and an 80A “Starting Mode” designed to work as a stand-in for another car when jump starting. I used the latter a couple times driving my ’64 Rambler through the subzero Michigan winter of 2013-'14 and I can vouch for its efficacy. The Charge It devices have similar settings: 10A for charging deep-cycle batteries, 40A for “Maintenance-free Automotive or Marine Cranking” units, plus a “high-amperage” starting mode.

2. Desulfation increases battery life

Other chargers I’ve had in the past had indicators for a special “Desulfation Mode” and while this one doesn’t, it does boast a secret blinky code disclosing that it has entered desulfation (a process that can last up to 10 hours!). What is sulfation, you might ask, and why must we reverse it? Sulfation occurs as a natural process of the battery’s chemical reactions. As the battery discharges, the sulfur derived from the sulfuric-acid electrolyte binds to the lead plates. This is normally reversed during charging, but chronic under-charging (often a result of lots of short trips) or long-term discharge (i.e. the car wouldn't start and you just left it to sit after running down the battery) can result in that bond becoming semi-permanent.

Reversing the process comes from a kind of controlled overcharging that is only possible for hobbyists like me thanks to modern microprocessor-controlled battery chargers. You can see why [in the 1920s, battery service stations were very much a thing](#): the sulfuric acid inside the case, the hydrogen gas produced during charging (still a risk—so watch out for sparks) and the serious electrical equipment involved made it a far more complicated hazardous undertaking back then.

3. Don't fear positive-ground systems

Both my charger and the Charge It happily accommodate six-volt batteries. Charge one in the car and it’s good practice to double check which way the car is grounded. All modern cars and most older cars use the seemingly intuitive negative-ground system, where you’ll find the battery grounded to some heavy part of the chassis via its negative post. The opposite, called a positive-ground (“positive-earth” in other parts of the world) system, has some theoretical advantages, however, and is relatively common in the old-car scene—even on some 12-volt vehicles. The Charge It manual says the positive-ground arrangement “is usually found in pre-1970 foreign vehicles or pre-1970 farm tractors,” to which I’ll add many pre-1956 American automobiles.

Should you find yourself charging a positive-ground car (or farm tractor), you'll simply need to reverse usual practice: connect the negative cable to the battery's negative post and the positive cable to some sturdy chunk of metal at the other side of the engine compartment (NOT fuel line, carburetor, sheetmetal, etc.). Charging on the bench is even easier: just hook the battery up as shown in section 5.

4. Modern chargers can handle lead-acid, flooded, AGM, and gel-cell batteries

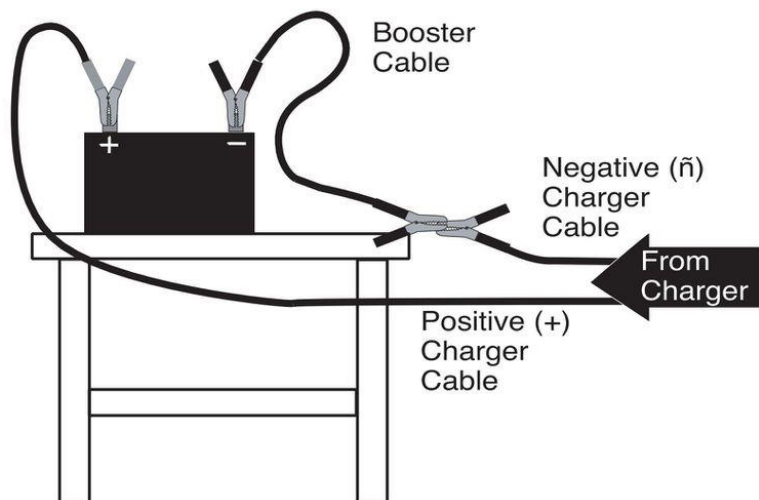
Uncontrolled overcharging, whether it's from a malfunctioning vehicle electrical system or a dedicated charger, is bad for any battery. On a regular lead-acid battery, it will at least boil away the electrolyte. On a gel battery, it may form permanent bubbles in the gel, damaging those pricey units beyond repair. In the old days, that meant careful adjustment and observation were required and while you certainly should pay attention to any charging task, the tiny computer brain in a modern charger can usually tell what's going on and adjust itself accordingly—cutting off charging entirely if something seems to be awry.

Consulting the manual will usually help deciphering any error codes you may receive and will typically contain some kind of workaround for problems encountered. Often, a battery that won't take a charge at a higher amperage can be revived using the lowest setting over a longer time.

5. For extra safety, use an extra cable for bench charging

It's pretty common to hook the negative cable to the negative post and the positive cable to the positive post when charging a battery, but that's not good practice. The explosive hydrogen gas produced when a battery is charging should be kept from spark and flame and it's smart to be wearing goggles and facing away from the battery when connecting and disconnecting the cables. While modern chargers run cool and typically aren't sparking inside if everything is working correctly, it's still smart to put some extra space between the charger and the battery.

When charging in the chassis, it's recommended that the ground cable (usually negative--see above) be attached to the chassis or engine block as far from the battery post as possible. On a bench, that's done by attaching a jumper cable between the negative post and the negative cable on the charger, as shown in the illustration below.



To extend the distance between user/charger and the battery, the recommendation to use a 6-gauge jumper cable on the negative terminal is universal. It's the bench-charging equivalent of hooking the ground cable to the chassis instead of a battery terminal. Illustration courtesy Clore Automotive.

MIDWEST ANTIQUE AUTO CLUB

AN INDEPENDENT GROUP OF COLLECTIBLE VEHICLE ETHUSIASTS