



# The Steering Wheel

## January 2023

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 &amp; 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 &amp; Tom Kannas</u>	<u>Ph. (712)-566-9818</u>
<u>Treasurers</u>	<u>Jim &amp; Cheryl Cushman</u>	<u>Ph. (402)-558-0150</u>
<u>Tour Committees</u>	<u>Ed &amp; Janet Hedegaard</u>	<u>Ph. (402)-490-5909</u>
<u>News Letter Editors</u>	<b><u>We still need someone</u></b>	<u>Ph. (xxx)-xxx-xxxx</u>
<u>Historians</u>	<u>Clif &amp; 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. 90<sup>th</sup> 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,

It was great seeing everyone at our end-of-year Holiday banquet at Pizza King. A big thank you to your board members that helped put this on (the Cushmans, the Kannas' and the Hedegaards). It takes time and effort to make sure we can enjoy the Christmas Party each year. A special thank you to my wife, Karen, for all she does to support the MAAC club and me. Also, a big thank you to Ed Hedegaard, who slipped and injured himself the Friday before our banquet but still attended.

As we end the year, I want to again thank Ed and Janet for their efforts to arrange our tours this year. Also, thank you Jim and Cheryl for taking over the treasurer duties. Our club won't survive without

the efforts of our board.

Finally, please remember to pray for Jerry Vincentini who is not feeling well. He has been great supporter of our club for a long time.

I hope to see you at our indoor meeting in January.

John and Karen Thurber

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### January Indoor Tour

We are planning to hold our second indoor meeting on **Sunday, January 15th at 2:00 p.m. at New Cassell Retirement Center – 900 N. 90<sup>th</sup> Street, Omaha.** Please enter New Cassell in the lower North entrance. **MEMBER CAR RESTORATION SHOW AND TELL** Since I have been showing the restoration of my father's car, I thought it was be interesting to see the restorations of our members' cars. If you have pictures or a scrap book, please bring it to the meeting to share with the other members. Ed will be making his famous chili to share with everyone. Members, please bring a salad or dessert. Also, if you want something other than water to drink, please bring your own drink.

**2023 MEMBERSHIPS ARE DUE** -They are still \$25.00. If you didn't pay you membership dues as part of the Holiday Banquet registration form, please send payment to Jim Cushman at 1901 No. 59th Street Omaha, NE 68104

### February 19th 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 17th at the Pizza King. We had almost 40 members attend the party. Thank you to the Cushmans and Hedegaards for scheduling the event. And thank you Board members for helping set up the party. I hope everyone enjoyed themselves and stayed healthy.

**November 20<sup>th</sup> Indoor Meeting** - We had our first indoor tour at New Cassell Retirement Center on November 20th. I appreciate the discussion on the revised bylaws - we approved revised bylaws at the meeting. Unfortunately, I didn't keep a list of attendees. Again, thank you for everyone that showed up.

**FOR SALE** – Five 700x15 Wide White Wall BF Goodrich Silvertown tires. Four tires have approximately 500 miles and one is new. They are around five years old. Price \$300 for all five (Coker price \$310/each). Bob Chalek 712-624-8885

**STOLEN VEHICLE AND TRAILER** – From Frank Van Doorn - Today when I went to my storage to get my trailer with my '52 Commander hardtop in it, it was gone. So the details are the trailer is a 2018 "Carry on" enclosed tandem axle trailer serial number 4YMBC2022JM015250 It has some damage on the right front and is a 20 foot wedge nose white in color. The Studebaker inside is a 1952 Commander hardtop Maui (light blue) with a white roof with 5000+ miles on odometer. Car is a V-8 with overdrive. serial number on door post is: 8219612. The trailer and car were stolen from Ponca storage located at 9930 North 45th court Omaha, Nebraska sometimes between the middle of September and today. It was parked in outside lot that is a secured gated area. Cameras are on the premises. **If seen call Omaha police or myself at 402 657-5318.** One other thing, I have only two sets of keys to the car and since it uses a Hurd key those are almost impossible to have made these days. The thief would have to most likely have to change the switch itself which in itself is not a big deal I suppose.



## **Hudson's step-down styling was revolutionary. So why didn't certain other carmakers use it?**

Pat Foster - Hemmings Motor News

11/18/2022

In case you're wondering, the title of today's column is not about me stepping down from my position here at good old HCC. Rather, it has to do with the cars that never joined the "step-down" movement. In other words, it's the handful of cars that never incorporated Hudson's innovative step-down construction technique.

You'll recall that Hudson's first post-World War II complete redesign was for the 1948 model year. It included sedans, coupes, and a convertible, all boasting an aerodynamic body shape. The lines were long and flowing; however, the first thing you noticed is how low they were. To people of that era, it seemed impossible someone could sit inside the new Hudsons comfortably; surely your hat would get crushed and you'd have to drive stooped forward. But Hudson's body and chassis engineers managed to achieve a low cabin with plenty of headroom. The trick they came up with was, essentially, to weld the floor panel to the underside of the chassis frame rails rather than the top. This allowed them to drop the seats several inches, which in turn meant the roofline could be lowered without loss of headroom.

It was a major styling coup. The new Hudsons were the lowest family cars in America by far, at a time when "longer, lower, wider" were considered big advantages.

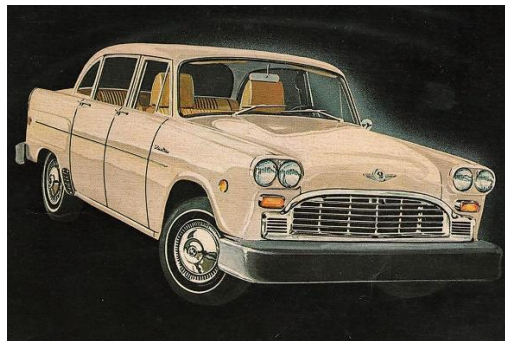
One side benefit: Occupants felt safer because the impression they got upon entering the car was that they were stepping down into the chassis. They could imagine frame rails encircling them for safety. It was a comforting feeling.

But the most significant benefit was in handling—the new Hudson Step-Downs outhandled every other full-sized car on the road. This fact was soon noticed by stock car racers around the country and before you could say, "So long, sucker," Hudsons were racking up race wins by the score.

So, it might seem strange that a handful of cars never switched over to step-down design, while one or two significant others eventually did, though years later than most. One latecomer was Rambler. When the company redesigned the Rambler line for 1956, it didn't include a step-down floor, which was odd because it would have helped them offer even more room in what was the roomiest Rambler yet. I knew its designer, Ed Anderson, but never thought to ask him why that was; I wasn't smart enough back then to think of it. That basic body remained in production through 1962. The 1963 models had a step-down floor.

Studebaker never joined the step-down club, but in this case, we know why: After 1956, the company lacked the financial resources to do a complete redesign of its cars. It managed to debut the sharp new Lark for 1959 by shortening the front and rear of its family sedan. After that came periodic updates and refinements, but no all-new line of family cars. However, Studebaker did its best to turn a disadvantage into a product plus; in advertisements it talked about the Lark's "sweep-out floors", which, the ads said, were easier to clean because one could simply sweep them out. The step-down design on other cars meant you had to use a vacuum cleaner or a dustpan to gather up dirt from the floor.

And then there's Checker. The gutsy little automaker from Kalamazoo not only never embraced the step-down design, but in terms of styling, it never left the 1950s! The final Checker production designs debuted for 1956 and featured "virtually flat floors" for ease of entry and exit, and for better leg and foot room. In Checker's case, I'd love to know if the decision to forgo the step-down design was actually for the sake of roominess, or because management was reluctant to use a technology it felt might be just a passing fad. After all, since the end of WWII, the price of tooling for a new car had soared, and didn't look like it was ever coming down, so Checker management knew its latest design would probably be in production for many years. As it turned out, the final Checker design was in production for more than a quarter of a century. However, modern styling techniques weren't all that important in taxicabs; roominess and ease of entry and egress were key, along with maximum comfort. In that regard, Checker was ideal. Just not "modern."





**MIDWEST ANTIQUE AUTO CLUB**  
**AN INDEPENDENT GROUP OF COLLECTIBLE VEHICLE ENTHUSIASTS**