



# The Steering Wheel

## August 2025

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. 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 latest Steering Wheel can be found at <https://midwestantiqueautoclub.org>.**

The deadline for articles for the Steering Wheel is the last Saturday of the month.

### The President’s Message



Hello Everyone,

I hope you enjoyed our tour to Horses Help near Council Bluffs Iowa. Tom and Gloria Kannas were able to arrange the drive and tour to the Horses Help facility. It was really interesting to hear how horses can help developmentally disabled people. It was nice to know we have a facility like that near the Omaha metro area. I have a few pictures of the event on the next page. Thanks again Tom and Gloria for suggesting the tour.

As a reminder, we are always looking for interesting places to tour within a 50-mile radius of Omaha. If you have an interesting place to visit, please let one of the Board members know. We are looking for help in finding new places to visit.

We hope to see you at our August Tour.

John and Karen Thurber



## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

### **August Driving Tour – Macedonia IA - Sunday, August 17, 2025**

We are planning our fourth driving tour on Sunday, August 17 with a tour to Macedonia, IA. It is about 30 miles from Council Bluffs and has a Pioneer Museum and, separately, a famous bird collection. We will have a picnic lunch after visiting the museum at the city park. **We will meet on August 17 at 1:00 p.m. at Lewis Central Middle School in Council Bluffs at 3820 Harry Langdon Blvd. (the same location that we met in July.** We will leave at 1:30 p.m. for the tour to Macedonia. For those members with last names starting with A-M, please bring a salad, for those members with last names starting N-Z, please bring a dessert. Please bring lawn chairs.

### **September Driving Tour – Sunday, September 21**

More information on the September tour in the September Steering Wheel.

## **MEMBER NEWS**

**July Driving Tour** – I hope you enjoyed our tour to Horses Help near Council Bluffs Iowa. As I mentioned earlier, Tom and Gloria Kannas were able to arrange the drive and tour to the Horses Help facility. It was really interesting to hear how horses can help developmentally disabled people. Thank you Tom and Gloria for suggesting the tour. Attendees include Charlie and Mickey Moriarty – Modern, John and Karen Thurber – 88 Pontiac Fiero, Michael Thurber – 66 Olds Toronado, Dave and Ester Miller – Modern, Lance and Aleta

Sulentic, Leon Zaiger and Jeanie Oles – Modern, Ed and Janet Hedegaard – 64 Chevy Impala, Cliff Ellis – 51 Chevy, Ed and Sandy Anderson – 99 Plymouth Prowler.

## Weekend Wrench: Recalling the Rigorous Training at Standard Oil

By Jim Richardson, Hemmings Motor News July 11, 2025



I glanced up from having peeled 200 pounds of potatoes and noticed that the rosy light of dawn was starting to stream in through the back door of the 24-hour truck stop coffee shop where I worked on the weekends as a dishwasher. I was in my senior year of high school, and I was glad to greet the dawn because it meant I only had a couple more hours to go. My hands were chapped and wrinkled from being in water half the night.

My compulsory education was coming to an end, and—not having been born into wealth—I knew I would need a better job in order to maintain my lifestyle, which entailed keeping a 1947 Chevrolet running,

and perhaps adding an Offenhauser manifold with a couple of Rochesters, and splitting the exhaust and installing a set of Smithy's.

With that in mind, when I finished my shift, my best friend Rick and I drove over and enrolled in the Standard Oil service station attendant training program. It consisted of a rigorous one-week curriculum that included learning to greet customers with a smile, pumping gas without spilling, and making change correctly. We had to wear fresh white uniforms, a black clip-on bow tie, and a garrison cap at all times, and be ready to hot foot it out to the pump island the instant we heard the bing-bing of the bell that told us a customer had pulled in.

We learned how to change oil and filters, do tire repairs and chassis lubrication, and clean the restrooms. There were a couple of guys who couldn't handle it and dropped out, but at the end of this arduous week of training, we survivors received diplomas. I was bursting with pride at being the first of my siblings to pursue higher education.

We called gas stations service stations back then because they did more than sell gasoline and deodorizers to hang from your rearview mirror. The whole concept of service is alien today, but back then you could have your tank filled, your oil and coolant checked, your tire pressure adjusted, and your windshield cleaned, without ever exiting your car.

Today you pump the gas and either pay at the pump or have to go over to a window to pay a kid sitting behind bullet-proof glass listening to his favorite tunes on his headphones. No smile, and no words are even spoken. There is no one to check your oil, do a tire repair, or help you with any other auto-related problems you might have.

Rick and I worked at the same station for a couple of years, and learned to do just about anything a car might need, including tune-ups, tire repairs, brake jobs, and even an overhaul or two, and we thoroughly enjoyed it. Our station had the traditional piston on the desk in the office used for an ash tray, and the usual reflective dish electric death-ray heater that heated the air in front of it to a sizzle, but left the rest of the office as cold as ever, and there was of course a cigarette machine, and a tub of water outside for detecting tire leaks. Coffee was brewed once in the morning

in a dented dirty percolator pot, and it grew stronger and more bitter as the day went on.

My pal Rick is a city manager today but still has his certificate on the wall of his office next to his master's degree. I have misplaced mine. I recently put in a request for a duplicate but haven't heard back. I still do my own maintenance on my classics after all these years because I am fussy, and I enjoy it. Besides, not many younger mechanics know how to do a lube job or a tune-up on a 1940 Packard, or a 1955 Chevrolet with breaker-point ignition. Adjusting brakes and clutches would also be alien to them, too.

In fact, a young fellow on my street called Auto Club the other day just to come out and change a flat tire on his Toyota. In my youth I would have been humiliated. Service stations and barber shops were a man's world, and fixing cars was considered manly. Sure, there were a few girls around who loved, and knew how to work on cars, but most of them were averse to getting dirty. However, the fastest Chevy in our neighborhood was owned by a girl named Kandi. She had a big advantage though because her father worked at an auto parts store.

Truth be told, I haven't progressed much since my service station days. I still spend my free time in the garage with my radio tuned to the golden oldies station while working on my old cars. Some people like to play golf, and others putter in the garden. But after a lifetime of working as an illustrator, art director and automotive journalist, I am still happiest looking after my classics. I suppose when you add it all up it amounts to manifold destiny.



## **MIDWEST ANTIQUE AUTO CLUB**

**AN INDEPENDENT GROUP OF COLLECTIBLE VEHICLE ENTHUSIASTS**