



The Steering Wheel

June 2026

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 President</u>	<u>Clif Ellis</u>	<u>Ph. (402)-397-4279</u>
<u>Secretaries</u>	<u>Gloria & Tom Kannas</u>	<u>Ph. (402)-681-5897</u>
<u>Treasurers</u>	<u>Jim & Cheryl Cushman</u>	<u>Ph. (402)-558-0150</u>
<u>Tour Committees</u>	<u>Ed & Janet Hedegaard</u>	<u>Ph. (402)-490-5909</u>
<u>Tour Committees</u>	<u>Lance & Aleta Sulentic</u>	<u>Ph. (402)-706-7366</u>
<u>Web Page Editors</u>	<u>Tom & Linda Beiriger</u>	<u>Ph. (402)-498-0598</u>
<u>Historian</u>	<u>Clif 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 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,

It is finally car show season. I hope you are visiting local car shows when you can. The Eastern Nebraska/Western Iowa Car Council has an on-line booklet of 2026 car shows located in our area. You can find the information at the ENWI Car Council website at <https://www.enwicc.com/car-council-directory-of-events.html>.

We had a great time visiting the Mills County Museum in Glenwood, Iowa and had a nice turnout of cars. We plan a shorter June tour to the Samuel Bak Museum and Learning Center in Aksarben Village in Omaha. I hope you can join us.

We hope to see everyone in June.

John and Karen Thurber

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June Driving Tour – Samuel Bak Museum/Aksarben Village Omaha - Sunday, June 21, 2026

We are planning our third driving tour on Sunday, June 21 with a visit to the Samuel Bak Museum and Learning Center in Aksarben Village, Omaha. The Museum houses works of arts by renowned artist and Holocaust survivor Samuel Bak. The Museum is home to over 500 pieces of Bak's work. We will have a picnic lunch after visiting the museum at Stinson Park, across from the museum. **We will meet on June 21 at 1:00 p.m. at Memorial Park on the loop around the memorial (approximately 56th & Underwood Ave). Let's meet on the south side of the Memorial Park Drive Loop.** We will leave at 1:30 p.m. for the tour through Elmwood Part to the museum. For those members with last names starting with A-M, please bring a dessert, for those members with last names starting N-Z, please bring a salad. Please bring lawn chairs if you have them.

July Driving Tour – July 19, 2026

We will have our fourth driving tour of the year on July 19, 2026. More information on the tour starting point and time in next month's Steering Wheel.

MEMBER NEWS

May Driving Tour – We had great attendance for our second driving tour of the year to Mills County Museum in Glenwood IA. We had a guided tour of the museum and were able to use the picnic area at the museum for our lunch. Attendees included John Thurber – 88 Pontiac Fiero, Jim & Cheryl Cushman – 39 Buick, Ed and Janet Hedegaard – 38, Lance and Aleta Sulentic – 99 Harley Davidson Motorcycle, Cliff Ellis – 51 Chevy, Tom and Gloria Kannas -71 Volkswagen, Ed Anderson – 99 Prowler, Max Meier – 63 Lincoln, Richard and Pat Zuber – Modern, Leon Zaiger & Jeanie Oles - Modern.

2026 – 68th HCCA Midwest Regional Tour July 26 – July 30, 2026 – Ed and Janet Hedegaard is holding the Horseless Carriage Club of America tour at the Americinn in Council Bluffs, IA. I have attached information on the tour in the Steering Wheel. Please call Ed at 402-490-5909 if you are interested in attending – you do not need a car from the 1910-30s to participate.

Vintage Wheels at the Fort - I am pleased to announce that Vintage Wheels at Fort Omaha is returning in 2026. It is the annual classic car show hosted by the Meadowlark Model A Ford Club and the Douglas County Historical Society at Fort Omaha. The event is currently scheduled for August 9, 2026. More information to come in a future Steering Wheel newsletter.

Weekend Wrench: Silent Service Of The Inline-Eight

By [Jim Richardson](#) Hemmings Motor News

I may be living in the past, but there are a few things from years ago at which I think we should take another look. Not many people today remember the straight-eight, but I do. My father stepped up to a 1941 [Pontiac Torpedo](#) Eight in the early 1950s, and it was great. As a kid, I really thought we Richardsons were stepping up.

I was amazed at how quiet and smooth it was. Dad's previous ride was an ancient 1936 Chevy that he bought in the late '40s. It lasted for years, but it was tired, made a bit of tappet noise, and the valves needed frequent adjustment. However, the Pontiac was smooth and quiet. Dad's new Poncho oozed along soundlessly as if being towed.

The Pontiac 248.9-cu.in. engine in Pop's Pontiac was the lowest priced inline eight available, but it was engineered with five thin-shell replaceable main bearings, and full oil pressure, unlike the Chevy. It was also a flathead, which was great because

that gave it a short, sturdy valvetrain that was quiet, and seldom needed adjustment.

Today, even some old-car buffs consider the inline-eight to be outmoded, and have forgotten it, because it has not been used in cars since the early 1950s. But its history tells an interesting and complicated story.

The overhead-valve engine was developed first, and the flathead came later. Most, but not all straight-eights were flatheads. That configuration was developed to make the valvetrain shorter and sturdier.

Granted, a flathead engine can't handle compression ratios higher than about 8:1, but in the old days, 7.5:1 was considered high compression, and high-octane fuel wasn't available until after World War II. It was invented for aircraft, but Cadillac and Oldsmobile redesigned their V8s to take advantage of it when it became common.

Some of us also assume the inline-eight came first, and the V8 was developed later. Not true. In fact, De Dion in France came out with a V8 in 1910, but the first inline eight didn't debut until 1919 in the Italian Isotta Fraschini Tipo 8, which was a powerful hand-built luxury car. After that, inline eights caught on with American carmakers due to their smoothness, simplicity, and incredible low-end torque.

But then in the 1950s, horsepower became the thing, when suitable fuel became available. In fact, these days many people aren't sure what torque even is. Torque is the real twisting power, while horsepower just determines how quickly the work gets done. Torque offers faster acceleration from a stop. In fact, drag racing is about bottom-end torque and elapsed time, not top speed.

Before the war, engineers tried to limit piston travel to minimize engine wear, keeping rpm low. That's important because, assuming your engine has a stroke of 3.5 inches, that becomes 7 inches up and back, and at 2,000 rpm, each piston will travel 1,167 feet a minute. At 10,000 rpm each piston will go an amazing 5,833 feet every minute. That's over a mile a minute!



At the other end of the spectrum from Dad's Pontiac was the incredible [Duesenberg](#) inline eight with dual overhead cams and four valves per cylinder that powered the 1931 Model J. This 5,000-pound-plus behemoth of a luxury car could do 89 miles per hour in second gear, and topped out at 119 mph. And with the optional supercharger it could do better than that. So why did Detroit dump their straight eights in the early '50s? It was partly because inline engines are long and tall, and styling was going for short and low. Straight eights were also heavy because their crankshafts had to be massive to avoid fracturing. Besides, straight eights were more expensive to machine because they had eight separate crankshaft journals and as many as nine main bearings—as opposed to four crank journals and three to five main-bearing journals for a V8.

Buick went to its nailhead V8 in 1953, except in their bottom tier Special, which retained the old inline eight for one final year. Packard and Pontiac quietly gave up their inline eights in 1954. But in Europe the straight eight went out with a bang, not a whimper. Mercedes straight-eight engines, such as those in the 1950s 300 SLR racecars, were untouchable. Mercedes solved the whippy crankshaft problem by putting the power take-off in the middle of the engine rather than the rear. Were they fast? Ask Juan Fangio.

Inline eights are not likely to become common again, but you never know. Cars required separate headlight bulbs, mirrors and lenses until 1940, and then we went to sealed beams that lasted longer and needed no maintenance. Now we are back to the fuss of bulbs, mirrors, and lenses. Also, many cars today use individual ignition coils at each cylinder as did the Ford Model Ts. Who knows, maybe smooth and silent will replace loud and rough again someday.

2026 – 68th HCCA Midwest Regional Tour
July 26-30, 2026, Council Bluffs, IA
Hosted by The Fargo Red River Valley Regional Group HCCA

Name of entrant: _____

Address: _____

Horseless carriage: _____

(year) (make) (model) (body style) (gas, steam, elec.)

CELL NUMBER: _____ (we don't want to lose anyone on tour)

HCCA Membership # _____ is only necessary to be eligible for the Regional HCCA Award Voted on by the tour participants.

Tour Fee is \$200.00 per adult _____

(excluding lodging) (Name of passengers)

_____ Children _____

_ (under 10 free) (Names of children)

TOTAL enclosed _____ Please make check payable to: Eddy Hedegaard

Registration deadline is July 1, 2026

Make your reservations by calling the AmericInn, 1000 Woodbury Ave, Council Bluffs, IA 712-322-8400

Two-story hotel no elevator

Tell them you are with the HCCA TOUR. Room Rate: \$ 88.11 (includes all tax), for standard single king or standard double queen.

PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATION BY July 1, 2026

(this is the DATE the BLOCK WILL BE RELEASED.)

Name of Insurance Carrier _____

(company) (agent)

I agree that the Fargo Red River Valley Regional Group of the Horseless Carriage Club of America, its officers, sponsors, or membership will not be held liable for any accidents or injuries incurred while I or any of my passengers participate in this tour on July 26-30, 2026 in Council Bluffs, IA and surrounding areas.

(signed by entrant) (date)

Mail completed entry form to:

Eddy Hedegaard

25065 Mahogany Rd

Underwood, IA 51576

If you have an email address include it here: _____