



The Steering Wheel

October 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.

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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 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 everyone is enjoying the last few car events of 2026. Soon we will be putting our cars away for the winter so please take advantage of the nice weather and visit a few car shows in October. Recently, I was able to attend events in Woodbine IA and Arlington NE and really enjoyed the weather and the cars.

We will be holding our first indoor event on November 15th at New Cassell Retirement Center. We will need to enter the main front door on the east side of the center. We are not able to use the north entrance as that is permanently closed to visitors.

I hope to see everyone at our last driving tour of 2026 and enjoy the pie at Fontanelle Orchard.

John and Karen Thurber

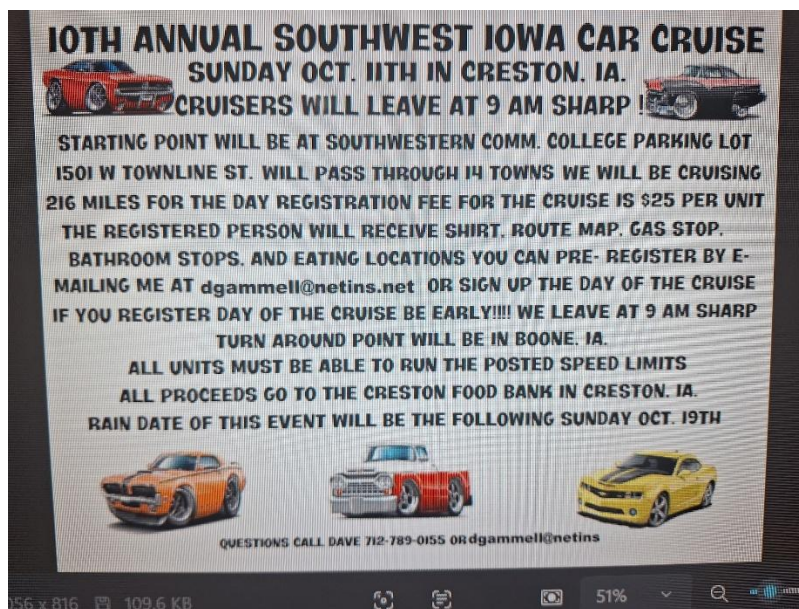
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September Driving Tour – Sunday, October 18 – Fontanelle Orchard

We will be visiting the Fontanelle Orchard in Fontanelle Nebraska (just north of Arlington, NE) just like last year. The club will be purchasing pie and ice cream for all the members that participate in our tour. **Please meet at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 18, at St. Patrick's Catholic Church at 204th & Maple Street.** The church is located at the northwest corner of 204th & Maple - you can turn right off Maple Street just west of the church to enter the parking lot. We will be driving past Elk City on our trip to Fontanelle Orchard. We will be leaving to drive to Fontanelle Orchard at 1:30 p.m. Pies will be available to purchase for \$18 a pie. Please bring chairs to the tour. I hope to see you at our last driving tour of the year.

Southwest Iowa Car Crusie – Sunday, October 11, 2026

The 10th Annual Southwest Iowa Car Cruise is scheduled for Sunday, October 11th. The cruise leaves Creston IA at 9 a.m sharp. For more information or to register, please contact dgammell@netins.net or sign-in the day of the cruise. More information is below.



November Indoor Tour

We are planning to hold our first indoor meeting on **Sunday, November 15 at 2:00 p.m. at New Cassell Retirement Center – 900 N. 90th Street, Omaha.** Please enter New Cassell in the front door East entrance – we can no longer enter through the north door. More information to come in the November Steering Wheel.

MEMBER NEWS

September Driving Tour – I appreciated the members that attended our visit to Penny's Art Gallery in Neola IA. The weather held off and we were able to enjoy the gallery and garden at Penny's place. The list of members attending include: John and Karen Thurber - 1988 Pontiac Fiero, Dave and Ester Miller - 1931 Ford Model A, Tom & Gloria Kannas - 1941 Buick, Clif Ellis - 1967 Mustang, Lance & Aleta Sulentic - Modern, Ed Hedegaard - Modern.

Cost-Effective Upgrades For Your Classic Car's Headlights

By **Terry McGean**—Hemmings Motor News



We're proponents of driving classics, rather than simply keeping them as objects to behold. But, driving vintage vehicles means becoming aware of their shortcomings, and one that we hear fellow enthusiasts complain about often is lighting. In the U.S., sealed-beam headlights were required for new vehicles starting with the 1940 model year, a mandate that remained in place until the mid-'80s. Sealed-beam lights did eventually become available in halogen form for brighter output, but on older vehicles, you're still likely to see headlights emitting light that looks closer to brown than white. Part of this is due to the level of electrical power being fed to the headlights — the older the vehicle, the lower the amperage rating on the alternator or generator. But perhaps a bigger issue is the design of the wiring, commonly routing the power into the cabin, through the headlight switch and then back

out to the bulbs, which often yielded a significant voltage drop.

The lack-of-light situation was recently raised again by a friend who'd acquired a very original, low-mileage 1970 Chevrolet C10 pickup. He soon found that driving home from evening cruise nights could be a bit harrowing on wooded Vermont roads with no streetlights. The Chevy was functioning as intended, but those brown headlights just weren't helping enough in the dark. Our friend had looked into modern replacement headlights, and found some very nice LED units, but was a bit surprised at the cost — nearing \$500 for a pair. We came up with a simpler alternative: H4 retrofit headlights for a total outlay of less than \$200. While the U.S. was stuck with sealed-beam headlights, over in Europe, more powerful alternatives were the norm. An H4 headlight is more like what modern vehicles use in the States today: A headlight housing and lens that are intended as a non-replacement part of the vehicle, with capsule-style bulbs that are replaced from the backside. This arrangement was common on cars from Europe and Asia, even when standard 7-inch round housings were specified.

We ordered a pair of Hella H4 retrofit lights from Summit Racing Equipment. Hella is a well-known German company that has long provided lighting components to OE manufacturers in Europe. Our 7-inch kit included glass headlight housings, a pair of H4 bulb capsules, and silicone weather-resistant covers for the back of the housings. The lens design is a little different from old-school American sealed beams — slightly flatter and with different fluting patterns — but we like the classic Euro-style look and recall people retrofitting H4 lamps like these even back in the '70s. Hella offers a kit with two housings and two H4 headlight capsules; however, it's worth pointing out that technically, the H4 bulb is not DOT approved for use on U.S. roadways. Hella also offers the same lamp housing with an HB2/9003 capsule, which is the DOT-approved version of the H4-style bulb. We're pretty sure Hella used to offer a similar kit with two headlight assemblies including the HB2/9003 bulbs, but now we can only locate these being offered in single form. You could also order the kit with a pair of housings and H4 bulbs ([p/n 002395801](#)) and just swap out the bulbs for the HB2/9003 type if you're feeling the urge to be compliant. There's one other aspect of lighting improvements we employed here: Using relays for the headlights to feed power directly to the bulbs. Kits have been available for years to do this (or you could just buy a pair of relays and wire it up yourself). The idea is that power is being routed directly from the battery to the bulbs, rather than going through the harness to the headlight switch and back out. We picked up a cheap harness kit online for around \$20 because we had some credits to use, but similar kits are available from known wiring specialists like American Autowire and Painless Performance. You could even use the relay harness with the stock sealed beam headlights to provide some level of improved output, but we combined the harness with our new headlights. The instructions for the Hella H4 conversions recommend using a relay for each lamp, but do not require it.

We brought our friend's '70 C10 to the shop at Hemmings, to do the installation of the upgraded headlights and the relay harness. If you drive your unmodified classic, you've likely experienced nighttime motoring with minimal illumination. Most of us have become accustomed to modern headlights that provide excellent visibility even on the darkest of nights. The old, pre-halogen sealed beams on this '70 Chevy C10 offered about as much help as a pair of flashlights, but we can make improvements without losing the period character of the truck. Headlights like these H4 assemblies were common in Europe, even in the '70s, with housings that take capsule-style bulbs, similar to what finally became the norm in the U.S. in the mid '80s. Hella has made OE-grade lighting products for decades and offers these 7-inch H4 assemblies as a retrofit for sealed beams; 5.5-inch versions for four-light arrangements are also offered. This C10 still had its original T3 headlight bulbs, so these were carefully removed and stored. The arrangement here is typical for the period: the bulbs are retained with a metal ring fastened with three small screws. There are also two larger screws hooked into the headlight buckets, those are only for adjusting the beam angle and should not be loosened to remove the bulbs. The small Phillips-head screws fastening the headlight retaining ring are notorious for stripping, so use care and a quality screwdriver. Also, if you're attempting to preserve the sealed beams being removed as we were, use care in removing the plugs — it's easy to pull the tangs right off the back of the bulb. Although the H4-style headlight is intended to allow bulb replacement without removing the housing from the vehicle, with retrofits like ours, the headlight bucket's center hole will be too small to enable that. Instead, we dropped the bulbs into the housings first and locked them in place using the wire clip. Though the H4 lights we're using are intended to fit in place of a typical 7-inch sealed beam, we were still a little concerned about them working with that small hole in the truck's original headlight bucket. That was mainly because the H4s include silicone boots that fit over the bulb capsules after they are installed to

provide a weather seal. The extra bulk of the boot made us think the stamped-steel buckets might have to be trimmed but the new assemblies fit, just very snugly. The H4 lights are designed to accept the original headlight wiring; however, the amperage draw is a little bit higher, so Hella recommends using relays to power the new lights. This is an opportunity to improve the power feed to the headlights, as the stock wiring arrangement on vehicles of this period was somewhat notorious for incurring voltage drops by the time the power reached the bulbs. We opted to use a headlight relay harness to power the new lights, which included plugs for the headlights, power and ground leads, and even a male plug to connect to one of the factory headlight sockets, which will then serve to trigger the relays. Feeding the headlights directly from the battery via relays can provide an improvement in illumination even with stock lamps. The main elements of the headlight harness are these two relays—one for low beam and one for high beam. We were able to mount them to the radiator support in a location that would be hidden by the battery, once it is reinstalled. The new harness included plugs for each headlight; the original harness plug on this side will be taped up and tucked away for now. On the other side, the new headlight harness will plug into the factory headlight socket to serve as a trigger for the relays. Each headlight plug has its own ground wire that must be connected to the truck. Conveniently, we were able to slip the new ground connections into factory grounding locations on each side of the radiator support.

Now, when the headlight switch is pulled, the power coming from the switch will be used only to trigger the relays, significantly reducing the draw on the switch circuit. The last step is to connect the new power source for our relay harness. This could be run directly to the battery (it included an inline fuse holder), but we were able to add ours to this factory junction block that was already powered directly from the battery. The additional wire is barely noticeable, and the fuse holder is tucked just out of sight under the inner edge of the fender. With everything in place, we pulled the headlight switch and were rewarded with clearly improved illumination. In addition to being more intense, the light now has a whiter tone, and the pattern has more distinct boundaries. Make sure to adjust the angle of the new beams before hitting the road. Though the appearance of the Hella headlight lenses is a little different than stock sealed beams, we think they look appropriate on a truck like this—enthusiasts were installing H4s like these even back in the '70s. Plus, we can easily switch back to stock any time.



MIDWEST ANTIQUE AUTO CLUB
AN INDEPENDENT GROUP OF COLLECTIBLE VEHICLE ENTHUSIASTS