

# The DASHBOARD

DECEMBER 2025



THE MAGAZINE OF THE GREATER ILLINOIS REGION OF THE  
CLASSIC CAR CLUB OF AMERICA





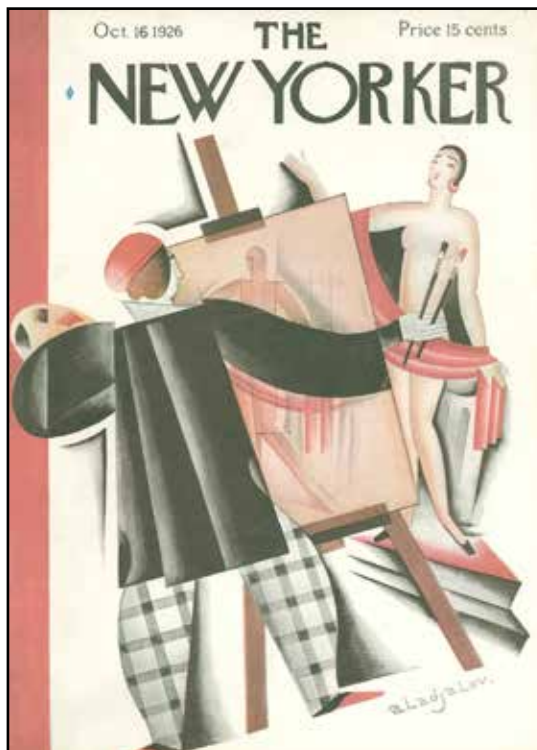
## Inside This Issue

December 2025

Letter from the Director .....	2
Calendar of Events .....	3
Editor's Page .....	4
Introducing Mark Shear .....	5
In the Rear View Mirror with Jim Tharp .....	6-7
Annual Luncheon .....	8-11
Geneva concours 2025 .....	12-15
Cover Car .....	16-21



CH Wills-The Man and His Company .....	22
The Year 1926 .....	23
RR and GIR Joint Meet .....	24
1937 Cord and a Wooden Bench .....	26-27
News and Notes .....	27
The MCACN .....	28-29
From the Archives.....	29
Carburetor Repair Stand .....	30-31
CCCA Approved Classics .....	32



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## LETTER from the DIRECTOR

Hello fellow club members, and warm wishes to you all.

As we clearly see the end of another wonderful year coming in to view, I hope you reflect back on some of the experiences we have provided in hopes that these special memories can sustain you through what promises to be another Midwest winter.

We all know it's the cars and people that make this club so special. That's why we encourage all of you to try to participate whenever you can. Just you showing up gives everyone the added pleasure of sharing something new or old about your car life.

Your board will be at it again after the holidays and we look forward to providing you some extra special and unique adventures. We are especially excited about partnering up with some of our neighbor clubs to expand these experiences without stepping on each other's events. We all know that there are only so many good weather weekends to enjoy. 2026 will bring some changes for the club as well.

At this time I'd like to thank outgoing board member and treasurer Alan Bloom for the fantastic job he's done, giving us a new footing with our finances. Over his tenure, we have not only seen our treasury grow with a current outstanding balance of \$36,500 but we've seen his record keeping skills give us an easy transition to the next treasurer. He's done all the heavy lifting and created an accounting approach which will be much easier to manage. Thank you Alan from the board and everyone who has enjoyed your labors.

I'd also like to take the time to introduce our newest board member, Mark Shear. He comes as a recent transplant from California where he's enjoyed a long history playing with cars. You can read more about him in this issue. Mark has dived in with both feet and provided a much needed upgrade in our website usefulness. Not only will you find much of our history populated in photos and publications available to peruse, but he has brought us into the 21st-century with the ability to pay online for our events. This will help us tremendously and eliminate much of the labor intensive procedures we've endured in the past.

We hope to be welcoming a couple of new faces next year to the board and certainly are always seeking fresh faces. A healthy club needs a continual influx of new blood. Can you make time in your life to give a few hours a year to help maintain our status as one of the premier car clubs in the Chicago area? We are always open to suggestions as how we can do better so please don't hesitate to reach out.

I also would like to take this opportunity to extend my personal thanks and appreciation for the fine work our CCCA office has provided since I became a member many, many years ago. At this time we extend well wishes to the retiring Tony Pantoja and Cece Parker for all their efforts managing the inquiries and keeping our CCCA office running smooth. So for Toni's 32 years and Cece's 20, we say thank you and happy retirement.

And finally, I'd like to close by saying thank you to each and everyone of you for your consistent participation and support in what we do. It reminds me of how rich our lives are for sharing in a common passion over these fine works of art. Because of this, we can continue to provide a mechanism for keeping a living history of why these cars have survived over 100 years. You, the present custodians, are ensuring their long-term survival. That's a pretty lucky place for us to be.

On behalf of the board, I would like to wish you all the healthiest and happiest holiday season. Until we meet again....ENJOY the snow. Your car might look good in it ; )

CORDially,  
*Russ*





## Board of Managers



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Dashboard / Up To Speed Editor	Maureen Blevins <a href="mailto:maureenblevins@yahoo.com">maureenblevins@yahoo.com</a>

## Upcoming Events - 2026

January 18 - Arizona Concours d'Elegance - Scottsdale  
[arizonaconcours.org](http://arizonaconcours.org)

February 13 - 15 - Miami, FL concours  
<https://miamiconcours.com/event-schedule/>

March 5-8 - Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance  
[www.ameliaconcours.com](http://www.ameliaconcours.com)

March 25-29 - CCCA Annual Meeting - Kirkland, WA  
<https://www.classiccarclub.org/events/387>



May 29 - 31 - [Greenwich Concours d'Elegance \(CT\)](#)

June 5-7 - The CCCA Museum Hidden Treasures Experience  
<https://www.classiccarclub.org/events/361>

June 20 - 28 - The Great Race - To commemorate the Rt 66 centennial the race will follow Rt 66 from Chicago to Pasadena. [www.greatrace.com](http://www.greatrace.com)

June 21 - Father's Day Car Show - Oakbrook

July 12-16 - 59th Annual Packard National, Warwick, RI  
<https://www.packardclub.org/events.php>

July 11 - Copshaholm concours d'elegance  
<https://www.concoursatcopshaholm.org/>

July - Date TBD - GIR/POC Annual Picnic - Fabyan Preserve, Batavia

July 20 - AACA CAR SHOW - Carpentersville, IL

July 17-20 - CCCA Grand Classic  
<https://www.classiccarclub.org/events/348>

August 16 - Pebble Beach Concours

August 23 - Geneva, IL Concours d'elegance  
<https://genevaconcours.net/>

September 3 - 5 - ACD Festival  
<https://acdfestival.org/>

Sept 12 & 13 (tentative) - Greenfield Old Car Festival  
<https://www.thehenryford.org/>

October 7-10 - AACA Fall Fest - Hershey, PA  
<https://hershey.aaca.com/eastern-division-fall-meet/>

November - Date TBD - GIR Annual Meeting

**Call for Stories and Ideas:** If anyone has an idea for an article you would like to submit, please do so! I know you all have some pretty good stories to tell. Or if you are interested in contributing a regular column please contact me. And remember - If you have a car you would like featured, don't be shy! Give me a call!

## The EDITOR's page



Happy Holidays everyone!

After a nice lingering Autumn, Winter careened in and suddenly it was time to replace those riding mowers with snowblowers. I hope you all got those cars tucked away and winterized with no problems.

We are in the middle of the Holiday Season as I write this. A light snow is falling, and while it looks pretty, I'm hoping I don't have to get that shovel out again. I've got Christmas shopping done, menus planned, and as I look at my calendar, I'm trying to find a day or two with nothing on it. It's been a busy December for me this year but I'm not complaining! It's been fun. Whatever holiday you celebrate I hope you find joy and peace and a little time to just relax for a bit.

Working on this issue gave me a chance to look back over the summer and revisit some of the nice times and fun events this club has had. I hope you all feel the same as you look through it.

Sadly, I missed a couple, so I didn't get a chance to see some of you. Hopefully there will be chances to remedy that in 2026. It truly seems as if this year has flown by unreasonably fast. Let's hope the frigid weather disappears just as fast. Before you know it though, it will be time to dust off those beauties and get them road ready. Something I'm sure we all look forward to.

To those of you who are getting away to warmer climes for a bit, keep the rest of us in mind. If you get to a car event please do send a few pics. We can post them on the website, and maybe put them in the next issue. We also have a Facebook page and one on Instagram if you are so inclined.

Once again - Happy Holidays to one and all!

*Maureen*

p.s. I hope you enjoy this issue of the Dashboard

## Board Notes

We welcome Mark Shear to our board and are pleased to announce him as our new **webmaster**. Previous work done on the website was a good start but Mark has brought it all Up to Speed, making some much needed improvements as well as updates. You can now register for events online, and pay for them online too. So far, the feedback has all been positive. Check out the site at <https://www.girccca.org/>

We have an opening on the board for the position of **Treasurer**. Alan Blum is having to step back from that position. Thankfully, he is not resigning from the club, so that is welcome news, but he needs to free up some time for other projects. He has our sincere thanks for the job he has done over the past several years. He has done a remarkable job has made it easy for whoever will be stepping up into that role. He also will be happy to help in any way he can during the transition.

Russ Rodriguez will be placing an order soon for **name tags**. If you are a new or current member in need of one, please shoot him an email at [russ@girccca.org](mailto:russ@girccca.org) so he can add your name to the list. Cost is \$10 per. They are quality

sturdy, magnetic plates.

The board has wrapped up the year with a final meeting before the holidays. Financially, the club is in good shape. We could however, always use a few more **board members**. So please, if you have a little time, and an interest in keeping this great club going, give Russ a call and let him know. He'll be happy to give you the details.

We received a **membership** report from the National office... "We are squeezing the not renewed from 2024 number down but it's still much higher than we would all like to see." Try and interest your friends or acquaintances to consider joining our region. It's wonderful if they own a classic, but they don't have to. All they need is an interest and an appreciation for these wonderful automobiles.

**Renewal notices** were mailed and emailed, and letters sent to non-renewals. A new initiative in the form of a partnership with McPherson College, extends a complimentary digital membership to any student or faculty who are part of the Automotive Restoration program in an effort to connect with students who are the future of this car hobby.

## Introducing...Mark Shear

I recently joined the GIRCCCA and am a long time member of the CCCA SoCal region. We currently have a home here in Highland Park and one in Calabasas, California. I am on the board and webmaster for both chapters. One of the big initiatives I was able to put in place on both websites is online registration and payments for events. I hope you find that easier than writing a check and mailing it in. If you don't, no worries, we are a classic car club so we understand! If you haven't registered online, give it a try or just check out the website at [www.girccca.org](http://www.girccca.org).

I also recently joined our National organization's membership committee as I feel we have to get new classic car lovers and members into our clubs. Fortunately, I am retired so I can work on these things and other activities including advising a fraternity chapter, and until recently served Calabasas as a commissioner for over 20 years in different areas.

My wife, Jill, and I love to drive (when it was running) our 1936 Packard v12 1408. It was my Dad's for over 50 years. I used to love to go on car tours with him even when he was in his late eighties. That is where I started my love for the Classic Era cars. We also share a 1956 Packard Patrician and a 1914 Saxon with my sister's family. Both of which were also cars my Dad owned.

The '56 was a barn-find and is in good original condition. The Saxon was just like one my grandfather used to own. My Dad donated it to the Zimmerman Auto Museum in California and when Stanley Zimmerman passed away, I bought it back at auction.

The '36 Packard is a driver that I hope to bring here next year so we can tour with it. It has been "in the shop" for the last four years, first with one mechanic and now a second mechanic to rebuild the engine. Fingers crossed!

We have twin adult children, two grandsons and two dogs. Our daughter is a pediatric neurologist who lives here in Chicago and our son lives in a town outside of Boston with our two grandsons 3 and 5 years old (both geniuses I'm sure and I know they love cars already). I go for regular walks with one of our dogs and hope to bring them out on a tour or two.

Being new to the area, the club provides an opportunity to make new friends. I look forward to meeting you, getting to know you, your cars and your stories at an event in 2026.



*Our 1956 barn-find Patrician, complete with original plastic seat covers. That's my dad in the passenger seat.*



*Our 1936 Packard v12 1408 basking in the California sun.*



*Four years up in the air having her engine rebuilt.*



## A Look In The Rear View Mirror with Jim Tharp

*Everyone who has owned a collector car has stories. As part of our continuing series, we asked Jim Tharp to tell us some of his.*

### **Everyone who has owned a collector car has stories. What's one of your favorites?**

Back in 1964 my wife and I were driving home from Southern Illinois when our water pump started leaking in our 1956 Lincoln so bad that we started stopping at each farm to fill the radiator. At each farm we filled the radiator, and they wished us good luck. After 5-6 farms we stumbled across a farmer who offered to look at the pump to see if he could fix it. He brought out his tools, removed the pump and began making calls to auto part stores to locate one. After a few calls he located one that was 40 miles away in Indiana. He was able to get hold of a manager on a Saturday afternoon as closing was near.



The manager stayed open until he arrived to pick up the part needed while my wife and I waited. He returned in a couple of hours. In the meantime his wife served us sandwiches and when he arrived, he installed the pump with ease. When I asked him what I owed him he said the cost of the part and gas. This was all he would take - he refused to take any more money.

Pass on the kindness to all the people you meet, and you will have a good life. We took that advice and practiced it going forward, we have had a wonderful life, and everything is well.

with an agreement that I would keep it neat and orderly, or I was gone. I did this for a semester and searched for another dealer that would offer the same. My parents, with some persuasion, bought a new car from him. I have been a Packard lover for the rest of my life. I have had a total of 17 cars ranging from 1928-1934.

### **What was your first love affair with a car, and did you ever buy it?**

Very similar to #2. I could not afford the car as I was just in high school.

### **You have a blank check and can buy any car. What would you get and why?**

Mercedes 2018 S63 AMG. I had a 2015 model, and it was the best car I ever had from a luxury standpoint. It was the best luxury, comfort and styling, and execution.

### **What is your favorite cruising song to listen to while driving in one of your cars?**

This was a tough choice; I have so many. The greatest is Benny Goodman's Christopher Columbus. It has a terrific driving beat and a great melody with a highlight of a Benny Goodman Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert from 1938.

### **What is your first memory of connecting with cars?**

When I was in high school there was a car dealer across the street. During my tenure there was a dealer who allowed me to eat my lunch in a 1937 Roadster



## What car do you wish you kept?

A 1933 Packard V12 Dual Cowl Phaeton. It had it all - looks, sound, chrome, side mounts, dual spotlights, wind wings, dual pilot ray driving lights, white wall tires, exhaust. The engine was completely torn down and re-machined. New valves and connecting rod insert bearings to eliminate the existing babit, which is a short life item. Car is rebuilt to last. Things happen in life unexpectedly. This is why it's been a difficult decision selling this treasure.



## What advice would you give your 20-year-old self when it comes to collecting cars?

Don't buy it without completely checking the car, including records. Generally, there are records, and more similar or same cars for sale. Have the car inspected by a reputable expert. Drive the car yourself. Discuss defects and price, and remember these are old cars. Nothing will be perfect, give it your best. Learn from your mistakes, it's a great hobby, keep your enthusiasm.



## What words, or saying do you live by?

Friendship, loyalty and love do not require coupons.

Be first, be different.

Early bird gets the worm.

What are you best suited for?

People afraid of asking, are ashamed of learning.

Keep your mouth shut and your eyes open.

Only begin and the task will be completed.

The best in life never come easy.





This was my first GIRCCCA Annual Lunch meeting at Rich Harvest Farms out in Sugar Grove. Entering the main building which appeared to be the club house for the golf course into a large lobby with a classic car to tease what was to come. Behind the lobby is the main collection of cars and other memorabilia. What a treat to find a wide array of classic cars to very high end sports cars. There was even an old beautiful horse drawn coach and a working carousel that lit up the area near it. It was fun to browse the collection and the main person who maintains the vehicles was on-hand to answer any questions. You could go into the shop where they work on the cars and see the complicated exhaust manifold for a Lamborghini. Downstairs is a sports collection and a theater. Most of us explored all of this but the indoor pool had no takers from our group.

Along with a very nice buffet lunch we had two guest speakers, Bob Lederer and Dave Shadduck who provided a double dose of information and pictures on the London to Brighton Run. Bob gave us the history of the Run from the very first Emancipation Run to now. It was particularly interesting to learn that originally there was a speed limit of 14 miles per hour which symbolized the loosening of the speed limit regulations, hence the original "Emancipation Run". To this day the cars in the run have to be manufactured before 1905. What a challenge!

Dave spoke about his and his wife Kimberly's many experiences participating in the Run over the years with friends. There is a general camaraderie between participants helping each other and with the general community also. It was fun to hear about the people and pubs in addition to the cars. Dave recounted how he once had to rebuild an axle that broke two days before the Run. Bob and Jacki Lederer joined them on a few runs as well.

Makes you want to go see the London to Brighton Run for yourself. Come to next year's Annual Meet for some classics and high end cars, old and new friends, and interesting talks.

















# Geneva concours d'elegance 2025

*Reviewed by M Blevins*



*1930 Stutz Speedster by LeBaron  
Carl and Carrol Jensen*



*1925 Kissel Roadster  
Jeffrey, Karen and Joshua Ozan*



*1912 American-LaFrance Roadster  
Bob and Jackie Lederer*



*1937 Hudson Terraplane Convertible  
John and Mary Otto*



*1951 Alvis Drop Top  
Tim Olson*



*1910 AC Sociable  
Doug and Laura Stuart*

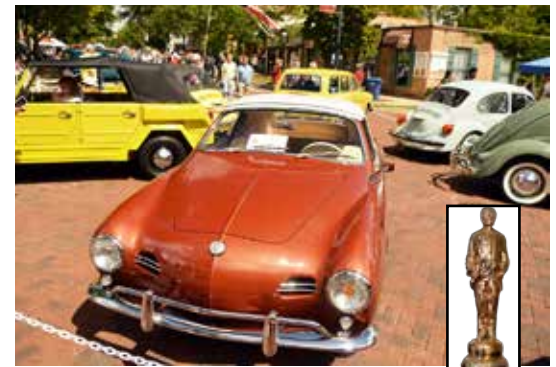


It was a beautiful day in Geneva on August 25 for the annual Geneva concours d'elegance. The weather was perfect, the crowd was happy, and beautiful cars were spread through town.

This year the featured marques were chain drive autos, pre-war roadsters, and Volkswagens. There are always some unusual vehicles to be seen, and it's always nice to see GIR members at the show - displaying their cars, or as spectators. And it's always great to see our members win awards! Congratulations to Doug and Laura Stuart, the father son duo of Dennis and Tim Heywood, Dan and Danica Sobieski, Mark Smith, Wilma Hunter, Kevin Knoepfel and to all the winners on their awards.



*Russ Rodriguez  
1908 REO Touring*



*Brad Warren  
19258 VW Karmann Ghia*



*Richard Flynn  
1933 Morgan Super Sports*



*Wilma Hunter      1931 Pierce Arrow*



*John Hansford  
1929 Cadillac Dual Cowl Phaeton*



*Paul Safransky and Wayne Jorgensen  
1918 Ford Roadster*





*1936 RR Sedan De Ville  
Ronald Falk and Sandy Girvin*



*1920 Packard Twin 6 Roadster  
Tim and Dennis Heywood*



*1904 Rambler Touring  
Tim Wiggins*



*Klairmont Collection  
1926 Rickenbacker 8 super sport*



*The big attraction on this car was this beautiful backseat bar with inlaid wood and crystal glasses and decanter.*



*Wendell Smith and Janet Yarbrough  
1927 RR Phantom I Allweather*



## In the Winners Circle



*Dan and Danica Sobieski  
1930 Cadillac Roadster*



*Mark Smith  
1930 Packard Roadster*



*John Barrett presents the award to a  
1925 Kissel Roadster*



*Alan and Mary Alyce Blum*



*Gary Gerstner*

## Spotted Around Town



*Nancy Strong*



*Tim Heywood*



*Herb Lederer*



*Bill Morris*



*Paul Callaghan*

*Mary Ellen  
Thielemann*



*Bob Joynt*



*Allen Strong*



*Jim Friedrichs and Mary Lou Soldato Friedrichs*





**1926 Wills Sainte Claire model T-6 five passenger club sedan**

**Owner: Tom Kleinschmidt**

This car was purchased off of eBay in October of 2006 based on pictures and a conversation with the owner.

Fred Meiners, engineer and former President of the Wills Sainte Claire Club completed restoration in 1980 from a parts car. The two-tone grey with black fenders and red pinstripes is an original factory paint scheme. Meiners sold it to a gentleman on Long Island, and a reseller bought it from the Long Island estate.

Initial inspection after delivery revealed a new 12 Volt battery under the driver's seat in the battery box. YIKES! Fortunately, it still had the seals on the terminals, so no damage was done. It was running the next day by cleaning the ignition points. That was short lived however, as the gas tank was full of rust chunks and the fuel line clogged. In due course a replacement stainless steel tank was fabricated and installed through Rock Valley Antique and Street Rod.

The big project was the hydraulic brakes. Between work and family it took me about a year to brass sleeve the wheel and master cylinders, make replacement pistons, reline the brakes, clean out the system and make it all work. The four-wheel Lockheed outside band drum brakes work reasonably well.

Many other repairs have been made over the years with more to go. Some engine and speedometer adventures have been chronicled



*Tom and Ann Kleinschmidt*



in previous editions of *The Dashboard*: What is That Clacking Sound? - Winter 2014, Rust and Sludge - Winter 2015/16, Dust and Oil – Spring 2016, Cam A Lot - Spring 2017, and New Technology for an Old Vehicle – Fall 2021.

The car that was kept going by this one still exists unrestored in the Wills Sainte Claire Museum on Wills Street in Marysville, MI, a former WWII munitions plant. It was used into the 1950s by a gentleman to tow his travel trailer. His car developed engine trouble and engines were swapped along with many other parts. There is a small, repaired crack in the subject car's water jacket. The parts car was titled by the engine number not the chassis number and is still titled that way.

The parts car engine swap included grinding off the original tow car engine serial number and stamping-in the parts car engine number in its place so there are now two engines with the same serial number, one from the factory and one not. The original serial number of the tow vehicle's engine in this car is lost to history. It is the only engine with a smooth surface on the engine block with a serial number. Original serial numbers were stamped into the raw casting.

This car is a good example of a “driver” rather than a precise original. As an orphan make with minimum documentation, repairs are a research project. Even things that are documented are not always complete. For instance the wiring diagram shows the battery but not the polarity. Some research by the Wills museum revealed that eight-cylinder cars are positive ground while six-cylinder cars are negative ground.

A survey of the cars in the museum revealed they all had different spark plug types. Eventually, a vintage Champion Spark plug catalog was discovered to have Wills cars listed and their proper plug type. The correct plug types were on the shelf at the local auto parts store! Every now and then there is a win.

Likely this car and its sister car are the only surviving five passenger sedans. At the 101st anniversary of the founding of the company in 2022 (post Covid), the goal was met to have 20 cars at the AACA Blue Water Region car show in Marysville Park. The vast majority of the cars there were roadsters. The only known town car was there too. This one was the only five passenger sedan.

It drives well with loads of low-end torque that minimizes the need to shift the non-synchromesh three



*The car makes its arrival!*

speed transmission. The 127” wheelbase and ample back seat make it a pleasant place for passengers. It was the only car to finish a Wills tour some years ago when it rained. With windows that roll up it kept the occupants nice and dry. Fortunately, it has a windshield visor as there is only a vacuum operated wiper and just one wiper blade on the driver's side.

#### **Five passenger sedan details**

1. Shipping weight: 3900 pounds
2. Wheelbase: 127”
3. Overall length: 15’
4. Tires: 32 x 6.20
5. Wheels: Disk steel with mounting studs for balancing weights
6. Brakes: Four wheel outside band hydraulic by Lockheed
7. Backup light
8. Top speed advertised: 75 MPH
9. Body  
Aluminum over wood frame built by American Body company
10. Color  
Two-tone gray with black fenders  
Red pinstripe



*Comfortable, plush light gray interior both front and back. Back compartment has a foot rest and lots of leg room!*



*Beautifully polished walnut frames around the large windows match the walnut steering wheel. Braided rope accents for holding onto on the back of the bench seat, and hanging in the back seat. The back interior is graced with a small light in each corner*



*The door handles on the window frame pivot, allowing the door to be opened.*





### Engine Specifications

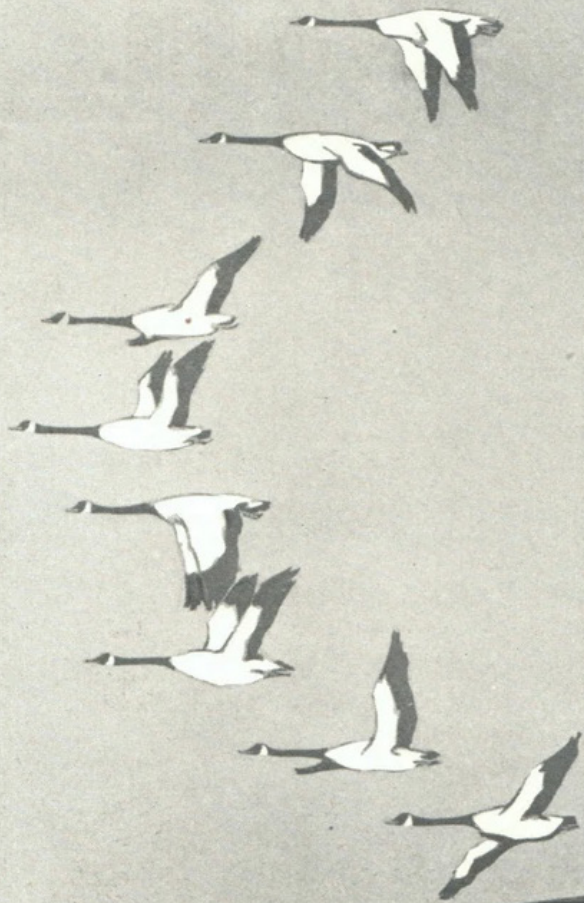
- Inline six cylinder engine with a 273 cu-in (4.49L) displacement.
- Compression: 4:1. Low compression was needed to deal with the poor-quality gasoline. Graham Edgar at GM with Standard Oil developed the octane rating system in the 1920s.
- Horsepower: 65 to 67 (varies by source)
- Oil capacity: 10 quarts
- Gear driven single overhead cam
- Electric fuel pump – a first for a production car.
- Pressurized cooling system with overflow tank
- Molybdenum steel components for durability
- Automatic spark advance











Italian in speed, French  
in smartness, English in  
economy of fuel, American  
in price and power.

WILLS SAINTE CLAIRE, INC. . . .  
Marysville, Michigan



© W. S. C. Inc.

WILLS  
SAINTE CLAIRE

*This ad appeared in a 1925 National Geographic*



# The Man and His Company

by Tom Kleinschmidt

C. Herold Wills was the third employee of the Ford Motor Company. A Metallurgist and Engineer, he was instrumental in the development of the Ford Model T - Specifically utilizing Vanadium alloy steel for strength and flexibility allowing for light weight durable components along with designing the Model T's two-speed planetary transmission.

He enjoyed calligraphy as a hobby and created the famous Ford script logo – it is not Henry Ford's signature as is commonly thought. Henry Ford was best man at Mr. Wills first wedding in 1904 to Mabel Preston whom he divorced in 1913. The couple had a son in 1906 who only survived an hour. They then had two daughters: Virginia was born in 1908, and Josephine in 1910. In 1914, Wills married Mary Coyne. He had two sons with Mary: John Harold and Childe Harold Jr.

Circa 1912: Wills tells Ford that the Model T is becoming obsolete. Ford - in words other than these - tells Wills to shut up, sit down and get his feet off the furniture.

In 1919 Ford bought out all his stockholders including Mr. Wills. Wills took his stock cash-out of \$1.2 million (about \$22 million in 2025 dollars) and moved to Marysville, Michigan just south of Lake Huron. He expanded the town, built a factory, and designed the Wills Sainte Claire automobile. Wills cars were manufactured from 1921 to 1926.

Wills Sainte Claire was one of the few American companies that made overhead cam engine cars along with Duesenberg and later Stutz. Wills cars have 65 HP single overhead cam engines, first V-8 and later I-6. The V-8s got a reputation of being hard to service and probably expensive to build. The six is very easy to work on. His engines are based on Hispano Suiza WW1 aircraft engines, including their gear driven overhead camshaft.

The goal of the Wills Sainte Claire automobile was to build a car with technology ten years ahead of its time and compete at a similar price point to Buick. The advanced technology was achieved: OHC engine, hydraulic brakes, pressurized cooling system, electric fuel pump, backup light, Molybdenum steel and more. The original target market was Buick buyers at \$1395. This car new was \$3885 compared with Cadillac \$3195, and Packard at \$3375. A Ford Model T was a few hundred dollars. Being an expensive car with a conservative design and less horsepower than the other luxury brands mentioned, sales were only fair. A total of 12,000 cars were built over the seven-year life of the company. Approximately 80 cars still exist.

The company name is of course Mr. Wills last name combined with the name of the factory's adjacent Saint Clair River. Mr. Wills felt that adding an "e" to the end of the names Saint and Clair looked classier. The goose logo was based on the huge number of geese in the area.

As Herold Wills was a perfectionist, he often shut down production to make improvements on the cars. Delayed deliveries resulted in canceled orders. The company went bankrupt twice - once in the startup days due to poor economic conditions and the second time due to the small market of buyer the car attracted. Chrysler Corporation bought the Wills facility shortly after bankruptcy and converted it into a parts distribution warehouse. A replacement building sits on the property and continues on as the Chrysler National Parts Distribution Center.

Wills went on to join New Era Motors - maker of the Ruxton. With some of his former employees, they worked on the prototype Ruxton. New Era Motors and the Ruxton front wheel drive car were short-lived: 1929-1930.

Eventually Wills consulted at Chrysler as a metallurgist. His various patents also provided a steady income. In 1940, Wills suffered a stroke and died a short time later at Henry Ford Hospital. He is buried at Woodlawn Cemetery, Detroit, Michigan.

In August of 1926, not long before the demise of the company in early 1927, two seasoned cross-country drivers Louis B. Miller and J. E. Weber drove a six-cylinder Wills from New York to San Francisco in 83 hours and 12 minutes chopping 10 hours off of the record set by AB Jenkins and Ray Peck just a few months earlier.



*Henry Ford and C.H. Wills in 1915*

## References:

### Books

*Michigan's C. Harold Wills*; Alan and Lynn Lyon Nalderett; ISBN 9781625850877

*Henry's Lieutenants* ; Ford R. Bryan; ISBN 0-8143-2428-2

### Magazines

*Cars & Parts*; Vol 17, No 2; December 1973; Column: Free Wheeling - Child Harold Wills Part I by Menno Duerksen, Pgs 81-86

*Cars & Parts*; Vol 17, No 3; January - February 1974; Column: Free Wheeling - Child Harold Wills Part II by Menno Duerksen, Pgs 94-97

Websites: <https://www.willsautomuseum.com/>



# The Year 1926



President Calvin Coolidge



World Series Contenders New York Yankees vs St. Louis Cardinals (the winner).

Rudolph Valentino, whose film *The Son of the Sheik* is currently playing, dies at the age of 31 in New York. Riots occur at the funeral parlor as thousands of people try to see his body.



Some Top Hits of '26  
*"Five Foot Two, Eyes Of Blue"*  
*"Bye Bye Blackbird"* - Gene Austin  
*"Valencia"* Paul Whiteman orchestra  
*"Baby Face"* Jan Garber Orchestra  
*"Sleepy Time Gal"* Ben Bernie Orchestra  
*"Always"* George Olsen and His Music  
*"When the Red, Red Robin (Comes Bob, Bob, Bobbin' Along)"* *"I'm Sitting on Top of the World"* Al Jolson

In January 1926 Scottish engineer and inventor John Logie Baird gave the world's first demonstration of his electromechanical television system to fifty scientists assembled in his attic workshop in London.



The first joint Daimler-Benz range is presented at the Berlin Motor Show. Mercedes-Benz Typ 8/38 PS / Typ Stuttgart 200 (W 02) pictured

April 12 Alfred Hitchcock releases his first film as director *"The Pleasure Garden"*, in England; the silent drama was made in Germany

Feb 1 Land at Broadway & Wall Street sold at a record \$7 per sq inch

From Washer to Ironer in 10 Seconds

## A speed washer and ironer now combined

in one beautiful Thor machine

at a price formerly asked for a good washer alone

**\$149.25**

Small does not mean small. This new Thor machine is small, compact and easy to use. It is the only machine of its kind that can wash and iron in one operation. It is the only machine of its kind that can wash and iron in one operation. It is the only machine of its kind that can wash and iron in one operation.

Now being demonstrated by Thor dealers. Call on any Thor dealer. See this new combination washer and ironer. Its simplicity and ease of operation, will be a revelation to you. Literature and a sample Thor cloth will gladly be sent on request. Write to Thor Machine Company, 2121 St. Clair Ave., Chicago, Illinois. Thor Machine Company, 2121 St. Clair Ave., Chicago, Illinois. Thor Machine Company, 2121 St. Clair Ave., Chicago, Illinois.

Thor Machine Company, 2121 St. Clair Ave., Chicago, Illinois. Thor Machine Company, 2121 St. Clair Ave., Chicago, Illinois. Thor Machine Company, 2121 St. Clair Ave., Chicago, Illinois.

THE WORLD'S FIRST ELECTRIC WASHER WAS A THOR—THE LATEST IS A THOR



## Rolls Royce Owners Club and GIRCCCA Joint Meet

*by Mark Shear*

A joint meet with the Lake Michigan Region Rolls-Royce Owners Club and GIRCCCA was held in August at the Kelsey Roadhouse in Lake Barrington, IL. Mark Shear sent along a few photos of the event. Looks like a fun time!







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# 1937 Cord Super Charged Convertible Coupe and a Wooden Bench

by Joe Bortz

In 1962 I had yet to turn 22 but I had purchased my first classic car - a 1931 Cadillac V-8 convertible coupe and was mesmerized by the size and power of this car. As I recall, the only book available to me to study the classic cars was a book called *Famous Old Cars* by Arco, which was copyrighted in 1957 by Fawcett Publications. On page 20 was a picture of 1931 Cadillac V-12 convertible coupe and I fell in love with the design and found out that the V-8 convertible coupe had exactly the same body. When I had the opportunity to purchase this car from New York I jumped on the opportunity and for my first time was the owner of a classic car.

The other car that I fell in love with in this book was a picture of a Cord Phaeton on page 33. I still have this book and at that time it was my sole bible for looking at the various designs of classics and deciding which in my dreams were the ones I would like to own. The Cord was always my first choice but the 1931 Cadillac became available first.

In 1964 I got married and purchased from the classic car dealer Jim De Bickero, a 1933 V12 Auburn Salon boat tail speedster. It was in dilapidated condition but in my bible, *Famous Old Cars*, on page 10 it had a 2 page layout that made me realize that this was also one of my cars of destiny. It took almost ten years for me to restore the car and in the process I came across a gentleman in Seattle, WA that had a 1932 Auburn 8 cylinder boat tail speedster – we suddenly had an interest in common because the red leather interior that I had originally had made for my midnight blue with silver trim 1933 V12 Auburn boat tail speedster did not seem the appropriate color. The gentleman in Seattle wanted to buy my upholstery setup as a kit for his Speedster. In the negotiating process I found out that he not only had a 1932 Auburn 8 cylinder boat tail speedster but also a 1937 Cord convertible supercharged sedan and a 1937 Supercharged Cord convertible coupe. He casually sent me the pictures of his three cars and when I saw the 1937 Supercharged Cord convertible coupe I knew that I had to have it.

We negotiated for some time and finally agreed that I should fly out to take a look at the Cord convertible coupe and try and settle on a price, which I did. And while much has been done on the history of my car as the Portz-Bortz Cord, I have never told the story of what happened when I went to purchase the car.

I remember flying out to St. Helen's, OR the summer of 1970 to see the car and allowing myself five hours of ground time before getting a plane back to Chicago - a red-eye special that left at midnight. The seller of the car picked me up at 7:00 p.m. and instead of proceeding to show me the Cord in question or his

other two cars; he took me to his house and started to show me his banjo collection. While I had zero interest in musical instruments in general and less than zero interest in banjos, I was smart enough to know that when it comes to buying a car you want to keep the seller in the selling mood. Some sellers are just interested in money and others feel as though they are giving away their flesh and really want to like the buyer. And in some cases when they don't, they will do an about face and not sell the car to you at all. So it became apparent to me that in my interest of consummating the purchase of the 1937 Cord convertible coupe I should show some interest in banjos. Quickly I noticed that we had spent three hours on banjos and the beginning lessons of playing a banjo and not one minute of looking at the Cord or coming to terms with it.

I suggested that we were running out of time and we should make the trip over to his garage to see the Cord, which we did.

The Cord was more than I expected and was a great car.





It was super charged and it had that look of a car that had not been overly tampered with. I told him that I wanted to buy it and the best I recall at the time I offered him a very fair price of \$9,000.00 plus the restored red leather interior from my Auburn Speedster in exchange for his unrestored interior and \$9,000.00 for the Cord. He was very firm on his price, \$10,000.00 plus the exchange of interiors and I was very firm on my offer so I suggested that we start the drive out to the airport because the last flight of the evening was at midnight and we were well over an hour from the airport.

I remember arriving at the airport at 11:30 p.m. after discussing all the way over the reasons why he felt the car was worth his asking price and why I thought that \$9,000.00 plus the restored Auburn interior exchange was more than fair. As we sat in front of the airport we could both peer through the large glass windows in the front and out the back and see the only plane that was still in a stall. I remember looking at my watch and saying "My plane leaves in fifteen minutes, we have to make up our minds".

To be honest I cannot tell you if we agreed on his deal or mine. I do remember that we shook hands and made the deal and I took off fast to catch my plane. As I approached

the middle of the airport doing a quick trot I saw the plane start to taxi out. I couldn't believe it and I even ran a little faster thinking that I would be able to catch the plane before it takes off. I looked around and the entire airport was closed down with a few signs saying, "This airport opens 5:00 a.m. seven days a week". I quickly discovered that I was the only person in the airport on the customer side of the building. There were no food facilities, and only a water fountain, and a bathroom, and a multitude of wooden benches. I quickly concluded that I had no choice but to wait until the airport opened at 5:00 a.m. - a mere five hours away! I was about to spend those hours sleeping on one of those wooden benches. I did find some old newspapers to wrap up as a pillow support and quickly dozed off until I heard the noises of the airport ticket agents arriving in the morning to open and get ready for business and that day's travelers.

A new day, a new car for the collection and a new backache I thought would never leave me! It is funny how an interesting side story in procuring a wonderful car, which I still own and enjoy, sometimes slips the memory for almost forty years and comes back vividly.

## News and Notes

John Hansford has a new Classic, currently undergoing a cosmetic and mechanical update - a 1931 Cadillac Fleetwood convertible coupe that has been in storage for close to 30 years. He hopes to have it ready in time to make its debut at the Oakbrook Show. It's a beauty!

Planning is underway at the CCCAM for the Hidden Treasures Experience, June 5th-7th, 2026! We are looking forward to a fun filled weekend of Full Classics and their many hidden stories! Extend your time in Michigan with a five day driving tour immediately following the Experience weekend.



**Just a reminder! It's time to renew your membership for the upcoming year.** If you have not renewed your membership for 2026 this will be your last issue! Don't let that happen. You can renew your membership, join, or download the form online. <https://www.classiccarclub.org/join>  
If you'd like to place an ad, please contact the editor for details.

## How to Join the Classic Car Club of America (CCCA)

It's easy to join! Either call 847-390-0443 and ask for a membership application, or just click on the link and join online! It couldn't be easier. We are the Greater Illinois Region. We'd love to have you as a member.

<https://www.classiccarclub.org/join>

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**YOU DON'T HAVE TO OWN A CLASSIC CAR** to be a member of The Classic Car Club! All you need is an appreciation for these fine automobiles. We encourage you to join our tours and events too! Not everyone owns a Full Classic®, but everyone can join the fun.



*The Muscle Car and Corvette Nationals was held November 22 and 23 at the Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, featuring over 600 cars.*

By the summer of '86 I was so impressed with the performance of Buick's Turbo-charged/Intercooled Grand National I wanted to buy one....but I did not want a black car. The Turbo T-Type was available in any color/trim combination and had the same performance so I placed the order for a white Regal with a Fawn color interior and Sport Exterior trim (blacked-out moldings). it was delivered just after Christmas.

I bought all the Grand National emblems and the deck-lid spoiler when I ordered the car with the intention of building a White GN and by the spring of '87 my car looked like Buick made a white GN.

Jack Ditmars at Phase 1 Autobody painted the bumpers white after sand-blasting the chrome off and filled in the hood emblem that came on Turbo Regals but not on the GN. He added the spoiler and removed any Regal emblems to add the GN bits. In a year that 22,000 Grand Nationals were built, less than 1600 Turbo Regals were made. The FBI and DEA ordered about 80 of them in full Regal Limited trim ( with Landau vinyl tops and chrome moldings ) to use as pursuit cars. I have never been a 'numbers matching' guy so it was not a problem to modify what would become a pretty rare car.

Ken and Pete Barton did all the performance mods in their Melrose Park business, ANS Performance. They put a Kenne-Bell ram air front spoiler and new filter housing with a much larger K&N filter. They added their custom electronic controls and a 7<sup>th</sup> fuel injector in the 'hat' to richen the mixture and increase boost to 20 psi. They also had the trans and torque converter modified adding a B&M shifter to control it. The exhaust was changed to Hooker's Aero-chamber duals kit eliminating the stock cross-flow muffler. They installed a Hypertech Performance chip in the



*The Cord 812 called "Whizzo" started out as a 1937 Cord Westchester sedan with pontoon fenders & covered tires that was never produced - a "Phantom".*



*The '33 Cadillac came from the Stahls Museum in Michigan. Bob Ashton, who runs the show tries to bring "muscle cars" from the Classics every year to encourage young people to see where performance came from.*



*Ken Nagel had 5 luxury convertibles. on display, including this '53 Skylark.*



computer that eliminated the 124 mph governor and installed a 145 mph speedometer in place of the factory 85 mph unit ( a useless instrument mandated by the FED ).

When the GNX came out I wanted to upgrade to speed rated tires on 16" rims. Cars Magazine ran an artist concept sketch of the GNX with C4 Corvette rims on it. I found a used set that were the narrower 8.5" width and using Vette Brakes adapters mounted Goodyear Gatorbacks in the same size as the GNX. I bought reproduction flares from a company in Michigan that covered the wider wheel/tire combo and changed the Corvette flag center trim to Buick 'Power 6' emblems from an '84 Turbo Regal.

The wheels have been fully polished with no clear-coat so I can put a shine on them with Mother's Metal Polish. Dennis Laff, who ran Peggy Sue Limited out of the old Reliable Ambulance building on Western Ave did the clearance boxes in the front wheel wells like the GNX, and painted/mounted the flares. He also placed the GN X vents in the hood where they actually work to relieve air pressure. The wheels are actually fans that pull air from under the car across the brakes to cool them and further reduce front-end lift. I have buried that 145 mph speedo and the car is completely stable at that speed!

There are more White Grand Nationals but only one "BIG N BAD" - the one I have owned since 1986.

## From the Archives



For 1979 the Dashboard won three awards from National - the Turnquist, the Bigelow, and the Steiner.

The Turnquist, for publications (2nd place)

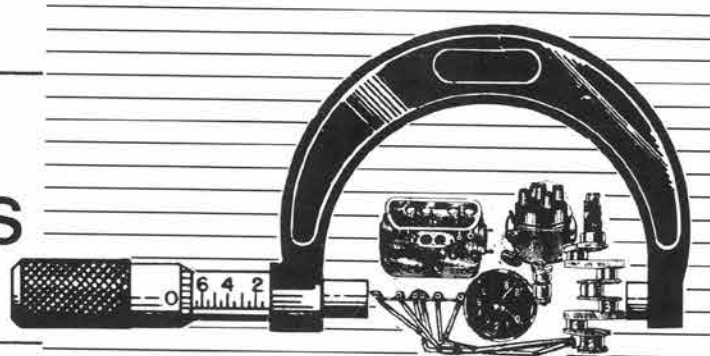
The Bigelow for overall activity (also 2nd place)

The Steiner Award for Grand Classic participation - 1st place.





# Classic techniques



## C A R B U R E T O R   R E P A I R   S T A N D

With no new or rebuilt carburetors available for our cars, many of us must resort to rebuilding our old carbs. Here's how to make a repair stand to hold the carb while you're working on it. Dimensions are shown for the AFBs on my 1959 Chrysler 300-E. However, the size can be altered.

### TOOLS REQUIRED

Carpenter's Square  
Cross Cut Saw  
3/8" Drill Bit  
Hand or Electric Drill  
Ruler  
Tubing Cutter or Hack Saw  
File  
Adjustable Wrench

### PARTS REQUIRED

1 Piece 3/4" thick wood  
4 Pcs. 5/16" x 3" Hex Head Machine Bolt (1" threaded)  
8 Pcs. 5/16" flat washers  
8 Pcs. 5/16" Hex Nuts  
1 Pc. 3/8" I.D. Copper Tube (6")

1. Measure the distance between the carburetor attaching studs on the intake manifold (or holes in the carburetor base).
2. To determine the size of the wooden base, add at least 1" ( $\frac{1}{2}$ " per side) to the measurements taken in step number 1 above. (See Exhibit I)
3. Select a piece of hardwood or plywood and cut it to the size determined in step number 2 above.
4. Center the carburetor attaching stud pattern on the base block and drill 3/8" diameter holes.
5. File or sand rough edges as needed.
6. Cut copper tubing to length and file ends to remove burrs. The thickness of the wood, the length of the copper tube and the thickness of the two washers should completely cover the unthreaded portion of the bolt. (I used 1" lengths, but it would be wise to measure first in order to avoid cutting the tubing too short).

(Continued on page 9)



7. Put a hex-head machine bolt through the base; add a washer, the copper tube, a second washer and a hex nut. Snug tight. (See Exhibit II)
8. Follow the same procedure (step 7) for the three remaining bolts.
9. Place the carburetor over the threaded portion of the machine bolts in the same way you would install it on the intake manifold studs. Tighten the nuts so the carb will have good contact on all four corners and not rock back-and-forth. Use the four remaining nuts to attach the carb to the repair stand.

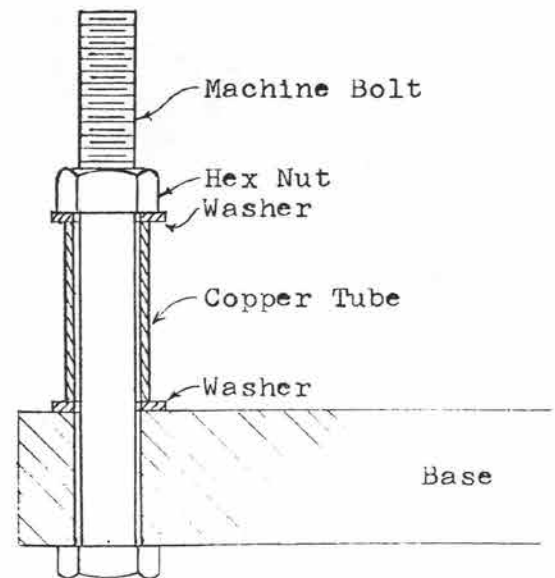
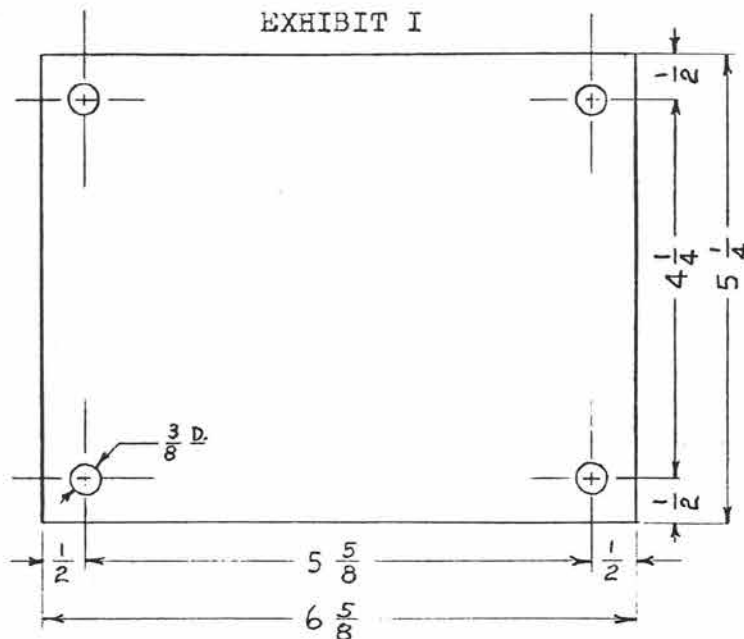
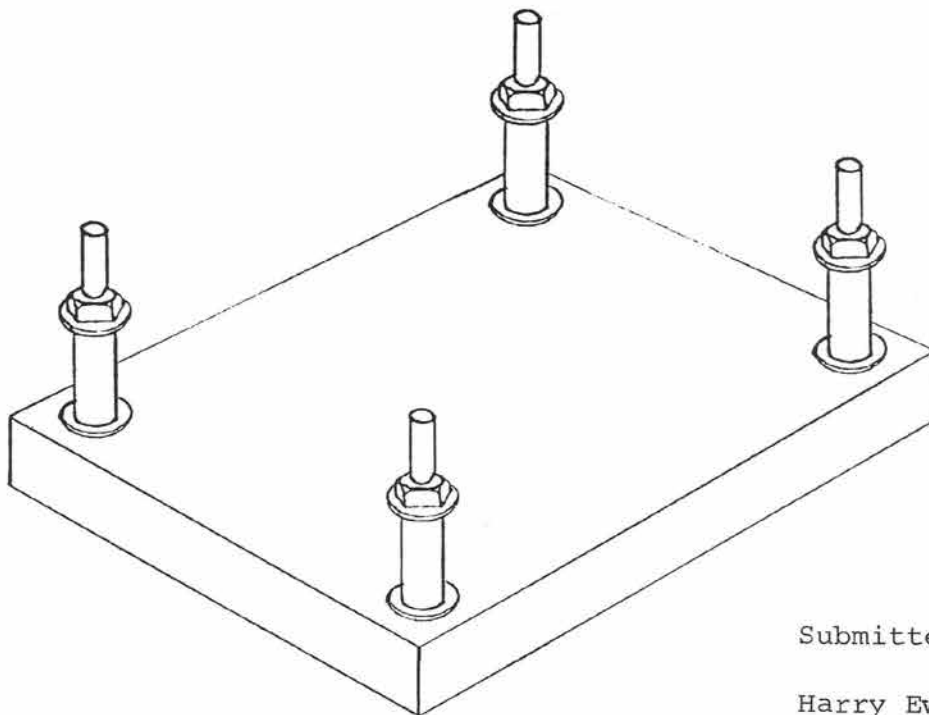


EXHIBIT II



Submitted by:

Harry Ewert, G.I.R.





## CLASSIC CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

### Approved CCCA Classics as of 01/2022

The Classic Car Club of America defines a Classic as a “Fine” or “Distinctive” automobile, American or foreign, built between 1915 and 1948, generally high-priced when new and built in limited quantities. Other factors, including engine displacement, custom coachwork and luxury accessories help determine whether a car is considered to be a Classic.

Only certain models of the following vehicles built during 1915 through 1948 are recognized as CCCA Classics: Be sure to check on the list of recognized cars to see if all models of a particular marque are accepted as Full Classic® cars.

For complete information go to the website : [http://classiccarclub.org/grand\\_classics/approved\\_classics.html](http://classiccarclub.org/grand_classics/approved_classics.html)

A.C.	Cord - all	HCS	Locomobile	Rochester-Duesenberg
Adler	Corinthian	Heine-Velox	Lozier	Rohr
Alfa Romeo - all	Cunningham	Hispano-Suiza	Marmon	Rolls-Royce
Alvis	Dagmar	Horch - all	Maserati (considered)	Ruxton -all
Amlcar (considered)	Daimler	Hotchkiss	Maybach - all	Squire - all
Apperson	Daniels	Hudson	McFarlan	S.S./SS Jaguar
Armstrong-Siddeley	Darracq (see Talbot)	Humber	Mercedes-Benz-all	Simplex
Aston-Martin	Delage	Hupmobile	Mercer - all	Simplex-Crane
Auburn	Delahaye	Invicta	M.G.	Stearns Knight
Austro-Daimler - all	Delaunay Belleville	Isotta-Fraschini	Miller	Stevens Duryea
Ballot	Doble - all	Itala - all	Minerva	Steyr
Bentley	Dorris - all	Jaguar	Nash	Studebaker
Benz	Duesenberg - all	Jensen	National	Stutz
Biddle	Dupont	Jordan	Owen Magnetic	Sunbeam
Blackhawk - all	Elcar	Julian - all	Packard	Talbot
B.M.W.	Excelsior	Kissel	Paige	Tatra
Brewster	Farman	Kleiber	Pathfinder	Templar
Brough Superior	Fiat	Lafayette	Peerless	Triumph
Bucciali	Fox	Lagonda	Pierce-Arrow	Vauxhall
Bugatti	Franklin	Lanchester	Railton (considered)	Voisin - all
Buick	Gardner	Lancia	Renault	Wasp
Cadillac	Georges Irat	LaSalle	Reo	Wills Ste Claire-all
Chadwick	Graham-Paige/Graham	Leach	ReVere	Willys-Knight
Chrysler	HAL	Lincoln	Richelieu	Winton
Cole	Haynes	Lincoln Continental	Roamer	

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