



# THE MOTO METER

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA REGION, ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF AMERICA

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Rich Mishler 319-364-8863  
Dan Ortz 319-366-3142  
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(At Large)

### Editor:

Brenda Juby 918-231-3635  
bjuby52@gmail.com

### Membership:

Dan Ortz 319-366-3142

**Calling Tree Contact** 319-366-3142  
**Judy Ortiz**

## THE MOST EXPENSIVE COTTER PIN IN THE WORLD

This mishap occurred on a pre-tour outing located in Minnesota with a 1904 Model Ford AC. They were heading to the ice cream shop for a cold drink when all of a sudden the steering wheel lost contact with the wheels, the left wheel turned fully left and the Ford crossed the center line heading for the lake. The Ford had a mind of its own. She seemed to be heading for the only tree between me and the lake water.

Having no steering, I jammed both the brake and reverse pedal down as far as I could while pulling back, the hand lever to the "low" gear. The Ford had crossed the white edge line of the other lane and headed downward towards the lake. It hit the tree just left of the center of the left front spring. In doing so, the tree crushed the wooden body, destroyed the left lamp and bent the frame, front axle, fender and brace. Further damage was discovered later. The left side of the body itself had been pushed back over an inch and all supporting brackets were broken.

Most Fords - and many other early cars - the steering arm comes across and curves down into a pin. This pin holds the spindle and tie rod together. It is an important and often over-looked part that needs to be checked before touring. The pin that holds the tie rod, spindle and steering arm was held in place with one cotter pin. The arm from the steering post also is routed between the spring. Early Fords had the full-elliptical type: one on top and one on the bottom. These early Fords probably never hit 25 mph with the roads of the era, much less than 30 mph.

Today however, while sitting strapped to a trailer floor, the Ford may be traveling 75 mph. The roads were terrible with some "bump" signs letting you know the pavement was dropping six inches or more. When the car has its axles strapped to the floor, the body bounces around like a "bobby-headed" doll.

It can only be deduced that the spring was hammering against the steering arm all the way and that action caused the one cotter pin to shear itself off while it was being driven up. Further investigation shows the Ford "originally" had a slight bump or bend to the steering rod-right, where the spring was. The steering rod had been straightened out when it was restored in the 50's. In other words, the Ford had been improperly restored. There was supposed to be a cap that went over the bottom of the connecting pin and TWO cotter pins at opposite angles were to be inserted. The moral of this story is when having your car restored be sure to go to a shop that is acquainted with your cars design.

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## WIFE VS. HUSBAND

A couple drove down a country road for several miles, not saying a word. An earlier discussion had led to an argument and neither of them wanted to concede their position. As they passed a barnyard of mules, goats, and pigs, the husband asked, sarcastically, 'Relatives of yours?' 'Yep,' the wife replied, 'in-laws'.



## TRIVIA QUESTION

Once upon a time, there was one car model that got sold by five...if not six... separate manufacturers! What was it? (Page 6 for answer)

*"I hope that when I die that my wife does not sell all my restoration parts for how much that I said I paid for them." ~ Anonymous Customer*

It's amazing how much you can do with dental floss.

When installing a dash warning lamp, and you have to compress a spring to get a cupped washer and horseshoe clip installed, compress the spring, and tie it compressed, with dental floss. You can then slip the spring onto the warning lamp housing, slide the cupped washer against it, install the horseshoe clip, and then cut the dental floss.

Trying to install one of those carburetor springs with the hooked ends that swivel? Make a lasso of dental floss. Install one end of the spring, onto the heat shield or bracket. Attach the loop to the other hooked end. You can then pull up, adjust position with needle nose pliers, and install the hook where you want it.

*By John Seim*

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## HISTORICAL VEHICLE



The Cord Model L-29 was the first American front-wheel drive car to be offered to the public, beating the Ruxton automobile by several months, in 1929. The brainchild of former Miller engineer Carl Van Ranst, its drive system borrowed from the Indianapolis 500-dominating racers, using the same de Dion layout and inboard brakes. This allowed it to be much lower than competing cars. Both stock and special bodies built on the Cord chassis by American and European coach builders won prizes in contests worldwide. The L-29 came with full instrumentation, including a temperature gauge, oil pressure gauge, and speedometer on the left of the steering column with a gas gauge, oil level gauge, and Ammeter on the right. The L-29 was powered by a 301 cu in, 125 hp L-head Lycoming inline 8 from the Auburn 120, with the crankshaft pushed out through the front of the block and the flywheel mounted there, driving a three-speed transmission. Gearing in both transmission and front axle was inadequate, and the 4,700 lb car was underpowered, limited to a trifle over 80 mph, inadequate even at the time, and readily exceeded by the less expensive Auburn. Still, the styling was lovely, and despite the 137.5 in wheelbase and steering demanding fully four turns lock-to-lock, handling was reportedly superb. However, it could not outrun the Great Depression, and by 1932, it was discontinued, with just 4,400 sold.

*The Owners Manual, Venice Fl.*



## Touring Central Nebraska in an "A"



A four or five day journey stretched into a three week adventure when we took the '29 "A" from East Iowa to Central Nebraska and beyond.

*Left: Camping along the Middle Loup River north of Broken Bow.*

*Top right: Using a 10-15% ethanol blend cleaned the interior of the fuel tank of the rust that had accumulated there over the years and resulted in our being stopped along the highways about 35 times during the duration of the approximately 2500 mile trip. Each time I thought, "Well, this should be the last time for this procedure". But, of course it wasn't.*



One of the highlights of the journey was the quite Sunday afternoon spent at the Dowse Sod House located near Comstock, Custer County, Neb. No other guests were there the entire afternoon and the host, who wasn't there either, had the interior looking as though someone was expected for supper, with the table set for six, paper and kindling' in the wood burning stove, clean covering on the overstuffed chairs, the bed made, etc. The silence was golden.

One of the many things that made the trip so memorable was when I made a fuel stop; which was about every 80 miles or so. I would let the car idle for 15 - 20 sec before I shut it off and I can't recall how many times there would be someone standing at the window ready to talk Old Cars. Heard many really good tales of the ol' days when the "A"s were much younger.

We experienced some rain one evening and night so we "moteled" it. The next morning, I went out to see if I could get an engine start- no luck. I had parked the "A" right in front of the motel entrance so the night clerk could keep an eye on things; no locks on my machine. I went back in and got some dry paper towels and, in the gentle drizzle, took the ignition parts apart and dried them as well as possible and quickly hopped in and "bingo" she started up. In that time period several other guests had left and I think it made them glad that they had modern cars and could just get in and hit the starter and she'd start.



*We traveled about 200 miles or so on roads like these two examples. I don't recall meeting anyone on any of these miles. We had plenty of water, food, tent and sleeping bags for most any emergency, but, other than fuel flow, we had few problems; one of the most important- watch where you stepped in these cow pastures.*



*To be cont'd next month*

# REGION NEWS & INFORMATION

## DECEMBER 7, 2017 CEDAR RAPIDS REGION AACA MEETING

Larry Yoder, Vice President, said we had several things to ask the club members so there was a short meeting after the Christmas Party. It was discussed and voted on by the membership to print the ads in the *MM* in black and white instead of of color to save on cost. Images of the club events would still be in color.

Jon Reynolds and and Judy Ortiz would start calling the ad businesses and were going to split them up. We would e-mail those who are willing to get the Moto Meter by e-mail and still send by mail to those who don't want their *MM*-mailed. This would cut down on mailing costs.

Larry stated that on May 3, 2018, we would tour the Kirkwood Center on Boyson Road. We also talked about the scholarships. Larry Yoder said we where locked into the scholarships for this year. The board said for 2018 we would recommend giving \$3000. The motion to approve was given by Marge Reynolds and Shareen Melvin.

Larry Yoder ask for a show of hands on how many would go to Kalona for the Spring Banquet. It was decided to have the Spring Banquet at 12 or 1 PM instead of the evening. Linda Yoder will get back to them.

The drawing for the prizes was held after the brief meeting. A thank you to Pete Bischoff for getting the prizes and to the entire Bischoff family for helping with the Christmas Party.

### 1900-1930: The years of driving dangerously

Campus Martius in downtown Detroit was a jumble of streetcars, automobiles, pedestrians and a horse-drawn wagon in 1917.



Before the stop sign was invented, many lives were lost, but Detroit led the way in bringing order from chaos.

This article is going to cover the 1900 to 1930 transition from the horse drawn mode of transportation to the automobile. The very first gasoline-powered vehicle driven on the streets of Detroit was built by engineer Charles Brady King in 1896. It went as fast as 20 miles per hour, which was described in the newspaper as "tearing along the street at a lively rate, dodging people and teams."

The transition from the horse age to the motorized age would prove to be very dangerous. At first speeding vehicles were not a big problem, with only a few of them on Detroit streets, but the situation grew serious quickly.

As early as 1908, auto accidents in Detroit were recognized as a menacing problem: In two months that summer, 31 people were killed in car crashes and so many were injured it went unrecorded.


The rest of the story will continue in the February *MM*!



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## TRIVIA ANSWER

*The Avanti. With Studebaker in 1963 and 1964, and then through Altman and Newman to 1982. Stephen Blake then stepped in, but declared bankruptcy in 1986.*

*The Michael Kelly concern picked up the reins and ran it briefly, and then John J. Cafaro took over...moved it to Ohio...and operated Avanti through 1991.*

*Kelly then repurchased the firm in 1999, moved it from Ohio to Georgia, and struggled to continue into 2005. A year later, he moved the company to Mexico, and was then indicted for fraud.*

# ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

## 2018 REGION CALENDAR

### Social Night

### Business Meeting

### Board Meetings

<p>January 8-Carlos O'Kelly at Westdale                  February 5 - Starlite                  March 5- Leonardo's                  April 9- Bandana's                  May 7-Fairfax DQ                  June -none                  July 9-Chrome Horse at New Bo                  August 6-Culvers in Hiawatha                  September10- DQ on Johnson Ave                  October 8 - Zio John in Marion                  November5-Pizza Ranch at Westdale</p>	<p>January 4                  February 6                  March 1                  April 5                  May 3                  June 7                  July 4                  August- 2                  September 6                  October 4                  November 1                  All meetings will start at 7:00 PM</p>	<p>January 18-Tommy's                  February 15- Scott's                  March 15- Tommy's                  April 19-Scott's                  May 17-Tommy's                  June 21-Scott's                  July 19-Tommy's                  August- 16-Scott's                  September 20-Tommy's                  October 18-Scott's                  November 15-Tommy's                  Meetings will start at 6:00</p>
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### Special Events

### 2017 Treats Schedule

<p><b>SWAP MEET</b>                  March 16-17,28<sup>th</sup> Chickasha Pre-War Swap Meet, Chickasha Oklahoma, <a href="http://www.pwsm.com">www.pwsm.com</a></p> <p>Spring Banquet                  Date: TBD</p> <p>July 4<sup>th</sup> Picnic                  Date: TBD</p> <p>Twin Rivers Tour                  Date: TBD</p> <p>Fall Banquet                  Date: TBD</p> <p>Christmas Party                  Date: December 6, 2018</p>	<p>Jan 2018                  Feb. 2018                  March 2018                  April 2018                  May 2018                  June 2018                  July 2018                  Aug. 2018                  Sept. 2018                  Oct. 2018                  Nov. 2018                  Dec. 2018</p>
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## Touring Central Nebraska in an “A”

(Cont'd from last month)

We drove down this road about a mile and then hiked a hundred yards to a sod Home that had been lived in until about ten years ago. Old timers nearby said this grass was about as green for late summer as they'd ever seen.



Further west, and attesting to some of the sorrows of Nebraska dryland agriculture, we saw this beautiful reminder of better times in the past.

*Left: In far southwest SD, at an unused military facility, stood this Chapel and on the front sidewalk a steer had chosen this to be its last resting place. Nature, and wildlife, had decayed the animal to nothing but bones and a little hide. We didn't stay around here too long as we weren't sure if we should have even been here in the first place.*



*Left: A beautiful road northeast of McCook, Nebraska.*

*Below: Traveling a modern road with the normal amount of traffic.*

*Bottom: Our last night on the road - at a campground in Hamilton County, Iowa. The most expensive camping of the journey.*



*Right: A beautiful, but long unused gas station waits at a very rural intersection that now has few cars pass each day.*



Mile after mile of pleasant roads, but one had to be careful of the gullies that were often nearly a foot across and a foot deep that ran up and down the hills. We found these roads on old local maps and many were closed. It was surprising to me that many of the local folks had never been on the majority of these dirt roads.





# *The Last Nice Day*



*(Continued from December MM)*

The MG thrummed to life and she pointed it down the valley, enjoying the solitude and sound of the engine. She smiled and let the accelerator down, doing well past the speed limit where she knew that she could, easing off through the towns where the local sheriffs protected and served.

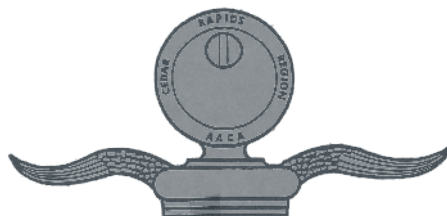
This was the road that Kristin and her father drove. After she'd mastered driving and was allowed to take the wheel of Maggie, he would drive north and let her do the return trip south. She kept it slow and safe when she was younger and driving with her father in the passenger seat, but now she pushed it, dipping over the centerline on the left-hand turns, and taking the MG to the very edge of the pavement on the right side, feeling that she could almost reach out and brush her hand against the guardrails.

As she swept down the valley, the November sun streamed through the bare trees, casting an endless zebra-stripe pattern on the road. She sped through, feeling the sunlight flicker like a strobe light as she dropped the car down to third gear to navigate a tight turn before throwing it back into fourth to race by the lake. Her hand rested gently on the gear shift knob as the miles ticked off under the wheels, and she felt the itch to have one more gear—to be able to keep accelerating, to have another throw of the shifter. But four gears was all she had, and it was good enough today. It was a perfect day for a drive, and maybe the last nice day of the season. She'd checked the weather before leaving the house and a cold front was due in overnight, with the first snow of winter scheduled for the weekend. Mags might be tucked away into the garage soon, but today was a day for letting the little car do what it was built to do.

Nearing the last small town before turning on the road to her house, she thought about the day and how much it was like the last time her father took Maggie out for a drive. It was late October, warm, clear, the sun rippling the fall colors on the trees, a perfect day for a drive. Kristin couldn't even remember why she didn't go that day—homework, a school project, a boy—but she was too busy and her father hit the road without her. It snowed a few days later and then the big blizzard hit in the beginning of November. Maggie stayed inside. Her father had the stroke in February. Her mother moved into a smaller house a year later and the MG sat in a friend's garage until Kristin and her husband bought an old farmhouse near where she grew up and had the space to take care of the MG again. The first drive was bitter-sweet, as memories of her father flooded back, but she resolved to drive the old car whenever she could, especially on the nice days late in the year when you never knew if this might be the last nice day or not.

She made the last turn and headed home, the MG purring contentedly, over the road she'd driven to and from work every day until the first baby came along. Six more miles and she swung into the driveway, slowly rolling to a stop in the shade of the garage. She turned the key and the motor clunked to a stop, leaving Kristin with a calm silence. She closed the garage door, looking fondly at the old car, always waiting to be driven. "See you in the spring, Dad," she said.

The Moto Meter  
Cedar Rapids Region AACA  
Brenda Juby  
614 Eleanor Ct. SE  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 52403



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