



THE MOTO METER

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA REGION, ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF AMERICA

WEBSITE: CEDARRAPIDSREGIONAACA.COM

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**LOVED BY SOME, CUSSSED BY OTHERS,
READ BY EVERYBODY
February 2026**



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Presidents Message February 2026

I would like to thank my Board of Directors for braving negative 5-degree weather and two members by phone to participate in our Board meeting.

First let me start by telling you of our discussion on free stalls to other local clubs which we will offer at our 2026 Swap Meet. I'm pleased to announce it was unanimous to offer the following clubs a free booth in the exhibition hall.

- Hawk A Model A Club
- Cedar Valley Street Rodders
- Bone Shaker
- Studebaker Club

Each club will receive one 20 x 10 Stall

2 Tables

2 Chairs

2 Free admissions for Saturday to man their Stall.

Allowing them to setup on Friday May 15, between the hours of 10 AM and 4 PM.

Sharon Schminke, Chair of Exhibition Hall will assist in all four clubs' location. Per our contract we must be out Friday by 5 PM before the Stock Car Races.

Last month we had a speaker. Mr. Matt Rathje. If you have any idea for a future speaker or tech topic at our monthly meetings, please let me know.

Another item discussed at our Board meeting was the end of the year budget which looks to be in good shape. Additional work is needed on our Web Page. If you have a picture of your car. please contact Sylvia.

At the February meeting, we will have information on the Spring Banquet, as well as an update on tours.

Next Swap Meet meeting will be one hour before our regular Club Meeting in February. We will discuss where we are and who needs help.

Remember: Our success is solely due to you; the club members and I thank each and every one of you.

2026 will be a great year.

Jack Harville, President

JON'S CORNER

- 1. What was the first foreign car company to come to America?**
- 2. Oscar J. Simler invented the turn signal in what year?**
- 3. Who was the first company to provide seatbelts as an option in automobiles?**

Answers on page 7

January 12th 2026 CEDAR RAPIDS REGION AACA MEETING

The January meeting was held at the Hiawatha Community Center

Meeting called to order by President Jack Harville. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

VISITORS: Matt Rathje and Dave Staab

BIRTHDAYS: Rich Mishler

ANNIVERSARIES: None reported

ILLNESSES: Jon Reynolds

DEATHS: Ken Robertson a past member

NEW MEMBERS: Dave Staab joined tonight.

CORRESPONDENCE: A thank you from Harry Hawley Family

SECRETARIES REPORT: There was no Secretary report for December because of the Club Christmas Pot Luck.

TREASURERS REPORT: Report read by Sylvia Copler. Motion to approve by Judy Ortiz and 2nd by Sue Melvin.

TOURS AND ACTIVITIES: Neil reported that our Twin River Tour will be June 1-5 and we will be touring in the Winterset area.

SPRING BANQUET: Loren asked if anyone had a suggestion and it was mentioned to go back to Kalona and have the Amish meal that is always so good. Larry Yoder said he will talk to them and see if that could work. They are not doing as many meals as they used to. Larry will report back to Loren.

SWAP MEET: We had a meeting before our regular AACA meeting and Aaron and Kyle had the new flyers there and handed them out to the members to place at businesses. They encouraged us to leave a few at the businesses so people can pick them up and take them home for future information. Aaron and Kyle have been passing them out at Swap Meets they have been going to now. GOOD JOB. We had 3500 flyers printed for us to pass out.

OTHER: Dan Ortiz reported that all but eight of last years members have renewed and the ones that haven't he has sent notices to. You need to fill out a form with your current phone number, mailing address and email address.

Sherry Melvin and Sue Melvin had volunteered to audit the Treasurers books and Sherry reported that everything was in great shape.

Jack reported that they are still having trouble with the Facebook being turned over to us to be able to take charge of it. He also said they are still working on the Web page with Ryan

SPEAKER: Matt Rathje brought his Robot Lawn Mower and told us about it. It can also be a Snow Blower, Leaf gatherer and has many more attachments. He gave a little demonstration of the operation and videos that showed how he mapped his 2 ½ acres to set up the path for mowing and snow blowing.

BUY SELL & TRADE: Was conducted by Clyde Melvin

Motion to adjourn made by Dan Ortiz and 2nd by Judy Ortiz

Treats were provided by Sharon Schminke

Please have your articles to Sylvia by the 10th for the Moto Meter

Respectfully submitted by Sharon Schminke Secretary

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

2026 CEDAR RAPIDS REGIONAL CALENDAR

Upcoming Events February 2026

Feb. 9th AACA Swap Meet Meeting at 6:00 pm at Hiawatha Community Center-101 Emmons St in Hiawatha.

Feb. 9th AACA Club Meeting at 7:00 pm at Hiawatha Community Center-101 Emmons St in Hiawatha.

Feb. 16th AACA Board Meeting at 6:00 pm at Perkins on Collins Rd/CR

Feb. 18th AACA Friendship Luncheon at 11:30 at Tornados-1600 3rd St SE/CR

Feb. 21-22 Rod & Custom Car Show-766 N. Maple St/Monticello

Upcoming Events March 2026

Mar. 9th AACA Swap Meet Meeting at 6:00 pm at Hiawatha Community Center-101 Emmons St in Hiawatha.

Mar. 9th AACA Club Meeting at 7:00 pm at Hiawatha Community Center-101 Emmons St in Hiawatha.

Mar. 16th AACA Board Meeting at 6:00 pm at Perkins on Collins Rd/CR

Mar. 18th AACA Friendship Luncheon at 11:30 at Mercury Diner-1201 3rd St SE/CR (formerly Chrome Horse)

JOKE OF THE MONTH

A car repair shop ran a help wanted in the local paper. One candidate came in for an interview. They asked him all the usual questions, but the Service Manager wanted someone who REALLY knew cars so he asked the young man to wear a blind fold. Then he had the other mechanics start the engines of various cars in the shop, expecting the candidate to name each car by sound alone. First car he answered "Chevrolet." (Correct) Next car he said "Pontiac," (again correct). Next car he said "Studebaker," and was right again. Just then someone came out of the nearby Men's Room flushing the toilet on his way out. The job candidate hollered "FORD!" So the service manager hired him on the spot!

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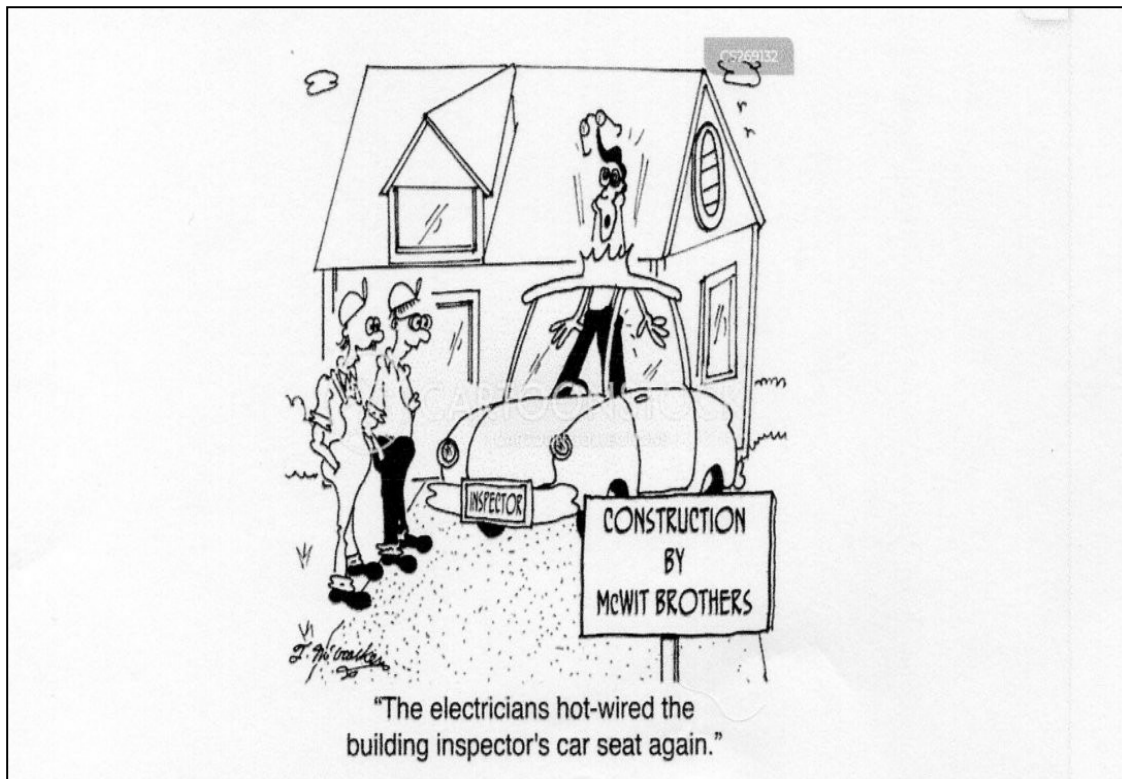
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Hi Again To All You Ole Car & All Vehicles Lovers In The Area! Time again for some Ramblings about another Car I found in the area. As you all know I have always been an ole car guy since I could walk (maybe before as I laid on the couch beside Dad listening to His Stories!) I always kept my eyes peeled for any interesting old car & told all my friends to let me know about anything they saw or heard of. I remember seeing this old coupe on a hill west of Ely – remember I lived outside of Fairfax so Ely was a long ways away! I had seen it sitting there for years, but I could tell it wasn't a T so I hadn't gone to look at it. In High School some of my Ely connections told me that I should find out it because it was a Dodge and they knew my first car was a Dodge that was also from Ely & purchased when I was 9. By then I had a driver's license and could explore everywhere in the '47 IH pickup from the farm! So on a nice day I drove over to look myself. What a neat story as I found out that it was a 1924 & had been owned by the family since the 20s. It was such a great car & so dependable that it was still being used on their farm during WW2! They had a veggie truck garden & needed to haul the produce to town every week. It turns out that they had to haul so much they needed a pickup but they were very hard to find & very expensive! The solution they came up with was to take off the coupe trunk lid, cut out under it & build a wooden truck box in its place to haul the produce to town! It turned out to be very dependable & because it was now a truck used on the farm the license plates were even cheaper. All went well until a couple of tires went bad & no replacements could be located because of the war. They were really stuck because they really needed to use it! They looked around & found out that a truck bud rim would slide right on to the rear wheels when the reg demountable cart rims were removed! The rear truck tires were much taller than the correct 1924 car tires so that gave another advantage as new gear ratio was just like having an overdrive for faster road speed! The dependable old gal was used this way all thru the war clear into the early 50s until the starter failed & it was parked on the hill! They were so glad that someone liked it & would SAVE it from the junk yard that they made me an offer that a farm boy in High School could not pass up. Once again My Awesome Dad came to my rescue with a hay rack & tractor loader along with a handy ditch was able to get it back to the Hoggy Ranch (what we kids called our Hog Farm)! It turns out that it is a Fast 4 Dodge (my 28 Dodge was one of the first 6 cyl Dodges)! I did manage to find a nice replacement body but sadly I never got it finished! Another project I should get back to some day!?! What A Story!

Thanks For Listening Again! John L Williams



In updating the club website we are needing photos of members cars. If you would be willing to have your car shown on the website please email your photo in jpeg format to Sylvia at sicopler68@gmail.com or mail your photo to her at 1789 County Home Road, Marion, Ia 52302.

Jon's Corner Answers

1. Volkswagen
2. 1929
3. Nash Motors Company

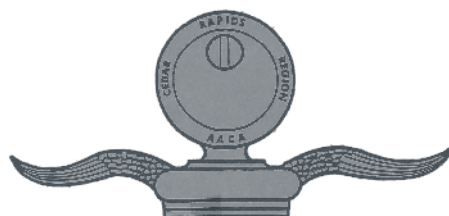
TREAT SCHEDULE

Feb. - John & Agnes Williams

Mar. - Dick & Pat Semelroth

Apr. - Jack & Kathi Harville

The Moto Meter
Cedar Rapids Region AACA
Sylvia Copler
1789 County Home Road
Marion, Iowa 52302



February 2026 Moto Meter

New Seedling Mile signs near Mt. Vernon



Below is an article about the Seedling Mile that was in The Gazette

Less than 800 automobiles were registered in Iowa in 1905. Ten years later that number was more than 147,000. With the number of cars multiplying the Iowa Official Transcontinental Route Association was formed in 1910 to lay out the shortest, flattest, and most reasonable road through Iowa.

A Cedar Rapids branch of the association was formed on May 26, 1911 by the Commercial Club, followed by Marion and Mt. Vernon associations a day later. At each meeting speakers pushed for community involvement in the good roads program, citing benefits to individuals businesses, governments, & the state. The state association's annual meetings were often plagued by rain, which turned the route's dirt roads into muddy quagmires, limiting attendance.

W.G. 'Billy' Haskell, president of the association, was also the first person to own a car in Cedar Rapids. He took a Gazette reporter with him when he drove to an association meeting in Ames in 1912, but the majority of attendees made it there by train to avoid the mud.

A month later, in July 1912, the Iowa Transcontinental was chosen to be part of the Transcontinental National Highway from New York to San Francisco. A.L. Westergard, tourmaster for the American Automobile Association, selected the route because it was the most direct and the most level.

Lincoln Highway

In 1913, Carl Fisher, president of the Presto-Lite Co., Came up with idea of a road crossing the country in the shortest, most direct route that was well-maintained and marked for travelers. He interested some Detroit businessmen in the project and the Transcontinental National road became the basis for the Lincoln Highway (later Highway 30), named as a memorial to President Abraham Lincoln.

The Lincoln Highway Association viewed the vast expanses of dirt and gravel along the rural sections of the highway as less than adequate. It began a contest in 1914 to give free cement to pave a mile in each county along the route that showed the greatest amount of work on the highway. The thinking was that if rural motorists could experience driving on one paved 'seedling mile' they would lobby for more paving across the country. The winning county's roadway had to be six miles from a population center, and the community had to pay for labor and equipment as well as freight charges for the cement.

Barrels of Cement

When 8,000 barrels of cement were allotted to Iowa, state consul (delegate) W.F. Coan decided to divide it into four parts, with groups of counties competing for 2,000 barrels. The first group of counties was Clinton, Cedar, and Linn. Second was Benton, Tama, and Marshall. Third was Story, Boone, and Greene. And fourth was Carroll, Crawford, Harrison, Pottawattamie.

Fifteen blocks of paving in Mt. Vernon, 3.5 miles of paving in Marion, 3 miles of permanently graded roads between Marion and Mt. Vernon, three major paving projects in Cedar Rapids, and a mile in Kenwood, along with bridge improvements, won the prize for Linn County.

Rural roads terrible

By 1918, though, no improvements had yet been made to the highway outside the city limits of Cedar Rapids, Marion or Mt. Vernon. Linn County had spent a lot of money on new bridges and culverts, but the rural sections of the highway had a reputation as being the worst in the state. The dirt surface was said to be “dragged when the farmers haven’t anything else to do.” On July 1, 1918 the Linn Board of Supervisors approved paying \$2,295.90 to the C&NW Railway Co. to bring in cement for the Seedling Mile.

Seedling Mile

Edward Killian, as county consul for the Lincoln Highway Association, arranged to have 17 carloads of cement shipped, two carloads at a time. When the sacks arrived, they were stored in barns along the route. The Board of Supervisors immediately began a plan to raise funds for more paving adjoining the Seedling Mile, offering \$1 for every \$1 raised. The site chosen for the Linn County Seedling Mile was between Cedar Rapids and Mt. Vernon-6 miles east of Cedar Rapids at a Y corner (about 2.5 miles east of Highway 13), that would continue for a mile toward Mt. Vernon.

Bids were opened for a “Seedling Mile of Paving” on the Lincoln Highway on July 22, 1918. All the bids were rejected as too high & the bid-letting process started over. The second set of bids opened Aug. 2, was also high. Rather than let bids again, State Highway Commissioner Thomas MacDonald-along with Edward Killian, W.P. Powell, & Samuel Armstrong, representing the Lincoln Highway Association & the Chamber of Commerce in Cedar Rapids- changed the specifications. Instead of two 8-inch courses of concrete, the job was changed to require 7.5 inches in the center of the road & 6 inches at the sides in one-piece construction. The low bidder, Ford Paving Co. Changed its bid to \$2.84 a square yard & the bid was accepted.

Work delays

Gravel from the Northern Gravel Co. Was slow in coming. Work didn’t start until late August & pouring of concrete didn’t begin until Sept. 17. Supervisors approved the acquisition of gravel, wherever it could be found, no matter the cost, and the project seemed to be back on track to be done by Nov. 1. Then the rains came-for 10 days.

Trucks broke down. Work was at a standstill. The Seedling Mile road stood at three-fourths of a mile on Nov. 25, 1918 when the county engineer halted work as the winter freeze set in.

Work resumed in the spring and Iowa’s first Lincoln Highway Seedling Mile was completed in the summer of 1919. It was 16 feet wide and contained 9,669 square yards of concrete, costing \$30,462.70. With excavating & grading costing \$4,474.11, the mile’s total cost was about \$35,000.

The highway on either side of the mile was eventually paved and became Highway 30.

Today the seedling mile is marked by a memorial placed at the west end of the mile on what is now Mount Vernon Road.