

# The Radiator

December 2025

Official Publication of the Corvallis Historic Auto Club







**Gary Peterson**  
Club President

# President's Message

## Little Red and the Christmas Parade – Prequel

Susan Winget is an American watercolor artist known for her nostalgic depictions of rural life. She annually contributes her work to a calendar entitled “Truckin’ Along” which features illustrations of classic red trucks involved in various activities throughout the year. For example, in the 2025 calendar, the July picture shows a red pickup truck, perhaps a Chevy, carrying a load of watermelons with American flags flying from the bed of the truck.

This time of year, red trucks, particularly pickup trucks, are often associated with Christmas, usually with a tree in the back. Maybe it is because of their color being associated with the season. Maybe it is the nostalgia of older trucks as we recall experiences of our childhood. Maybe it is just because old pickup trucks are cool.

I am truly fortunate to own such a truck. My red pickup truck, a 1950 GMC F-100, is named Little Red (as christened by my daughter). She (the red GMC) showed up in the parking lot of an auto repair shop here in Corvallis in October 2021.

I was interested in Little Red as she was similar to the 1952 Chevy pickup on which I learned to drive. She sat out in the weather as I drove by

on a regular basis until I finally decided to check her out on a snowy day in December. I was able to purchase Little Red in early January 2022. Unfortunately, Little Red was not in running condition and would not be for another six months.

With the Corvallis Historic Auto Club being invited to participate in this year’s Corvallis Holiday Parade, I asked myself if Little Red could be ready. (She missed being in a Christmas parade in 2021 when she was not in running or parade condition.) She currently runs well most of the time-she has not had a ride on the bed of a tow truck for over a year!

However, she does not do well in the rain, and the forecast is for rain. Her windshield wipers work sporadically. She leaks around the doors. She has burned out a set of headlights during the time I have owned her, and this parade is at night. She does not have power steering and sometimes it is difficult to maneuver her out of tight spaces. On the plus side, Little Red has a great heater which runs year around!

However, Little Red obviously meets the key criteria for a Christmas truck, assuming she is in running condition – she is a pickup and is red. But what else does she need? Does she need a Christmas tree in the back? How tall? How do I secure it? Does the tree need to have lights? What color? (Red, of course!) How do I provide power to the lights?

While Little Red does have an ash tray, she does not have a cigarette lighter so that is not an available power source. What else should go in the bed of the truck along with the tree?

### **Little Red and the Christmas Parade – Parade Day**

It is parade day, December 6, 2025! Little Red is mostly ready. The five-foot Douglas Fir tree has been carefully placed in the bed of the truck and carefully secured in place with bungee cords. It is covered with approximately 100 red lights. (While decorating the tree, a neighbor happened by and asked if Little Red was going to be in the parade. I responded affirmatively to which the neighbor thanked me for my effort). The lights are powered by a small solar generator pre-powered for the parade. In addition to the lights on the tree, another 100 lights have been placed on the racks which run on each side of the bed. These lights are powered by the same generator.

The rain looks to be less than the past few days. What would December in Western Oregon be like without a little rain? But this is a special event, and I can dry Little Red off when we get home.

Little Red and I have planned to leave home at 4:45 in order to get to the CHAC meeting location at 5:00 PM to join the other fourteen Club member vehicles in the parade. Unfortunately, Little Red has decided to get “stage fright”! First, she is flooded (perhaps I had something to do with that) and then her battery runs down while I am trying to get her started. The jumper cables, of course, are under her seat and that takes another ten minutes to get them out and put the seat back in place.

My neighbor, Trevor, comes by and offers to help with the battery jump start. However, the battery for my own Ford Edge is in a location where I can’t connect the jumper cables to the battery terminal, so I ask to “borrow” Trevor’s Subaru for the jump. With

renewed energy and some serious intent, Little Red finally starts at 5:20 just as our Club is supposed to be in the parade staging area. Little Red and I hurry off, hoping that we can still make the parade and the tree in the back doesn’t blow over.

Pete Rocco meets us at the entry to the staging area on “B” Street and helps us find the rest of the Club vehicles. Evan Sether suggests a location for us to park and that I should just leave Little Red idling. I plug in the lights for our tree and take a moment to enjoy the scene. It is such a perfect December night for a parade – 50 degrees, dry, no fog and very little wind! Floats and vehicles from various community organizations are in the staging area as well as some members from the OSU marching band. What a night!

The Club has done a good job of supporting the parade and several are nicely decorated. The Club vehicles in the parade include a: 1967 International, 1973 Mini Cooper, 1938 Plymouth Business Coupe, 1989 Ford F250, 1965 MG MGB, Electric VW Bug, 1964 Chevrolet Impala, 2018 red Jaguar, 1951 Plymouth Cambridge, 1972 Chev C10, 1969 AMX, VW Bug, and 1996 electric Toyota truck.

The parade begins promptly at 6:00 PM. The parade route along First Street from Washington Street is lined with many families watching the parade. So many people and the crowds just continue to grow as we continue northward – in some cases the people lining the street seem to be several rows deep.

As Little Red and I drive along, I am appreciative that she is a four-speed. When I grew up, the first gear was called “compound low” although there was another name for the gear that I wasn’t supposed to use. However, for a parade, the low first is just perfect, and we seldom need to brake or shift out of gear. We hear comments about how nice Little Red looks and many of the watchers wish us “Merry Christmas”. I just say thank you and wave back. The members of the

Corvallis community seem so pleased that the parade is back! We also get requests to honk our “ooga” and I do so occasionally.

As I turn the corner onto Jackson Street at the end of the parade route, I can’t believe that it is over already. It was so much fun, and I am so appreciative that Little Red made an appearance. She made quite an impression in her first parade, and I am already looking forward to the next one! Little Red is just perfect for holiday parades. I just need to help her get started a little earlier for the next one.

I am honored to serve as the CHAC President. Thank you for the opportunity. As we experience this holiday season, I do carry the message which Little Red’s parade adventure reminded me: The road to the destination may not be easy but it makes reaching the destination more rewarding.

Happy Holidays!

Gary





# This Month In Automotive History

By Andy Noble

## 1889 - Kurt F. Hitke is Born in

Audigast, Germany on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Hitke immigrated to the US in 1911 and was later naturalized as a citizen. In addition to racing, he designed the highly rated Roamer and Kenilworth race cars. Hitke is also credited with inventing the first straight-eight engine. He came in 23<sup>rd</sup> in the 1919 Indianapolis 500 after completing 56 laps.



## 1913 - Ford Completes The

installation of the first moving assembly line on December 1<sup>st</sup>. William Klann, who oversaw Model T production, introduced the assembly line idea at Ford after viewing Swift & Co.'s Chicago slaughterhouse "disassembly line".



## 1942 - Albert Kahn Dies on

December 8<sup>th</sup> at the age of 73. Kahn has been called the "architect of Detroit", having designed nearly 900 of its buildings. He collaborated with his brother, Julius, in designing the famous Ford River Rouge automotive glass plant, which began operating in 1923.



## 1965 - The Beatles Release The

song "Drive My Car" on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. It was the first track on their Rubber Soul album, which reached number 1 on eight different album charts and went six-times platinum in the US alone.



## 2015-ThePetersonAutomotive

museum reopens on December 7<sup>th</sup>. Having opened in 1994, it underwent a \$125M renovation beginning in 2014. The Los Angeles museum has more than 100 vehicles on display in 25 galleries, with additional vehicles being displayed in a "vault" in the building's basement.



# Get It In Gear



## Chris Hagler Asks the Enduring Question of Motoring

*Story and photos by Chris Hagler*

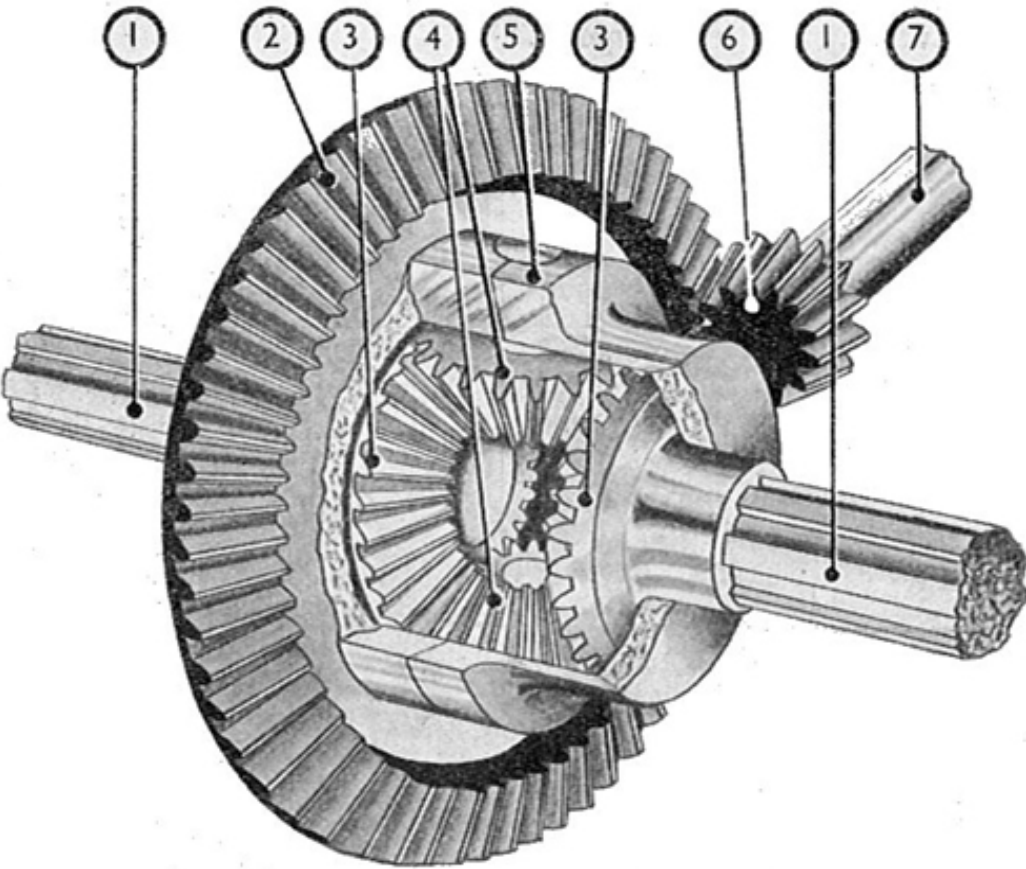
**D**o you have spiders in your rear end? Well, that may seem like a personal question, but please let me explain.

The recent failure of my 1959 Sprite's rear axle housing caused me to dive deep into how the rear-end differential works. When the failure happened, I was sitting at a traffic light in downtown Corvallis in the left turn lane. To start the turn I let out the clutch,

revved the engine, and nothing happened - I didn't move. At that moment I didn't know that the wheel had separated from the car taking the axle with it. So why no forward motion?

Ok, back to the spiders, but first a little history: The modern automobile differential is credited to Onesiphore Pecqueur, a French mechanical engineer who patented the modern-day differential in 1827.





***The components of the ring-and-pinion differential shown in the diagram above are: 1. Axles 2. Drive (or ring) gear 3. Sun gears 4. Spider gears 5. Carrier 6. Input (or pinion) gear 7. Driveshaft***

***My gear set from the Sprite***



**T**he four-gear arrangement is known as a form of a planetary gear set, consisting of two sun gears and two planet (or spider) gears.

The genius behind the invention is that it allows the rear wheels to turn at different speeds when the car is cornering, while also providing even power to each rear wheel during straight-line driving. The planetary system is attached to the ring gear, which is driven by the pinion gear, which is attached to the drive shaft from the transmission.

Now, rewind to the intersection in Corvallis. My left rear tire (and axle) was stationary and still attached to its Sun gear.



However, my right tire (and axle) were no longer attached to the differential. Thus, when I applied power, my spider gears were happily rotating the unloaded sun gear and I was going nowhere.

As an aside, this traction control problem was solved by the limited-slip differential (LSD) first designed in 1935 for Auto Union's Grand Prix racing cars commissioned by Ferdinand Porsche. It was introduced to U.S. automakers in the late 1950s, with

Packard introducing a clutch-type LSD in 1956 and General Motors introducing its Positraction system in 1957.

**W**hy did the wheel come off in the first place? The axle housing threads retaining the wheel bearing sheared after 67 years of use [lower left photo].

Repairs underway- I live to drive another day! 🛠️







Several CHAC members showed up to participate in this year's resurrected Corvallis Christmas Parade, to represent our club. The weather cooperated, the crowds were big and the antique cars were a hit. Thanks to everyone who participated! 🎁

## For Sale By Owner

*Ads run for two months with photos, then four months with text only or until canceled by seller, whichever comes first.*

John Dietz is selling Earle Greig's 1948 Buick for \$33,500.

- 1948 Buick Super Convertible body
- Engine/chassis from 1975 Chrysler New Yorker
- Full restoration
- Air conditioning

Call or text John for Earle and Vangie Greig, 310-871-4613.

Email: [jfdietzmusic@gmail.com](mailto:jfdietzmusic@gmail.com).





# The 1908 Cadillac Coupe

By **Andy Noble**

The Cadillac Automobile Company was founded by William Murphy, Lemuel Bowen and Henry Leland in Detroit, Michigan in 1902. It was formed from the assets of the Henry Ford Company, after Ford left that company in a dispute with investors.

Cadillac was named for French explorer Antoine Laumet del La Moth, sieur de Cadillac, who founded Detroit in 1701.

Cadillac's main selling point was reliability through precision engineering. The company's first cars were a two-seat Runabout and a Tonneau, with the first units being produced in late October, 1902.

Three years later, in 1905, the company merged with Leland and Faulconer Manufacturing, creating the Cadillac Motor Car Company.

The company quickly expanded its line of vehicles, adding touring cars, limousines and delivery trucks. It also sold the Cadillac Coupe, pictured at right.

Cadillac was purchased by General Motors on July 29, 1909, being placed above all other GM's makes and ending Cadillac's life as an independent company.



*Rain or Shine, it's all the same in a Cadillac Coupe*

Price **\$1350** Including Three Oil  
F. O. B. Detroit Lamps and Horn

**The Ideal Physician's Car—The Ideal Shopping Car  
The Ideal Opera Car**

The IDEAL CAR for any purpose, where a two passenger enclosed motor vehicle is desired.

The Cadillac Coupe comprises our regular single cylinder chassis with enclosed body. It is suitable for every day in the year, warm or cold, rain or shine, mud or snow, for city streets or country roads. In cold or inclement weather the occupants are almost as well and comfortably housed as they would be at their own fireside. In pleasant weather the front and rear windows may be lowered and the side windows opened, permitting ample air circulation.

The coupe body may be removed and our runabout or four passenger body substituted for summer use if desired.

This

# CADILLAC

with its gasoline motor has many advantages over cars using other motive power. There are no noxious odors from gases. There is no waiting for the storage of power; you can replenish the tank with gasoline almost any place and be on your way in a few minutes. The Cadillac Coupe is luxuriously upholstered and trimmed and richly finished both inside and out. It has every mark of dignity and refinement. It has all the single cylinder Cadillac characteristics of durability, constancy and dependability, and is by far the least expensive enclosed car to operate and maintain.

Ask for our Special Coupe Booklet and Catalog T 26.

**We can make immediate deliveries**

**CADILLAC MOTOR CAR CO., Detroit, Mich., Member A.L.A.M.**



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The Corvallis Historic Auto Club, a nonprofit organization, was incorporated on November 22, 1965 in Corvallis, Oregon for the encouragement of interest in historical cars, their preservation & restoration, the extension of knowledge concerning them, & related activities. **Now, all cars are welcomed.**

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Corvallis Historic Auto Club

# Event Calendar

Below is a partial list of upcoming events. See an updated list on our website calendar: [corvallishistoricautoclub.org](http://corvallishistoricautoclub.org), and check out the list at Salem Auto Club Council: <https://salemautoclubcouncil.org/>

**Friday - Saturday, January 16-17**

Winter Rod &amp; Speed Show and Winter Swap Meet

General admission \$10, kids 8 and under free

Linn County Fair and Expo

3700 Knox Butte Rd E., Albany, Oregon

Questions? Call (503) 370-9164 or go to CapitolDragster.com

**Monday, January 26**

C.H.A.C. Membership Meeting, 7:00-8:30PM

Shepherd of The Valley Lutheran Church

2650 NW Highland Dr, Corvallis

**Saturday, February 7**

Mild to Wild Motorsports Swap Meet 8AM-2PM

General admission \$8, children 8 and under free

Vendor space 10x10 \$45, car space \$55

Salem Fairgrounds, Columbia Hall

2330 17th St. NE, Salem, OR

Questions? Call Steve Moore - (541) 990-8087 or (503) 394-3070

**Saturday - Sunday, February 28 and March 1, 2026**

Salem Roadster Show, 9AM-6PM Saturday, 9AM-5PM Sunday

Admission \$15, 15 and under free

Oregon State Fairgrounds

Jackman Long Building &amp; Columbia Hall

2330 17th St. NE, Salem

Questions: Call (503) 871-7573 or (541) 928-3149

**Friday - Sunday, April 10-12, 2026**

Portland Swap Meet, 7:00AM Fri-Sat, 8AM Sunday

Portland Expo Center

2060 N Marine Dr., Portland

Questions: [info@portlandswapmeet.com](mailto:info@portlandswapmeet.com) or (503) 678-2100
**On The Cover: 1949 Ford F1**

*Ford introduced the F-series for the 1949 model year, with the first-generation being sold through 1952. The line was also known as the Ford Bonus-Built. Ford spent \$1M on research and tooling to develop a wider cab that included extra headroom and a flat, one-piece, bigger windshield. The first-gens were the only F-series pickups to use only flathead engines.*

**Tell Us Your Stories:**

*We're always looking for content. Tell your fellow members about your first or favorite car, the one that got away, a hard-to-find part that you sourced, made or refurbished, a memorable road trip, your personal tips for storing your car for the winter, or something else.*