

The Radiator

October 2025

Official Publication of the Corvallis Historic Auto Club





Gary Peterson
Club President

President's Message

“Does Grandpa even know how to drive a Toyota?” my 5-year-old granddaughter recently asked her parents as carpool options for travel to a football game were being discussed. I offered to let her help me learn but she wasn’t eager to take me up on that request. I was actually driving a Toyota Camry when she was born but she has only known me to drive a red Ford Edge since.

Her question leads me to think of several notions about the cars we drive. Of course, the first is what was the vehicle with which we learned to drive. For me, as I have written before, it was a 1952 Chevrolet 3100 pickup truck. Or is it the vehicle which we were driving when we earned our driver’s license (I can’t remember!). Or, as I have also suggested, perhaps it is the first vehicle we owned (a 1964 Rambler American for me).

A larger question is what are we driving now and why? With my Ford Edge, I like its size, its comfort, its handling, its powertrain, its color, and to some extent, the mileage (28 mpg). I’m sure there are other vehicles I could be driving which would favorably compare to the Ford Edge, but this is

what I have now...that is a story for another day about how I ended up with my first Ford.

In addition to the considerations for what we are currently driving, I think back to “what was the all-time favorite vehicle that I had or drove?” Looking back is not always particularly helpful, and we know that the vehicle we had at a particular time was based on our needs then. However, I can think of two vehicles that are memorable to me. The first was a 2003 Toyota 4-Runner. It wasn’t fancy but it was everything I like about my current vehicle; size, comfort, handling, powertrain. Most importantly, it navigated the snow in Colorado really well!

My second favorite vehicle was a 2020 GMC Sierra pickup truck with a 6.2-liter engine and a 10-speed transmission. It had everything I could want or like to have - just an awesome truck. I would still have it, but I did not need a pickup truck and my son did. He was just another recipient of a vehicle courtesy of the Peterson “Family” vehicle plan!

Back to CHAC business. Our October 4 Cars and Coffee was another great event. We had 81 vehicles on display on a cool and overcast but dry day.

Thanks to the team of Heather Brookes, Carol Lenz, Janeen Rudd, Dave Snell, Andy Noble and Mike Rapp for their work in hosting the event. Winter is coming but spring will be here soon enough. We will inaugurate our 2026 Cars and Coffee schedule on May 2, 2026.

The CHAC Board of Directors is recommending the following calendar of events for 2026. We

will be discussing these activities and approving them at our October 27 Membership meeting. Please come and share your thoughts on this calendar of events! I look forward to seeing you then.

Gary Peterson, President

Corvallis Historic Auto Club – Calendar of Events for 2026

January: Membership Meeting – January 26

February: Pizza Feed - February 21; Membership Meeting – February 23

March: Membership Meeting – March 23

April: Swap Meet – April 26; Membership Meeting – April 27

May: Cars & Coffee – May 2; Membership Meeting – May 25

June: Cars & Coffee – June 6; Car Show – June 20 (Saturday before Father's Day); Membership Meeting/Annual Meeting – June 22

July: Cars & Coffee – July 4; Steak Fry – July 26; Membership Meeting – July 27

August: Cars & Coffee – August 1; Membership Meeting – 24

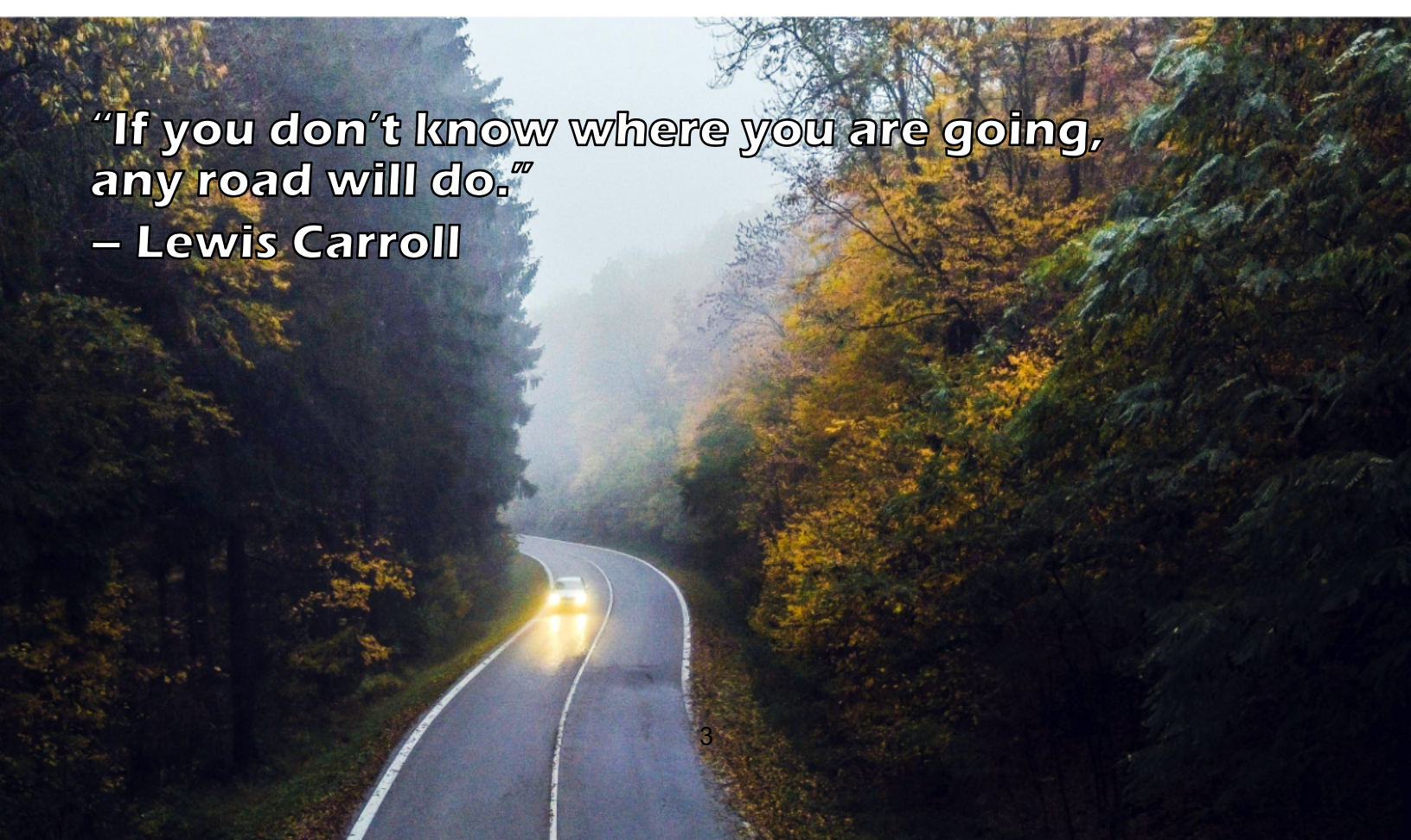
September: Cars & Coffee – September 5; Membership Meeting – September 28

October: Cars & Coffee – October 3; Membership Meeting – October 26

November: Membership Meeting – November 23

December: Holiday Party – December 12

Overnighter - TBD



**"If you don't know where you are going,
any road will do."
– Lewis Carroll**

This Month In Automotive History

By Andy Noble

1857 - Elwood Haynes is Born in

Portland, Indiana on October 14th. In addition to being a metallurgist who invented the metal alloy stellite and independently co-discovered martensitic stainless steel, Haynes is recognized for creating the earliest American design for an automobile that was feasible for mass production. He named his first prototype Pioneer, and test drove it on July 4, 1894, two years before Henry Ford tested his Quadricycle.



1955 - Citroën unveils the DS 19

at the Paris Motor Show on October 6th. The DS line were front mid-engine cars, the first mass production cars to be equipped with disc brakes. Development was done in secret over 18 years. The DS 19 was so well-received that 80,000 cars were ordered in the first 10 days after the unveiling, a record that stood for 60 years.



2003 - The Nissan Pathfinder

Armada is introduced on October 1st. The name was later shortened to the Nissan Armada. The first generation was sold through the 2015 model year, and came equipped with a 5.6L V8 engine and a 5-speed automatic transmission.



1921 - Roadwork Bids Are Opened

for a 15-mile section of the McKenzie River Highway between Eugene and Bend, Oregon on October 16th. The work involved reducing the steep grade that approaches the Cascade summit, heavy work through timber, and extensive rock excavation. The section is part of what was redesignated route 126 in 1952.



1989 - California's Loma Prieta

earthquake strikes the San Francisco Bay Area on October 17th. The 7.1 quake caused extensive damage to bay area roads, including collapsing the double-decked Nimitz Freeway through Oakland, killing 42 people, and the partial collapse of a section of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

https://s1.cdn.autoevolution.com/images/gallery/NISSAN-Armada-437_14.jpg



A close-up photograph of the rear of a dark-colored BMW car. The license plate is white with black text, featuring a blue European Union flag on the left with the letter 'D', followed by 'B' and a green circular emblem. The main text on the plate is 'ND 3103'. The BMW roundel logo is visible above the plate. Yellow autumn leaves are scattered around the car.

Steppppping Up To The German Plate

Story and photos by Sebastian Heiduschke

All of my German cars are equipped with authentic German license plates, and people often ask how I am allowed to drive around with them in Oregon (I am not as they are not legal, and I always have my yellow Special Interest plate somewhere in the car in case I get pulled over). What people don't ask is what the plates mean.

There is a logic behind the letters and numbers you see on the plate.

Let's start with the contemporary plate on a make you may not have seen before - a Cupra that is manufactured by the Volkswagen group in Germany. You will notice that the standard plate is shaped

differently as laid out in the *Verordnung über die Zulassung von Fahrzeugen zum Straßenverkehr* (Ordinance on the admission of vehicles for road traffic). That's more than a mouthful.

German number plates are rectangular plates sized 52 cm by 11 cm for cars, trucks, buses and many trailers. Now is the perfect time to review your metric system if you are trying to figure out what that



Volkswagen Cupra displaying a contemporary license plate.



American cars have smaller, white plates with a blue upper-left corner.

translates to in inches. Each vehicle has to have two license plates, one in the front and one in the back. Some vehicles like motorcycles or American cars can have smaller plates. The plates are white, with a blue field on the left that resembles the flag of the European Union with its twelve golden stars and a white D for Deutschland (Germany) underneath. To the right, there is a combination of black letters and numbers in a font called *fälschungsschwerende Schrift* (perhaps best translated as forgery-hindering font) that was introduced in 1995 (you can read more about that here: <https://w.wiki/Eyxc>).

Pre-German unification-style plate from 1980.



Each plate starts with one to three letters indicating the city or county the car was originally registered in, followed by one or two additional letters that are randomized (some letter combinations such as SA, SS, or HH that were abbreviations in the Nazi era are illegal and therefore not used), and then a number between 1 and

9999 (sometimes followed by the letter E). Umlaute (the vowels a, o, or u with extra dots on top) are used.

Between the first and second letter combination on the rear plate are two stickers. The bottom one indicates the *Bundesland* (federal state) the car is from, the top sticker indicates the month and year this car needs to undergo the next required technical inspection (called *TÜV*). We can now decode the plate on the Cupra. It is from the city Bamberg in Bavaria, it will need to be back for inspection in March 2028 (brown sticker, rotated to a position with the month at the 12 o'clock position). For those of you who want to see all of the plates in use at the moment, [click here](#).

So far so good. If you have seen the German plates on my classic cars, you may wonder why the license plates on my cars look different? For starters, I drive historic vehicles made in the 1970s and 1980s, when Germany was still divided. My 1980 Mercedes 280E was manufactured in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG aka West Germany) at a time

when the font was still in the German DIN-style ([DIN=German Institute for Standardization](#)), there was a dash between the first and second letter fields, and the European flag is missing because the European Union did not exist yet.

Which city or region does the H stand for? Send me an email with the correct answer, and I will draw two lucky winners who will receive an original plate for their shop. My wife Jenny picked the license plate, by the way, to commemorate a historic event from West German history. You might have to google a bit to find out more.

What about my 1988 Trabant 601 from the German Democratic Republic (GDR aka East Germany)? Since the GDR was a sovereign country until unification in



East German plate on Sebastian's 1988 Trabant.

October 1990, it had its [own numbering system](#). The first letter indicated the district (O is for Suhl, close to Bamberg in the FRG where I grew up), followed by one or two letters, one or two numbers, a dash, and two more numbers. Interestingly enough, the font was the same DIN 1451 that was used in the FRG, just in a condensed version. I guess German bureaucracy did not care about the Iron Curtain.

But wait, there's more. One of my non-running projects is the 1978 Super Beetle Convertible. I purchased two license plates already - and you can see that the beetle



Rare plates on Sebastian's 1978 Beetle.

actually got two different plates, the smaller for the rear. I played around a bit and got plates that were quite rare, belonging to the German enclave Büsingen am Hochrhein, a municipality of about 1500 people enclosed by Switzerland that can only be reached by going through Swiss border control and customs. Büsingen has about 700 cars registered and I bet that "my" license plate is actually attached to a real vehicle there.



1979 Opel Ascona with Historic Vehicle Plate.

One day, I am going to travel there and seek out the real owner of that plate.

There are a few more historic German plates you might have seen in the past. On the 1979 Opel Ascona 2.0/SR I saw at a car show in Germany this June, you can tell from its plates that it is a historic vehicle, indicated by the H following the numbers, and that it is a seasonal plate valid only between April and October.



1983 BMW 635CSi sporting a collector plate.

This amazing, ultra-rare 1983 BMW 635CSi 'Hartge H6SP' dons one of the red Euro style '07' plates reserved for collectors of historic cars. Your car needs to be at least 30 years old, and the collector needs to undergo a criminal background check. You can use this plate on any of your cars



2020 smartfortwo wearing an E electric plate.

in your collection, but you have to log every kilometer you drive, and you need to be able to show this log if you get pulled over. I was stunned

when I saw this Hartge BMW - think [Bavarian muscle car](#).

And here is something in contrast, a 2020 smartfortwo with an E following the numbers, indicating that it is an electric vehicle. These cars are driven as official vehicles by the city government in my hometown Bamberg in Franconia (Northern Bavaria).

For the sake of history, I also wanted to add a license plate from the time of the Weimar Republic before the Nazis ruined everything, attached to a



1930 Audi SS Pullman & Weimar Republic plate.

beautiful 1930 Audi SS Pullman Convertible 'Type Zwickau' which would indicate that this car was registered in the Republic of Baden.

Let me close with two of the plates I used when I still lived in Germany. The long plate BA NC 923 was attached to my last car, a 1999 Subaru Legacy, while the plate BA CH 804 was attached to our camping trailer we took to



our summer residence, the NSU Campground Lido Cavallino across from Venice. Check out some of the images from that campground (and more classic cars) [here](#).

July 10, 1912.

THE HORSELESS AGE.

53



Model H, 3 1/2 tons GMC Gasoline Truck,
owned by Wm. Spink, Philadelphia.
Price, chassis only, \$3000.

Buying the *right* truck from the *right* manufacturer is as necessary as *right* capacity and *right* power. Each is of vital importance in installing motor transportation and must be given deep consideration if service and satisfaction *plus* economy is to be expected.

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The 1912 GMC Model H

By Andy Noble

The General Motors Truck Company was created in 1911, after William Durant bought the Rapid Motor Vehicle Company and added it to General Motors.

The company produced the Model 16 3/4-ton truck during WWI, along with a 1-ton troop carrier. More than 90% of its production was for military use by 1918. 600,000 trucks were produced for the US military during WWII.

By 1920, GMC and Chevrolet trucks shared the same platform and much of the body panels. Drive trains varied between the two nameplates. GMC was marketed toward businesses, while the retail market was Chevy's domain.

GM purchased a controlling interest in bus and taxi manufacturer Yellow Coach in 1925, and renamed it Yellow Truck & Coach Manufacturing Company, or YT&CMC. General Motors Truck Company manufacturing was placed under YT&CMC.

GM purchased the rest of YT&CMC and renamed it GMC Truck and Coach Division in 1943, ending the use of the General Motors Truck Company name.

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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, and check out the list at Salem Auto Club Council: <https://salemautoclubcouncil.org/>

Monday, October 27

C.H.A.C. Membership Meeting, 7:00-8:30PM
Shepherd of The Valley Lutheran Church
2650 NW Highland Dr, Corvallis

Saturday, November 15

Albany Indoor Swap Meet, 8:00AM
\$5 admission, 16 and older
Vendor spaces: \$30, registration encouraged
Linn County Exposition Center
3700 Knox Butte Rd E, Albany
Questions: albanyswapmeet@comcast.net
Glen Osborn, 541-928-1218

Monday, November 24

C.H.A.C. Membership Meeting, 7:00-8:30PM
Shepherd of The Valley Lutheran Church
2650 NW Highland Dr, Corvallis

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
(503) 678-2100



OnTheCover: 1938BuickCentury

Buick introduced the Century in 1936. The first generation was the fastest Buick of the era, with 320ci, 141hp straight-eight engines capable of sustained speeds of 100mph (hence the name Century). There were six generations of Centurys, with production gaps from 1943-54, and 1959-72. Production ended with the conclusion of the 2005 model year.

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.