

The Radiator

October 2023

Official Publication of the Corvallis Historic Auto Club



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President's Message

CLUB Elections are coming. There is a nominating committee working hard. They request that you step up and put your hat in the ring. Please look around our growing club (ninety-three, as of the last Cars and Coffee sign-ups) and see if you can find our next president. All other Board positions are open for candidates as well (save the Past President's slot). Contact the nominating committee via the club Gmail address.

Our October meeting of membership (Monday night, October 23rd) will devote its second part to discussion of the proposed changes to our Constitution and Bylaws. The following meeting (November 27) will be the meeting in which to cast your vote on the Motion to Adopt the new documents.

A "final-final draft" created on Friday, October 13th by the Board will be distributed to you prior to the October meeting. It corrects some typos and changes a few words. I hope you will have read them prior to the upcoming discussion.

I also plan to announce at the meeting, correspondence that the club received. Here is the edited e-mail: "Prestige West Hills Senior living in Corvallis, has invited us to join them October 29th from 4:00-6:00pm. They are hosting a Trick or Treat event with at least 20 of residents of West Hills passing out candy from their apartments. Please come bring your kids, grandkids, grandparents, or just you dressed up in a costume and make our residents day! We will be having light refreshments, spooky snacks, and games in the lobby."

"Bring nonperishable food to donate to our food drive to be entered into a raffle. Our community set a goal to donate 500 lbs. to our local food bank. "

West Hills has previously invited us to some nice events like their Memorial Day Parade of Cars and others.

SO . . . Let me now ask you; what do you do as the "Car Show Season" nears its close?

Other than try and get in *one more* nice-day ride, do you order parts? Look for great deals on cars for sale? Plan a vacation to get away from it all?

For me, it will be looking forward to installing some of those parts that are currently residing on my shelf. My Sprite should welcome the tapered wheel bearings I purchased months ago on its front wheels.

My Impala needs a new fuel filler neck. Fuel was dripping onto the ground last time

I went to fill the tank. A forum page I frequent informs me that the gas tank does not have to be dropped. Just in case, I have let the fuel level dip to a very low attitude. I hope it is just the filler tube and rubber grommets that will need replacing...but you never know until you start taking things apart.

How about you? Are you looking forward to attending the **Enduring A's Swap Meet**? It will be here before you know it! Any club members who may be interested in sharing the table with me? Let me know at P.ROCCO@SBCGLOBAL.NET. On Friday the thirteenth, The CHAC Board decided to have flyers for our April Swap and Show printed to hand out. If you plan to attend, take some and make sure they get posted!

The Winter Rod and Speed Show is always held in January and it is a super way to beat the winter blues. It's January 19 and 20, 2024 - - if you want to write that down.

Or... maybe you are looking forward to something sooner: the **Holiday Party** with the CHAC. This year we are planning to dine at Carino's in Albany. Early dinner or late lunch – details to come. If there is an over whelming response by membership to a Saturday December Second Holiday Party this may require a change in venue. The banquet room at Carino's holds fifty comfortably. The room's capacity is 65. At that number it's too crowded. We don't want too crowded.

We are opting for the private room at Carino's because it excludes the partitions we find at the Spaghetti Factory, and has better acoustics, which lends for a better environment for sharing the fun. As you walk into Carino's our room is off to the left.

We will do the gift sharing game, details about how the (hopefully, now famous) "Yankee Gifting Process" works. This will all be explained in the next edition of The Radiator.

-Peter



There is twice the seating (along the front wall -to the left of the fireplace) not shown in this photo.



The Trabant

An Iconic Journey Through the History of the GDR's Beloved Car

By Sebastian Heiduschke

In the world of automobiles, there are legendary vehicles that capture the essence of their era and region. Among them, the Trabant, often affectionately referred to as the "Trabi," holds a special place in automotive history. Born in the heart of East Germany, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the Trabant is a symbol of resilience, innovation, and the quirks of an isolated state. This essay takes you on a journey through the fascinating history of the Trabant, appealing to car enthusiasts and history buffs alike.

The story of the Trabant begins in the aftermath of World War II when Germany was divided into East and West. In 1949, the GDR was established, and the country was isolated both politically and economically from the capitalist West. The need for a domestically produced car was evident, and the VEB Sachsenring Automobilwerke Zwickau factory in Zwickau, Saxony, was chosen as the site for this ambitious project.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 102-1000-1-20-002
PDS: Koppert, Jan Peter / 129, November 1980



The first Trabant, known as the Trabant P50, rolled off the production line in 1957. Its construction was far from conventional. The body was made of duroplast, a type of plastic reinforced with cotton waste, making the car light, affordable, and, interestingly, a bit smelly. The Trabant P50 measured approximately 3.4 meters (11.2 feet) in length. Under the hood, it housed a modest two-stroke, two-cylinder engine with a displacement of about 500cc, producing just 18 horsepower.

One of the unique aspects of the Trabant P50 was the process of mixing two-stroke oil with the gasoline manually. Owners had to follow a specific ratio, typically around 1:33, to ensure the engine's longevity and performance. This ritual required some skill and care, as the right



mixture was crucial for the Trabant's operation.

1963 saw the introduction of the P601, which would become the most iconic and enduring version of the Trabant. Its design remained largely unchanged throughout its production run, making it instantly recognizable on the streets of East Germany. This is the car I drive to Cars & Coffee and take to car shows.

The Trabant P601 had dimensions similar to its predecessor, with a length of around 3.4 meters (11.2 feet). Under the hood, it featured an upgraded two-stroke engine, still with a displacement of 594cc, but now

producing a somewhat improved 26 horsepower. This powerplant, while far from impressive in terms of performance, was known for its distinctive sound, earning the Trabant the nickname "Rennpappe" or "racing cardboard" among enthusiasts.

The Trabant was more than just a car; it was a way of life for many East Germans. In a country where car ownership was a privilege, not a given, the Trabant represented freedom and mobility. My family relied on the Trabant for our daily commute, vacations, and even as a status symbol.

The waiting list for a Trabant was notoriously long, sometimes spanning years. To secure a spot on the waiting list, prospective buyers often had to put down a deposit, sometimes even before a child was born, ensuring their future mobility. When the car finally arrived, it was a cause for celebration, often marked with a bottle of Sekt, East Germany's sparkling wine.

The Trabant had its fair share of quirks and peculiarities that endeared it to its owners. One of the most distinctive features was the necessity of mixing two-stroke oil with the gasoline manually. This ritual required some skill, as the right mixture was crucial for the engine's longevity and performance.



The car's body made of duroplast was prone to cracking and denting. Repairs were often a DIY affair, and resourceful Trabant owners became adept at patching up their cars. The simplicity of the design and construction meant that many owners could perform basic maintenance and repairs themselves, fostering a sense of ownership and pride.

The Trabant's cultural impact extended beyond its utility. It became a recurring motif in East German literature, film, and music. In the 1974 comedy film "Erscheinen Pflicht" (Appearance Required), the Trabant played a central role, embodying the aspirations and limitations of the era.

The singer Sonja Schmidt released a song titled "Ein himmelblauer Trabant" or "A skyblue Trabant" in 1985, capturing the essence of the car's role in East German life. The lyrics praised the Trabant as a loyal companion on the journey through life, underscoring its emotional significance.



The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent reunification of Germany brought dramatic changes to the Trabant's fate. With the opening of borders and the influx of Western cars, the Trabant faced tough competition. Production continued for a few years, but the car's outdated design and two-stroke engine could not compete with modern vehicles. There was a short-lived attempt to roll out the Trabant 1.1, a four-stroke version with a VW engine. It was horrible.



My personal connection to the Trabant was established when I acquired a Trabant 601 Universal station wagon approximately a decade ago at an auction in Austin, Texas. This unique purchase allowed me to fulfill a lifelong dream. My fascination with the "other" Germany behind the Iron Curtain, fueled by family ties to the region, made owning a Trabant a deeply meaningful experience.

I don't keep my Trabant hidden away in a garage; instead, I take every opportunity to showcase it at car shows and events. The Trabant's presence at these gatherings is a



testament to its enduring appeal and its ability to captivate the imaginations of both young and old car enthusiasts.

One of the remarkable aspects of my ownership experience is the sense of community that comes with being a Trabant enthusiast. I am part of a worldwide network of Trabant aficionados who share their passion for these cars. Parts for maintenance and restoration are relatively easy to come by, thanks to the active aftermarket parts manufacturing industry and the camaraderie among Trabant enthusiasts.

Next time, I will write about the way East German engineers manufactured a device to turn the manual transmission into an automatic. Stay tuned.

Want more Trabant? Watch it in action:

How to drive a Trabant: <https://youtu.be/npMKIUTa3uI?feature=shared>

Commercials with subtitles: <https://youtu.be/WzqHVU-ngxU?feature=shared>

At a drag strip: <https://youtu.be/vtBX4NGLrXI?feature=shared>

Trabant 1.1: <https://youtu.be/eSMRMpkt3dg?feature=shared>

Goes electric: <https://youtu.be/84Bqrd14t-0?feature=shared>

How it was produced: <https://youtu.be/fh-cWijQYCU?feature=shared>

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The Corvallis Historic Auto Club, a nonprofit organization, was organized over 57 YEARS AGO in Corvallis, Oregon for the encouragement of interest in historical cars, their preservation & restoration, the extension of knowledge concerning them, & related activities.

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Event Calendar:

Below is a partial list of upcoming events. See an updated list on our website calendar: corvallishistoricaclub.org.

Friday, October 20

Covered Bridge Cafe Cars and Coffee, 8:00AM

Free, Every Friday

510 N. 3rd Avenue, Stayton

Saturday, October 21

Portland Cars and Coffee, 8:00AM

Free, Every Saturday

21650 SW Langer Farm Parkway, Sherwood

<https://portlandcarsandcoffee.com/>

Monday, October 23

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

Shepherd of The Valley Lutheran Church, 2650 NW Highland Dr, Corvallis

Saturday, November 18

Enduring A's Indoor Swap Meet. Gates Open at 8:00AM

Linn County Expo Center, Albany - Free Parking, \$5 Gen Adm.

<https://www.enduringas.club/albany-swap>

Monday, November 27

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

Shepherd of The Valley Lutheran Church, 2650 NW Highland Dr, Corvallis

On The Cover: 1935 Brewster

Photo taken by Pete Rocco at the Concours in Forest Grove in 2022. Brewster and Company was founded in Long Island City, NY and was the sole agent for Rolls Royce of Springfield MA. This car, #9117, was purchased new by Mrs Elizabeth M. Horne of Park Avenue, NYC. She used it to commute to her primary residence in Southampton, NY. Later owned by her daughter, its current owner acquired the car in 2021.

Tell Us Your Stories:

The Radiator is a newsletter of the members, by the members, for the members. 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. Let us know your story at: corvallishistoricaclub@gmail.com