



# Exhaust Whistle



Great Southern Region AACA

September 2025 - Official publication of the AACA Great Southern Region - Serving Central Alabama Vol. 37 No. 9

## Dinner Out Location to be Determined October 14 at 6 pm



### AACA Eastern Regional Tour - Aroostook County, Presque Isle, Maine

After many months of dreaming of a cool, northern Maine vacation in the midst of a hot Southern summer, Eddie and I picked up our friend Joy Bailey in our 1979 Pontiac Bonneville Safari station wagon. We were anticipating a week of fall-like weather and packed accordingly.

Our plan for Day 1 of our travel northward was to travel to Staunton, Virginia, taking it easy and stopping at ethanol-free gas stations along the way. The weather in Birmingham was hot, steamy and sunny, all the more to appreciate the cool Maine

weather, right? As we prepared the house for our departure, we called Joy to let her know that we would be there shortly to pick her up. "Today?", she asked in alarm. "Today," my dear husband confirmed. Joy has never packed more quickly! We had discussed early in the planning whether it would be better to take a leisurely four-day drive north to scope out ethanol-free gas stations or to make it a quick three-day drive. We had opted for the leisurely four-day drive, but evidently our

Continued on page 3



# *A Note From The* **PRESIDENT**

You can just feel the hint of fall in the air. It feels so welcoming that you just have to get in your car and go out for a drive. And not the least of those places to take your car is a car show. Like our own car show on November 8th. Make sure it is on your calendar now and tell your car friends about it. We need a good strong showing of our members and their cars.

Thanks to those who were able to show up at our last meeting. It helped us tremendously to begin the process of planning and working out details. It is not over and we need to finalize the details at our next meeting on October 14th. If you go ahead now and post it on your calendar, you will notice it is a rare Tuesday night meeting. This is because Phyllis and I will be leaving for the AACA tour in Texas and will be gone through the following week.

Not the least of our needs for this show are volunteers. I appreciate those who've already signed up. However, we need at least 3 more judges, 1 more to help park cars, and 2 more for registration. This is a minimum. More would be very helpful.

Please consider being a volunteer. It will not take a lot of time. You can still enjoy the show for the vehicles and friends. See you there.

Let's Drive in '25

*Ken McClellan*



Great Southern Region AACA

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restoration and maintenance of  
automobiles and automotive history**

Membership in the AACA is required to be a  
member of the Great Southern Region  
Ownership of an antique car is optional

## **The Exhaust Whistle**

Great Southern Region, Birmingham, AL

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## **2025 Officers**

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Editor/Webmaster: Charlotte Dahlenburg

Activities: Bill Gardner





Welcome to Maine sign

decision didn't get to Joy. Our bad? But even with that little mix-up, we were on the road before 10 a.m., oddly reminiscent of National Lampoon's Family Vacation without the travel problems Chevy Chase had on his trip.

On Day 2, we began the day without any issues and



Bangor birthplace of Paul Bunyon

pressed on through beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains and the Shenandoah Valley, a quick pass through West Virginia and Maryland on I-81 and on through Pennsylvania. We spent the night in Middletown, New York, remarking how the traffic was surprisingly light. The day was hot and sunny, with no hint of the cool northern weather we were expecting in beautiful New England.

Day 3 found us amid heavier traffic and fewer non-ethanol stations. We travelled through New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire before reaching our destination for the night in Bangor Maine where we had our second surprise of the trip....the hot weather had followed us to Maine! We had record highs in the 90s and our dreams of cool, fall-like weather were vanishing like smoke up the chimney. I did have my first lobster roll of the trip which did not disappoint me and pacified my ire over the hot weather just a little bit.

Sunday, Day 4 of our travels, found us leisurely leaving the hotel late in the morning since we had a long time to go a short distance. Since Bangor was



Car overheating

the birthplace of Paul Bunyon, we stopped at his statue for a couple of pictures.

We also went to an outside church service in a park before searching for the preferred non-ethanol gas station. Once filled up, we got back on I-95 for our final leg of the trip. I began looking for moose on both sides of the road, just knowing that after many years of looking for one, this trip would surely allow me a glimpse of the elusive creature. After a while, Eddie saw a sign telling us about a scenic overlook and he thought it would be a good time to stretch our legs and see the scenery. We parked in a space and piled out to see the view. I was still on the lookout



for the moose that I just knew would eventually show himself. There were quite a few people at the overlook, and one asked Eddie what was wrong with his car. He turned to see green liquid spewing out from under the car. My heart sank. We had come so far with no problems, only to have the car overheat with just a short way left to go.

Fortunately, after we opened the hood and let it cool down for a few minutes, we were able to crank it up and head on to our destination.

A short way down the interstate, we left I-95 and rolled on to historic US 1. U S Highway 1 stretches from Maine to Florida and was the road connecting the original thirteen colonies over three hundred years ago. Its northern point of origin is just outside Presque Isle and its southern point ends in Key West, Florida and is 2,321 miles long. Most importantly for us, it was the road to take us to our hotel. Fortunately for us, there were no other signs of overheating while we completed our trip.

Aroostook County, Maine is the largest county on this side of the Mississippi River. People in Maine just call it "The County". Typically, the temperature ranges from 70 to 77 degrees in the summer. The weather rarely goes above 85 degrees according to the weather station. Well, let me tell you something.... They didn't consider that a convoy of old vehicles would be coming up there to heat up the atmosphere! We arrived with temperatures over 90 degrees, so hot that the moose went into hiding the whole time we were there. Aroostook County is an agricultural county and they grow 4% of the nation's potatoes among other crops at the northeastern tip of the United States.

We rolled into a beautiful town and found our hotel with ease, unpacked and got ready to spend a joyous week seeing the sights beginning the next day. We found an interesting restaurant called Governor's Restaurant and Bakery to have a bite to eat before settling in for the night. I highly recommend it if you ever get up that way.

On Monday we registered and began saying hello to old friends while meeting new ones. That evening, we were invited to an Ice Breaker Reception at the Maine AACA President Craig's Car Barn. We were happy to see that AACA Great Southern Region President Ken McClellan, and his wife Phyllis safely made it from Leeds Alabama in their 1998 Pontiac Firebird. A delightful time was had by all even though

the heat continued to be more like Alabama than Maine. The National AACA President David Anspach was there to say a few words and meet everyone.

Tuesday started bright and early with a tour to Ashland, Portage, Fort Kent, and St. Agatha. We had a delightful lunch at the Lakeview Restaurant. They put on a fantastic spread and no one left hungry. The afternoon included Madawaska, Lille Cathedral, and Van Buren Ice Cream before going back to Presque Isle to clean up for the entertainment in the Ballroom that evening.



Wednesday's tour went to Littleton, Houlton Airport, Oakfield, Sherman, Pattern where we had lunch at Shin Pond Village before leaving to see the Logging Museum and stopping again for Ice Cream. The best part of this day to me was the slight rain that cooled down the high temperatures. That evening we did the Estey Museum which was a Victorian historical home owned by the town's 20th century eccentric business woman with an amazing success story.

On Thursday, we toured Fort Fairfield, Easton, Mars Hill and had lunch at the Big Rock Ski Area Lodge. That food was fantastic. It was catered by the Maple Pig barbecue. Even though it wasn't our Alabama barbecue, I could have eaten it every day! After lunch, we went to the state park to rest, walk, and enjoy the water scenery. Some even decided to take their shoes off and wade in the water. We ended the day by touring the James School which was representative of the one room schoolhouses that used to be all over the county.

We arrived back at the hotel with just enough time



One room schoolhouse

to clean up before taking our cars to the AACA Car and Music Festival put on by the AACA and the town. It seemed like the whole county came to admire our cars, eat food from food trucks and enjoy a fantastic band that was as good as, if not better than, the 70s band, Chicago. They had over fifteen members of the band and could play as many instruments as you might find in a small orchestra. A good time was had by all and several enjoyed dancing in the street as well.

Many thanks to Ken McClellan for the picture below showing multiple cars on the tour that attended the Car and Music Festival.



AACA Car and Music Festival



The streets lined with cars

Friday's tour included the Loring AFB Museum with lunch at Limestone Phil Kilcollins Farm before going to Maysville Museum and Presque Isle Air Base in the afternoon. Thanks to Ken McClellan for the picture below showing some of our cars at the Air Base Museum.



Loring AFB Museum

We concluded our week of touring with a Cocktail Reception and Dinner at Presque Isle Forum where we parked our cars in the building while we enjoyed our choice of steaks or lobsters and clams. No one went away hungry, I can assure you. The live music was an added treat.



We left Presque Isle the next morning with a little bit of sadness and a group of new friends. Our thanks go out to Craig Green and Kim Smith for all their hard work in making this a fantastic driving tour. - Suzanne Bibb





## AACA Eastern Region Tour

From August 11th through the 15th, the Main Region hosted this tour of Aroostook County, Maine. It is the northernmost county in that state and is larger than Connecticut and Rhode Island combined. With only 65,000 residents, there are a lot of remote areas and open vistas. Eddie and Suzanne Bibb as well as Ken and Phyllis McClellan joined about 50 other cars and braved the long drive, and it was well worth it. Of course, every trip encounters a surprise and ours was the weather. Not rain but a very unusual heat wave. Temperatures were up to the mid 90's, which the locals told us was about 20 degrees above their normal August weather. Guess we brought our heat with us.

Presque Isle was the home base and the tour began with a reception at the president's car barn in town on Monday evening. It was a great place for this event with automobile memorabilia around and lots of nice cars parked in the neighborhood. Even the neighbors enjoyed having our treasures parked around their homes.



Car and Tractor Museum



Car and Tractor Museum

Tuesday began the actual tour. This day was spent in the northern part of the county and we drove about 190 miles in total through the day, traveling all the way on beautiful rural roads to places like the northern tip of Maine where Highway 1 begins in Fort Kent. We visited many historic places as well as a collection of automotive memorabilia and tractors, ending the morning with a great buffet lunch at Lakeview Restaurant, It's name is very indicative of the view over the lake and valley. The afternoon drive included a stop by the Lille Cathedral, which is an all wood cathedral that is being restored, and an ice cream stop at Van Buren Ice Cream along the way on Highway 1.

Wednesday was spent in the south and west part of the county. Once again, beautiful roads throughout the countryside with stops at the WWII era Houlton Airport and beautiful vista of Mt. Katahdin (highest point in Maine), then stopping for lunch at Shin Pond Village. While we ate lunch, we learned about the area via history and artifacts that included Teddy Roosevelt's time in the area. After leaving lunch, we stopped by the Maine Logging Museum for more history of that industry and the area, a gorgeous drive through rolling hills and forest, and once





Beautiful Countryside

again stopping by for ice cream on our way back to Presque Isle. You have to understand that with the higher than normal temperatures, these ice cream stops were great, especially for those that didn't have A/C in their cars. The evening, for those who were interested, involved a visit to the Estey Museum. This was a beautiful Victorian house in downtown Presque Isle with a rich history in the area.

Thursday was spent in the eastern part of the county. You have to understand that all along the east and north of this county is New Brunswick, Canada, and you are constantly reminded with border crossing signs. We drove the morning through a lot of Amish countryside, passed many a horse and buggy, drove around a mountain with wind turbines lining the ridge, and ended with a lunch and more history at the Big Rock Ski Area Lodge. The afternoon drive had stops at the launching point of Double Eagle II, the first balloon to cross the Atlantic, and James School, one of the original schools in the area (bell tower and all). The late afternoon and evening included Main Street being blocked off in front of the host hotel with our cars parked along the side and middle of the street, a fabulous band playing music from the 60's, and several food trucks. The town came out in force and was a lot of fun.

The last day of the tour, Friday, began with a stop at the Loring AFB Museum. Much of the morning was spent



Car shows in Maine



Four Corners Park



Car shows in Maine

at this Cold War Era Air Force Base and the tremendous history that surrounds it. An extra treat, and one the car aficionados loved, was the ability to drive our cars down the 2.5 mile long runway at any speed we chose. Imagine that. We proceeded from there to have lunch at Kilcollins Farm. Phil Kilcollins collects and restores old tractors. The large collection includes several brands and all have been completely restored by Mr. Kilcollins himself. He is a lifelong farmer and restorer who was fun to talk to. The afternoon drive continued to be beautiful country with stops by two more museums that focused on more history of the area. The day finished off with a Closing Cocktail Reception and Dinner at Presque Isle Forum, a large indoor event facility, with all of our cars parked inside the Forum around the tables. It was a fitting end to a great week.

- Ken McClellan



Four Corners Park



## Pepper Place Car Show

The Great Southern Region of AACA hosted a car show at Pepper Place and the turnout was fantastic. Among the many classics, the Bolton's Bremer motor scooter stole the spotlight, especially with the younger crowd. Dozens of future old-car enthusiasts lined up for a turn, their excitement proving that the love of vintage wheels is alive and well.

Held on Saturday, August 30, the event was part of the Cars at the Market celebration of Pepper Place's 25th anniversary. From 9 a.m. to noon, the Martin Biscuit/Jeni's Ice Cream parking lot was filled with old cars, trucks, and motorcycles on display. Visitors also strolled through the Market to enjoy live music, delicious food, and beautiful crafts from local artisans. It was the perfect mix of community, culture, and classic cars.





# A Note From The EDITOR

Fall has arrived, and with it comes our second car show season here in the South! Shows are popping up all across the middle of the state, giving us plenty of chances to get our cars out and enjoy the road.

GSR recently celebrated the 25th Anniversary of Pepper Place with the Cars at the Market event, and it was a fantastic success! Up next, mark your calendars: on November 8, GSR will be hosting another car show. Be sure to check out Ken's letter

for all the details on how you can join in and help make this event just as much fun.

Getting our cars out and showing them off is always a blast—but what makes it even better is the time spent with fellow club members. Bring a friend to our next event and let's keep growing this amazing community together!

*Charlotte*

## GSR Calendar

January 23 .....	Dinner Meeting
February 27 .....	Dinner Meeting
March 27 .....	Dinner Meeting
April 12 .....	Let's Drive Tour
May 24.....	Let's Drive Tour
June 14 .....	Jenkins Place
July .....	Bibb's Place
August 30 .....	Car Show at Pepper Place
September 25 .....	Dinner Meeting
<b>October 14 .....</b>	<b>Dinner Meeting</b>
November 20.....	Dinner Meeting
December .....	Christmas Meeting

## AACA Calendar

**October 7-10**

**Eastern Fall Nationals**

Location: Hershey, PA Sponsor: Hershey Region

**October 18-22**

**Central Divisional Tour**

Location: San Antonio To Gonzales, TX Sponsor: Texas DFW Region

**October 22-25**

**Central Fall Nationals**

Location: Galveston, Texas Sponsor: Gulf Coast Region

**2026**

**February 5-7**

**Annual Convention/National Awards**

Location: Chantilly, VA 717-534-1910

March 19-21

**Special Nationals**

Location: Guaynabo, Puerto Rico Host: Puerto Rico Region



## How can you support AACA?

Send a gift to the  
**AACA Building Maintenance Fund**

For information on how to donate,  
just call AACA National HQ at 717-534-1910.





# Local Calendar

## Cruise Ins

### Cruise Ins

- 1st Tuesday - 5-8pm** Petro Bucksville 22526 Highway 216 McCalla
- Thursday Weekly - 6-9pm** VFW Post 6022, 7001 University Blvd E, Cottondale
- 1st Saturday - 8-11am** Hoovers Tactical Firearms Cruise In 1561 Montgomery Hwy. Hoover. Hosted by Dixie Vintage Antique Automobile Club
- First Saturday - 9-2pm.** Cruising on the Square. Downtown Jasper (April – Sept)
- 2nd Saturday - 5-8pm** Apr-Oct Bee Line Highway Classics & Cruisers Railroad St, Hartselle
- 2nd Saturday - 6-9pm** Apr-Oct Alabama Misfits Jack's Exit 267 off I-65 1195 Walker Chapel Rd, Flutondale
- 2nd Saturday - 8-11am** - Magic City Octane. 6200 Grand River Blvd E, Leeds, AL
- 3rd Saturday - 6pm** Tallahassee Shopping Center 400 Gilmer Ave
- 3rd Saturday - 2-5pm** Hooters Hwy 119 & Oak Mountain Park Road, Pelham
- 3rd Saturday - 3:30-8:30pm** Home Depot 41310 US Hwy 280 Sylacauga
- 3rd Saturday - 4:30-7:30pm** Home Depot 3784 US 431 Phoenix City
- 3rd Saturday – 6-9pm** Jack's Drive in Blountsville (May-Aug)
- 4th Saturday - 5-9pm** Pizza Bar 141 2nd St NW Carbon Hill
- 4th Saturday – 8-10:30am** 1110 Sparkman St. NW Hartselle American Legion Post 52
- Saturday Weekly 8:30-10:30** Shops of Colonnade 3418 Colonnade Pkwy, Birmingham
- 3rd Sunday - 1-5pm** Casual Pint, 5541 Grove Blvd, Hoover
- 3rd & 5th Sunday 3pm** 1204 Forestdale Square, Forestdale
- Last Saturday – 5pm-?** 7900 Vaughn Rd at Taylor Rd Montgomery

## Shows

### October

- 4 The Wheelz/Re-Vamped Carshow** 8-2pm. 9474 County Rd 55 Harpersville, AL \$20 entry. Food trucks, door prizes.
- 4 8th Annual Daniel Ray Willis Memorial Car Show.** 11-3. Free Tannehill State Park 12632 Confederate Parkway, McCalla, AL Info 205-243-2667
- 4 15th Annual Cruisin' For A Miracle Car Show** 8-3pm Moody City Park, 685 Park Ave Moody, AL 35004 Contact Fhris 205-365-7412
- 5 The Brian Colburn Memorial Cruise-In.** 2-5pm 734 Hwy 78, Jasper Open to all Vehicles. Entry by Donation
- 5 American Legion Post #5 Antique Cars, Tractors and Motorcycles Show.** 8-5pm. Southside Community Center 2142 Hwy 77, Southside, AL. \$10 entry
- 11 Thorsby Swedish Festival Auto Show.** 9-2pm. 54 Opportunity Dr, Thorsby, AL 35171.

Pre-reg. \$20. Day of Show \$25. Contact thorsbyswedishfestivalautoshow@gmail.com

- 11 Graysville Chamber of Commerce Cruse-In Car Show.** 9-2pm. 1403 Hwy 78 Graysville, AL. \$20 Entry. Info 205-514-5079
- 11 Town of Oak Grove Fall Festival Car, Truck & Motorcycle Show.** 9-2pm. 1042 Forest Glen Rd., Oak Grove \$25 Entry.
- 11 Car Show Fundraiser for Mt Vernon Church.** 8-2pm. 470 Long St. Lynn AL 35575 Lynn Community Center. \$10 entry
- 17-18 Etowah County Swap Meet & Car Show.** 201 Griffin St Attalla, AL. Info 256-490-5432. Reg. \$30.
- 18 Ronald Griffith Memorial Car & Truck Show and Youth Fundraiser.** 8-1pm. Cross Creek Community Church, 4825 US Hwy 278 E, Hokes Bluff. Info 256-613-0096
- 19 Eulaton Church Fall Fest & Car Show.** 4-7pm. 1835 Gate 8 Rd, Anniston. Free entry
- 24-25 6th Annual Wyatt Spann Memorial Car Show.** Friday 5-10 Saturday 9-2pm. 3928 Byler Rd., Eldridge Exit 39 of I-22. \$20 entry fee. Info 205-412-5877
- 25 Mellow Valley Community Center Car Show.** 10-3pm. 1025 School Rd, Caggford, AL.
- 25 J&K Tire Classic Car & Truck Show.** 9-1pm. 1667 Wood St, Steele AL top 20, Top 3 Cars, Top 3 Trucks. Reg. \$20
- 25 Greater Alabama Showdown Car & Truck Show.** 3250 Wetumpka Hwy, Montgomery, AL Gate open at 11am

## November

- 8 Helena Old Town Car Show.** 9-1pm. Buck Creek Park in Helena \$20 reg. Awards, Food Truck.
- 8 White Plains Arts & Crafts Fair/Car Show.** 9-2pm. 23153 Hwy 431, Lafayette Info 334-338-1092







## 1939 Pontiac “Ghost Car”, the transparent car

Reprinted with permission from cockpitdz.com

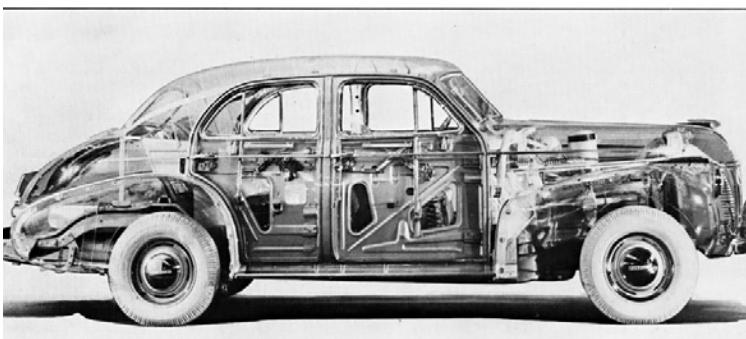
The Pontiac “Ghost Car,” which debuted at the General Motors Highways and Horizons Pavilion at the 1939-40 World’s Fair in New York, was built on the chassis of a 1939 Pontiac Deluxe Six. In collaboration with Rohm & Haas, a chemical company that had recently developed plexiglass, the transparent car concept was designed and it was the first to be built in America.

This one-of-a-kind vehicle was auctioned on July 30, 2011 by RM Auctions in Plymouth, Michigan. The car sold for \$308,000 (€214,000).

The special plexiglass exhibition car was nice to see and

admire, as it is part of our automotive history and culture.

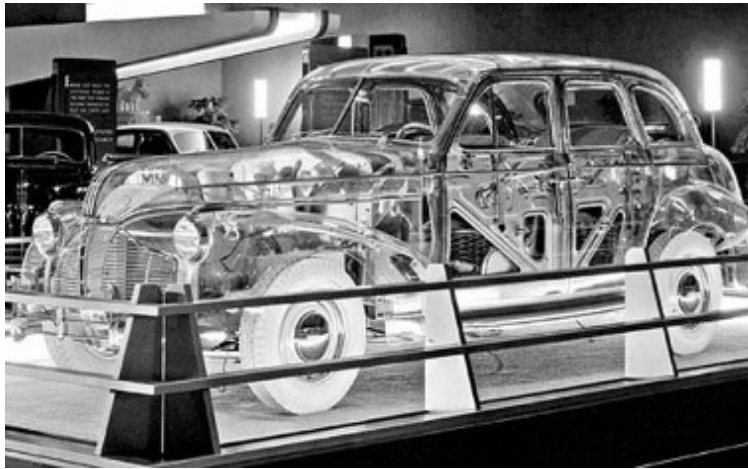
General Motors also built a second model for the 1940 Golden Gate Exposition, which many visitors thoroughly enjoyed. Both show cars were later shown and displayed at Pontiac dealerships nationwide. The very unique show cars were loaned to the Smithsonian Institution shortly after the outbreak of World War II.



*How many see-through Pontiacs were built remains a mystery. This C-bodied sedan complements Barlow's B-body car. The B-body was likely introduced initially as a '39 front end, then updated with '40 lines next year.*







**HERSHEY AACA EASTERN NATIONAL FALL MEET 2025**

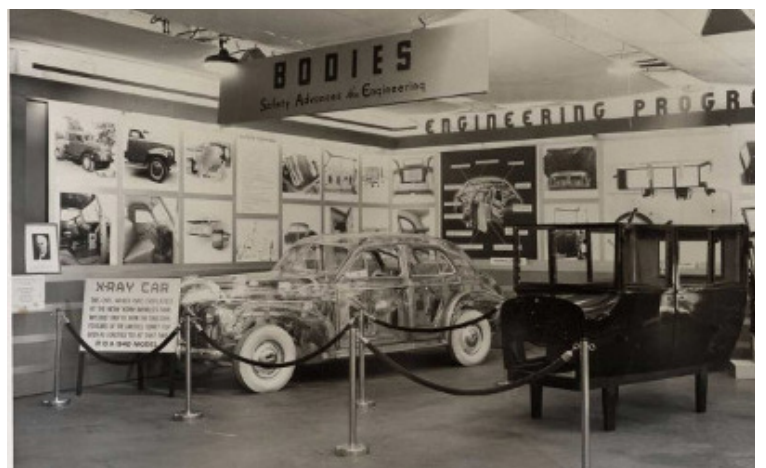
*Let's go*

*for a drive in 2025*

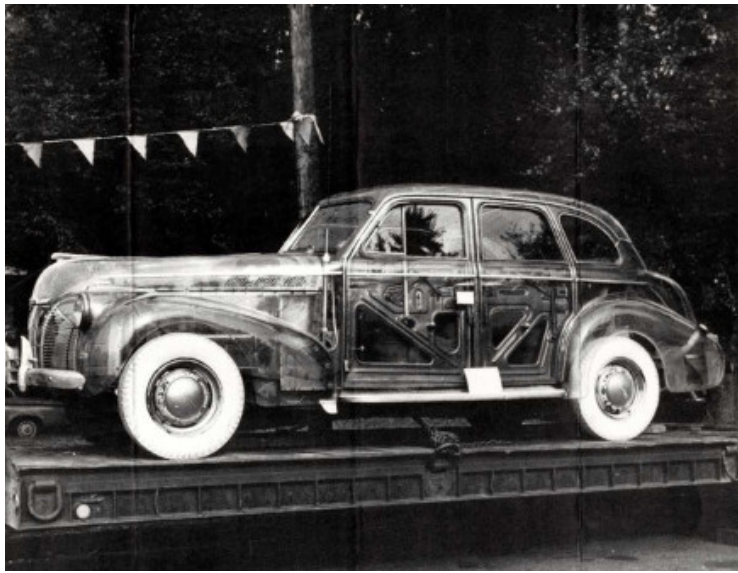
**October 7-10 ■ Tuesday-Friday**

**Largest Antique Car Show & Flea Market in the World**

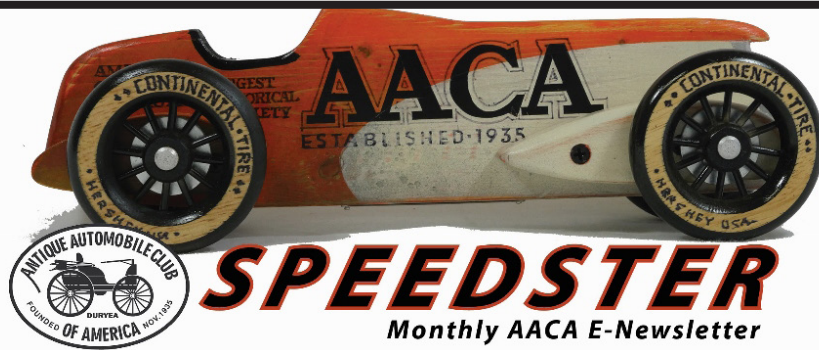
Registration information can be obtained by submitting the activity request card that came with this magazine to AACA Headquarters.











Speedster articles courtesy of AACA

## 2026 AACA Membership Renewals Have Started!

By Karen White, AACA Membership Manager, [kwhite@aacar.org](mailto:kwhite@aacar.org)

As most of you know, your AACA membership runs for a calendar year – January 1 through December 31. From about mid-September through the end of the year, AACA Headquarters gets a little crazy with membership renewal phone calls and mail. It's not uncommon for us to receive several hundred renewals in a day. Even though it's our busiest time of the year, making sure we get our 45,000 members renewed is always our top priority.

Look for your first written notice to renew your membership for 2026 to come with your September/October issue of Antique Automobile magazine. A renewal form will be included with this issue. Simply fill out the form and send it back to the office with a check or credit card information.

Beginning September 1, you can start using our super easy online membership renewal on our website. Renewing online is quick and simple! Just log in with your membership number and PIN number, review the information currently listed on your membership record and make changes if necessary. Review your information one more time and choose your payment type. Payment options include Visa, MasterCard and Discover. Your payment will automatically record to your membership record, and you will receive a confirmation email receipt.

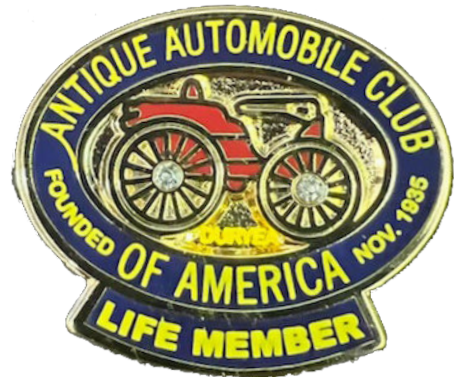
Your membership number and PIN number can be found on your membership card. If you don't know your membership number and/or PIN number, you can call AACA National Headquarters at 717-534-1910 or email [membership@aacar.org](mailto:membership@aacar.org). **Please DON'T try to pay your dues by using the JOIN AACA tab. This WILL NOT renew your**

**membership – instead, it will create a new one.**

If you're going to be at Hershey, you can also stop by the AACA trailer or tents and renew your membership in person with us.

We look forward to seeing or hearing from all of you very soon!

### Attention Life Members: NEW Pin Available



### Are you proud to be an AACA Life Member? Show off your pride by wearing one of our brand-new AACA Life Member pins.

The pins are made of a hard enamel that is colorful and classy. At only \$10 (plus \$5 for shipping), these new pins are an inexpensive way to show off your status in the club. They are also sure to be a conversation starter with other members as well as people you meet at car shows and tours. You must be a paid Life Member to purchase this pin. Call 717-534-1910 to order one today!







## **From Meep-Meep to Ahooga: Mobile Alabama's Own Miller Reese Hutchison and the History of the Car Horn**

By Charlotte Dahlenburg.

Source: Wikipedia, [www.caranddriver.com](http://www.caranddriver.com), AAA Network, [hornblasters.com/pages/the-timeless-appeal-of-klaxon-horns](http://hornblasters.com/pages/the-timeless-appeal-of-klaxon-horns)

The car horn is one of the earliest and most important accessories ever fitted to a horseless carriage. Before GPS, heated seats, or even windshields, drivers needed one simple tool: a way to make sure others heard them coming.

### **Early Warnings on the Road**

The first "horns" weren't attached to vehicles at all. In mid-1800s Britain, laws required self-propelled vehicles to be preceded by a man on foot waving a red flag and blowing a horn. Once cars began appearing more widely, the duty shifted to the driver.

Motorists experimented with all manner of noisemakers—bells borrowed from bicycles, whistles, squeeze-bulb horns, and even exhaust-driven sirens. In the U.S., bells were at first more common than horns. By the early 1900s, though, the bicycle-style squeeze bulb horn became a favorite. Air pushed through a steel reed produced a polite toot, enough to alert pedestrians. In fact, honking was considered courteous, even good manners.

But as streets grew busier, polite little "meeps" no longer sufficed.

### **Mobile's Inventor Steps Forward**

Enter Miller Reese Hutchison, a proud son of Mobile, Alabama. Born in 1876, Hutchison displayed an inventive streak from an early age. By his twenties, he had





*Early bulb horn*

developed the Akouphone, one of the earliest portable electric hearing aids, an invention that restored some of Queen Alexandra of England's hearing and brought him international fame. He followed it with a lightning arrester for telephone systems and other patented devices.

Hutchison's talent eventually took him to Thomas Edison's laboratories, where he became Edison's chief engineer. Yet it was the rise of the automobile that gave him his greatest chance to leave a lasting mark.

### **The Birth of the Klaxon**

Early bulb horns were no match for the chaos of city streets. Hutchison realized drivers needed not just a sound but a shriek—a noise no one could ignore. His solution was the Klaxon horn, patented in 1908.

The name came from the Greek *klazō*, meaning "to shriek," and shriek it did. A steel diaphragm was struck by a rotating wheel, powered either by a hand crank or small motor, producing the legendary A-OOH-GAH!

The Klaxon took the world by storm. New York's Mayor George B. McClellan Jr. bragged of owning "the loudest automobile in New York" thanks to his Klaxon. By 1911, they were fitted not only to cars but also bicycles,



*The Klaxton horn*



*Dr. Miller Reese Hutchinson*

motorcycles, and factories as alarms. Submarines even used them as dive signals. In comedies and cartoons, the ahooga became a cultural symbol of mischief.

Critics teased Hutchison, saying he invented the horn only to make people deaf enough to buy his hearing aids. But the truth was undeniable: his invention saved lives, reduced accidents, and gave the automobile a true voice.

### **The Rise of Electric Horns**

While the Klaxon dominated the 1910s and 1920s, another technology was quietly emerging. In 1910, Oliver Lucas of Birmingham, England, developed the electric horn, using an electromagnet to vibrate a diaphragm hundreds of times per second. Compact, reliable, and tunable, these horns soon displaced the Klaxon.

By the 1930s, most cars carried paired electric horns tuned to musical notes—E-flat, C, or later sharper pitches like F-sharp and A-sharp, designed to cut through quieter cabins. Larger vehicles demanded even greater power: trucks and buses mounted air horns roaring at over 117 decibels, while trains adopted monumental air horns blasting as loud as 175 decibels, their chords carrying for miles.

### **Horns in the Modern Age**

Today's car horns may lack the cartoonish charm of the Klaxon, but they remain essential. Modern vehicles usually carry dual electric horns tuned to slightly different





*Dr. Miller Reese Hutchinson*

frequencies—around 405 Hz and 500 Hz—so their blended sound pierces traffic noise. Companies like Bosch, producing horns since 1921, continue to refine them with weatherproof casings and corrosion-resistant parts to ensure decades of service.

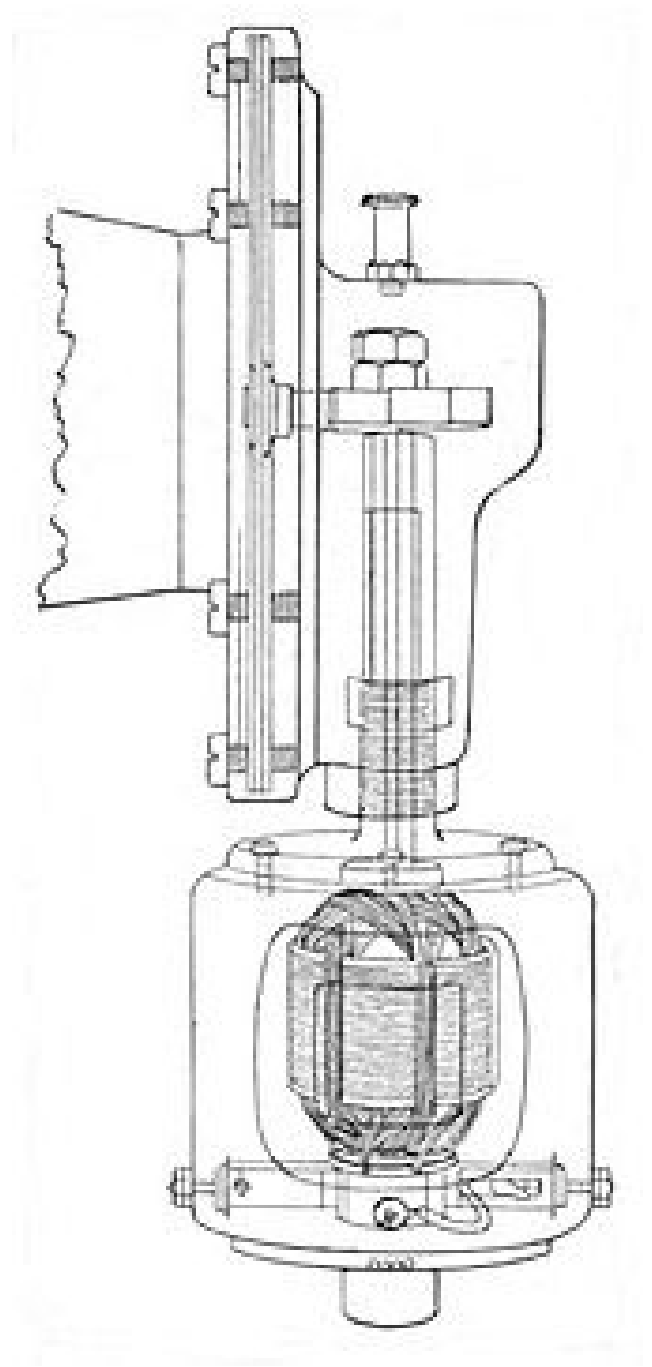
Regulations keep horns within limits. Most U.S. states require them to be heard at least 200 feet away but not be “unreasonably loud.” California caps aftermarket horns at 110 decibels. Still, cultural differences remain: in America, honking is often seen as rude, while in Cairo, Mumbai, or Naples, it is an essential part of daily driving conversation.

Some horns still bring humor and playfulness. The Plymouth Road Runner of the 1960s famously honked “meep meep,” and aftermarket novelty horns can belt out songs or custom sounds. Yet the purpose has never changed—whether polite, shrieking, or musical, a horn is there to make you heard.

#### **Legacy of a Mobile Inventor**

Though electric horns eventually replaced the Klaxon, its cry echoes through history. The word itself—“klaxon”—became shorthand for any loud horn in Britain and beyond. Its distinctive voice lives on in cartoons, comedy routines, and even in naval tradition.

As for Miller Reese Hutchinson, his career stretched far beyond the Klaxon. As Edison’s right-hand man, he helped refine phonographs, develop improved storage batteries,



and explore new technologies from gasoline additives to military equipment. Yet, of all his creations, it was the Klaxon that defined him.

From the quiet streets of Mobile, Alabama, to the bustling boulevards of the world, Hutchinson gave the automobile its first true voice. The shriek of the Klaxon is more than just a funny sound effect from an old cartoon—it is the sound of invention, culture, and one local man’s contribution to the age of the automobile.

So the next time a horn blares in traffic, take a moment to remember: that simple blast traces its roots back to a Mobile native who believed that when it came to safety, sometimes a good shriek was better than a polite toot.





## A POSITIVE AACA ATTITUDE

**By Phillip Cole**  
**2025 VP, SE Regions**  
**Development & Support /**  
**2024 Secretary/Treasurer**

A popular British car manufacturer has added a new website to their media approach. Their traditional website has always been restricted to owners of their brand, but their new site is for any "car enthusiast". For us as members of AACA that does not seem like anything new or even different. AACA members do not have to own a car that is "twenty-five years or older" to join. We do need, however, to be an enthusiast and follow our mission of encouraging the old car hobby. Thus, wherever we go and whatever we are doing, we need to bring along our positive AACA attitude.

Sadly, our culture seems to be so divisive nowadays and that generally does not cultivate a positive attitude even in our club. At too many of our Board of Directors meetings, one or more of our VPs of Regions Development and Support has to bring up the closing of a region or chapter.

That is a sad moment for all of us on your National Board. Equally sad is when the VP of Activities has to report that after dozens of contacts, we cannot find any region or chapter to host one of our National meets or tours. Both such reports generate a lot of discussion and several suggestions from your Board. Well, I want to suggest that a good place to start is by each of us adopting an AACA positive attitude!

I recently asked a fellow life coach for her suggestions as to how we can put our positive attitude into practice. First, she asked, "What negative attitudes do AACA members have to face?" The following (very familiar to most of you) is a list of some negatives that I lifted up to her and her positive attitude responses:

- "We've always done it that way." To "This is a great opportunity to try something new."
- "We don't have the resources." To "What can we do to gain the needed resources?"
- "That won't work!" To "What will make 'that work?'"
- "We don't like change." To "Let's take a chance on the needed change."
- "No one tells us anything." To "What can we do to keep you informed?"

## Mileage Award Program

Touring is not a spectator sport, so for those who enjoy driving their vintage vehicle, the AACA Mileage Award Program (MAP) has been set up. So, as the old saying goes, "Ladies and Gentlemen, start your engines" and prepare to enjoy AACA touring.

Anytime a vehicle is driven - anywhere for any reason - the mileage counts towards the award level.

The vehicle owner must register

the vehicle in the MAP. Registration included completing the MAP form and returning it with \$25 to AACA Headquarters.

When the vehicle is driven 2,000 miles it is eligible for the MAP award. The badge has places for each award: 1st Award - 2,000 mile; 2nd Award - 5,000 mile; Subsequent Award(s) at each 5,000 mile increment.

Mail your copy 2 at each increment



for National Headquarters to approve and your award will be mailed to you. Direct questions to [general@aaca.org](mailto:general@aaca.org) or 717-534-1910.



# CAR

HELENA  
OLD  
TOWN

Hosted by the  
Great Southern  
Region of the  
Antique Automobile  
Club of America



# SHOW

**SAT, NOV 8TH**

**9 AM-1 PM**

Location: Buck Creek Park in Helena

Awards for  
Original and Modified Classes  
Top Ten  
Youth Choice  
Best of Show

Food  
Truck

**\$20**  
ENTRY FEE

Net proceeds will be donated to  
Helena Firefighter Charity

Visit This Event at Helena Old Town  
Facebook or Great Southern Region  
website and Facebook below.



**MORE INFO: GREATSOUTHERN.AACA.COM • FACEBOOK - GSRAACA**