



Exhaust Whistle



Great Southern Region AACA

November 2025 - Official publication of the AACA Great Southern Region - Serving Central Alabama Vol. 37 No. 11

Christmas Gathering December 13 at Noon Location: Ken and Phyllis McClellan's Home



Helena's Old Town Car Show Draws Big Crowds and Big Hearts

What a fantastic morning it was in Old Town Helena on Saturday, November 8! The Great Southern Region of the Antique Automobile Club of America (AACA) proudly hosted the inaugural Helena Old Town Car Show at beautiful Buck

Creek Park, and the turnout was nothing short of spectacular.

A total of 68 stunning vehicles filled the park, ranging from lovingly restored classics to eye-

Continued on page 3

A Note From The **PRESIDENT**

I do hope everyone enjoyed or are still enjoying their Thanksgiving time with family and friends, reflecting on the blessings we all enjoy.

As we transition to December and Christmas time, I first want to encourage our members to join us for our Christmas Gathering at the McClellan home. All the details were given in my earlier email but if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. It will be a good time with friends, a time to reflect on 2025, and have conversations about what we want to do or accomplish in 2026.

To that end, I would like for our members to start thinking about activities that we as various members would like to participate in. Imagine if members came up with their favorite activity to plan, then sign up for that month and make it your month. That way, we enjoy different ideas and the onus of planning doesn't fall on one person.

I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you on the 13th.

Let's Drive in '25

Ken McClellan



*Schools are in session so
please be careful on the
roads, those children are
our kids and grandkids.*



**We are on
Facebook!
Like and follow us
gsraaca**



AACA National Headquarters
P.O. Box 417 Hershey, PA 17033
Founded 1935 717.534.1910
www.aaca.org

**Dedicated to the preservation,
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
Email stories and photos to Charlotte at
Realracegril1@gmail.com
www.greatsouthern.aaca.com
facebook: gsraaca

The Exhaust Whistle is a monthly publication of the AACA Great Southern Region, view expressed in the Exhaust Whistle are not necessarily those of the Region officers of AACA. Original material may be reprinted if credit is given.

2025 Officers

President: Ken McClellan
Vice President: Bill Gardner
Treasurer: Vicki Bolton
Secretary: Vicki Bolton
Editor/Webmaster: Charlotte Dahlenburg
Activities: Bill Gardner



catching vintage favorites. The crisp autumn air, the sound of engines rumbling, and the sight of polished chrome glinting in the sunlight made for a perfect day for car enthusiasts and families alike.

This family-friendly event truly brought the community together. Visitors of all ages wandered among the rows of antique automobiles, swapping stories, snapping photos, and learning a bit of automotive history along the way. One of the day's highlights was the youth judging team, made up of local soccer players, who enthusiastically took on the challenge of selecting their favorite cars. Their excitement and thoughtful choices brought a fresh perspective to the show, and plenty of smiles from the owners!

The event was not only about celebrating great cars but also about giving back. Proceeds from the show were donated to the Helena Fire Department, a cause close to the hearts of both participants and organizers.

Ken McClellan, president of the Great Southern Region, expressed his pride in how the event



Old and new classics side by side



A diverse field of cars

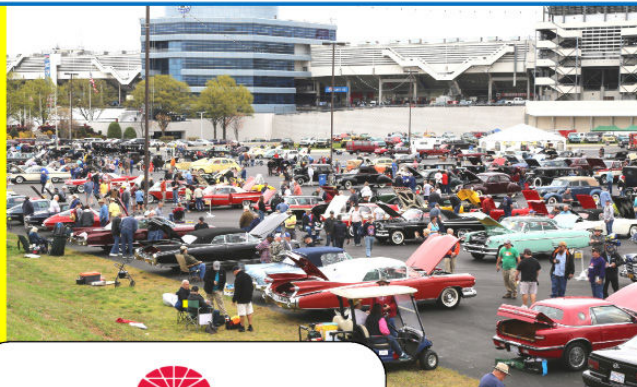


Plenty of classics and muscle cars were present



This Model A Woody with the side curtains was a stand out at the show

AACA Southeastern Spring Nationals
April 11, 2026
at Charlotte AutoFair
 Hosted by Hornets Nest Region




AUTOFAIR
 April 9 - 11, 2026

Information:
 Region Office
 704-841-1990
 Mon-Thur 9-3

Hornets Nest Region
 9307-H Monroe Road
 Charlotte, NC 28270
hnraaca@gmail.com


 ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILE CLUB
 of America

Vehicle Registrations Will Be Handled
 With the Customary AACA Process.



came together.

"They wanted us to be there. We wanted to be there," McClellan said. "We made it happen. They were promoting it through their Facebook and website, and the community support was incredible."

Helena's first car show was a resounding success, thanks to the efforts of volunteers, participants, and the supportive local community. With such a strong



Peolpe of all ages enjoying the show



Peolpe of all ages enjoying the show



Lots of spectators at the show



President, Ken McClellan visiting with fellow enthusiasts



Learning something new

Puerto Rico

2026 AACA SPECIAL NATIONALS

MARCH 19-21, 2026 GUAYNABO, PR



1934 MG PA



COURTYARD
BY MARSHALL
San Juan Miramar
www.marriott.com (787) 731-7400




Jose "Guillo" Davila
787-382-9813
guilodavila57@outlook.com

"Best Antique Car Show on the Island, By Far!"

Raymond Beniquez
787-881-1957
raybeniquez@gmail.com

Request registration materials from AACA National

start, plans are already being discussed to make this an annual tradition, one that celebrates the love of classic cars, community spirit, and charity.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated, attended, and helped make the Old Town Helena Car Show a day to remember!



Beautiful cars filed the show field



Awards from kids come from the heart!



Happy award winner with the kids



The GSR membership table. What a great way to get to know new people and gain new members



More cars on the show field



Happy award winner with the kids



The Runaway Scrape Tour

A Progressive Tour from San Antonio to San Jacinto, TX

The history behind this tour was to follow the path of the fleeing Texians and Tejanos as they were chased eastward by Mexico's dictator/general Santa Anna and his forces after the rout at The Alamo. Those fleeing had to travel on foot through downpours and muddy terrain for over 200 miles as Santa Anna was burning and killing everything he came across. Hence the name Runaway Scrape. It wasn't until they reached San Jacinto (east of present day Houston) that Sam Houston had amassed enough forces to take the battle to Santa Anna, and won with a much smaller force. Historians say that Houston surprised Santa Anna so well that the main battle only lasted 18 minutes, with mop up skirmishes lasting another 2 hours. This is certainly the Cliff Notes version but you get the idea.

Phyllis and I left out on October 16, heading toward Moody Gardens Resort on Galveston Island, where the AACA National Meet was to occur after the tour was over. We arrived there in mid afternoon on the 17th, unloaded the Triumph GT6+ we brought along for the tour and show, and headed out down the

Island and then NW through the South Texas Plains toward San Antonio. As I stated at the beginning, this was a progressive tour. So we had to pack enough belongings for 6 days of traveling in that car. Slight challenge but we did it, unpacking and packing every evening and morning. That being said, we spent that night in Victoria, TX, then proceeded on to San Antonio on the 18th.

As a side note, we were surprised to find that even the 2 lane farm roads we traveled had speed limits of 70 and the standard 4 lane highways were 75. They always say everything is bigger in Texas, and it goes for travel speeds as well!

We got into San Antonio and had enough time before the welcome reception and buffet dinner to walk through some of downtown and the Riverwalk. It is certainly a beautiful downtown area. Special guest speaker at the dinner was John Meehan, Sr., who is a Volunteer Docent with the Alamo Trust and a proud descendant of Private Dillard Cooper of the Alabama Red Rovers, who fought under Col. Fannin at Goliad, TX and was one of the few to escape the massacre.



Sunday morning after breakfast we met on the Plaza in front of the Alamo for group pictures, then were able to tour the Alamo before we got in our cars and headed east toward Seguin, TX, where the town had blocked off spaces around “Central



Park” for all of us. We walked a couple of blocks to a great restaurant for lunch. The afternoon drive was broken with a hospitality stop at Lee Roy & Mary Ann Menning’s car barn/house in Cost, TX for cool drinks and dessert (it was hot). Lee Roy & Mary Ann are a wonderful gracious couple who have quite a collection of cars. Some were fully restored, some being restored, and some for sale. Tempting. From there, we were on to Gonzales, TX with a brief stop at the First Shots Monument by the River. In Gonzales, we checked into our hotel, then headed downtown to La Bella Tavola restaurant for a fabulous dinner. Once again we had a guest speaker, Vickie Frenzel, who is a fifth-generation Texan, retired educator, and dedicated historian of Gonzales. Her presentation was not only filled with lots of interesting history but was extremely engaging. We finished the evening with an outdoor movie that was shown on the Gonzales Memorial Museum walls, expertly done, about the history of Gonzales and the Come Take It Cannon.

Monday morning, we traveled back to tour the Gonzales Memorial Museum, which commemorates the Immortal 32 who died at the Alamo. It also houses the famous Come Take It Cannon, where the first shot of the war was fired. I have to admit that cannon was much smaller than I anticipated, but it was a rally point for the people to stand up to Santa Anna. From



there, we traveled to the Spoetzi Brewery in Shiner, TX for lunch and a brewery tour if so desired. Spoetzi Brewery is where Shiner Bock beer is made. The first part of the afternoon drive took us to the San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site in (you guessed it) San Felipe, TX. They have recreated part of the town that the fleeing Texans burned in order not to



provide Santa Anna any food or materials he could use. The docent at this museum was a master of his craft and engaged you in the history so you felt you were there. It was a great stop for understanding the history involved. From there we traveled on to Brenham, TX for the night.

Tuesday morning we started out at the famous Blue Bell Creamery for some history of the company and a plant tour. A nice treat was getting a pint of any of their flavors for a \$1. I could get used to that. Next stop, Washington-on-the-Brazos, which was the site of the signing of the Texas Declaration



of Independence on March 2, 1836, establishing the Republic of Texas. We enjoyed a catered lunch of chicken and beef fajitas with all the fixings, and experienced several activities which included the women making bonnets and everyone learning all



about and handling flintlock rifles and pistols. We also had a great speaker by the name of John Hicks who is the District Representative for the Sons of the Republic of Texas. His Texas roots run deep – his family endured the Runaway Scrape, and two of his uncle's fought at the Battle of San Jacinto. We left there traveling to John and Mary Ann Dalton's Ranch in Cleveland, TX. On the way, we drove through a severe rainstorm. Some participants who were in



convertibles were surprised and got soaked before getting the top up. Guess Mother Nature just wanted to wash off the dust we had collected since the beginning of the tour. At the Dalton Ranch, we got to view a large collection of beautiful cars AND got

AACA Winter Nationals

March 26-28, 2026

Georgia Highland College • Cartersville, GA

Host Hotel: Courtyard by Marriott Cartersville
5460 Highway 20, Cartersville, GA 30121
678-721-1660, ask for AACA rate

For more information, visit Lakeallatoona.aaca.com
Request registration materials from AACA National

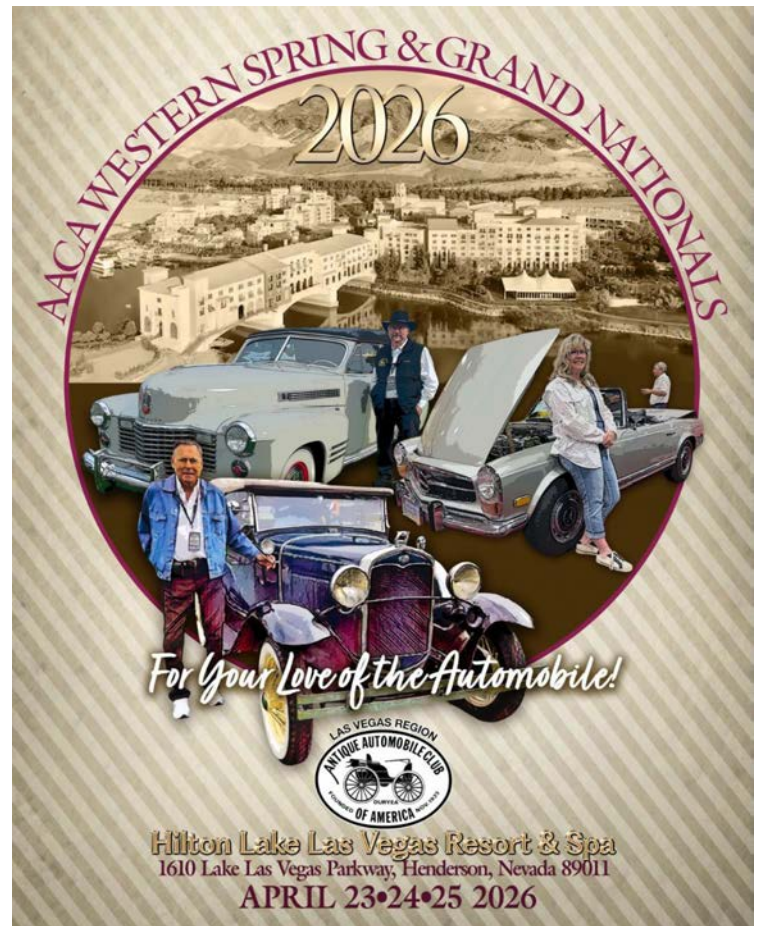
served a wonderful meal. From there, it was a short 21 mile trip to New Caney, TX for the night.

Wednesday morning, the final day, we traveled from New Caney to the San Jacinto Battlegrounds and Museum. On the way we took the Lynchburg Ferry, which was established in 1822 and is the oldest continuously operating ferry in Texas. It played a critical role transporting settlers and Sam Houston's army eastward ahead of Santa Anna's advancing forces. The Battlegrounds and Museum are on the site of that history turning battle as you might guess. The museum houses a lot of artifacts and information about the area, and the monument that was erected is truly a sight to see. As one might suspect when seeing it, it has an observation deck under the star that caps the monument, where you can see the



landscape for many miles. The tour closed with a tasty luncheon banquet at the nearby Monument Inn. Goodbyes were said to the fellow travelers we were privileged to meet, and we departed for Galveston Island for the Meet.

-Ken McClellan



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
October 14	Dinner Meeting
November 20.....	Dinner Meeting
December.....	Christmas Meeting

AACA Calendar

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	
March 26-28	Winter Nationals
Location: Cartersville, GA Host: Lake Allatoona Region	
April 9-11	Southeastern Spring Nationals
Location: Charlotte, NC Host: Hornets Nest Region	
April 23-25	Annual Grand Nationals/Western Spring Nationals
Location: Las Vegas, NV Host: Las Vegas Region	
May 28-30	Eastern Spring Nationals
Location: Indiana, PA Host: Shannock Valley Region	
June 11-13	Southeastern Fall Nationals
Location: Oak Ridge, TN Host: Volunteer Region	
June 15-19	Sentimental Tour
Location: Mechanicsburg, PA Host: Pontiac-Oakland Worldwide Region	
July 23-25	Central Spring Nationals
Location: Green Bay, WI	
August 5-8	Southeastern Divisional Tour
Location: Hendersonville, NC	
August 19-22	Annual Grand Nationals / Zenith Awards
Location: Allentown, PA 717-534-1910	
September 9-14	Founders Tour (1932-2001)

A Note From The EDITOR

As we approach the end of the year, the familiar signs surround us, leaves drifting from the trees, calendars filling with holiday gatherings, and evenings settling in far too early. Yet there's something comforting about these long nights at home, the perfect time to tackle those long-overdue projects we've been meaning to get to.

I encourage you to continue sending in your photos and stories about your winter projects. You never know—what you're stuck on might be exactly what someone else has already mastered. When we share our experiences, we grow together, not only in skill but in friendships that can last a lifetime.

Thank you for being part of this community, and I look forward to seeing what you're working on this season.

Charlotte



Welcome New Members

Bob Shoemaker

George Miljus

If you know of someone that is interested in old cars, invite them to a meeting or an activity. We want to share our hobby with others so that we can share the fun we have. Membership is everybody's responsibility.



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, Cottdale
- 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

2026

January

- 30- Feb 1** 55th Annual World of Wheels
Birmingham More info: worldofwheels.net/birmingham/

April

- 18 4th Annual Pell City Car Show** 9am. Pell City High School

May

- 1 4th Annual Irondale Auto Classic.** 8-1pm. 3900 Grants Mill Road, Irondale



**YOU CAN RENEW
YOUR MEMBERSHIP!**

Dues are \$20.00 per family.
 You must be a member of AACA to be a member of the Great Southern Region.
 AACA Annual dues are \$45.00.



The Military Sponsorship Program is available to all of the Military Veterans that have proudly served to protect our homeland and freedoms.

With this program, AACA is extending a limited number of complimentary 2023 memberships for first-time AACA applicants. More information on this program

and an application can be found on the AACA website under member information and drop down to Military. These complimentary 2023 memberships are for first-time AACA applicants and are limited by the funds available for this program. These complimentary applications for membership are intended for individuals who have a genuine interest in the antique car hobby.



Harley Earl

Revolutionized the Automotive Design Industry

Reprinted with permission from [www.
CorvetteMuseum.org](http://www.CorvetteMuseum.org)

November 22, 1893 – April 10, 1969

Harley Earl is the father of the Corvette. The Corvette was his idea pure and simple. He was influenced after World War II watching Jaguars and MG's run road-racing courses like Watkins Glen. He felt America needed its own sports car and he convinced GM to develop its own, inexpensive two-seater.

Originally code named "Project Opel", Earl kept the Corvette program pretty much to himself. He had a special small studio with a handful of people working on it. At the time, Earl wasn't sure which GM division ought to sell the Corvette, But he felt close to Ed Cole at Chevrolet and decided to give the "Bowtie Division" first shot. Cole was sold the first time he saw the prototype. He knew it was just what the stodgy Chevrolet division needed.

The Corvette debuted at Motorama in New York, January of 1953 and was an instant hit. Six months later the Corvette went into production and the rest is history. But the Corvette may not have been Earl's greatest achievement. His main accomplishment was making automotive design an institution. It was



1927 Cadillac LaAalle Series 303 Roadster



Harley Earl the Father of Automotive Design

the work of Harley Earl that put the sizzle back into the American car business after World War II. His expressive designs defined an entire era. He was the first man to design a car with a wraparound windshield, cars without running boards, and the first to tantalize the motoring public with dream cars like the 1938 Y Job and the 1951 Le Sabre.

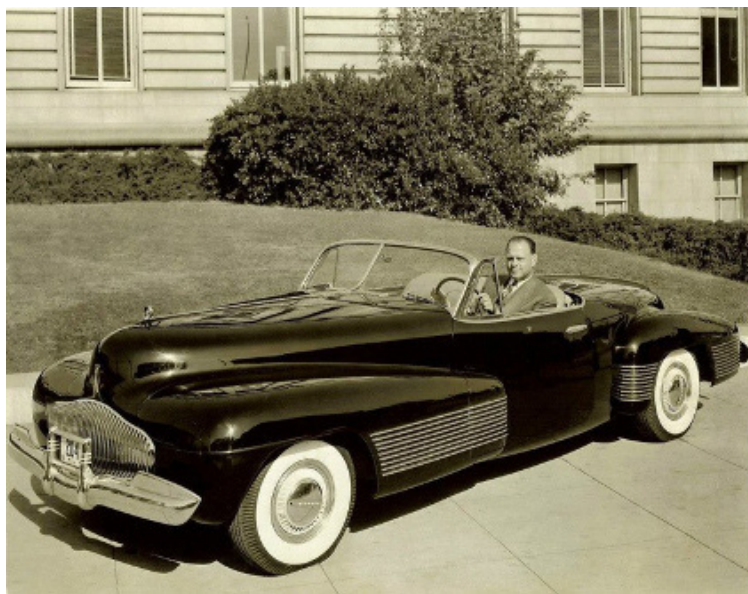
He grew up in Hollywood in the early 1900s and quickly developed designs with a flare for the dramatic. His father ran a custom coach building company, and young Harley was put to work- as Chief Designer. He would often produce clay models for customers, showing them what their future vehicles would look like. Earl later became close friends with Lawrence Fisher, who became president of the Cadillac Division of General Motors in 1925. Fisher asked Earl for some design help on the new LaSalle. His successful design caught the attention of GM Chairman Alfred B. Sloan.

Harley moved to Detroit in 1927 and quickly



Part of Harley Earls Designer Portfolios

set about making GM one of the world leaders in design. In 1937, his Art and Color department was renamed General Motors Design Staff. Among Earl's most memorable designs are the Chevy Nomad, the Cadillac Eldorado Brougham, all of the early



Harley Earl and the Buick Y-Job

1950s Buicks and of course, the Corvette. Earl's legacy, however is the Corvette which will live on as a testimony to his vision and his talent. Harley Earl died on April 10, 1969.

Donate before it's lost

Your donation will help support the AACA Library & Research Center's goals and to aid hobbyists in restoration and preservation efforts. For information on planned giving call 717-534-2082

AACA Library & Research Center

SAVE THE DATE!

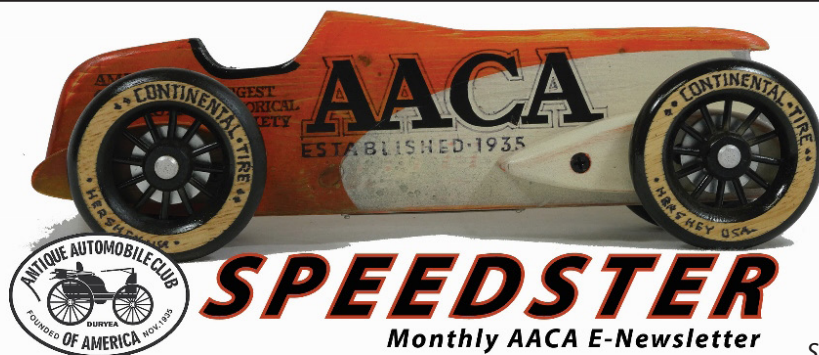
2026 AACA Eastern Spring Nationals
May 28-30 • Indiana, PA

Questions?
Nationals Chair: Paul Colligan
724-599-8711, sv26spring@gmail.com

ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF AMERICA

SHANNOCK VALLEY REGION OF AACA

Request registration materials from AACA National



Monthly AACA E-Newsletter

Speedster articles courtesy of AACA

Hershey: the Best Show in the World

By Stacy Zimmerman, Speedster Editor,
szimmerman@aaca.org

I look forward to Hershey every year, as many of you do. Simply put, it is just the best week in this hobby, period. Old friends, new friends, old cars, new-to-you cars, old parts, NOS parts... I could go on and on. The week holds such special meaning and tradition for so many. I believe that as we grow older the week becomes more and more about the people and less and less about the cars. Now, don't get me wrong... we all enjoy seeing the awesome display and variety of antiques that always show up at the Hershey show, but I've now transitioned to counting down the days until I get to see some of my most favorite people from all over the country. Most of these folks I only get to see once or maybe twice a year, but that again is what makes Hershey so special.

There are not enough thank yous in the world to give to everyone who makes Hershey happen each and every year. Without the 800+ volunteers from the Hershey Region, we would never be able to pull off the event. THANK YOU, Hershey Region, from the bottom of all of our hearts! Thank you to the vendors, some of whom have been selling at the show for decades. Thank you to all of the members who brought their cars to share on the show field. Thank you to those who spent their time judging all of those cars. Thank you to all of you who took the time to visit during Hershey week – we hope we impressed you enough to make you want to come back again.

All of our National shows and tours are important and great, and we love all of the regions who help us put them on, but Hershey is just a different beast with its own trials and tribulations. The Hershey car show is literally 3-4 times the size of most other National shows we put on. Plus, you add the huge flea market, the car corral and all of the evening activities including the RM Sotheby's auction, and you can see why it takes a village to successfully host the event. Even though it's stressful for everyone involved leading up to the event (and sometimes even during the event), it is completely worth it in the end. To be able to say

that AACA National and the Hershey Region put on the biggest and best show in the world speaks volumes about our dedication, respect, and love for this hobby. All of you should be proud to be a member of this club. A club that continues to show the world through its successful public events that this hobby is not dying but rather thriving.

If you have never experienced the Hershey show, I implore you to put it on your calendar now – October 6-9, 2026 – and make it a priority to attend. You will be amazed and a little tired at the end of the week, but you will be so happy you came.

AACA Central Spring Nationals July 22-26, 2026 • Green Bay, Wisconsin *Registration & Hotel Deadline: June 20*

Show Highlights: Lambeau Field Tours • Welcome Party • Craft Event • Members Roundtable • Judging School • Ice Cream Social • Oneida Dancers • Leisure Time @ Oneida Casino • Judges Breakfast • CJE • Nationals Car Show • Cocktail Hour & Banquet

Host Hotel: Tundra Lodge

865 Lombardi Avenue, Green Bay, WI 54304

877-888-3727, ask for AACA rate

Includes \$10 daily breakfast if you show your AACA badge

Questions? Contact Chairman:

Russ Walker, 920-819-1407, russellswalker@aol.com



Request registration materials from AACA National





1951 Buick Special Convertible

In the early 1950s, the Buick brand was full speed ahead in feeding post-war demand for passenger cars. Buick became known for its tagline 'Premium American Style'

By Mark Maynard - Mark Maynard has written about cars, their people, and products for 30 years. You can email him at MaynardsGarage@gmail.com or visit his website, MaynardsGarage.com.

American car design was on the threshold of a renaissance in the early 1950s. It was just five years since the end of World War II when U.S. automakers got back to the business of making vehicles for civilians and not the war effort.

Between Feb. 10, 1942, and Sept. 9, 1945, General Motors and other American carmakers did not produce cars for civilian use. Starting in 1940, General Motors eventually converted over 100 of its manufacturing plants to produce for the war effort.

After the war, passenger car designs continued to grow in size — a direct reflection of the post-war prosperity enjoyed by most Americans. Automotive engineering brought new



The 1951 Buick Convertible remains a symbol of an era when cars were more than mere transportation — they were works of art, craftsmanship, and aspiration. (Photos courtesy of the GM Media Archive)



technologies, such as electric starters, hydraulically operated convertible tops, power windows, and power driver's seats — sometimes referred to in period print ads as the pilot's seat.



On the production line in 1951 at Buick City, Flint, Mich.

The first safety features debuted, such as padded dashboards, safety glass, and improved brake systems. Now that chrome was again available (restricted during wartime production), large expanses of the shiny metal alloy coating was applied to bumpers, bodyside spears, grilles, and headlight casings.

Design features of warplanes could be seen in the post-war designs of cars, according to a report in Hertz.com. Expansive tail fins emulated aircraft wings. Hood ornaments took the shape of gunsights, and conical “Dagmar” bumper guards would mimic artillery shells. Buick’s iconic “ventiports” — hood portholes — recalled the exhaust outlets of fighter aircraft such as the P-51 Mustang, built by North American Aviation in the 1940s. While the P-51 Mustang was V-12 powered, with six exhaust ports aft the propeller, the Buick had just three to four ventiports on each side of the hood.



The Roadmaster instrument panel.

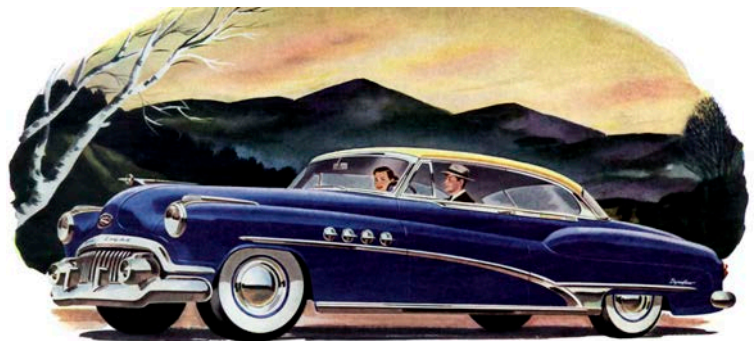
Ventiport History

The now-iconic Buick portholes, correctly termed “ventiports,” were a stylist fluke. Credit for the brand-defining feature goes to noted General Motors stylist Ned Nickles, who designed and installed a set of round fender vents on his personal 1948 Buick Roadmaster. According to the engaging report in MacsMotorCityGarage.com, Nickles used small electric lamps (probably neon or similar) that were wired to the ignition system. The lights would flash in sequence with the cylinders of the engine. Reportedly, he was inspired by the flashing exhaust pipes (or gun muzzles, in some versions of the story) on World War II fighter aircraft.

At that moment, a Buick styling trademark was born.

“Buick manufacturing boss Edward T. Ragsdale ridiculed the gimmick, saying it ruined the car, but general manager Harlow Curtice loved the idea, minus the flashing lamps, and ordered the ventiports into production on the 1949 models, a scant seven months away.

The 1949 Roadmaster debuted four “Cruiser-Line Ventiports” per side, while the junior Super and Special sported just three per side. The Roadmaster earned four portholes for its 320-cubic-inch straight-eight vs. 260 cubic inches of the lesser models. The F-263 engine (for 263 cubic inches) had power ratings of 120 hp or 124 hp in the 40 series or 50 series. The top-line 70 series had an upgrade to 168 hp.



Buick Lifts the Limit on Luxury

Here, come what may, is a line of the smartest Buicks ever built—smart in the advanced brilliance of their styling and power—smarter still in new pricing levels that go deep into budget value.

From the brand-new Streetmaster, that comes closer than ever to the lowest price levels, to the custom-rich Roadmaster that shows its heels to the face-of-the-field, you are aware of new features, new comfort, and new highs in thrilling action.

You will find distinctive luxury in a new “quick-hue” treatment of solid enamel and during design, in the lively long-shield look of chrome-finisher body moldings on most models, in the eye-catching sweep of chrome-finisher parts that instantly say “Buick.”

You will find truly spacious roominess in cars ingeniously engineered for maximum over-all length to make parking and grouping easier. You will find interiors richly tailored in the custom manner, with lustrous fabrics, Buick and trim that set trends for tomorrow.

You will find value-in-head Endall performance from straight-eight engines in four power ratings—the wonderfully soft and best going of the Buick dream ride—wide, crystal-clear visibility all around. And beyond all that, further-right handling—with Tremor Drive available on any model, to make your drive complete and reduce car-servicing costs to boot.

So look over these Buick beauties for 1951—with your road life and your budget in mind.

Select your dream-car from the galaxy of progress models in four series—Streetmaster, Custom Streetmaster, Super, and Roadmaster. Choose from four wheelbases, from nine body styles, from five price ranges. Pick from a wide selection of equipment and accessories that let you custom tailor your Buick to your taste and price.

For you will surely find that, by any measure, the smart car to look at, to drive, to own is the smartest Buick for '51.

Buick color print ad: “Smart Buy for 1951.”

Post-War Vehicle Demand

The Buick brand was full speed ahead in feeding new post-war demand for passenger cars. The brand became known for its tagline, “Premium American Style.”

he 1951 Buick model-year lineup elevated the General Motors brand to America’s fourth-largest automaker. Total sales



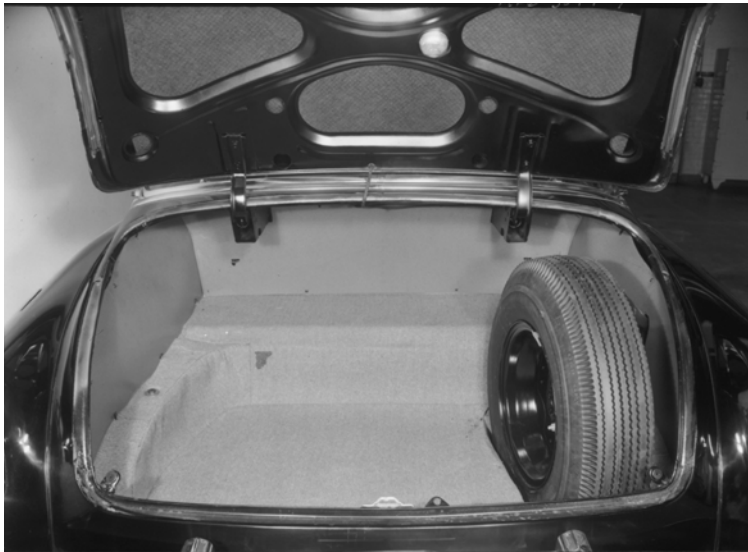
Each Buick series had its unique grille pattern, contributing to its identity. The Super Series, for example, sported a bold horizontal grille.

that year were 406,657, according to the third edition of "The Standard Catalog of American Cars, 1946-1975." Convertibles represented 9.4 percent of Buick's business.

Buick Innovations

The 1951 Buicks were known for their distinctive features, combining style, comfort, and innovation. Here is a list of some of the special features that set Buicks apart:

1. Dynaflo Transmission: Buick introduced the Dynaflo automatic transmission, which provided smooth gear changes and eliminated the need to shift gears manually.
2. Distinctive Grille Designs: Each Buick series had its unique grille pattern, contributing to its identity. The Super Series, for example, sported a bold horizontal grille.
3. Electric Clocks: Buick was among the first to include



There looks to be room for the golf cart and clubs in the 1951 Roadmaster trunk.

electric clocks as standard equipment. The timepieces added a touch of modernity.

4. Safety Innovations: Buick emphasized safety. Features like padded dashboards, safety glass, and improved braking systems ensured passenger well-being.

5. Wide Whitewall Tires: Buicks roll on wide whitewall tires, which enhance their visual appeal and ride quality.



Convertibles represented 9.4 percent of Buick's business in 1951.

Buick Special Convertible

The 1951 Buick Special Convertible, also known as Model 46C, epitomized Buick's dash and elan in a budget-priced package. Despite its affordability, \$2,561, it boasted luxurious deluxe finishes that set it apart.

The Model 46C was a two-door convertible with seats for six. It was powered by the new F-263 engine, with high compression ratios and ample horsepower. The convertible was full-bodied at 3,645 pounds but 860 pounds less than the Roadmaster.

Inside, passengers were treated to plush interiors, comfortable seating, and attention to detail.

The top-of-the-line Buick Roadmaster Riviera pushed the starting price to \$3,453 in 1951. But it remains a symbol of an era when cars were more than mere transportation — they were works of art, craftsmanship, and aspiration.

For Buick restorations, be sure to visit the Buick Heritage Alliance.





Don't Wait Until... **By Phillip Cole VP- SE** **Regions** **Development and** **Support-** **Southeast**

A few years ago, former National Director, Wayne Burgess, posted on our AACOA Forums, "We have a local region that is close to folding up, because they cannot find someone to step up and become their leader, their President. Their present President has been there for 12 years. He needs a break. I just wonder does anyone have any new ideas to help prevent the club from closing down?"

Wayne received some good suggestions from other members. Here are a couple:

Matt Hinson, former Rummage Box Editor, said, "I don't know if I can suggest a quick fix, but I do have an idea about how to combat that sort of thing... It just takes time... The important thing is that you need to attract new members constantly. Our members attend the local Cars and Coffee and other local non-AACOA car club shows and typically sign up a new member or more every month. That keeps new blood coming into the Chapter. Driving your old cars, and being willing to speak to other potential new members about their car and about AACOA, and having a packet of the forms needed to sign up a new member available when you "sell" them on joining, makes it easy to sign up new members... Having one person be President for more than about 2 years is typically a warning sign that the club has become stagnant. It is time to get some new blood into the

leadership, but you have to develop your members so that they feel comfortable in being a leader."

Walt Gosden, noted automotive historian and author, shared, "The important thing is that you need to attract new members constantly... But you also need to make the new members feel welcome. A new member doesn't have to be someone who is new to the hobby! The club needs to have high interest but low cost activities that will encompass the whole family... Some of the events should involve a younger generation as well who can attend with their parents or grandparents - make it an interesting family affair."

A popular process in small businesses nowadays is "onboarding", where you bring motivated, far-thinking new members on your local board. That's a good place to start, but if you wait until you cannot find executive officers it will be an uphill climb. Contact your AACOA VP of Regions Development & Support. (If you live in the Southeastern United States, that's me! Feel free to contact me at pcole@wnccumc.net or call 704-577-8576.)

Here are other basic, onboarding ideas:

- Make membership meaningful for all members. Keep all members involved in all projects and plans.
- Assign a mentor to new members.
- Communicate! Emphasize our mission.
- Reach out in your local community.
- Rotate officer responsibilities.

And yes, as Matt and Walt suggested, "Don't wait until... Get out in front of growing your membership and leadership!"