

OREGON REGION • CLASSIC CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

"From the mountains to the prairies, to the oceans white with foam..."



The **Hood Release**

SPRING 2016



1931 Pierce-Arrow Convertible Coupe

Owner: George Choban

OREGON REGION
CLASSIC CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

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CONTENT EDITOR

Larry Schick · lschick@lagrandindustrial.net

MANAGING EDITOR

Laura Schick · hoodrelease@gmail.com

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Brian Fanning · b.fanning.photography@gmail.com

THE CLASSIC CAR CLUB OF AMERICA is a non-profit organization chartered in the State of New York for the development, publication and interchange of technical, historical and other information for and among members and other persons who own or are interested in fine or unusual motor cars built between and including the years 1925 through 1948, but including cars built before 1925 that are virtually identical to 1925 Full Classics® and distinguished for their respective fine design, high engineering standards and superior workmanship, and to promote social intercourse and fellowship among its members; and to maintain references upon and encourage the maintenance, restoration and preservation of all such Classic Cars.

The purposes for which a Region is chartered by the National Club are: The furthering of the ideas and ideals reflected by the By-Laws of the National Club in a specific regional area and to provide regional activities for the members in that area.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING in *The Hood Release* and our web site is free to all CCCA members. All such advertising must relate to Full Classics® or Modified Classics® as defined by the CCCA.

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Bill Price
9645 SW Ventura Ct
Tigard, Oregon 97223
971.409.9977 (cell)
osgoodconklin@comcast.net

MOVING? Be sure to advise the membership chairman of your new address.

SUNSHINE INFORMATION

Evelyn Freedman · 503-246-5667

OREGON REGION CCCA 2016 Calendar of Events

JANUARY	14-17 CCCA Annual National Meeting in Novi, MI*
FEBRUARY	14 Annual Valentine Brunch and Tour at Multnomah Falls*
MARCH	19 Tech Session with Bob Earls at Freedman's Garage
APRIL	1-3 Portland Swap Meet at the Expo Center and PIR 9 PNW Region Coming Out Party 15-17 Three day, two night tour – Long Beach Peninsula
MAY	7 Portland Transmission Car Show 21 One-day Albany Covered Bridge Tour
JUNE	3-5 CCCA Museum Experience, Hickory Corners, MI* 12 Annual Strawberry Social & Tour* 25-26 LeMay Museum Tour with the Packard Club
JULY	17 Concours d'Elegance – Forest Grove, OR 23-24 Mosier Tunnel Tour with Buick, Cadillac, and Packard Clubs
AUGUST	7 Concours d'Elegance – Fort Vancouver, WA 14 Lake Oswego Car Show 20 Tech Session with Bob Earls at Freedman's Garage
SEPTEMBER	10-17 Oregon Region Fall Tour – Route & Destination TBD*
OCTOBER	14-16 Pumpkin Tour to Central Oregon with the Packard Club 30 Halloween Party at Freedman's Garage*
NOVEMBER	6 Oregon Region Annual Meeting & Dinner at Tualatin Country Club 19 Activities Planning Meeting for 2017*
DECEMBER	11 Holiday Party at the Lake Oswego Heritage House*

Monthly membership meetings are held at 6:30 pm the first Thursday of each month, January-October, at O'Connor's Restaurant in Portland.

* Denotes a CCCA or Oregon Region CCCA sanctioned event

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

OUR 2016 CCCA year started with our traditional Valentine's Day brunch, where 50 of our members and guests enjoyed the Roger Eddy "goat trail" tour, the great Multnomah Falls brunch and a tour of the Asbahr's cattle farm (with a few old cars mixed in). In March, we had a good tech session led by Bob Earls on troubleshooting car issues and preparing your car for tours. If you missed this tech session, we will be having another in August.

I RECENTLY spoke with Howard Freedman about working in a member's garage tour, and we both concluded we have a very busy club schedule this year. I won't elaborate on each event, as the entire schedule is on our website, but I will highlight our major outings. By the time this publication reaches you, our 3-day Long Beach tour will be history. On May 21st, we will have a one-day covered bridge tour, led by Bill Price, which will end with wine tasting at a private winery. June 12th will be our annual Strawberry Social at the Jabs' Eagle Creek Lavender Farm, and July 23-24 will be the overnight Mosier Tunnel tour (100 year celebration), organized by Robert Douglas. September 10-18 is our annual weeklong tour, which will take us to central and southeastern Oregon (the Steens Mountains). As you can see, our tour committee (Roger Eddy, Robert Douglas, George Potter and Howard Freedman) and others are busy planning our events. More information will be forthcoming on each event, and if you have ideas or suggestions, please send them to me or any board member. This is your club, and we want to organize activities that you want to attend.

THE CLUB has a new 4' long banner that can hang from a folding table to use at events to promote our club and new membership. If you know of an appropriate event, or if you want to use it to promote our club, please contact me. We also want to update our website to include photos of members' vehicles, so please forward good quality photos of your car(s) to George Potter at gpotter942@gmail.com. You have the option of having your name listed or not—just let George know your preference.

OUR CLUB has three ways to communicate with you—our monthly *Brake Cables*, our quarterly *Hood Release*, and our wonderful website (www.oregonccca.com), produced and updated by George Potter. Please do not hesitate to offer comments and suggestions that will benefit our club. Looking forward to an event-filled Oregon Region CCCA 2016.

Bill Jabs

DIRECTOR, OREGON REGION, CLASSIC CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

FROM THE EDITOR

THIS SPRING'S issue of the *Hood Release* features an unrestored, original 1931 Model 42 Pierce-Arrow Convertible Coupe owned by George Choban. Researching the history of this vehicle afforded a unique opportunity to interview George and share some of the fascinating experiences of his personal life as well as his lifelong love of cars. However, it also took me back to another time and place, since I first met George nearly 60 years ago apart from the world of automobiles. Our paths first crossed in the Fall Quarter of 1960 when he was my Advanced Algebra instructor in my freshman year at what was then known as Portland State College (now PSU).

We met again some 20 years later when I joined a professional organization called "The American Foundrymen's Society" and learned that its monthly dinner meetings were held at Marika's Greek Restaurant—where George, his family, and his magnificent Packard Dual Cowl Phaeton greeted the clientele who could hardly wait to order their signature entrée of Greek Chicken. I clearly have one more reason to appreciate my love of Classic Cars when it presents the opportunity to re-connect with someone like George Choban—like his car, a true original.

Larry Schick

CONTENT EDITOR, *THE HOOD RELEASE*

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AND MANY OTHER CLUBS FOR THE

2016 GORGE RIDE

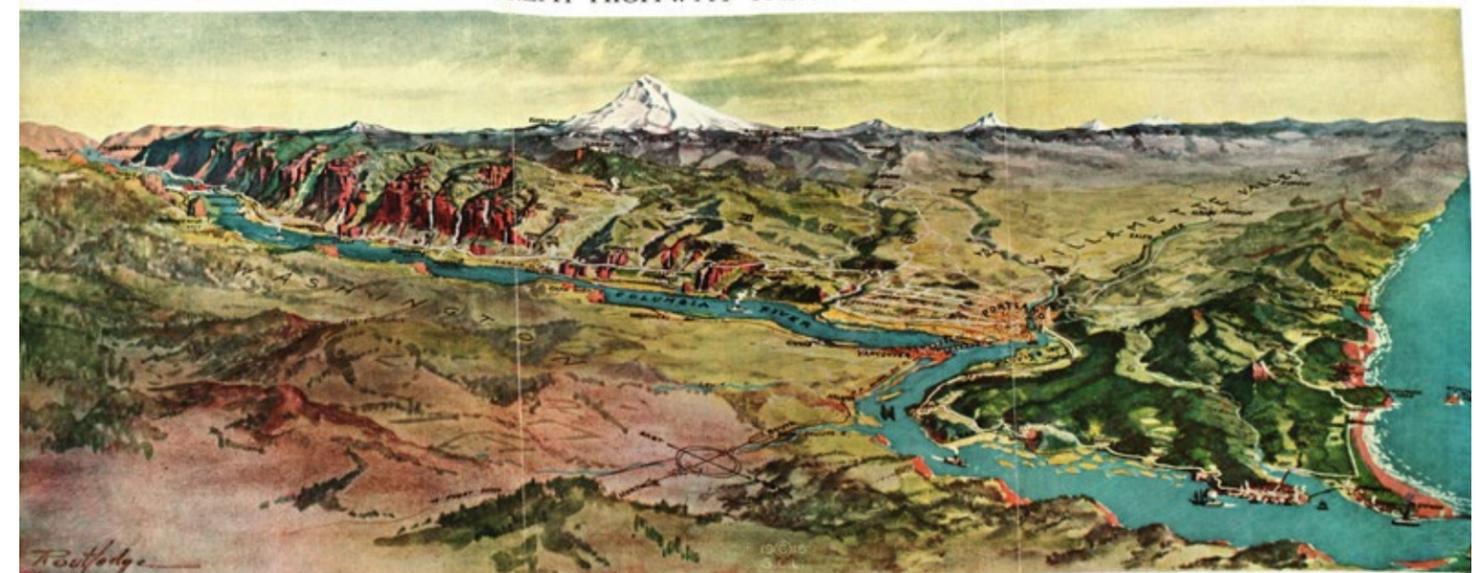
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2016 Valentine's Day Brunch and Tour

REPORT BY ROBERT DOUGLAS
with various embedded reporters



PHOTO COURTESY OF BILL JABS

Bill Jabs' 1941 Lincoln Continental Coupe, alongside the 1938 Bentley Touring Sedan owned by new members Bloor and Patricia Ann Redding, were two of the Classics attending the event as well as a few Non-Classic vehicles.

THIS YEAR brought about the rare coincidence of The Valentine's Day Tour and Brunch and the actual Valentine's Day, a highly unusual occurrence. This event is traditionally the first tour of the season for the Oregon Region CCCA in conjunction with Packards of Oregon, a chance to get out cars, test out recent work, and see if the winter's efforts have paid off. Unfortunately, the weather was heavy and therefore the Full Classic® and Packard turnout was light. Those with the courage to bring them out were Mary and Bill Jabs in their 1941 Lincoln Continental, Patricia Ann and Bloor Redding in their 1938 Bentley 4.25L Thrup-Maberly Touring Sedan, Myrna and Gary Geddes in their 1954 Buick Super Convertible (NC), and guest Carl Johnson, who drove modern iron—but it was the distinctive 1980 Rolls Royce Silver Shadow II (NC). Everyone else drove their modern iron for the event.

OUR TOUR DIRECTOR Chris Cataldo and Tour Director Emeritus Rodger Eddy had laid out the route from Lewis and Clark State Park to the Multnomah Falls Lodge, and, as always, it was an exciting adventure in motoring! At ten o'clock in the morning, our band of travelers set out onto Highway 30 heading for a much anticipated meal at Multnomah Falls Lodge. In about four miles the tour turned off of 30 and onto a series of other scenic back roads. The scenery, though wet, was beautiful as it always is in the Columbia Gorge, but at about mile 15 the road surface began to change and the trees grew much closer to the road and the down-grade began to increase. Alex Barr/Haines Road became an automotive adventure; the forest and trees were right beside the road and we were dropping back down to Highway 30 on switchbacks. If you did not have power steering, by the time you got to the bottom, you had cut a cord of fire wood! It is a beautiful

TOUR REPORT

route though, off the beaten path and very scenic—the kind of roads our cars traveled when they were new. In about two miles, the tour rejoined Highway 30 and continued east for another six miles before arriving at Multnomah Falls Lodge and breakfast.

WE FILLED our half of the lodge with forty-eight hungry travelers, and the buffet did not disappoint. No one left hungry! As always, we had a beautiful view of the falls, which were spectacular from all of the recent rain. The trail soon filled with intrepid hikers but with the weather, everyone was glad to be inside near the fireplace.

AFTER BRUNCH, the tour continued on a less precipitous route back to the beautiful home and collections of Beverly and Roy Asbahr where everyone enjoyed the fine collection of cars in the shop. In their home were amazing collections of dolls, toys and quilts—truly a visual feast for everyone. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Beverly and Roy for kindly sharing their home with us. We really enjoyed everything! From here, the tour ended and people went their separate ways, returning to their homes and lives.

WE WOULD like to take this opportunity to thank those who made this adventure possible: Sylvia and George Potter and Howard Freedman, for arranging our brunch at the Multnomah Falls Lodge and having everything ready for our arrival; and Chris Cataldo and Rodger Eddy, for another spectacular automotive adventure that delivered us all safely to another Bacchanalian feast. Thank you one and all for another great event! ■

Top: Tour director Roger Eddy with help from his nephew Phillip giving some last-minute driving instructions; Middle: George and Susi Choban enjoying the day with Marko; Bottom: New members Bloor and Patricia Ann Redding at their first CCCA Oregon Region Event.



PHOTO: BILL JABS



PHOTO: BILL JABS



PHOTO: HOWARD FREEDMAN

LONG BEACH IN APRIL: TOUR REPORT



PHOTO COURTESY OF DENNIS GILMAN

Member cars soaking up the sunshine upon arrival at Long Beach Peninsula, Washington.

THE WEATHER was perfect, the company was top notch, and the cars were the cream of the crop. Our host lodging was far and away the most hospitable of any place we can recall: right on the beach, and the owner went way out of his way to make it perfect. Upon our arrival, he even brought out orange cones to cordon off special parking areas for our cars, and provided the honeymoon suite for our social hours.

AGONY was not forgotten, particularly that of the author. I started out driving the '41 Packard but heard an engine noise so I took it back; then got in the '48 Cadillac, but after about ten miles found no brakes, so limped home and got back to the garage in Evelyn's VW to get the DeSoto—but it was sick with a starter that did not want to start, so I finally got in the '53 Packard (NC) and hit the road in super style. It was a great hauler when we packed in 8 or more people for the runs to dinners. Pat and Larry Cox had some trouble at home so they drove a modern car, as did JoAnne and Dennis Gilman (of course, a hot-rod black 'Vette). Rodger and Jan drove one of their fleet of (NC) wagons, while Bob Earls drove our '53 Pontiac (NC). Michael and Virginia Galvin drove the lovely '41 Cadillac 62 while Jan and Bob Newlands drove "Goldie," their '37 Packard, and it was a special treat to have them with us.

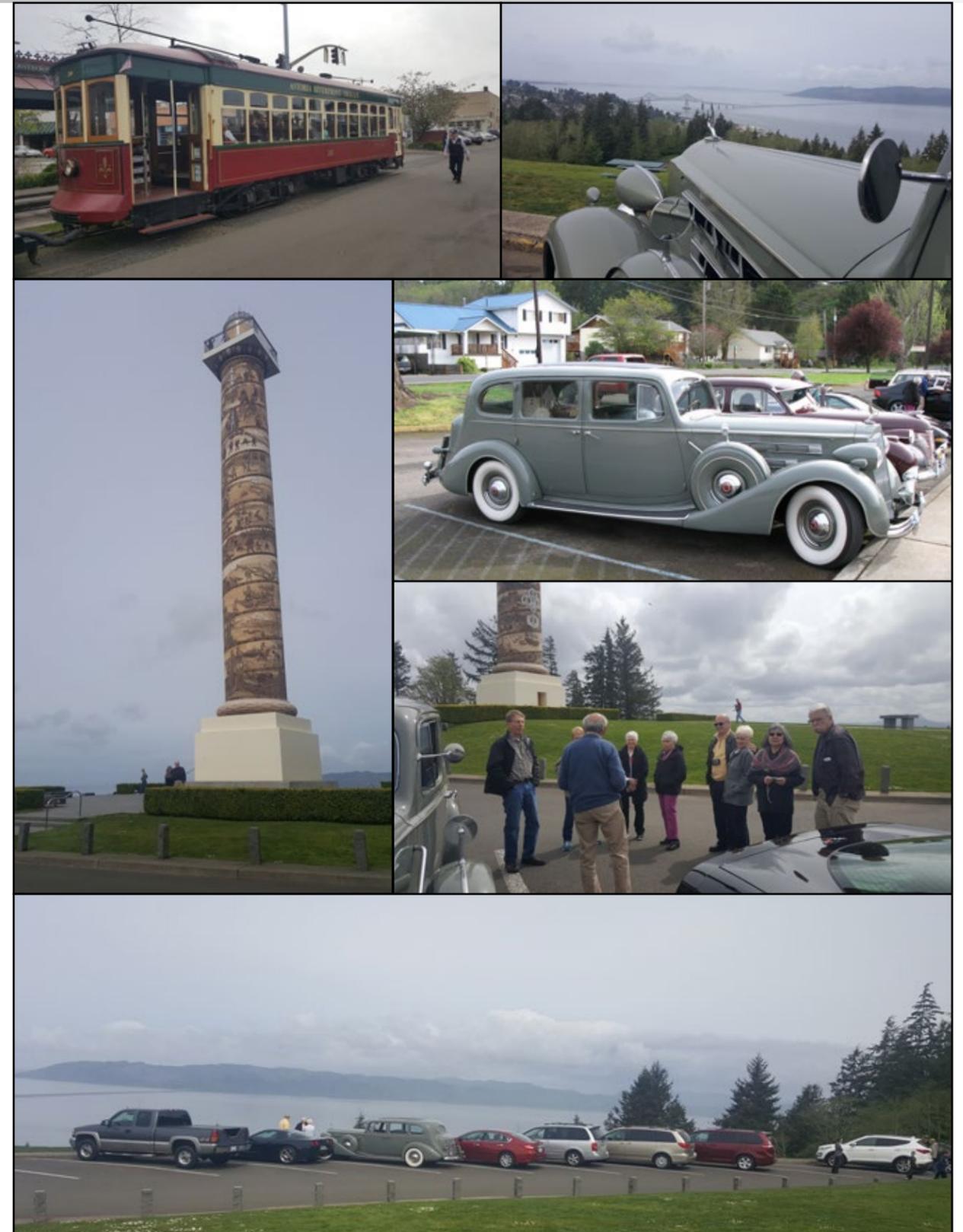
WE ENJOYED the maiden voyage of Sylvia and George Potter's new 1937 Packard "12" and, as would be expected, it was the belle of the ball. Great happy hours, good dinners, beautiful scenery, and of course the obligatory trip to Jack's general store in Ocean Park made the Long Beach Peninsula tour a true delight. Thanks to all who came with us, and for those who did not, perhaps you can join us on one of our next tours for lots of fun and companionship plus the main joy: driving our Classics.

Howard Freedman

TREASURER, CLASSIC CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

TREASURER, CCCA OREGON REGION

OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: A ride on the Astoria Riverfront Trolley (photo: George Potter); great views over the Columbia River (photo: George Potter); George and Sylvia Potter's 1937 Packard 1508 - V12 Limo (photo: Dennis Gilman); Tour Director Roger Eddy addresses attendees beneath the Astoria Column (photo: George Potter); Classic and non-Classics alike line the waterfront (photo: George Potter); The Astoria Column rises up over the Columbia River (photo: George Potter).



TECH SESSION REPORT

REPORT BY LARRY SCHICK
PHOTOS BY BILL JABS

ON SATURDAY, MARCH 29, sixteen members of the Oregon Region of the Classic Car Club of America met at 10:00 am at Howard Freedman's garage to attend a technical presentation by Bob Earls in which he discussed two related topics—preparing your car for the upcoming spring and summer driving season after the long inactivity of the winter months, and ensuring both car and driver can best survive the dreaded unexpected breakdown whenever it occurs.

IN ADDITION to covering the usual basics, such as checking all fluid levels, condition of tires, battery, steering, and brakes, Bob also provided tour hand-outs to attendees titled "Emergency Road Tool and Parts List" and "Troubleshooting Guide for Classic Cars." Bob also had a list of supplies he recommends for a "Survival Kit" for both car and driver he found very useful from his own past experience, which included personal items such as blankets, non-perishable food, water or other beverages, a lantern flashlight, highway flares or other warning signs, and a fully charged cell phone. Valuable automotive spares include an extra set of plugs, points, a coil, fan belts, radiator hoses, headlights and bulbs, and



Bob Earls discussing roadside emergencies.

a two-ton bottle or platform jack. Bob also noted that several automotive parts stores such as NAPA frequently carry parts in stock which are acceptable for use in older cars although they were not expressly manufactured for that purpose. Bill Jabs and Larry Cox also provided additional input in the discussion regarding interchangeable parts and possible parts sources. Howard Freedman provided important information regarding the need to avoid exceeding 1.5 amps on recharging Optima batteries.

AT THE CLOSE of the presentation, attendees enjoyed a light brunch hosted by Howard and viewed a film Bob provided titled *Burn-Em Barnes* which featured cars of the early 1930's era. ■



Some of the session's attentive participants.



Members enjoying brunch after the session.



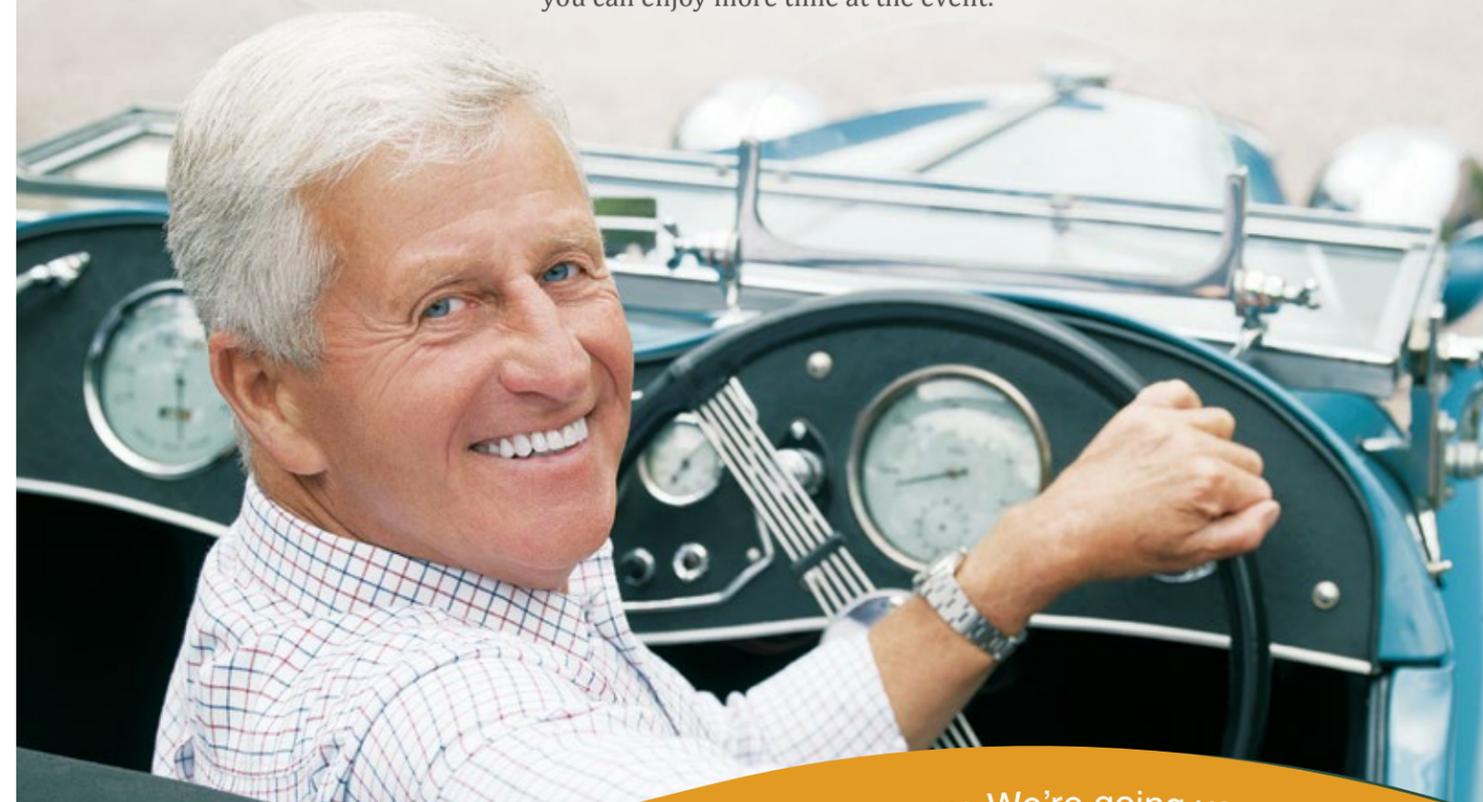
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TECHNICAL ARTICLE

COOLING SYSTEM CLEANING AND CORROSION PROTECTION

BY BILL JABS

YOUR COOLING SYSTEM is one of the most important systems in your automobile to keep clean and stop or reduce corrosion. This is especially important when your car has mixed metals like aluminum and copper that can set up electrolysis. Failure to maintain your cooling system properly can cause overheating and result in costly repairs. Maintenance involves both cleaning and protection from further corrosion.

IF YOU EXAMINE an old engine block, you can observe a buildup of rust, scale and other deposits that keep your cooling system from operating at its designed efficiency. If you have not cleaned your cooling system in some time, you probably have a similar buildup. Back flushing can do a good job of cleaning scaly deposits, but I believe that lots of rust and deposits remain. If you dissolve the rust and deposits chemically, my experience suggests that you end up with a cleaner cooling system, with less chance of particles circulating through your radiator and plugging the tubes.

THERE ARE many commercially available cooling system cleaners, which all may work fine, but I have begun using white vinegar, a mild acid, to clean my vehicle cooling systems with good success. The process is simple, reasonably inexpensive, easy to use, not too messy, and leaves your cooling system very clean.

HERE ARE THE BASIC STEPS:

1. Drain your cooling system and if oily, use a mixture of Simple Green or other degreaser to dissolve the oil.
2. Close your petcock and fill with white vinegar. Most systems take from 2-3 gallons, so buy the cheapest vinegar you can find. Bi-Mart and Walmart seem to be the cheapest suppliers.
3. Run your engine until it is up to operating temperature. I even drive my vehicles around, and let the vinegar "cook" for one to three days before

draining. The dirty vinegar will stain concrete and pavements, so be careful and dispose of it properly. 4. Flush several times with clean water, then add two cups of baking soda in the last flush to neutralize the acid.

YOUR COOLING SYSTEM should now be clean, but it needs protection to prevent immediate corrosion. Some people prefer a 50-50 mix of antifreeze, which is important if you are exposing your car to subfreezing temperatures. I have been led to believe that older cars do not cool as well with antifreeze, and since I do not drive them in the winter, I generally avoid its use. A commercial additive called "Water Wetter" claims to improve engine cooling by increasing heat transfer, and also claims to prevent corrosion. I have used it and am neither a proponent nor an opponent, but have recently been introduced to a new product by fellow car collector, Bob Newlands, called "No-Rosion" that I feel is superior.

PRIOR TO USING any product, I try to research who is using and recommending it, and why. My research indicates that the Nethercutt Museum in Sylmar, Ca. and Jay Leno's Garage use the product extensively. The manufacturer claims their product prevents corrosion and electrolysis, provides water pump lubricant and lasts up to 5 years or 30,000 miles of driving. It is manufactured and supplied by Applied Chemical Specialties, Inc., Omaha, Ne., www.no-rosion.com. The cost is \$9.95/pint or 4 pints for \$29.95 plus S&H. It can be added with or without antifreeze. Recommended mixture is one pint with 50-50 antifreeze and 2 pints with plain water.

I AM SYSTEMATICALLY going through my entire collection and cleaning with white vinegar and adding No-Rosion. While I don't have years of experience with the process or products I have described, I am confident that it is going to work well. If I learn otherwise, I'll write a rebuttal. ■

PIERCE-ARROW



1931 MODEL 42 PIERCE-ARROW CONVERTIBLE COUPE OWNED BY GEORGE CHOBAN

BY LARRY SCHICK

AS A FOUNDING MEMBER of the Oregon Region of the Classic Car Club of America and a widely recognized collector, restorer, and historian of Packard automobiles of the Classic Era, it would seem only fitting that George Choban would also count among his prized collection of classics another member of the legendary “Three Ps” of American motoring royalty—an unrestored original 1931 Model 42 Pierce-Arrow Convertible Coupe. The Pierce-Arrow was, in fact, one of George’s first classics, which he acquired in 1960 even before he met Susie, his devoted wife of over 65 years. “I ran across the Pierce at Harlan Hardman’s HGS Machine Shop here in Portland in the middle 1950s,” George recalls, “and I pursued that car for over four years, which was even longer than I courted Susi.”

AFTER TEACHING MATHEMATICS in 1959 at Portland State College (now Portland State University), George decided to take a leave of absence from the faculty for a year and pursue a Master of Science Degree in Mathematics at Oregon State University. Following a year of intense study, George earned his degree and decided to reward himself by buying a car. As luck would have it, he received a phone call from Mr. Hardman about that same time informing him that he was finally ready to sell his 1931 Pierce-Arrow, but that George would need to make a decision soon because another buyer had surfaced. After George made his offer, Mr. Hardman called back to inform him that the potential buyer had exceeded his offer, and that he may want to make a new offer.



Pierce-Arrow's dash afforded the driver a sense of understated elegance together with simplicity of function.



The arrangement of gauges with the odometer showing original mileage and Waltham's legendary timepiece of the era.

When George learned that the other interested party was none other than Jay Hyde, another devoted classic car enthusiast and one of his close friends, he was reluctant to make a second offer.

AT THAT POINT, Mr. Hardman soon realized that he was unintentionally promoting a bidding war between two friends, and he promptly informed them both that he would make a decision on to whom he would sell the car not based solely on whoever submitted the highest offer. Not long thereafter, George was delighted to receive a call from Mr. Hardman informing him that he had decided George should have the car. To this day, he has no idea why Mr. Hardman chose him as the buyer of his car, although it may well have been the result of George’s earlier four year persistent courtship of the car. In any event, George and Jay remained lifelong good friends up until Jay’s recent passing, and shared many memorable experiences together through their mutual interest in cars. It was Jay, in fact, who told George about a 1930 Cadillac Convertible Coupe that might be available in Lebanon, OR, which George subsequently bought in June of 1960. That car turned out to be the 1930 Cadillac V-16 Convertible Coupe which George magnificently restored and still owns today.

“WHEN MY BROTHER and I drove that Sixteen Cylinder Cadillac back to Portland around 55-60 mph, we got only about 5 miles per gallon for mileage,” George recalls, “so we decided to reduce the speed a little down below 50 mph, and although it took us a little longer to get home, the mileage went up to 10 mpg.” Fortunately, George didn’t heed his Uncle Frank’s advice after he learned that George had acquired both the 1931 Pierce-Arrow and the 1930 V-16 Cadillac Coupe within the span of two weeks! “He couldn’t understand what I wanted to do with ‘those two old jalopies,’” George recalls, “and he told me that the best thing I could do with them was to haul them both down to Alaska Junk Co. (now Schnitzer Steel), and have them scrapped out so that I could get back at least some of my money.”

AS IS OFTEN the case with Classic and vintage automobiles, George has an extensive, although incomplete history of his 1931 Pierce-Arrow Model 42 Convertible Coupe. The first known owner of the car was a collector in Klamath Falls named Julian Echols, who later traded it in around 1935 for a new Pontiac at the Windolph Pontiac Dealership in Portland. It was subsequently purchased by a local dentist who drove the car frequently during World War II, finding its cornering and handling

on tight curves impressive for a car of its vintage. One lasting legacy of the dentist's ownership was the lack of a bottom seat cushion in the rumble seat compartment when George purchased the car. "It seems that the dentist and his wife went on a picnic one day and decided to use the bottom seat cushion as a makeshift picnic table," George relates. The occasion was apparently so enjoyable that they drove away leaving the seat bottom behind, necessitating the manufacture of a replacement as clearly indicated by the contrasting appearance between the original seat back and the new bottom.



The old and the new: Contrasting leathers of the original rumble seat back and the replacement seat bottom.

BESIDES having an upholstery shop make the replacement bottom cushion for the rumble seat compartment and stitch up a rip in the seat, George says that he has done very little work on the car over the past 65 plus years, preferring to keep it in its factory original condition rather than giving it a 100 point total restoration. When he bought the car in 1960, Mr. Hardman had repainted the fenders but did not put them back on the car, leaving that task

to the new owner to complete. In 1961, George had some limited engine work done, installing new rings and having Mr. Hardman's machine shop re-babbitt seven of the original eight connecting rods.

POWERED BY its smooth, quiet, 385 cubic inch nine main bearing straight-eight engine generating 132 horsepower, and driven by its three-speed transmission with free-wheeling rear differential and duo-servo mechanical brakes, the car has outstanding road handling and maneuverability for its 142-inch wheelbase and is truly a joy to drive. The free-wheeling option was introduced in 1931 by a number of American automobile manufacturers including Pierce-Arrow and Lincoln. With no engine braking while the car is in gear and the accelerator pedal undepressed, the free-wheeling option was touted as providing improved gas mileage, a seemingly insignificant consideration for a buyer in Pierce-Arrow's \$3500 plus price range. George can attest to the Pierce's outstanding road manners from personal experience, as he notes the car even survived a four-wheel drift his brother deliberately put in it when he drove it around the tight curves of Old Germantown Road around 40 mph. He has little doubt a similar performance would likely have rolled his 1930 Cadillac V-16 Convertible Coupe over on its side!

WITH LESS THAN 100,000 original miles showing on the odometer, this 1931 Model 42 Pierce-Arrow Convertible Coupe retains its factory original top, paint, upholstery, and chrome, with the minor exceptions noted. It was judged Best Original Unrestored Car at the 2013 Forest Grove Concours d'Elegance, and stands as a lasting testimonial to the quality of manufacturing and level of engineering excellence synonymous with automobiles built by the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company of Buffalo, N.Y. from 1901 to 1938. ■

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO
GEORGE AND SUSI CHOBAN

**1931 PIERCE-ARROW MODEL 42
CONVERTIBLE COUPE
TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS**

WHEELBASE: 142"
CURB WEIGHT: 4700 LBS.
ENGINE: 385 CU." STRAIGHT-EIGHT 132 BHP
BRAKES: SERVO TYPE MECHANICAL
TRANSMISSION: FREE WHEELING
PRICE: \$4,275 FOB BUFFALO

TOTAL 1931 PIERCE-ARROW PRODUCTION: <5,000



One of the most iconic hood ornaments of the Classic Era was Pierce-Arrow's "Archer" radiator cap, designed and produced by the Turnstedt Division of General Motors.



A hallmark of Pierce-Arrow's engineering excellence was its silk-smooth 9 main bearing straight-eight 385 CID engine generating 132 BHP.



Pierce's 1931 Model 42 Convertible Coupe was beautifully proportioned and impressive at any angle, as shown by its streamlined rear deck. The rumble seat lacked a handle but chrome step pads accommodated passengers.



The unique placement of headlights molded into the front fenders endured from 1914 until the marque's demise in 1938.

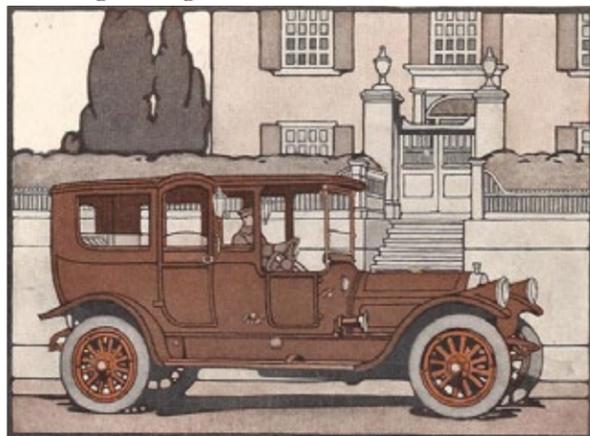
UNCOMPROMISED EXCELLENCE

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PIERCE-ARROW MOTOR CAR COMPANY

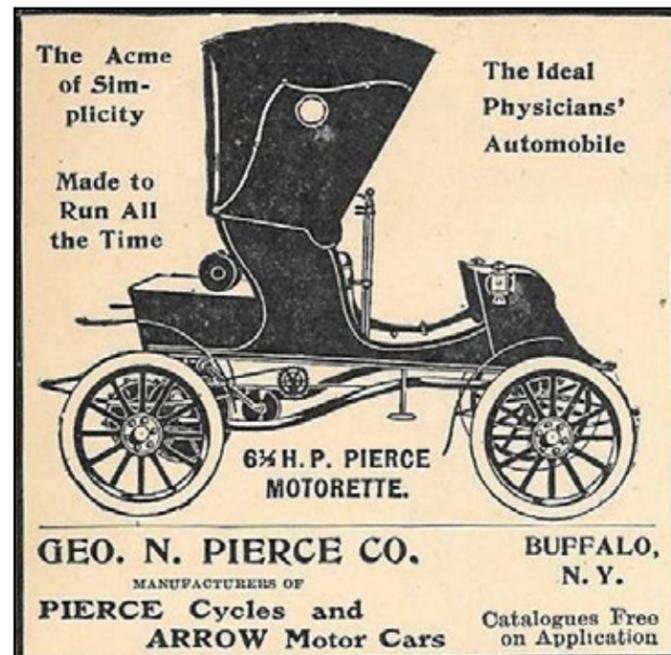
BY LARRY SCHICK

AFTER HIS DECISION in 1872 to buy out his two partners in the Heinz, Pierce, and Munschauer Company they had founded in 1865, George Norman Pierce changed the name of his company to the George N. Pierce Company and abandoned the manufacture of household items such as ice boxes and gilded birdcages in order to pursue the budding transportation industry of motorized vehicles. Following the “Motorette” which had only a single cylinder with two forward gears and no reverse, he soon began the manufacture of more elaborate upscale models, producing the durable four cylinder “Arrow” which proved its reliability by winning the prestigious Glidden Trophy in 1905 for its victory over 32 other entrants in the challenging 1,100 mile race from New York City to Bretton Woods, New Hampshire.

AFTER GEORGE PIERCE decided to sell his ownership of the company in 1907, it became known as “The Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company” a year later. By then, it had already earned its reputation as a purveyor of upscale automobiles catering to buyers of financial means and discriminating taste, counting among its clients President William How-



An illustration from a 1914 ad shows the newly developed design for headlights incorporated into the front fenders.



An early advertisement for the “Motorette” built by the George N. Pierce Company under the Arrow Motor Cars marque, c. 1904

ard Taft, who ordered two of its vehicles for use on state occasions as the first official cars of the White House. Concentrating exclusively on six-cylinder cars by 1914, Pierce-Arrow adopted its most enduring and definitive styling hallmark when Herbert M. Dawley, who designed almost every vehicle the firm produced from 1912-1938, decided to move the headlights into flared housings molded into the car’s front fenders. Besides immediately giving the car a distinguishing and unique identity from its frontal and side views, its wider separation between the headlights also gave it the illusion of a wider, bolder stance. Although conventional headlight placement on the sides of the radiator remained an option for customers who preferred it, few chose that alternative throughout the marque’s life until production ended in 1938.

A SECOND uniquely identifying Pierce-Arrow feature was the sensational and delicately designed iconic helmeted archer, also created by Herbert Dawley, which graced the hood of every Pierce-Arrow produced from 1928 on. Although it was now firmly established as a status symbol and clearly recognized as a vehicle of choice sought after by Hollywood’s stars, industrial tycoons, American Presidents, and world dignitaries and diplomats, the Great Depression was already clearly beginning to take its toll on production levels and threatening the financial well-being of Pierce-Arrow, as well as other independent American luxury marque manufacturers.

ENVISIONING the mutual benefits that a merger might bring to both companies, such as a larger dealer network and the economic advantages of a shared engineering staff, Studebaker President Albert Erskine acquired control of Pierce-Arrow through a stock transfer in 1928. Although the merger failed to bring the financial advantages both companies had originally envisioned, Erskine’s decision to allow both companies to function autonomously enabled Pierce-Arrow to last long enough for it to be a part of the Golden Age that produced the great cars of the Classic Era.

REACHING the finest bloom of its operations in the early 1930’s, Pierce-Arrow produced four wheelbases of differing lengths in 1931 in a variety of open and closed bodies, several of them bearing the custom coachwork of the finest design houses in existence, such as LeBaron, Derham, Dietrich, and Brunn. Sadly, only 4,522 cars found buyers that year—and yet, undaunted by continued declining sales, the firm persisted in its stubborn refusal to consider the production of a down-scale companion car to enhance sales, such as Packard



This 1932 iteration of the iconic Pierce-Arrow archer wore no helmet, but remained instantly recognizable. Photograph by Robert Couse-Baker. Image licensed under CC-BY-2.0 via Flickr.com.

did with its Junior Series. In fact, in a show of its determination to continue its pursuit of manufacturing quality and engineering excellence, the firm introduced two new V-12 engines for 1932, which offered smoother operation, better accessibility, and higher performance and response than the V-12 engines of its competitors. Unfortunately, sales still continued to drop, falling to only 2,692 cars at the end of the model year—an ominous portent of the beleaguered company’s future.

PIERCE-ARROW arguably left no more lasting testimonial to its reputation as one of the pre-eminent manufacturers of the greatest motor cars of the era, from the standpoint of both advanced automotive design as well as engineering excellence, than was exemplified by its streamlined, rakish Silver Arrow Show Car produced for the New York and Chicago Auto Shows in January, 1933.

CONTINUED ON P.18.

UNCOMPROMISED EXCELLENCE *continued*



The Silver Arrow concept car reflected new design ideals for a car of the future, but sadly no more than 5 were ever produced. Photographs by James Emery. Images licensed under CC-BY-2.0 via Flickr.com.



STRIKINGLY FUTURISTIC and radically designed, it was intended to be America's dream car of the future, but its \$10,000 price tag at the depth of the depression limited its production to 5 cars and sealed its fate as only a "dream car." Following Studebaker's forced sale of Pierce-Arrow stock after it fell into receivership as well in over-extending itself in the pursuit of The White Motor Co. in February 1933, a group of Buffalo, NY area businessmen and bankers bought control of Pierce-Arrow and continued in production.

INITIAL OPTIMISM under newly appointed former Pierce general manager Arthur Chanter soon faded as sales for 1933 had dropped even further to only 2,152 units, with an estimate of 4,000 units needed to break even. After emerging from a bankruptcy reorganization in 1934, a leaner and more

streamlined company entered the 1935 model year with a 1,000 unit break-even point, but even this lower goal proved overly optimistic, and Pierce-Arrow was forced to close its doors. The company was liquidated in May of 1938, bringing to a close the production of automobiles that will forever be remembered for their superbly designed engines and chassis and their bodies of unmatched craftsmanship and quality which had enabled them to compete with other luxury car manufacturers that were part of large corporations with vastly superior financial resources and the capability of realizing economies of scale in engineering and production. The passing of Pierce-Arrow signaled the end of one of America's grand marques built by highly skilled craftsmen in a stately New England plant where the micrometer played a more significant role than the clock. ■



One of the very first automobile advertisements ever printed in color is reproduced below, from a magazine page which appeared in 1907. A long line of America's finest motor cars connects The Great Arrow with its latest successor... the Pierce-Arrow shown at the left.

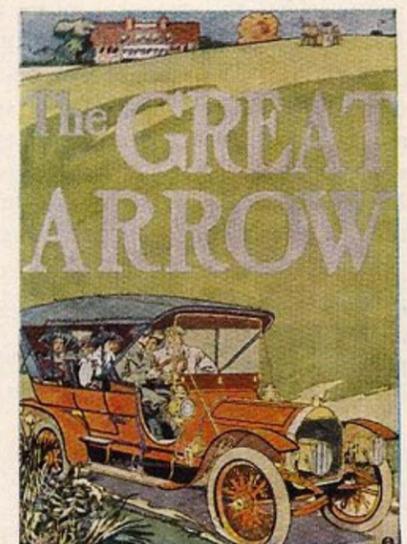
PEOPLE of character own Pierce-Arrows just as they choose select neighborhoods in which to live, proper environments for their families, and well-bred associates. In short, these are people who insist upon fineness in whatever closely touches their daily lives.

To such traditions are Pierce-Arrows built, in Buffalo, by the finest hand craftsmen in the world — by men who, in many instances, learned reverence for Pierce-

Arrow fineness from their fathers.

Nor is it remarkable, in the circumstances, that America's finest motor car should have borne the Pierce-Arrow nameplate for twenty-nine years — or that the same emblem should today identify the elect among automobiles of quality the world over.

Pride is thus inseparable from Pierce-Arrow ownership — pride in the car's integrity, its patrician loveliness of line, its beauty of coloring, its flawless appointment.

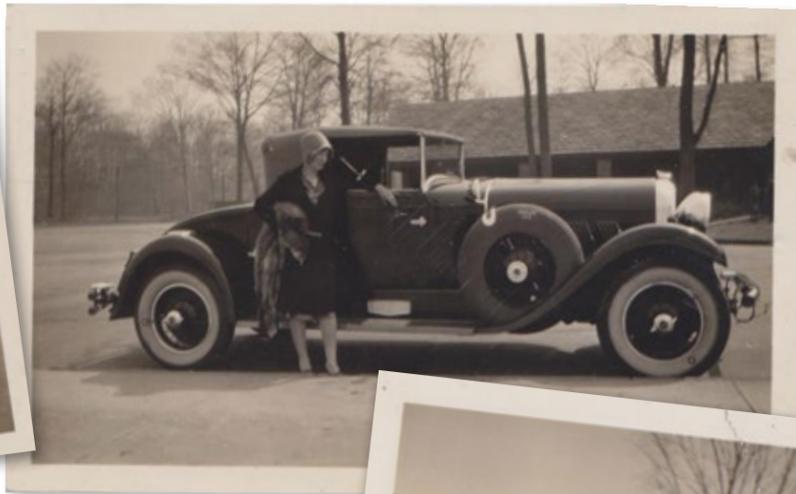


PIERCE - ARROW

THREE NEW GROUPS OF STRAIGHT EIGHTS . . . 132 TO 144-INCH WHEELBASES . . . \$2695 TO \$6250 AT BUFFALO
(Custom-built Models up to \$10,000)

FROM THE VAULT...

READERS of last quarter's *Hood Release* will recognize the images on this page from the previous feature, now identified by CCA Oregon Region member Mona Marsh. The recipient of the letter and photographs, reproduced below, is Sherman Williams, one of the Oregon Region's founding members. Can anyone identify the year, make, or model of the car pictured with Sherman?



November 13, 1932

Dear Sherman;

At last I get around to catching up on my correspondence. I am sorry behind and have not answered your last two letters.

You last letter to the club gave me the impression that you had the idea you were not a "member in full". Actually you were. The original \$3.00 you sent in was the amount of the dues for 1932. The \$5.00 mentioned in our publication is the figure we fix for 1933 to help cover the cost of our publication. We have taken your money order and have you listed as a member for 1933.

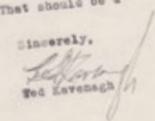
So far we have no classes of membership. Either you are or you aren't. All member have the same privileges (that is the way) and receive the same check my dictionary! privileges (that is the way) and receive the same notices and publications. Makes no difference whether they have cars or not. Some of our members can't have cars because, like yourself, they are not here, or they live in a city and have no place to put one, or they can't afford one and so are content to collect material.

I bought a Lincoln, 1937 K Leland convertible sedan, some time ago with the idea in mind of making some profit on it so I could better afford to do the huge job necessary on my Packard. Now I don't know what to do. There is a 1931 Cadillac V-16 roadster in Norristown that is owned by a young man who is married and has a baby and not much money in trade. He has been told that he won't sell it but might take something in trade. So I can offer him 4 cylinders less for economy and an open or closed car for comfort. Also a slightly newer car. But, if I do that, there goes my profit for the Packard. BUT, how often does one find a car like the V-16? Not often enough to be able to throw away the chance of getting one fairly cheap.

It needs top, woodwork, seats and maybe tires. But the Lincoln needs top, paint, and a little valve work. Also, I like the older cars better than the later models. So what to do? I think I'll try to effect a trade. If it works, I really think I'll take him up on it. If I can't afford it in the long run, a V-16 Caddy Roadster will sell faster than the Lincoln.

I am enclosing your longest photos for which I thank you. I'm sorry I don't have any pix of the Princess or the Lincoln to send you. For that matter, I haven't taken any pix of the Lincoln.

Let us know how you make out on the 27 Packard. That should be a real bomb.

Sincerely,

 Ted Eavenagh



This issue's photo "from the vault" comes from the personal archives of the Editor's great uncle, John LaGrand, who is shown here seated in the middle on the running board of his Pierce-Arrow Touring Sedan, circa 1931 with family and friends.

We hope you enjoy these glimpses into the past, and we invite you, readers of the *Hood Release*, to send us any of your own treasures "from the vault."

Laura Schick
 MANAGING EDITOR



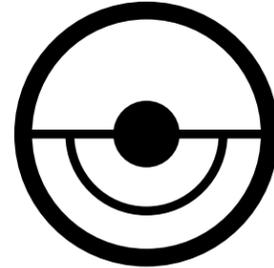
MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

May
21

COVERED BRIDGE TOUR

Albany, Oregon

Join members of the Oregon Region for a morning of touring and relaxation that will feature a trip to a high-end restoration shop in Canby, a tour to the Gallon House Bridge, a drive through Mt. Angel, and a visit to a private winery in Scotts Mills with wine tasting and appetizers served at a cost of \$10 per person. Contact Tour Coordinator Bill Price with questions.



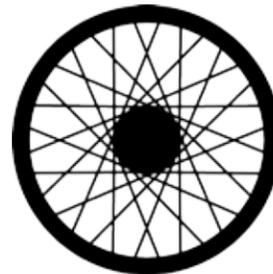
June
12

STRAWBERRY SOCIAL

Eagle Creek Lavender Farm

Hosted by Bill and Mary Jabs

The Jabs will welcome Oregon Region members and guests to their home and lavender farm for the annual Strawberry Social. Come for delicious desserts, excellent company, and of course, the gorgeous lavender fields!



September
10

WEEKLONG FALL TOUR

Steens Mountain, Oregon

September 10-18

This fall's weeklong tour will take participants to central and southeastern Oregon, where the crown jewel of Oregon's high desert, Steens Mountain, rises above Alvord Desert. Contact Oregon Region Tour Directors for more information.



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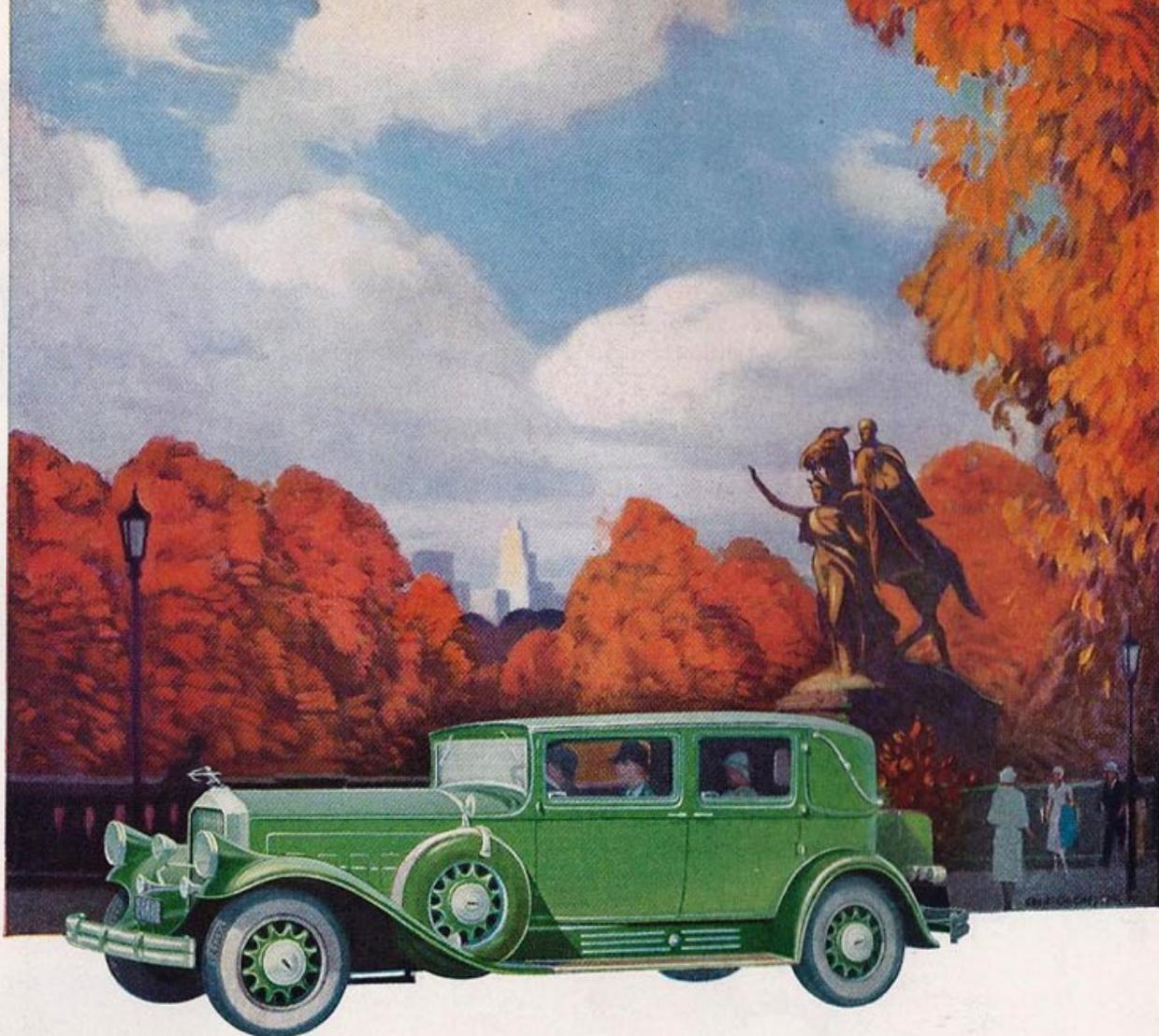
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A new Pierce-Arrow Salon Model...the Club Sedan...and, below, a distinguished predecessor

PIERCE-ARROW PRESENTS

A NEW LINE OF EXQUISITELY APPOINTED

Salon Models

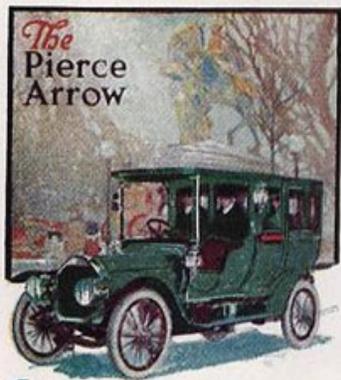
ADVANCE CUSTOM MODES FOR 1931

Twenty-two years have wrought remarkable development in automobiles of quality, as evidenced by the two Pierce-Arrow portraits on this page. But scarcely less striking is the contrast between Pierce-Arrow's new Salon creations and even modern-day conceptions of beauty and elegance and distinction in fine motor cars.

Pierce-Arrow has anticipated, in these new models, the ultra-modern demand for a

certain studied elegance — with interiors so richly appointed as to suggest distinguished drawing rooms — with colorings and equipment in the custom manner of tomorrow.

And beyond these lovely externals is the performance that is so reassuringly Pierce-Arrow — expressing, as always, every latest engineering development proved worthy of adoption by America's finest motor car.



America's Finest Motor Car of 1908

PIERCE - ARROW

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