

I am not very good at creative writing, but I have been asked to write something for newsletters and articles about the 2025 Arizona Concours in Scottsdale AZ. I can get very wordy, so feel free to edit this and throw as much on the cutting room floor as you desire.

On Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, I was attending the Phoenix “Orphan” Car show. The name has a dual meaning, in that it is a opportunity to display “Orphan” cars, as well as a fund raiser for the local orphanage, Sunshine Acres here in Mesa. The meaning of an “orphan” is a car manufacture that is no longer in existence, like the Sears and the Maxwell that attended, as well as the less obvious orphan like Oldsmobile’s. I was there with my 1924 Studebaker roadster, an EM ‘Light Six’ which is my only orphan. (Known as ‘Cash Fetters’ ‘Mr. Fetters’ or simply ‘Cash’).



The gathering is a cruise-in for different clubs around the valley like the H.E.T. Club, the Grand Canyon State Chapter of the Studebaker Drivers Club, the Horseless Carriage Club, etc. I was there with my friends from the Studebaker Drivers Club, and it is a wonderful event for a October picnic and for meeting members of other clubs, unlike most cruise-ins where so many muscle cars are the norm, or like a single club event where everyone usually sees the same drivers.



At some point in the morning, a man unknown to me, approached me and asked if I had ever considered applying for consideration to a Concours d'Elegance? I laughed to myself – my perception of “d'Elegance” is V-12 and V-16 cowl followed by a 9 or 12 passenger 3 row Phaeton that straddles 3 zip codes, along with an equally long number of zeros following the \$\$\$. This man, who I learned was the manager of the Arizona Concours, said if he had enough entrants for my class, he would accept me as an entrant. I was excited and shocked to be considered.

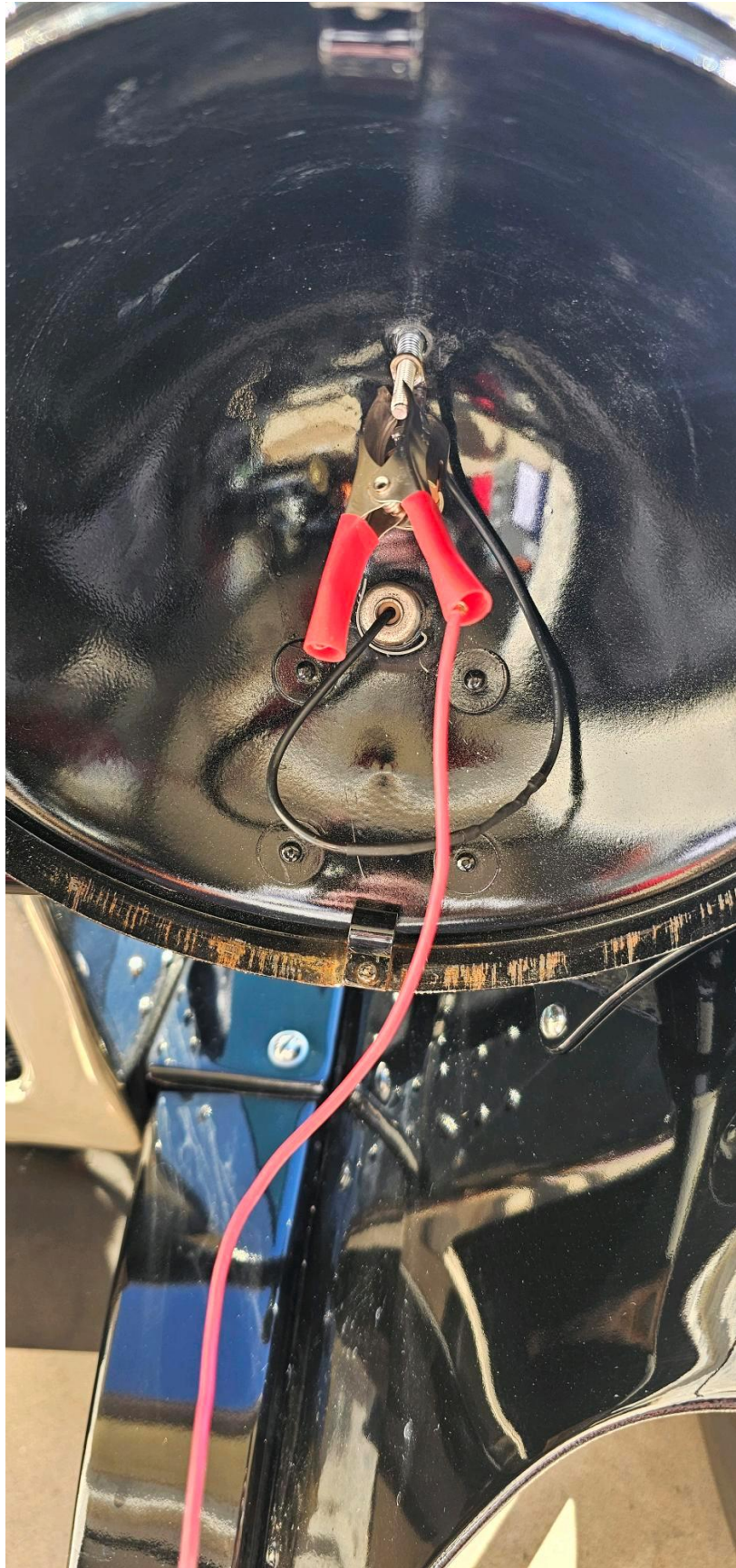
By the next day, I had my application and was scrambling to pick others brains about what I should say in my entrant essay. What do I say? There is no prominence that I know if to this car; I have no clue where the car came from (save that the seller told me he purchased it in Iowa); the Light Six model has no racing history; and even though I had wanted to drive this car since about 1974, the only connection I have to the car is that my great grandparents drove one and I have lots of photos from 1927. That's it. In the end, I threw together a description and sent it off. I also decided that I would enter for judging and not just for showing, only because I was interested in how many points my car would be. I was not interested in competing against the big dogs, but I was curious to know how accurate it might be.



On November 7<sup>th</sup> I got the email congratulating me for being accepted! At this time, the excitement and shock from the week before turned in to panic. The car was not running smoothly. Or even reliably. The lights and the carburetor were not working either. So I did the thing I usually do when faced with a deadline – I procrastinated.

With the holiday season approaching, rich folks like to travel a lot this time of year, so I had several long (duration) trips and the only work I did on the car was to contemplate what my next move would be. The lights stopped working when the shop re-installed the newly overhauled engine and I had tried repeatedly to find how they stopped working due to a lack of a proper ground.







It was a frustrating process and never seemed to make any progress. Most wooden bodied cars do not have a lot of places FOR grounding, but to make it worse, the metal on this car is soooo well painted (the good news) with 16 layers of lacquer, followed by 8 coats of clear coat, (the paint job really stands out as exceptional) and undercoating in appropriate places – but the paint essentially became an electrical insulator to the metal (the bad news). And each piece (headlamp housing, fender support bracket, fender) was painted thoroughly and thickly before assembling to the next piece, so one piece did not contact metal to metal to the next piece. Only paint to paint surface contact. The only solution I could come up with was to file the paint down on the holes that the brackets are screwed in to, but I cringe at the thought of scratching paint deliberately. So I continued to use work as an excuse to procrastinate.

With the holidays over and only 2 weeks to go, on January 5<sup>th</sup>, I decided to go into the garage and start to see if a solution came to mind. When a ground to the body was not working and still not eager to file the paint in an attachment hole, I decided to try a different approach which was to try to get a ground circuit with a new piece of armor wire. I could possibly run a longer piece of wire and route it through a different bracket that actually was getting a ground.

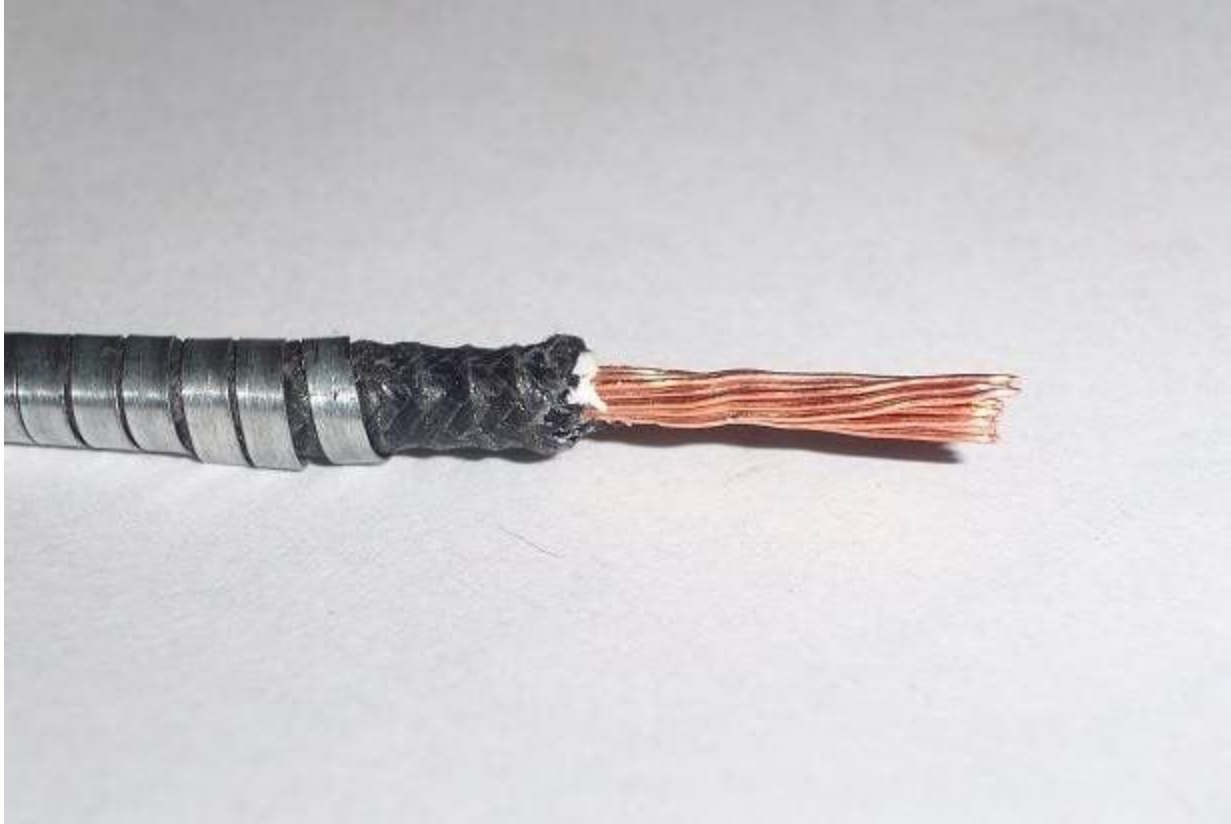


With this new decision, I was made to look at where I would splice a new piece of wire in, and quickly discovered the reason for the lights not working was that when the shop installed the engine, they severed the armor cable around the wire and created an open in the circuit. I decided to make a quick solution and twisted the ends of the 2 sections together like a twist-tie on a loaf of bread.



For those unfamiliar with armor wire, it is used on wooden bodied cars because there is not enough metal to provide a consistent path back to the battery. The armor wire is a wire with insulation around it (like in all cars), but over top of that insulation is an unforgiving evil wrap of thin steel that is specifically trained to rip flesh at any chance it can. This steel runs the entire length of the wire, so the hot current is flowing through the center wire, and the current returns to the battery through the armor on the outside (ground). The wire is clamped in multiple places on the body, with the hopes that one of those clamps might find a ground for current to flow through the body to the battery. The lights were finally working!





But I soon discovered another problem in that the DIM and FULL positions of the light switch had no effect on the bulbs. In either position they were barely visible.







Oh well, it was going to have to work as I did not have time to rewire the entire car. (I did later find out that with the engine running, the lights were [slightly] brighter, and they actually did have a difference in intensity between the two switch positions, so now I had a “high” beam. It would just have to do. (It DID satisfy the judges, and they were none the wiser on show day).

The next issue was to start with the rough running. It was as though it was getting starved of fuel. So to start with, I would adjust the high and low thumb screws of the carb (these are the only two things to do with the carb. There are no other settings). I went to start the car and it refused to fire. What the heck??? It usually runs after only 3 revolutions. Now it refuses to start at all. (I have come to the conclusion that this car is very shy – every time I schedule a big event, it has a major issue. The last time it decided to split the bendix in 3 pieces).

After many attempts to find out what the issue was – the only thing left was to clean out the entire fuel system. Starting with draining all the fuel. So a long process of draining the fuel tank; removing the tank, vacuum pump, and the carburetor; blowing out the line between the tank and pump; then I proceeded to clean any old fuel and any possible debris out of each of those components. This was NOT on the schedule or on my checklist. GRRRRR. This was going to put me behind. (It actually went relatively quick, and in one afternoon from draining to completely back together. The advantages of a simple car).













Then it all was reassembled and filled the tank and primed the pump. It started right up. I was happy again but only for a short time because it was running worse than it did in the previous months. I decided to also change out the spark plugs and was glad I did. They were wet with fuel and most of them were pretty fouled up (for only 120 miles on the new engine). Now it was time to adjust the HIGH and LOW settings on the carb again

Over the next 2 weeks I spent many laps around the block trying to keep it running and trying to get it to smooth out. But the drives were often interrupted sitting (and cussing) along the side of the road with a stubborn engine.





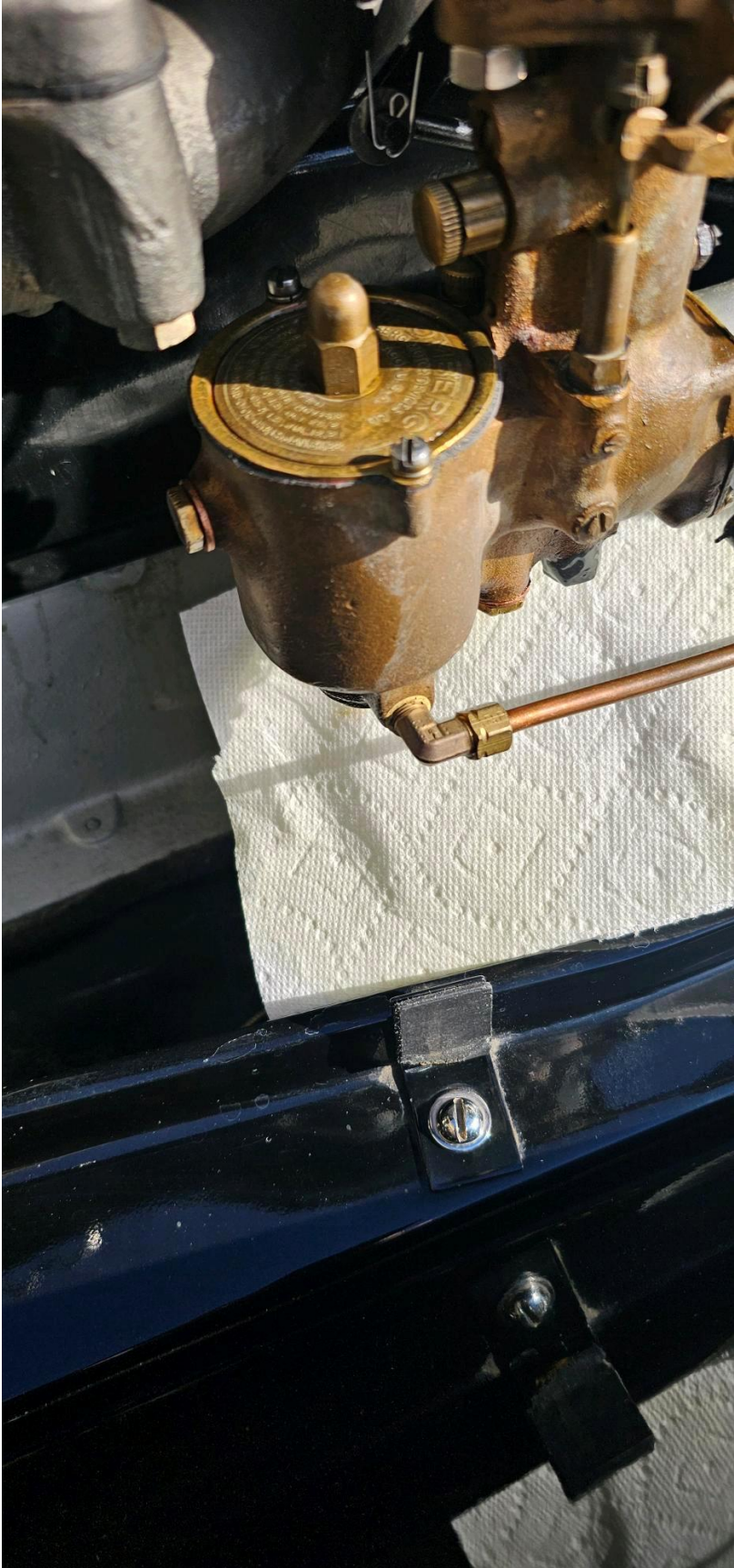
All of this while starting an extensive cleaning detail. Polishing the nickel and wood, washing the underside of AZ dust, degreasing the splash pan, vacuuming the Hartz cloth top and the side curtains, washing the engine and of course the windows and body. Unfortunately, I did not realize or stop to evaluate what the order should be, so there was a lot of back tracking of re-polishing where I splashed water spots on clean areas.





I did eventually get it to run well enough to start; idle; and not die for 10 minutes. That would at least let the judges see it start and run, and get me from the parking garage to the show field on game day. It was not without struggles, as since the time I cleaned out the carb earlier in the week, it was now leaking. So it was removed again, and new copper washers were purchased and I remade, for the second time, the gaskets around the bowl with an X-acto knife. All the while, each day was spent trying a different setting with the thumb screws, because the way it ran one day was different than the day before (when we thought we had it correct).







By Thursday night, and a day ahead of schedule, the car was finally clean – cleaner than it had been since the day it came out of the paint booth. The underside, the wood, the dust out of the trunk (try to reach that with a rear spare! UG), polished the shiny bits, windows, cloth and leather. Not a speck of dust or smudge anywhere. (A very rare occurrence in a dusty desert).



Saturday was drop-off day. After hooking up the trailer and loading up the car, Jerry and I made the trek about 20 minutes away to the parking garage and registration. If I was not nervous enough, the top cleared the ceiling of the garage by about 3 inches. So far, the car seemed to be running fine, and I was proud that it showed up the \$\$\$\$ Mercedes next to us that refused to start with its mechanic laying in the street under it trying to convince it. We got the registration materials and “swag” and my heart skipped a beat seeing my photo in the Programme. As well as seeing a coveted Arizona COPPER plate!!



1935 AUBURN 851 SUPERCHARGED CABRIOLET



KEN AND ROSE DENNISON - SCOTTSDALE, AZ

Created by famed industrial designer Gordon Buehrig, this 1935 Auburn 851 is equipped with a supercharged straight-8 Lyncorn engine producing 150 horsepower, a Columbia dual-ratio rear axle that gave the 3-speed synchromesh gearbox 6 forward gear ratios, 4-wheel Bendix hydraulic brakes and hydraulic shocks, sporty outside exhaust and a 3-position convertible top. The Cabriolet is rarer than the more-familiar "boottail". Speedster with only 103 produced and only a handful remaining.

1940 PACKARD 180 CONVERTIBLE



THE SPORT CLIPS COLLECTION - GEORGETOWN, TX

The first Darrin-bodied car built under Packard's authorization, this convertible was created as a show car for the 1940 Paris Auto Show, then circulated among Packard dealers in the US to attract attention. The Packard was later sold to MGM Studios and featured in several movies, most notably "Blowing Wild," released in 1953 starring Gary Cooper and Barbara Stanwick. The car was acquired by CCCA Member Norman H. Knight in 1961, who drove it home to Michigan, where he was instrumental in establishing the Gilmore Car Museum. The car was shown at the 2024 Pebble Beach Concours.

1924 STUDEBAKER EM LIGHT SIX



KENT MUSGRAVE - MESA, AZ

The Light Six was produced from 1920-24 as Studebaker's volume leader, accounting for almost 50 percent of the automaker's new-car sales. A quality car with a mid-price range of \$1,000-\$1,500 in comparison with the Ford Model T selling for about \$450, the Light Six is powered by a 207 cid L-head 6-cylinder engine producing 40 horsepower. Of the 118,022 EM cars produced, only a handful still exist. This Studebaker was restored in 2007 by George Vassos of Boston. The current owner purchased it in 2016 after seeking the same year and model car that he had seen in photos of his great grandparents.

...produced as a remarkable... including an inline-six that... an exceptionally smooth... F-head engine... 288 cid, which... as a dual-... and a cork... 200,000 vehicles... in third place on the... sales charts.

...providing more power and... Cadillac produced it... for the 1930 model year... The Great Depression was... The top-drawer luxury cars... of 10 Fleetwood bodies... These mass... and just 4,076 were... with the majority of their... This elegant Art Deco convertible... designed by GM's famed design chief Harley

1937 PACKARD

...30 separate models available... a record of nearly 110,000 cars... an annual number that the... achieved. Just 5,793 of the... Eight, which for the first... front suspensions and... This Super Eight is fitted with... convertible sedan... associated with the... It was meticulously... and carefully maintained even... presentin



After dropping the trailer in a vacant lot near the show field, we had time enough for a quick lunch and clothes change, and then head to the event dinner and cocktails.

The dinner was an exciting event. We started out the evening with a couple of cocktails and we sought out some of our friends from the Horseless Carriage Chapter and one of our neighbors that we run in to at events. (We met him when we were looking at houses to buy and I considered buying his home – he gave us a tour of the home he was selling, which was also his antique MG restoration shop). The reception was a great time to visit with others, and our friends introduced us to a some of the other entrants they knew. We really had a fun time which was unexpected, as Jerry and I anticipated that it was going to be an uptight event among wealthy owners that we would not be able to relate to. Among the guests was Mrs. Janet Cussler who stopped to talk with us for a bit, and of course the Master of Ceremonies for Sunday, Donald Osborne was talking with everyone.





After the reception, we were called in to the dining room to take our seats. We followed the Horseless Carriage members, as we felt they would be the ones that would be accepting of a couple of redneck car guys, but by the time they chose a table, there were no more chairs. We chose a table close to them and after introductions, we found that we were among friends. Among our dining companions we discovered, one was a judge for the period costumes and a race car driver; one was a judge; and another was an honorary judge. The honorary judge was sitting right next to us, and very extroverted. Through the entire dinner, he wanted to constantly talk with Jerry and I, and we found out it was none other than Kip Wasenko, the chief designer of the Cadillac from 1979 – 2007. It was an educational evening and we had a lot of fun talking to everyone and they were very interested in my Roadster.





Sunday morning. What did I get myself into? It is wayyyy too early on a weekend, and wayyyyy too cold outside the covers. Did I really set my alarm for this time of day??



I did need to give myself enough time to get ready – our snacks and water etc. were already loaded in the tow vehicle, and now it was time to get dressed. For my 20s and 30s vehicles, my wardrobe is a Fedora (unfortunately, it is 1940's but who can tell the era of a fedora?); a very short tie (unknown to most, but yes, it is the style of the 20's, but un-visible in the photos); coat and pants from the late 20's / early 30's (purchased new by Ray Bolger – The Scarecrow in the original Wizard of Oz); Argyle socks; Spats for the tops of my shoes (not vintage but 20's style – and not that I really expect to be walking through deep mud, but they look cool and now no one will ever see the cool period socks, rolls eyes); and early 30's suede dress Derby shoes (the suede does happen to be blue, but don't tell Elvis that he was 15 years behind the times).



We had to be at the garage at 6:30 and ready to drive to the field at 7:15. It was a last minute chance to clean and polish (especially since the cars had spent all night in a garage where the pigeons were trying to stay out of the cold above the cars) and eventually it was 'go time'. The car started and ran good in the garage. We messed with the thumbscrews on the carb again because it was still a little rough so we were trying different settings. I tried to get it to warm up for a while, but there was not much time for that. Everyone was suffocating from the fumes in such a closed space. (Did I mention that it was early and cold? It was also dark, so polishing and last-minute dusting was futile).





As I drove out of the garage, I was happy that my car was running while others were still trying to get theirs started. As I turned on to Drinkwater Blvd., the traffic was being held up for the parade of us, and I accelerated to keep up with the rest of the pack. The car started backfiring repeatedly the next 2 blocks the entire time I was going over 15 mph. GRRRRRRR. After entering the field, I was at an idle and the backfire stopped, but there were several times I was wondering if it would continue running, as the volunteers were being slow (read meticulous) about getting each entrant into its space, and aligned just perfectly).





It made it without dying, and I was relieved. I was directed to my parking space.....





...and then breathed a big sigh of relief, as I watched one vehicle being pushed in. A short time later, another was being towed on to the field by an electric golf cart. So sad. (The topdown carriage is the one behind the golf cart)





(This is the one being pushed 3 blocks from the garage to the field).



It was time to start dusting and critiquing the polish and water spots that I may have missed. That was a futile effort – as it is winter in the desert, and the grass is dormant and like straw. So every footstep on the field was a coat of debris over every car on the field.





The doors opened to the public at 9 am, and the judging started right away. I was thankful that our class was first on the list, as it meant I would be able to wander the field instead of being required to stand close by waiting all morning for them to arrive. The judges arrived and I was pleased to learn that one of the junior (apprentice?) judges was from Mac College where I attended classes (McPherson). They checked the operation of every component of the car, and even the side curtains in the trunk. The car performed beautifully and nothing was in error. The judges were very complimentary of the car and were very impressed about the photos of my great grandparents in their 'Light Six'.











Once the car was judged, the



rest of the day was left to be a spectator of the other cars, enjoy a picnic lunch, talk with other spectators about my car, and talk to other entrants about theirs, and finally the awards. The class I was placed into was the "1930's" class, which I do not understand, but the class winner was a Deussenberg, which I was happy to lose to (one of my favourite makes). Among the entrants, there was a fleet of early motorcycles, priceless Bugatti's, an 2026, 27, 28? electric Cadillac 'Concept' car, (I have only ever seen photos of 'Concept'), and a handful of brass era.







On the field, we did notice a fair number of owners looking down their noses at us for such a “common” car, and we did hear one comment wondering aloud “Why is that car here?”. But most of the spectators were very happy and loved the car and wanted to know more about it. Mrs. Cussler was happy to see it again, and the Horseless Carriage club was voting for my Stude. It was a long day and a very long month, but the experience was well worth it and an absolute honor and such a blast to even be considered. A once in a lifetime experience (for a lil’ ol’ roadster). I think that Grandmama and Grandpapa would be proud!











