



## Newsletter March 2025

*"Moving Forward"*

### Pre-War Chevrolets

Starting March 6<sup>th</sup>, the Forney Museum will debut the "Pre-War Chevrolets" exhibit! Founded by brothers Louis and Arthur Chevrolet and the founder and former manager of General Motors, William Durant, in November 1911, the first production Chevy reached the market in the 1913 model year. Eventually Durant used the success of the new company to take back his old position as General Manager at GM through a reverse merger in 1918, and Chevrolet has been a critical core component of the General Motors line ever since.

This exhibit, ranging from a 1914 Model H, through a 1942 Fleetline 2-door – with so many in between – will really spotlight the beginnings of this classic company. Don't miss the 1925 Touring or the 1931 Roadster; a 1928 National Depot Hack or a 1933 5-Window. Come see all the amazing vehicles that helped to turn Chevy into one of the most iconic automotive manufacturers in the world. With all this history on display – and so much more – you won't want to miss this exhibit!



## Our Newest Arrival

Generously donated by Philip Doty of Greenwood Village, Colorado, the newest addition to the Forney Collection is this extremely rare 1940 Cadillac Series 62 Convertible Sedan.

The Cadillac commitment to luxury and quality give the car its looks, and the 345 cubic-inch, 135-hp L-head V8 gives the car its personality! Only about 75 Series 62 Convertible Sedans were produced in 1940, and with only six known to



survive today, this car is highly sought after by

enthusiasts and collectors. Finished in “Silver French Gray Iridescent” and with the side-mount spare tires, this beauty really stands out in a crowd! This 1940 Cadillac Series 62 Convertible Sedan is on display now at the Forney Museum of Transportation.



## This Month in Transportation History

**March 20, 1905** – The Bellow Falls Arch Bridge was opened. Spanning the Connecticut River to connect Vermont and New Hampshire, the 644 foot 8 inch 3-hinged steel arch bridge held the record for the longest single-span highway bridge in the United States. Designed by Boston civil engineer J.R. Worcester, the bridge remained in service until 1971, and was finally demolished in 1982 over safety concerns.

**March 6, 1913** – The Second National Good Roads Convention began at the Raleigh Hotel in Washington, D.C. Held under the auspices of the American Automobile Association (AAA), the heavily attended conference featured speakers emphasizing the need for federal funding to help build and maintain a national network of roads. Less than two years later a group of state highway engineers would convene at the same hotel to establish the American Association of State Highway Officials to pave the way for increased federal aid for road-building efforts.

**March 14, 1918** – The first seagoing American ship made out of concrete, the S.S. Faith, was launched in Redwood, California. Although concrete ships had been around since 1848, the steamer Faith was the first such ship in the United States. The popularity of concrete ships was tied to the extremely high cost of steel during wartime rationing, and waned after the end of WWI before briefly peaking again during wartime rationing in WWII. The Faith was in service until 1921, at which time she was sold and scrapped as a harbor breakwater in Cuba.

**March 26, 1931** – Swissair, the trailblazing national airline of Switzerland, was established. The airline operated for 71 years as a major international airline, particularly in Europe. Swissair is also known



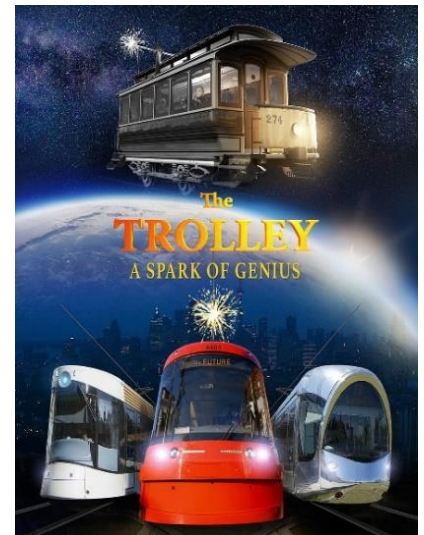
for establishing the first transalpine plane route, between Zurich, Switzerland and Milan, Italy. Another innovation credited to the airline was the introduction of the first flight attendants in Europe.

**March 30, 1968** – The last regularly scheduled passenger train rolled into the Huntsville Depot in the city of Huntsville, Alabama. Opened in 1860, and after more than a century of use, the station was closed and the building converted into the Huntsville Depot Museum, with a focus on the rich railroad history of the area. The oldest surviving structure in Alabama to have operated as a railroad station, the Huntsville Depot was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1971.

**March 21, 1999** – The first nonstop flight around the world by balloon came to an end in western Egypt. Piloted by psychiatrist Bertrand Piccard and English balloonist and former Royal Air Force pilot Brian Jones, the globe-circling flight in the balloon known as Breitling Orbiter 3 began on March 1, 1999, in Switzerland. Catching favorable winds in the vicinity of the equator, they piloted the 180-foot-tall balloon around the world from east to west. The flight took a total of 19 days, 21 hours, and 47 minutes to complete, with the Breitling Orbiter 3 soaring up to 36,000 feet in altitude and moving as fast as 105 miles per hour.

## Forney Speaker Series

After some delay due to facility issues, the Museum is happy to announce that Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, at 2 PM, we will be screening the documentary *The Trolley: A Spark of Genius*, all about the history and development of that wonderful exemplar of mass transit: the trolley! From its development in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, through its explosive worldwide adoption; learn all about the trolley's use in both world wars and the collision with the automobile age in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century; to the trolley's role in our modern world, the fight against climate change, and the shifting transportation ideals that are coming to define our current age. As humanity's transportation needs and technological demands have changed through the years, this extraordinary machine has risen again and again to meet them.



These monthly presentations are free with a paid admission, and make for a fantastic opportunity to learn more about some of the lesser known sides of history. So come join us on March 30<sup>th</sup>, at 2 PM, for the long-awaited presentation of *The Trolley: A Spark of Genius*. Watch this space or check our website at [forneymuseum.org](http://forneymuseum.org) for further updates and information about upcoming Forney Speaker Series presentations.

# Forney Vehicle Spotlight

## 1923 Kissel Model 45 "Gold Bug" Speedster

In 1890 Louis Kissel, the son of German immigrants in rural Wisconsin, made the fateful decision to expand the family business beyond farming. Along with his four sons, that year saw Louis found the Kissel

Hardware Store, the Hartford Plow Company,

Hartford Electric Company and Kissel Manufacturing Company. With Kissel

Manufacturing they began distributing engines for various manufacturers, as well as beginning to design their own gasoline engines. Eventually the family would expand into industries such as grocery, lumber, rock and sand quarries, real estate and

homebuilding and sales. Louis' son, Otto Kissel, founded the First National Bank of Hartford (Wisconsin) in 1906, and that same year saw the birth of the Kissel Motor Car



Company which had been the idea of two of Louis' sons George and Will Kissel.

The young brothers had built their first experimental car in 1905, a shaft-driven four-cylinder runabout. Production began in 1906 for the 1907 model year. This first product of the Kissel company was sold as the Kissel Kar. This name would stand for over a decade, until the Kar was dropped in 1919, after World War I, for

seeming too German-sounding for the American market. Although bodies and engines were originally produced by other companies, soon the Kissel Kar was entirely Kissel-made.

The company saw modest success through these early years, and pioneered automobile innovations such as indirect dashboard illumination, but the Kissel was

never produced in huge numbers — never exceeding 2,000 cars produced in a year. 1915 saw the redesign of the Kissel L-head long stroke six-cylinder. This engine would see only minor design changes until 1928, and other than the short lived 1917 Kissel Double-Six — a 12-cylinder







introduced to compete with the Packard Twin Six—was the powerplant for all Kissel vehicles until the introduction of an eight-cylinder model in 1925.

Some of the sportiest and most popular Kissels of this era had bodies designed with New York distributor Conover T. Silver, which were eventually refined by Kissel into

a full line of models. Among these was a sporty speedster, featuring innovative outrigger seats that would fold and slide in like a drawer on each side of the body. A contest was held to name the new car and out of 500 suggestions received the name “Gold Bug” was selected. Along with the sleek speedster there were several other unique designs that came along at this time, and this period in the middle 1920s would prove to be the company’s peak in terms of production and sales.

The Gold Bug also became popular with Hollywood entertainers and other celebrities. Jack Dempsey, Greta Garbo, Douglas Fairbanks, Bebe Daniels, Al Jolson, Mary Pickford and Fatty Arbuckle are just a few of the famous owners of a Kissel Gold Bug. One other American hero who owned a Gold Bug was Amelia Earhart. Although her most famous flying exploits were in the future, Earhart received this 1923 Gold Bug as a gift from her father in 1924, and began many publicized adventures with the car.



She rather affectionately referred to her car as “Kizzle” and can be seen with the car in some photographs from the time. Perhaps there was a sense of freedom to be found in driving herself where she wanted to go in 1920s America, but Amelia seemed to enjoy driving fast, earning her car the nickname “Yellow Peril” from some of her friends.

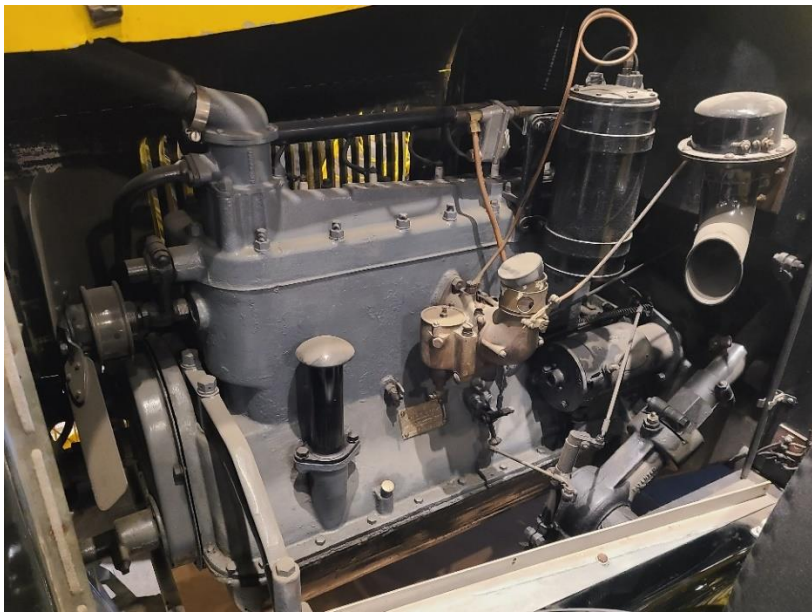
One adventure in the Gold Bug was a trip by road from Los Angeles, California to Boston, Massachusetts. In an open convertible, across the continent with roads of that era being little better than mud tracks in many

places, Amelia and her mother made it to Boston safely, speaking to her driving prowess.

Along with the innovative outrigger style sliding passenger seats this Kissel features four-wheel rod-activated mechanical brakes, leather upholstery, wood steering wheel, and a Moto-Meter temperature gauge. Front and rear bumpers, cowl lights, a rear-mounted trunk and 24-inch split-rim wire wheels complete the classic design.



The engine is a 284 cubic inch L-head inline Kissel 6-cylinder, with a one-barrel Stromberg 'OS-2' carburetor. This engine produced 61 horsepower, and was rated for 70 miles per hour, although collectors of the car suggest a top speed closer to 85 miles per hour with modern road conditions. A floor-shift 3-speed manual transmission transferred that power to the road.



All together this limited-production sporty little speedster was priced at \$1,895 base, which is around \$35,000 today. Despite the popularity and success of this model, by 1925 production numbers were down across the board at Kissel. A new model was introduced in 1927, but failed to reverse the fortunes for the

company and by 1931 Kissel Motor Car Company had declared bankruptcy. Although the Kissel family and their factory continued to produce marine outboard engines, including for Sears Roebuck, no more Kissel automobiles would ever be produced.

Amelia sold her car in Massachusetts, and after a couple of owners and an extensive restoration in 1955, it was acquired by the Forney Museum of Transportation in 1960. This 1923 Kissel Model 45 Gold Bug Speedster can be seen on display at the Forney Museum of Transportation.





## Featured Volunteer

The Forney Museum's featured volunteer for March is Rick Holdaway! Rick's love of the early Fords, and particularly his expertise maintaining, restoring and driving the Model T have made him an invaluable contributor to the Museum.

Born and raised in Colorado, Rick met his wife Dana at Denver North High School, and has lived here his whole life except for a stint in the Marine Corps. Rick worked for IBM in equipment maintenance and repair, retiring after almost 40 years in 2005. He also served in the Marine Corps Reserve from 1967 until 1973, and was on the Marine Corps Reserve pistol team for almost 4 years – shooting 2<sup>nd</sup> in the nation in 1973!



Rick's first car was a 1954 Chevy Bel Aire, but he discovered a true love for early Fords, first with a 1927 Fordor sedan before moving on to his 1923 Model T touring car. An active member of the Model T Ford Club since 1977, and working on T restorations and maintenance ever since then, Rick and Dana have taken their 1923 Model T to seven states so far, with plans to add more this summer!

Rick has been a volunteer for nearly 20 years, joining the Forney Museum team in 2005, after a Model T Club event at the Museum led to the then-Director asking him to help get one of the Museum's Model T's running. Rick has since worked on restoring many more Fords, as well as various more exotic museum cars. A particular treat are his driving lessons when he would take museum guests out in a Model T and show them how to manage the venerable car! Rick told me that one of the best things about volunteering at the Forney is the fun of repairing and driving old vehicles, adding, "the very best is the great people you get to know and the volunteers you get to work with."

We are grateful for all you have helped the museum accomplish through your hard work and dedication as a volunteer. Thank you, Rick, for everything you do for the Museum!

## Volunteer Birthdays

3/1 – James DeBartolomeis

3/7 – Glen Laber

3/10 – Dean Ames

3/10 – Tom Barth

3/13 – Rick Holdaway

3/15 – Harrison Wallace

3/19 – Don Stoehr

3/28 – Noah Deger

3/29 – Paul Martin

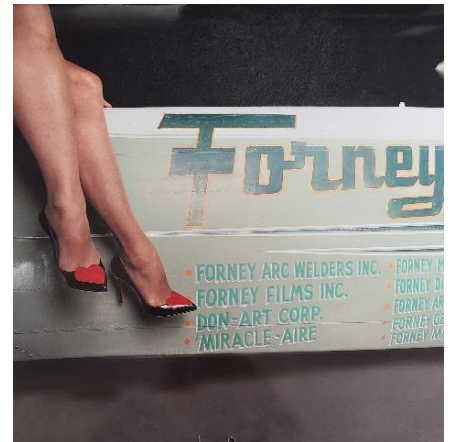
3/30 – Mac Willett

## The Museum needs YOU!

Anyone interested in volunteering or donating please reach out to us at the museum or email [volunteer@forneymuseum.org](mailto:volunteer@forneymuseum.org)

## Forney Museum Calendar

In addition to the many other wonderful items in the gift shop, the Forney Museum is selling our exclusive 2025-26 Pinup Calendar. Now only \$15, calendars can be purchased in the Museum Gift Shop or online at [forneymuseum.org](http://forneymuseum.org), and all proceeds benefit the Museum. Fun, flirty and for a great cause, get your calendar today and help out the Forney Museum! Special thanks to all the wonderful volunteer models who helped make the calendar possible.



## Memberships

Become a Forney Museum Member TODAY! We have memberships in many different levels to fit your particular needs, with options available for as low as \$50, the right membership for you can be purchased in the museum gift shop or online at [forneymuseum.org](http://forneymuseum.org). Memberships are good for one year and make great gifts, so help support the Forney by buying a membership today!



# General Museum Needs

We are putting out the call for several items that are needed here at the museum. If you see anything in this section that you think you would be able to donate to the museum to help us with our operations please reach out to our Assistant Director, Dan at [asstdirector@forneymuseum.org](mailto:asstdirector@forneymuseum.org), or call the museum at (303) 297-1113.

- 1) Diesel pickup in running, serviceable condition
- 2) Enclosed trailer (20-foot or longer) to transport Forney Museum vehicles safely & securely
- 3) Modern tire changing machine in working order
- 4) Modern wheel balancing machine in working order
- 5) Late model minivan in serviceable condition

Thank you to everyone who has already donated!

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Special Thanks to all of our readers!