



AM SPIRIT

Northern Ramblers Car Club Newsletter

*Dont Forget! Rambler Rama is coming up
June 20th!*

April-June 2026



Check out the 1969 AMX Owned by Rambler Rama Sponsor Zehr Insurance on pg 11

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Why Produce Hudsons in Canada Part 2 by Gino DiCiocco of the Ontario Hudson Club

Part 2 of 3 REVIEW: Episodes 3 and 4 The Last Independent Automaker by Alfred Holden

*"And there's another AMC!" The AMC Gathering at Woodstock Auto Expo May 17th by Gary Freelen of AMO Plus
The Zehr Insurance AMX*

Alfred Holden's Automotive Book Review of "The Driving Machine" by Witold Rybczynski

Visit our Website at: www.northernramblersclub.ca

AM Spirit is the official publication of the **Northern Ramblers Car Club Inc.**, promoting the "spirit" of the American Motors Corporation family of cars from 1902 - 1988.

Non profit #: 1335833 ISSN #: 1481-8086

OUR NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED QUARTELY 4 TIMES A YEAR, MEMBERSHIP DETAILS AND DUES ARE ON PAGE 21 OF THIS NEWSLETTER

President – Bryant Fear

bryantfear@northernramblersclub.ca

Phone: 226-220-1293

Vice President – Alf Holden

alfredholden@northernramblersclub.ca

Secretary – Phillip Simms

phillipsimms@northernramblersclub.ca

Storemaster – Harold Lamb

haroldlamb@northernramblersclub.ca

Treasurer/Membership

Volunteers needed! if you are interested in helping the club in any way email us at:

info@northernramblersclub.ca

Editor

Volunteer Needed For Permanent Editor

info@northernramblersclub.ca

Interim Editor – Bryant Fear

bryantfear@northernramblersclub.ca

Phone: 226-220-1293

Ontario Hudson Club Representative

Gino DiCiocco

hudsonontariochapter@gmail.com

AMO Plus Club Representative

Gary Freelen

garyfreelen67@gmail.com

AMO Plus Website: <https://amoplus.ca/>

Our Club exchanges newsletters and/or information with the following:

AMC Rambler Club of Australia

www.australian.amcrc.com/

AMO National

<https://amo.club/>

American Motors Club of Alberta

www.amcalberta.ca

AMC Rambler Club

Amcrc.com

Potomac Ramblers

www.potomacramblers.com

AMC RELATED WEB SITES

Javelin Home Page

www.javelinamx.com

AMC RELATED CHAT ROOM

www.theamcforum.com

www.facebook.com/groups/CanadianAMC/

Northern Ramblers Club Web Site

www.northernramblersclub.ca

The Editor's View

This edition is full of lots of neat stuff, there's information for Hudson fans, documentary and book reviews for AMC fans and automotive enthusiasts in general, and a report of the AMCs that gathered at the Woodstock Auto Expo in May. This is my third newsletter attempt, I've noticed some editing mistakes and typos which I apologize for, I'm still getting used to this new program. Special thanks to Alfred Holden Gino DiCiocco and Gary Freelen for their contributions, the next newsletter will be the all important Rambler Rama Edition!

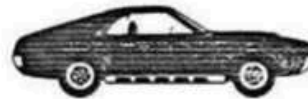
Thanks Bryant Fear - Interim Editor

We Have Members from:

5- Alberta 4- New Brunswick 119- Ontario 4- British Columbia 1- Newfoundland
10- Quebec 3- Saskatchewan 2- Nova Scotia 1- Manitoba 1-PEI 2- USA

NORTHERN RAMBLERS CAR CLUB

Rambler-rama



30th Annual American Motors Car Show and Swap Meet

Saturday June 20th, 2026

10am to 3pm

Registration closes noon

Please note there is NO pre-registration

SHOWCAR ADMISSION \$15 PER CAR

Open to all AMC, Rambler, AMC/Renault, AMC Jeep (Pre-1988), Hudson
and Nash, Willys and related Vehicles

VENDOR ADMISSION \$15 PER VENDOR

AMC/Rambler vendors ONLY

(items must be AMC/Rambler related or you will not be able to be a vendor)

Location: Scugog Shores Museum Village 16210 Island Road

Port Perry, ON L9L 1B4

Spectator admission (proceeds go to Museum not The Northern Ramblers Car Club)

\$7.50 for adults

\$6.50 for seniors,

\$6.50 for students

\$3.50 for children ages 5 to 12

Free for children 4 and under

For more info: www.northernramblersclub.ca, Email: info@northernramblersclub.ca

Club Contact: Bryant, Cell: 226-220-1293



The Presidents View

Hi everyone, it looks like the weather has finally gotten the message that summer is here!, as I write this on the last day of May it is around 20 degrees and the conditions are what can only be described as perfect in my small southwestern Ontario town. Lets hope the same can be said of the weather on the 20th at Port Perry, if all goes to plan you should be receiving this newsletter with at least a week or two to spare until Rambler Rama 2026. My hopes are it acts as one final reminder before the show, this year is looking to be one of our larger shows with the enthusiasm and turnout we had last year to grow on. If my impression of the interest we are receiving is correct I see no problem reaching 75 to 100 show cars and vendors combined providing the weather cooperates with us. With weeks to go we are working on finalizing door prizes, awards and show layout as well as volunteers for the day of the show. If you are interested in volunteering even just an hr of your time on the 20th, or have any questions about the show or vending please reach out to me by email: info@northernramblersclub.ca, or on my cell at: [226-220-1293](tel:226-220-1293), or have a new item you wish to donate to the club as a door prize please bring it the day of the show, any amount of help is extremely appreciated. This year we are going to try a slightly different setup for the peoples choice categories, they will be by all model year range as opposed to being vehicle specific, we are trying this in hopes of covering all the AMC related vehicles that we can while having an appropriate amount of classes for voting and tallying logistics, the decision of whether there is a 1st, 2nd or 3rd class will be determined on the number of vehicles registered in each class the day of the show, in place of trophies we will be awarding medals with personalized certificates. If the amazing turnout that Gary Freelen of AMO Plus had at the gathering he arranged at the Woodstock Auto expo is any indication I think we are in for a great surprise!, They had 7 AMC products and there were also 2 Jeeps out of approximately 150 cars, this is an amazing number for such an event, great work Gary!, you can check out the great cars that attended further on in this newsletter. Anyways I hope to see as many of you at Rambler Rama as possible, remember you DO NOT need to be a member to enter a car into the show, whether it be a pristine show car or a daily driver/project everyone with an AMC related vehicle or 1988 and older Jeep that can get there is welcome!, the main goal is for us to all make some new friends and catch up with old ones while seeing some incredible AMC Products!.

Bryant Fear

President

The Northern Ramblers Car Club

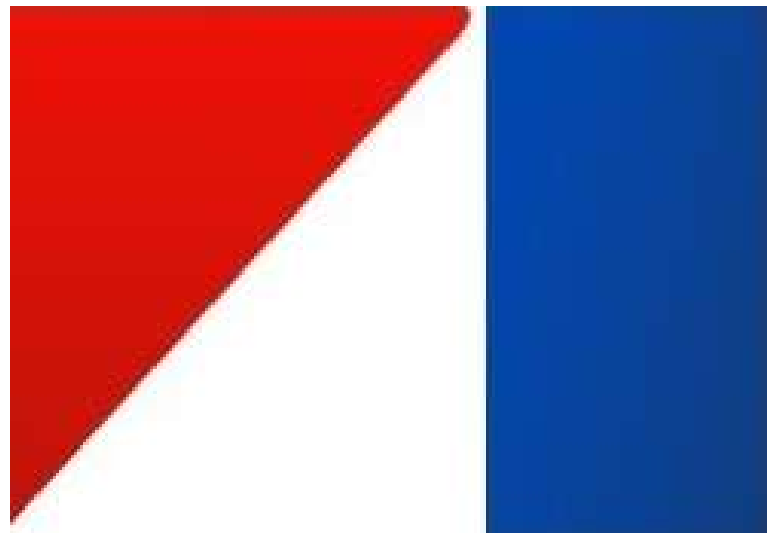
Volunteers Wanted!



The Northern Ramblers Car Club of Canada is looking for volunteers! If you are a current member and would like to be part of our executive board or help out in some other way please email us at

info@northernramblersclub.ca

Remember any help at all is greatly appreciated so please don't be afraid to reach out to us!



Why Produce Hudsons in Canada? Part 2



by Gino DiCiocco of the Ontario Hudson Club
Reprinted with Permission

In this installment I am going to talk about identifying Hudsons that were produced in Canada. Hudsons produced in Canada look identical to those produced across the river in Detroit. The most conclusive way to identify a Hudson produced in Canada is by the serial number.

The serial number information found below is from Alex Burr's record of Hudson Serial Numbers 1909-1957. Hudsonites are indebted to Alex for the vast amount of Hudson resources he has assembled. The information in the larger box provides a solid record of the Canadian Built Hudsons from the 1930s.

NOTE: In 1938 serial and engine numbers were identical after the following car numbers:

Models 80, 81, 82, 83 & 88 - 11630, except 12000 to 12319;
Models 84, 85 & 87 - 14126;
Model 89 - 28566

1935 Canadian serial numbers featured the letter "C" before the model and serial numbers; ie, 1935 - C-53-101, C-54-101, etc. From 1936 up the letter "C" was inserted between the model and serial numbers; ie, (1936) 63-C-101, 61-C-101, etc.

Motor Numbers:

1930 - 1044 to 54408

1931 - 32672 to 54999

1932 - Model T - 55000 to 63311; Model U - 55000 to 63225; Model L - 55000 to 63314

1933 - Six Cylinder - 2001 to 65474
- Eight Cylinder - Model T - 63501; Model L - 63501 to 65489

1934 - All models except LTS - 30000 to 54339; LTS - 47290 to 53967

1935 - Six Cylinder - 70000 to 78072
- Eight Cylinder - 55000 to 68900

1936 - Six Cylinder - 79000 to 89097
- Eight Cylinder - Model 64 - 1000 to 17643; Model 65 - 1000 to 17584; Model 66 - 1001 to 17642;
Model 67 - 1001 to 17474

1937 - Six Cylinder - 90000 to 97082
- Eight Cylinder - 18000 to 32027

1938 - (Starting Numbers Only) - Model 83 - 98000
Eight Cylinder - 35000
Model 89 - 28566

1939 - None available

The box below is the notation that Alex provided regarding production of Terraplanes in Tilbury:

Serial Number Notes: Canadian Serial Numbers for 1935, 1936 and 1937 denoted by the letter "C" in the serial number between the model number and serial number (except for 1935 where the "C" is placed before the model/serial number.)

Some anecdotal sources suggest that Hudson automobile production in Tilbury continued into early 1942 and it is on my "to-do list" of library visits to attempt to track this information down. As well, I do not have any substantial record of the serial numbers of Tilbury Hudsons that started to roll off the assembly line in 1950. There are also indications that the Toronto AMC plant produced some Hashs in the 1955-57 period. This information also needs to be confirmed.



You may have seen this advertisement to the left in the Old Autos Newspaper last fall. I was able to take a ride to Kendal, Ontario in November. Indications were that this wrecking yard had started operations back in the 1940s. By the video on YouTube, it appeared that the vehicles had not had much attention for years given the amount of vegetation that was taking over. The oldest car I came across appeared to be a late 1920s Buick. There certainly was an incredible variety of vehicles on the site. It

still looked to be an interesting outing and the \$10 admission fee turned out to be worth every penny.

While walking through the rows of vehicles I came across a 1937 Terraplane in very sorry shape. The drive train was present as were most of the body panels as well as interior pieces. All quite weathered. Yes, that is me in the driver's seat. I found the carburetor for this car in the trunk and it is for sale in the Marketplace section of this newsletter.



What does this have to do with Tilbury built vehicles???



as well as the serial number of the car. You will notice the lettering on the speedometer glass reads "Hudson Motors of Canada Limited" and this is one identifier of a Tilbury built car. Hudsons built in Detroit have the wording "Hudson Motorcar Co.

USA." Also laying on the instrument cluster is the serial number plate and an enlarged version is to the right. You will note that the serial number is 71C1294 and the placement of the "C" is, as Alex Burr's data indicates, between the model number and serial number for a 1937 Terraplane. The "71" identifies the four door car as a Deluxe model. Remember, the serial number plate is found between the hinges on the passenger side door post. I have to thank Eric Thomas for cutting this instrument cluster out for me. Another interesting piece Eric located was a significant part from the Electric Hand.



Whoever ordered this car had some funds and sprang for the pricey option. This Terraplane contained two clear markings that it was a Canadian car — the writing on the speedometer glass and the serial number.

When I found this Terraplane I had texted Eric some pictures and he further teased me by replying that there was a 1951 Pacemaker in the yard! The search was on but ultimately I was disappointed that day as did not find it. Eric went to the yard short time after I visited last fall and texted me some photos with some showing the Pacemaker. No wonder I missed it.

The salvage company that was liquidating the Jackson's yard opened the yard a few days a week for a few weeks in the spring of 2025 so I headed back and this time I found the Pacemaker! The motor and drive train were still in the car and the it was in sad shape. Thanks to Gord Love for taking this picture with my phone.



The two serial number plates found below are from Step Down cars. The one on the left was removed by Eric from the 1951 Pacemaker at the Jackson's yard. The Model 11A indicates the car is

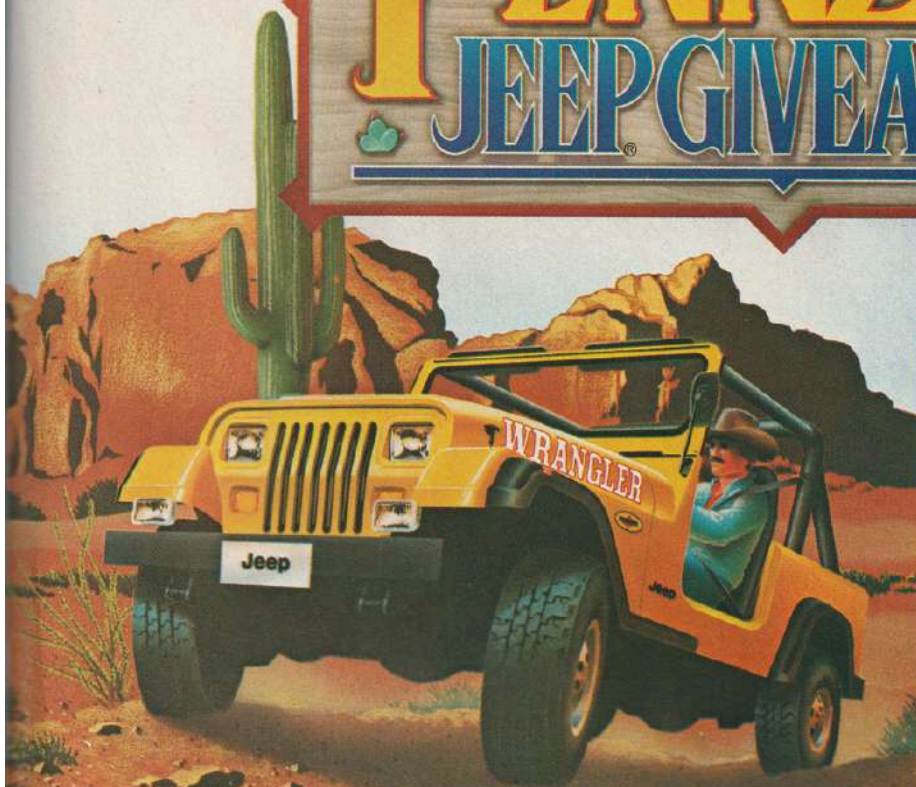
a Pacemaker which was the only model produced at Tilbury in at least 1950-1952. The number sequence 2311 is the serial number of the car. The tag on the right is from a Detroit produced Hudson. The 5C tells us the plate was from a 1953 Super Wasp. You will note that the Canadian tag contains the words "Made in Canada." Also interesting is the Canadian tag yellow colouring gives an embossed effect whereas the American tag is totally flat and without any texture.

You will recall from my previous article that Hudson Jets

began production in Tilbury in 1953 and apparently continued into 1954. At this point I do not have information to confirm if Pacemakers were also produced in those years. The serial number plate to the right is on Andrew Watt's 1954 Hudson Jet that he is restoring. Since this plate is attached to Andrew's car, we can assume the "D" stands for Jet. Andrew's serial number plate contains the wording "Made In Canada." Stay tuned . . . more to follow.



The Great PENNZOIL JEEP GIVEAWAY



You could be one of twenty lucky winners to drive away in a 1987 Jeep® Wrangler!

Enter The Great Pennzoil Jeep Giveaway—and you might drive away a winner! Just look for the display at your favorite store. Then fill out and mail in the Entry Form you'll find on specially-labeled bottles of Pennzoil Motor Oil. Start stocking up on Pennzoil Motor Oil today! And YOU may be one of the lucky ones who'll drive away a winner!

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY to enter or receive a prize. To enter, you may use the coupon found on quart containers of Pennzoil Motor Oil. You may also enter by hand printing your complete name and address on a 3" x 5" piece of paper. Mail to: PENNZOIL "JEEP", P.O. Box 16, NYC, NY 10046. Enter as often as you like, but each entry must be mailed separately. No mechanically reproduced entries accepted. All entries must be received by March 31, 1987 to be eligible. Not responsible for late, lost, or misdirected mail.

Winners will be selected on or about April 15, 1987 in a random drawing conducted under the supervision of Marden-Kane, an independent judging organization, whose decisions are final. All prizes will be awarded. Odds of winning depend on total number of entries received. Winners will be notified by first class mail and will be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility and release. Winners' names and likenesses may be used for publicity purposes for this or

similar promotions without additional compensation. No substitutions for prizes, nor are prizes transferable. All applicable taxes, if any, are the sole responsibility of winners. By entering this sweepstakes, entrants agree to be bound by the official rules and the decisions of the judges are final in all respects.

TWENTY GRAND PRIZES—New, 1987 JEEP WRANGLERS with all standard equipment. Total estimated retail value of prizes is \$195,000. Winners agree to accept vehicles as delivered. Limit one per household, address or organization. If any prize is won by a minor, it will be awarded in the name of a parent or legal guardian.

Sweepstakes open to licensed drivers in the U.S., its territories, and Canada, except the province of Quebec. Employees of Pennzoil, its distributors, agencies, retailers, Marden-Kane and their immediate families are not eligible. Void at gasoline retailers in ME, MA, MD, NH, NV, and where prohibited by law. Canadian winners are required to correctly answer a skill-testing question before awarding of prize.

For a list of prize winners, send a stamped self-addressed envelope to: PENNZOIL WINNERS LIST, P.O. Box 10614, LIC, NY 11101 (residents of Washington state send self-addressed unstamped envelope).



*The Standard of Protection
Since 1889.™*

1969 AMX Owned by Zehr Insurance Brokers official Rambler Rama 2026 Sponsor

"It was 1969 – Rudy Held, a young apprentice mechanic at an AMC car dealer would buy a new 1969 AMX. A unique car in the Mustang, Camaro/Trans Am, Mopar category that would go on to secure Held dozens of racing trophies.

With the optional 390 4 barrel with the featured "Go Package" offered by American Motors this fine example of 60's American muscle is a real head turner. Since new, the unique aqua blue AMX could be seen in its hometown of New Hamburg. Ownership of the car passed around within the original owner's family to Rudy's brother and his nephew.

In 2012, it was at Moparfest in New Hamburg and the AMX was offered for sale. John Zehr determined that New Hamburg's iconic AMX better stay in town so Zehr Insurance Brokers added it to their lineup to be put out front as its Vintage CARS show piece. It's all muscle. With the roar of the 390, be prepared to put some shoulder into turning the wheel. The bonus – the car drives straight and true as one shifts the 4 speed Hurst through the gears. It's a real rush!"

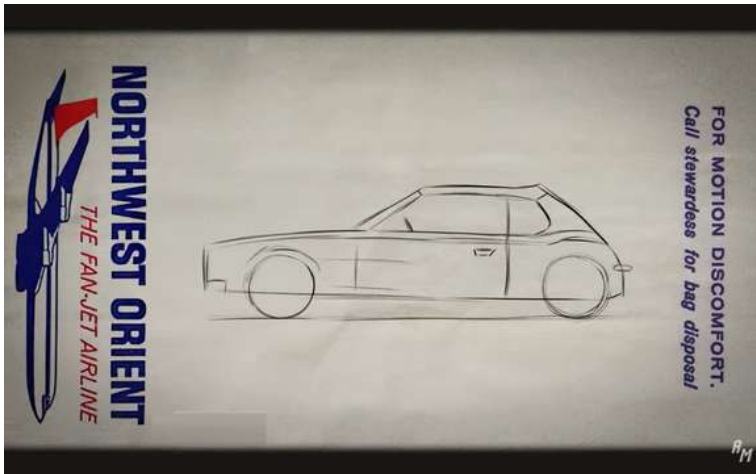
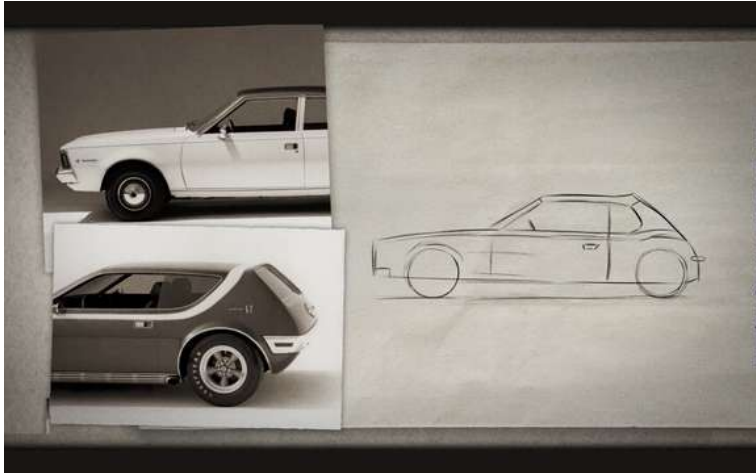


Protecting What Matters to You



ZEHR 
INSURANCE BROKERS LTD.

Part 2 of 3 REVIEW: Episodes 3 and 4 The Last Independent Automaker Continued



Cutting to the chase, the documentary takes us right into style chief Richard A. Teague's household, as he quizzes his daughter Lisa about blue jeans around 1972. "My father was saying to me, 'what is it about these Levi's? Why are they so popular?'"

Lest we forget: adults of that day rarely wore denim. Bing Crosby, in a jean jacket, was turned away from check-in at the Hotel Vancouver. In 1970 Ottawa, where I lived, jeans were risqué to attend school in. I don't think my Catholic buddies could at all. And good luck talking your way across the U.S.-Canada border wearing a ripped pair, especially if you had long hair.

"'Oh dad,' I was telling him," Lisa Teague-Scarpatti now recalls. "'We gotta have Levi's!' It was like a big deal." And yes, along came the Levi's Gremlin. I've written before that brains, not capital, drove American Motors. Here in episode 3 is cranial inspiration on full display.

Also visible is a nimbleness that gets little public credit. As the late stylist Vince Geraci says, in the video, "when I ultimately went to Chrysler they said 'you know, we really wanted to do the Levi interior also, but sales didn't know if they could sell as many and the dealers didn't know if it was going to be popular enough . . .'"

"That's the difference between American Motors and the rest of the industry." The Levi's Gremlin helped make AMC the "lovable underdog," as someone in the video says, and those were good times. This I also remember from the waiting list my family was on for a 1974 Hornet.

Continued on next page:

Part 2 of 3 REVIEW: Episodes 3 and 4 The Last Independent Automaker Continued

Episodes 3 and 4 take us directly to AMC's brief shining moment, when the company could sell as many cars as it could make.

Almost half a million 1974 models were built, not including Jeeps, and the company seemed on track for the future. No wonder the forward-looking Pacer came along. We can lament all we want that the car somehow stole resources from more ordinary things, but as those ads by Mary Wells's agency suggested, if you were competing against GM, Ford, and Chrysler, what would you do?

Anybody who has been in a Pacer knows the car delivered on things other small cars of that day could not: a feeling of space, a comfortable ride, a level of quiet. Consumer Reports rated the Pacer against the new VW Rabbit and decided both were breakthroughs, though very different cars. The Wankel debacle is discussed in episode 3. No lament from me: who would not take an AMC Six over a thirstier unreliable Wankel?

A sign the documentary's makers did their homework is all the interviewing with assembly-line workers. In episode 4 the folks who built our cars remind us: the line keeps moving. Keep turning that screw, or it will swallow you. "We all had our own little tricks on how to do our jobs," says one lady worker.

Among the innovations (not hers) were in-plant, under-workbench bars at Kenosha (never Brampton, do you think?). After shifts, a long line of workers connected the plant to Freddie's, a bar. The company and union finally got together and applied a little rehab.

Episode 4 leaves us deflated as the golden age abruptly vanishes. But the story is hardly over. Some of AMC's greatest cars were still in the future.

Meanwhile, who would have thought, in those squarer days, that some day everybody would be in Levi's. Well, someone had an inkling.

We will consider episodes 5 and 6 in the next issue of AM Spirit



An advertisement for a Wankel rotary engine kit. The main headline reads "The wankel is here! IT'S YOURS NOW!". Below this, it says "ASSEMBLE THIS REVOLUTIONARY ENGINE KIT YOURSELF AND LEARN WHY THE ROTARY ENGINE...". There are two columns of bullet points listing features: "Has 40% fewer moving parts", "Develops the same HP as a reciprocating engine twice its size", "Produces uniform torque throughout each revolution", "Runs smoother and more quietly at higher speeds", "Requires no valves, no cam, no pistons or rods", and "Gets peak performance on low octane, unleaded gasoline". On the right, there is a technical drawing of the engine and a smaller image of a "PRECISION OPERATING SCALE MODEL WANKEL ENGINE KIT".



RELIEVE THE FUEL SHORTAGE

AMC Gremlin is the only U.S. sub-compact with a standard six-cylinder engine. Yet for all its engine, the car is very easy on gas. Averages over 18 mpg, depending upon the way you drive. And Gremlin still out-accelerates, weighs more, has a wider track, wider front seat, and wider back seat than any other car in its class. If you want to know what else Gremlin relieves, price one.



Introducing the first wide small car.

You're looking at a unique-looking automobile.

It's called the Pacer.

And it looks different on the outside because it's different on the inside.

To begin with, the Pacer is wider than any other small car. So naturally, you get an unusual amount of room.

And since it's wider—and has a unique isolated suspension system—the Pacer also gives you an incredibly smooth and stable ride.

The hood of the Pacer looks the way

it does because it was designed for aerodynamic reasons. To reduce the wind resistance. So the engine doesn't have to work as hard at highway speeds. And so you wind up with better gas economy.

The Pacer comes with AMC's proven 6-cylinder engine and a 22-gallon gas tank. Which means you get outstanding performance, excellent economy and long-distance driving range.

With our doors we did something that borders on wizardry. We made the passenger

door even bigger than the driver's. So you can get in and out of the back that much easier. (We also gave the Pacer a hatchback so you can get your luggage in and out that much easier, too.)

This same ingenuity was also applied to Pacer's visibility. We wanted you to see as far as your eye can see. From our point

of view that meant designing the car for better all-round vision. From your point of view, you'll be able to notice all the people noticing you.

A final point. The AMC Pacer, the wide small car is covered by the wide coverage AMC's exclusive BUYER PROTECTION PLAN™.

Everything about the Pacer—the look, the room, the ride, the doors, the visibility, our Plan—make it what it really is. Everything a small car never was.

AMC PACER



"And there's another AMC!"

Report on the AMCs gathered at the Woodstock Auto Expo May 17th
by Gary Freelen of AMO Plus Reprinted with Permission

THANK YOU

to everyone who attended the
Sunday, May 17th, 2026
WOODSTOCK AUTO EXPO

Congratulations go out to William Koster
who won \$1,000. in the SPECIAL GRAND PRIZE DRAW!
This special draw was for those who entered their vehicle
in the "SHOW & SHINE" at this automotive event.
Pictured below is William after collecting his prize.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
The next WOODSTOCK AUTO EXPO
will take place on Sunday, July 5th, 2026

Hello everyone!

"And there's another AMC!" The sound out of the mouth of a person who was walking the showgrounds on this past Sunday's Woodstock Auto Expo. We had a great showing of 7 cars, and many people noticed our attendance. The day started off a bit on the wet side, and cool, as Mother Nature was cleaning up, and nurturing her spring plants.

Here is your winner of the draw that took place at the end of the show, just after 1pm. The organizers said there was about 150 cars at the show. Not bad.

I would like to thank everyone who came out to this event, and I think we shocked the auto world with the amount of AMCs present.



Angelo Fedele's 1973 AMX



Rob van Veen's 1970 AMX, with a new windshield that was installed recently. There is a pristine Jeep Comanche in the background that looks like it was rotisserie restored. That's how I like my chicken as a matter of fact.

Bruce Andersen's 1966 Rambler American convertible.

Continued on next page:

"And there's another AMC!" continued:

Report on the AMCs gathered at the Woodstock Auto Expo May 17th
by Gary Freelen of AMO Plus Reprinted with Permission



There is Pam Bullock, watching over the AMX, and Neil Bullock is seated on the other side.

Above is a 1964 Rambler Classic that is owned by a local gentleman. I saw the car parked just out of Langton the other day, and met Ken and Sharon Steinoff.



To the left is a 1969 Javelin that is owned by a Northern Rambler, Lyle Semple of Ingersoll. I have heard of him through a long time friend of the club, Barry Clark. This car was apparently a test vehicle at some point in its life. Lyle found all sorts of different shades of paint under the colour that he bought, when he went to restore it.



Below is 1969 Javelin is owned by Northern Rambler Mike McNiece of Kilbride Ontario.

This is a great grouping. I will try to contact the organizers for next year, and perhaps we could get some area reserved for our cars. I never did bring the AMC sign out.

It was a great start to the cruising season. Also, it was nice that Bryant Fear, the president of Northern Ramblers made this event known to his group. There is strength in numbers.



Automotive Book Review by Alfred Holden

Auto design history stops well short

The Driving Machine, by Witold Rybczynski, W.W. Norton & Company Ltd., London, 2024, 235 pages.

*I am a sucker for the new releases table at the bookstore. Travelling to Paris in April I was at one of the several Louvre shops and spotted *The Driving Machine: A Design History of the Car*.*

When a cover catches my eye, I turn to the index and peek at what is said about a topic I am interested in. If it seems fresh – if it “advances the story” as they say in journalism – out comes my credit card.

*How’s this, for how *The Driving Machine* snagged an American Motors fan:*

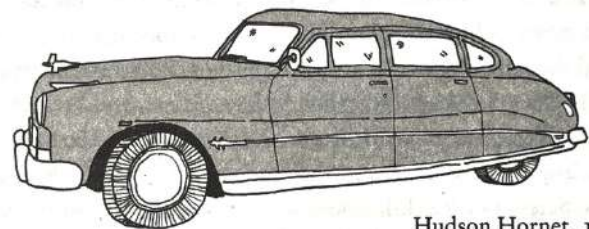
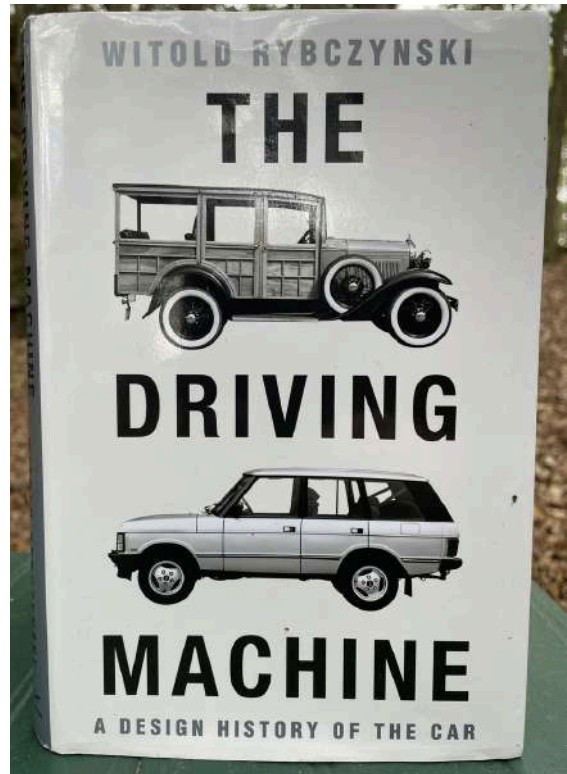
*“When *Mechanix Illustrated*, which ran a regular feature on users’ experiences with their cars, sent its standard questionnaire to Metropolitan owners, it reported an unexpectedly enthusiastic response.*

“‘Never have we had so many comments written on the blanks. In other words, the Metropolitan owners know their cars and they love this tiny import bearing the Nash nameplate.’”

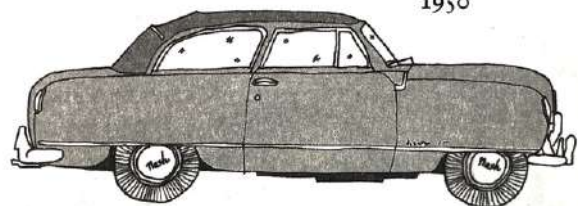
On that basis I bought the book, then left the Louvre bag containing it at the restaurant where we ate dinner. Normally you would just go back and get it, but like many tourists in Paris we stop randomly, since the food tends to be good all over.

The question became, “where did we eat?”

*One of us found a receipt in a wallet. A phone call was made, the book collected. I have since read all of *The Driving Machine*. Its much-published author, Canadian Witold Rybczynski, is something of a technically-inclined Michael Pollan. Instead of philosophizing about food and plants as Pollan does, the author covers home, hearth, and possessions.*



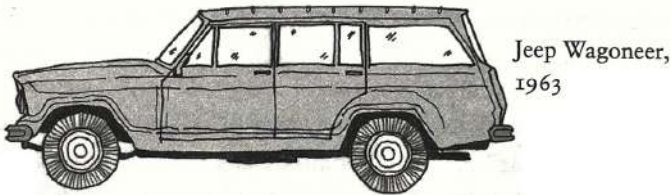
Hudson Hornet, 1951



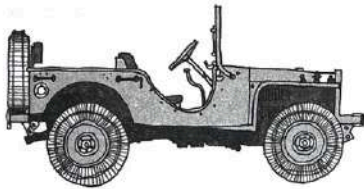
Nash Rambler landau,
1950

Continued on next page:

Automotive Book Review by Alfred Holden continued

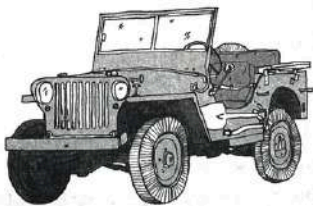


Jeep Wagoneer,
1963

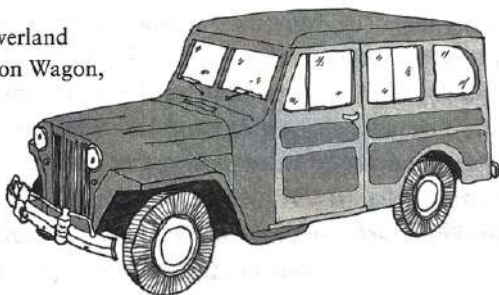


American Bantam
BRC, 1940

Willys-Overland
MB, 1941



Willys-Overland
Jeep Station Wagon,
1946



The next section I read was about the Jeep as a pioneering SUV. The genre's prototype, give or take, might be the postwar Willys wagon whose chief stylist, Brooks Stevens, later penned the 1963-1991 Wagoneer (and also the Studebaker Wagonaire).

"This (first postwar Jeep wagon) was a historic moment," Rybczynski writes. "While the open Jeep CJ had been the first mass-produced civilian car with four-wheel drive, the Jeep Station Wagon was a fully enclosed family car that was also a capable off-road vehicle. "Sometimes, the car was advertised as a 'Utility Wagon.'"

I was glad to see the author comment that the downsized Jeep Cherokee XJ of 1983 onward pulled off what almost no SUV has done since then: it is a beautiful car. More could be said; "The body design was the responsibility of Richard A. Teague, who was in charge of styling at AMC."

I was disappointed there wasn't a word from this Canadian writer about the downsized Cherokee's role teaching the Chinese how to build modern cars, given that China is now the largest builder of them. From whom did it learn the ropes?

Initially from American Motors, whose Beijing Jeep project had many Canadian connections, via parts organized for shipping in London, Ont., and the auto executives AMC sent over, including Beijing Jeep's president Don St. Pierre and Ernie Regher, a member of the Northern Ramblers.

*These omissions spark a confession about my impulses at new-release tables. I often have buyer's lament. This time I should have known better. Long ago, I tried to read Rybczynski's earlier *Home: A history of an Idea*, and could not get through it.*

Continued on next page:

Automotive Book Review by Alfred Holden continued

The vague, broad topic hints at the problem, which The Driving Machine also suffers from: Rybczynski's writing has the whiff of a quick riff to it. A good riff in jazz is one thing; on the page one tires of breezy conversation about whatever is on the author's mind.

"Neither the Hummer nor the Viper was the car for me, and while I was in no hurry to replace our Infiniti, I occasionally stopped at dealerships to look at cars and take a test drive. I fondly remembered (friend) Jean-Louis's old Saab, but that company was now half-owned by General Motors and the car had lost much of its offbeat charm.

"I tried a Lexus, but although it was roomy and well built, I found its bland sense of luxury unappealing. Shirley and I occasionally shopped at a garden supply center on Philadelphia's Main Line, which was near a Mercedes dealership . . ."

Much of the book reads like this and you get impatient for more gems like the Popular Mechanix back story on the Metropolitan. They are far between and one reason may be that, going by the bibliography, the author draws second-hand from books many of us have read, such as Robert Lacey's Ford or Vincent Curcio's Chrysler.

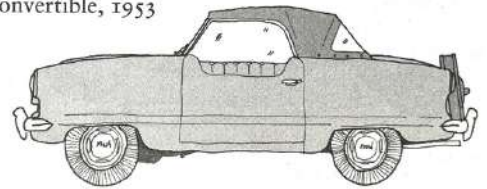
On the plus side, and testifying to the pioneering done by Nash, Hudson, and Jeep, is the fact that the author included more illustrations of AMC-related vehicles than any other car family.

A basic disappointment was that a book with the bold subtitle, "A design history of the car," had so little to say about the look of today's cars.

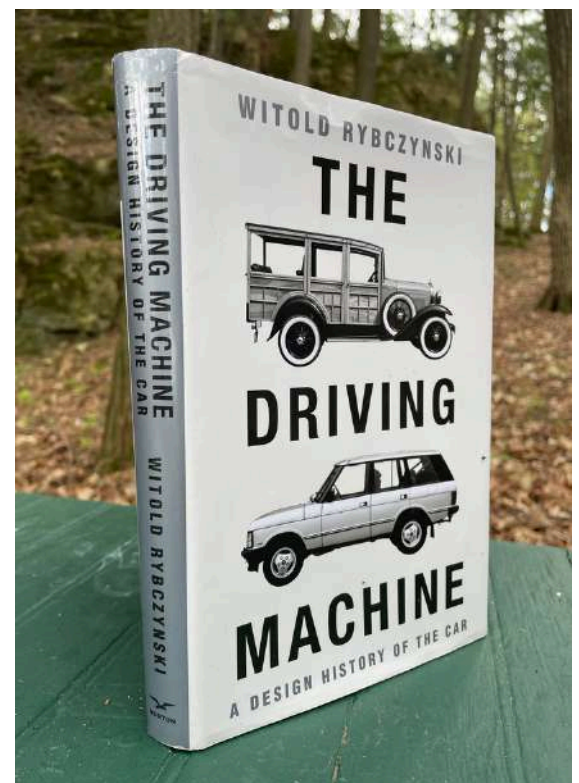
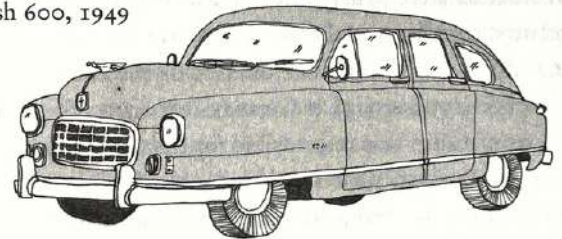
I am hungry to know what's with the gaping mouths, space-eating slopes and giant black wheels that have increasingly made vehicles look like the sinister machines in video games. Harley Earl liked to say that every time you got into a car it should be a little vacation. Now, for me, purchasing one has become painful. I put down huge money to buy a blobbish Mr. Potato head, speared with plasticized chrome and clipped-on black plastic pieces. I look around parking lots and think, "what are they thinking?" And don't get me started about interiors, about which Rybczynski says little.

"Alf, it's just you." Maybe so. But much more light could have been shed on car design in this chatty book that drew me in but, like a certain unnamed car, did not stay sold.

Nash Metropolitan convertible, 1953



Nash 600, 1949



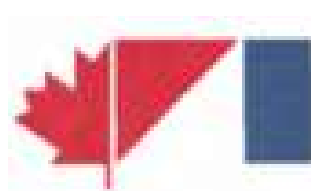
Northern Ramblers Car Club Membership Form

A Canadian club honouring the American Motors Corporation.

(Ownership of a vehicle not necessary.)

**ATTENTION! WE ARE DOING A SPECIAL
MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION AT
RAMBLER RAMA FOR ANYONE IN
ATTENDANCE!**

Details at the club store show day!



MEMBERSHIP DUES

Circle the option you would like below

Paper Version of Newsletter: CDN Members \$40 CDN Per year, U.S. Members \$45 US Per year

Emailed Version of Newsletter: CDN Members \$15 CDN Per year, US. Members \$20 US Per year

Pay by Cheque/Money order ONLY!, MAKE PAYABLE TO: NORTHERN RAMBLERS CAR CLUB

please complete the application below and send it to:

NORTHERN RAMBLERS CAR CLUB

C/O Bryant Fear

14 Robb St P.O Box 163

Moorefield Ontario N0G 2K0

Phone: 226-220-1293

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ **PROVINCE:** _____ **POSTAL CODE:** _____

PHONE: _____

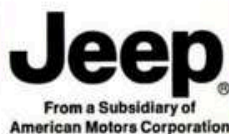
E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

IMPORTANT! WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS IN CASE CANADA POST IS ON STRIKE

VEHICLE YEAR / MODEL: _____

COLOUR: _____

NEW MEMBER _____ **RENEWING MEMBER** _____





AM SPIRIT

Northern Ramblers Car Club Newsletter

See you at Rambler Rama Saturday June 20th 2026



RAMBLER-RAMA: THE NORTHERN RAMBLERS CAR SHOW

Saturday June 20th 2026
10am to 3pm

Registration closes Noon

For more info visit
www.northernramblersclub.ca
Address: 16210 Island Road, Port Perry



Interested in volunteering for the club executive or to help on show day? Email the club at:
info@northernramblersclub.ca