

on the go



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"Considering the values upon which the festival was built, yet designing a logo that is meaningful for contemporary audiences, is truly a logo meant to reflect our values," noted Patrick Donmoyer, Director of the PA German Cultural Heritage Center, Kutztown, on renewing the Festival brand. More on page 12.

NOTICE - SPECIAL OFFICE HOURS:

Our office will be closed for the following observances - *Monday, May 30 Memorial Day; Monday, July 4 Independence Day*

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Peter J. Armstrong
President/CEO

“...gives us the
opportunity to view from a
different perspective...”

Milestones: Looking For The Reflection

In driver safety, we stress the importance of keeping one's eye on the rearview mirror. This practice allows us to watch for approaching situations that may require an action on our part to stay out of trouble. It also gives us the opportunity to view from a different perspective objects that have passed us by - some that could have presented a challenge and others that hardly merited notice.

It's interesting to reflect on life's "milestones" in our figurative rearview mirror - anniversaries, graduations, marriages, births, etc. Have you noticed that these reflections often have been filtered by the passage of time? Places and events from the past have been scrubbed free of troublesome tones and undercurrents; we're left with a bleached-clean remembrance of what was. Given this human tendency to inaccurately rewrite history, is there a benefit to waxing reflective?

In the May/June 2021 issue of *On The Go*, we celebrated "A Century of Service", recognizing the more than 679,000 AAA School Safety Patrollers across the nation and saluting their valuable contribution to the safety of their school mates. Some of us may look back at our own experience as a School Safety Patrol member, acknowledging the leadership skills and work ethic we drew from participation and from which we now benefit.

An upcoming event that pays homage to an American icon was highlighted in the March/April 2022 issue of our pub. The Mother Road turns 100 in 2026, but we're not waiting to celebrate. The AAA Route 66 Road Fest revisits the historic sites that once attracted so many road trippers. Who doesn't want to drop the top on your '60s-era convertible and hit the literal bricks of Route 66? Whales and wigwams and Winslow, oh my...

This year marks the return of an old Berks County favorite - the Kutztown Festival. An event that invites

young and old to immerse themselves in the ways of times past has much to pass on to current and future generations. Folks come from all over the world to see how chairs are caned, soap is made, baskets are woven and so very much more. If you think the Plain People were as their name implies, you'll change your mind as soon as you sample the sights, smells, sounds, and textures of the Pennsylvania Dutch life as demonstrated during this lively event.

And now we come to the inspiration of this issue's editorial musing- the 120th anniversary of the American Automobile Association. It has been an amazing ride. The beginning of the 20th century saw a boom in the sale of motorized vehicles. One data source says that there were 200,000 motorized vehicles in the United States in 1909. By 1916 there were 2.25 million. Not terribly reliable, these new contraptions created a need for a roadside rescuer. In 1915, a very young AAA was the first to organize a way to help stranded motorists. Today, roadside assistance is the number one reason people join AAA. A leader in the field, AAA handles more than 33 million calls a year.

But we're not just roadside service. We also assist our more than 62 million members with travel, insurance, member discounts and financial services. We advocate for safe mobility, going where the policy-makers are. The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety - which is celebrating its 75th year in 2022, by the way - continues its dedication to saving lives by preventing traffic crashes and reducing injuries when crashes occur. Changing driver behavior and old habits that cause crashes is an incredibly daunting task. Newer vehicle technology means we can't live in the past and must learn to adapt.

Learning from the past is possible. Could it be true that objects in the mirror are actually closer than they may appear?

Tow Provider Never Gave Up

Roland, of Arrowhead Services, received a call for a vehicle stranded in very remote area. It was a particularly hot day in Nevada, with temperatures reaching 115 degrees.

Roland made his way through barren and rugged terrain, with no sign of the stranded member. He decided to go over one last hill and there, 200 yards or so down, stuck in the mix of gravel and sand, was the member and his vehicle.

The member had run out of water and was starting to suffer from heat exhaustion. Roland made his way to the member, brought him back to his truck so he could cool off and rehydrate.

The member shared with Roland that he was recently retired and had taken up hiking as a new hobby. This is how he ended up stranded in such a remote location. The member repeatedly thanked Roland for not giving up on finding him, even saying

that he felt Roland had saved his life.

Roland, when he thinks back on that day, smiles and says, "I was determined to find him no matter how long it took. He is someone's father, husband and I wanted to be sure he made it home okay."

Roland was a Real Hero of the Road to this man who was just trying out a new hobby and found himself in need of help. When you're driving

along the highway and you see Roland, a tow provider like him, or other first responders working, think of this story and what his kindness meant to

this person. And when you do, please slow down and move over so they can do their job safely. We need tow providers like Roland and so do our members; but most of all, so do their families. Help us keep them safe.



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Club Update

New Partner - Always Towing & Service Center

The AAA Discounts & Rewards program is happy to welcome our newest Berks County partner, Always Towing & Service Center. A member of the AAA Approved Auto Repair Network, Always Towing & Service is a family-owned business located at 201 S. Third Street in Hamburg. In addition to towing service and U-Haul rentals, AAA members receive 10% off the total service bill, not to exceed \$100 (does not apply to

state emissions/safety inspection). Present your valid AAA membership card at the time of service to receive your discount.

Service center hours are 7am-3pm Monday and Tuesday and 7am-4pm Wednesday through Friday. Always is also the local preferred installer for tirerack.com.

Talk to Wayne Wolfe, Service Manager at 610-914-4567 for details on what Always Towing & Service Center can do for you.



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120
years
OF SERVICE

serving members

helping travelers

A pioneer in transportation a century ago, an advocate for safe travel and mobility today - AAA celebrates 120 years

This year AAA celebrates 120 years of advocating for safe mobility for drivers and travelers alike. Started in 1902 by automotive enthusiasts who wanted to chart the path for better roads in America, AAA has transformed into one of North America's largest membership organizations, providing roadside assistance, travel, discounts, financial and insurance services to enhance the life journey of more than 62 million members.

"AAA was built out of a commitment by a few to advocate for safe, efficient roads and enhanced mobility for all," said Marshall Doney, president and CEO of AAA. "People may know us for roadside assistance, but we are so much more than that. Today, AAA is a trusted voice consumers can turn to for all things mobility, travel and beyond."

Throughout AAA's storied history, the federation has been instrumental in pushing for legislation and training to improve roadway safety for everyone, whether for drivers, pedestrians, cyclists or first responders. This includes advocating for the creation of the Interstate Highway System in 1956, fighting for Move Over laws in all 50

states, developing driver education programs for all ages and the AAA School Safety Patrol program, speaking out on impaired and distracted driving and demanding stronger seatbelt legislation across the country. Much of this work is supported by proprietary research conducted by AAA automotive experts and the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety on these same issues.

As one of the largest full-service travel agencies in North America, AAA recognized early on the importance of providing the public with trusted travel information. To serve this need, AAA created a suite of resources that are still synonymous with travel today, including the TripTik, the AAA Diamond designation and TourBook® travel guides. AAA also developed a network of expert travel advisors who for decades have been instrumental in making dream vacations a reality for members across the country.

As AAA embarks on its 120th year, it stands among a small number of industry pioneers still in existence. Longevity of organizations has eroded over the years, impacted by economic depressions and recessions,

mergers and technological disruptions. In 2020, the average lifespan of an S&P 500 company was just over 21 years.

The first 120 years are only the beginning. AAA, a pioneer from day one, continues to evolve to meet today's changing mobility and travel landscapes and to meet member needs. From digital transformations that improve the member service experience, to pilot testing mobile battery charging solutions, developing new and exciting travel tools and resources, and conducting research to

understand consumer attitudes, frustrations or delights with things like vehicle automation or Mobility on Demand, AAA's products, services and advocacy are geared toward enhancing our members' life journey.

"AAA is a strong and resilient brand and I'm excited about how we are positioned for the future," said Tony Buzzelli, AAA Board Chair. "From roadside assistance to travel, AAA has evolved legacy programs and services, while pursuing new digital-focused initiatives that provide members more solutions to meet their needs."

How It Started

Founded in 1902 by nine motoring organizations with 1,500 members.

In 1915, AAA was the first to introduce a roadside service for stranded drivers.

In 1920, AAA's School Safety Patrol launched to provide school-aged children with an extra sense of safety and security when going to and from school.

Since day one, AAA has dedicated itself to the future of transportation by supporting safe, efficient highways and a multi-modal transportation system that is accessible and affordable to everyone.

AAA began offering TripTiks (the original GPS) in 1937 to help members get where they wanted to go.

In 1937, AAA began field inspections of hotels and restaurants, which led to the renowned AAA Diamond program.

In 1975, AAA created its Approved Auto Repair (AAR) program to address one of the most frequent consumer complaints - dissatisfaction with finding a reputable and affordable automobile repair shop.

In 1999, AAA began its mobile battery service to provide members with an on-the-go solution for battery testing and replacement at the location of their breakdown.

How It's Going

Today, AAA is North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization with 62 million members.

Roadside assistance is now one of the most valued features of a AAA membership. We respond to approximately 30 million calls for help annually. Today, requests for roadside assistance are increasingly handled through digital channels such as the AAA mobile app, dedicated website and via text.

100-years strong, the AAA School Safety Patrol program has contributed to the steady decline of U.S. student pedestrian (ages 5-14) deaths - a 24% decrease since 2010. The renowned program boasts more than 679,000 Patrollers in 35,000 schools across North America and 30 countries.

AAA actively engages in traffic safety advocacy and has been instrumental in passing important legislation across the country such as texting while driving bans, primary enforcement seat belt laws and Move Over laws protecting those working or stranded at the roadside.

Now a digital offering, TripTik and AAA TourBooks remain popular trip-planning tools. Each year AAA provides nearly 16 million routes via TripTik to travelers.

More than 80 years later, AAA inspects 53,000+ hotels and restaurants annually offering the only comprehensive, on-site professional evaluation guided by the latest industry trends and guest priorities. This includes AAA's newest designation, Inspected Clean, which is an objective, scientific validation of the cleanliness of common surfaces throughout hotels.

Today there are more than 6,000 AARs in the U.S. that are physically inspected by AAA and awarded this exclusive distinction.

Today, AAA is the only organization to offer mobile battery testing and replacement nationwide, responding to over 8.2 million battery calls annually and of those, replacing over 2 million batteries.

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Traveling with Kids: The Best Quick, Dirty Tips

By Samantha Brown, Host of "Samantha Brown's Places to Love"

If you have kids, you don't have a lot of time to read. My pet peeve is a long-winded blog about family travel that's light on tips, but just FULL of funny anecdotes. You just need the tips. So here they are, quick and dirty.

Bring Balloons to Inflate

You can work off a lot of kid's-been-in-a-car-all-day energy at the hotel. Yet an inflated balloon doesn't travel far and won't break anything.

And While We're at It...Bubbles

Blowing bubbles helps with the same thing especially at airports, and it's totally worth taking precious ounces of what the TSA allows you to bring in liquids.

How to Fly with Young Children

Parent one uses pre-board to load

in gear and sets up shop. Parent two waits with children and boards absolutely last. This way you wear them out, don't expose them to the most stressful part of the trip—the boarding process—and they are not constrained an extra 45 minutes (or longer) for the flight to leave.

Never Feel Bad about Going to McDonald's

Or any fast food restaurant for that matter. Being a quick and stress-free meal is EXACTLY what these restaurants were made for.

For Mom's Sake, No Buffets

Moms are required to do all the getting up and down, assembling, pouring, cutting, spreading and STILL leave a tip.

Two Words: Duct Tape

Use it to childproof outlets, tape

drawers and toilet lids shut and wrangle dangling cords.

Safety First

When you walk into any new space (like a hotel room or cruise cabin), drop everything and check windows are locked, balcony doors shut and anything else that could be potentially dangerous for a wandering child.

Seek Out Restaurants with Booths

Children relax more in them and even fall asleep. This old-fashioned seating can be found at Denny's and Perkins. Yep, the food may not be fancy, but at least I get to eat that food.

Never Leave a Location without Using its Bathroom

Your children will say they don't have to go. They lie.

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Dealing With System Maintenance

Dear Ask Ed:

My car is making a very scary growling/roaring sound and the steering wheel shakes when I make a turn. What can that be?!

**Sincerely,
Ruth W.**

Dear Ruth,

It really can be scary when our car starts to act oddly when we drive it. Immediately our imagination concludes that the repair is going to cost an arm and a leg and we're just not ready to deal with that. Of course, I can't diagnose your vehicle's issue through this column, but I can offer you some general information that may help.

While power steering systems don't have a filter like those for engine oil or transmission fluid, they may have a screen that could become blocked. Too often when a customer's car is making that annoying howling or groaning noise, the first thing the mechanic wants to do is replace the power steering pump. I would recommend that your trusted auto tech first check for less expensive repair options. If the screen does have a clog, resolve the issue. If that isn't the problem, look for other clues that would lead to a correct diagnosis such as pump failure.

Since the system had to be opened to affect repairs, this is a good time to flush it and start over with fresh fluid as recommended by the auto manufacturer.

Let's talk some more about flushes.

Coolant/Antifreeze System

This type of flush doesn't necessarily need to be done by any particular time or mileage. Coolant can become acidic, causing pitting and other damage to your car's cooling system parts. While some shops have a pH meter, others will employ a litmus stick to test the propylene glycol's pH. After dipping the stick into the fluid, the color of the paper is matched to a chart to determine the fluid's acidity or alkalinity. The recommended pH range for most coolants is slightly on the alkaline side, from 7.5-11.

If your mechanic has to do any kind of repairs to your car's cooling system, such as the water pump, that is a good time to have the coolant system flushed. By the way, when mixing your 50/50 coolant mixture (water/coolant fluid ratio to achieve the desired level of freeze



AskEd@aaardgberks.com

protection; in our area, around -20F), be sure to use distilled water or water that has been treated via a reverse osmosis system. Hard water is harmful to your car's engine, just like it is to your home's plumbing.

Transmission Fluid

This is a system flush that is often (maybe too often?) recommended by garages. It has a serviceable filter that is replaced when the fluid is flushed from the system. Some parts of the transmission wear out, ie clutch packs in an automatic transmission, that can shed tiny metal shavings that can be found in the filter and stuck to the magnet on the bottom of the pan. Transmission fluid is affected by time and use. Refer to your vehicle manufacturer's recommendations for a maintenance schedule.

Brake System

There is a battery-powered meter about the size of a magic marker that your auto tech will use to check the condition of the brake fluid. By dipping the meter into the fluid, he can measure its water content. This is very important. Brake fluid, when exposed to air, will absorb the moisture from the air, producing rust throughout the brake system. What can happen? Say you are driving down a steep hill and you "ride" your brake instead of downshifting. This will create heat in the system. If that heat reaches the boiling point, any water in the system boils away and then you'll have "soft" or "mushy" brake pedal pressure. Not good!

Ruth, I hope this information is helpful. Thanks for writing in. Happy motoring!

Ed

Contact Ed with your automotive question either by email at AskEd@aaardgberks.com or by writing to him at AAA Reading-Berks, 920 Van Reed Road, Wyomissing, PA 19610, Attn: Ask Ed.

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rediscover the kutztown



folk festival

By Lori B. Donofrio-Galley.

Founded in 1950, the Kutztown Folk Festival is the oldest continuously operated folklife festival in America. During the week of July 2-July 10, 2022, the event will be held in person at the Kutztown Fairgrounds for the first time since 2019.

Now in its 73rd year, the Kutztown Folk Festival remains relevant. Visitors will rediscover a Festival nationally recognized for its authentic crafts, food, entertainment, and interpretive demonstrations as it weaves some fresh perspectives into its traditional landscape. A new face of the festival is Berks County native and Kutztown University Alum Heather Zimmerman, who was named Director of the Kutztown Folk Festival in June 2021.

On the grounds, demonstrations by nearly 200 craftspeople and artists, countless food vendors, and five stages of entertainment are a mainstay. Fresh Fest Market is a new micro-section of the festival with locally homegrown and homemade cheeses, breads, and other healthy food offerings, local craft beers, and specially-crafted cocktails with local ingredients.

“Home-steading” is a trendy word now,” according to Zimmerman. “Thinking about where your food originates and traditional activities like canning are new again.” Linda Ernst, Festival Events Manager, added, “People are returning to their roots when it comes to food traditions.”

A daily program led by vendors on the stage at Fresh Fest Market could feature such topics as cheesemaking,



composting, and gardening.

Valuing tradition by introducing unique approaches is also evident in the Quilt Barn, one of the most popular festival attractions. Cyndi Hershey, Quilt Education and Development Director, characterizes the festival as “a multigenerational event.” Over the years she has seen children with their parents who were there also as children. “The Festival represents a nostalgia and comfort level that people are craving, especially considering the last two years.”

“In the Quilt Barn you will observe the broadest span of grassroots” continued Hershey. “Transitional quilts—a crossover from traditional to contemporary—are often lighter and brighter—the palate of color differs, and the design may not be traditional in any shape or form. The Festival is accepting more machine quilts, as long as the quilting meets authentic Pennsylvania Dutch skill and craftsmanship.”

A Pennsylvania native and watercolor artist for 39 years, Diane Phalen has been a fixture of the Kutztown Folk Festival for the last fifteen. According to Zimmerman, she is “a great ambassador for the Festival.” This year Phalen will staff her vendor booth in the Quilt Barn, as she will donate a painting of the very Zigzag Log Cabin Quilt to be featured in the acclaimed Quilt Auction on Saturday, July 9, at noon.

To enjoy all that the Kutztown Folk Festival has to offer, purchase advance tickets and plan your visit at <https://www.kutztownfestival.com>.



Back: Heather Zimmerman, Festival Director. Front Left: Cyndi Hershey, Quilt Education & Development Director. Front Right: Linda T. Ernst, Festival Events Manager. Photo credit: Joel Seidel Photography.

Potholes Pack a Punch

A new survey from AAA found that last year 1 in 10 drivers sustained vehicle damage significant enough to warrant a repair after hitting a pothole. With an average price tag of almost \$600 per repair, damage caused by potholes cost drivers a staggering \$26.5 billion in 2021 alone.

To make matters worse, these same drivers often ended up with an average of two pothole-related repairs, confirmation that America's roadways need immediate attention. AAA urges government officials and departments of transportation to focus on improving road conditions, prioritizing those areas most in need of repair.

"In many parts of the country, winter roads give way to pothole-

laden obstacle courses," said Greg Brannon, AAA's director of automotive engineering. "When a vehicle hits a pothole with any kind of force, the tires, wheels and suspension get the brunt of the impact and fixing any of those items is pricey."

The Pothole's Origin Story

Cracked and crumbling pavement is the perfect environment for potholes to form. Moisture collects in these crevices and as temperatures fluctuate, it expands and contracts due to freezing and thawing. This breaks up the pavement and, combined with the weight of passing cars, eventually results in a pothole. These concrete craters can wreak havoc on a vehicle's tires, alignment, suspension and shocks. In the winter and spring of 2021, AAA responded

to 1.8 million tire-related roadside assistance calls. While AAA does not identify if a roadside assistance request is the result of pothole damage, this number represented 11% of the total calls received in the winter and spring last year.

How to Save Your Car and Your Wallet from Pothole Damage

While potholes are a reality for many drivers, sustaining vehicle damage does not have to be. AAA recommends the following:

- Check your tires regularly, including the tread depth, tire pressure, suspension and alignment.
- Keep your eyes on the road. An alert and cautious driver is less likely to hit a pothole.
- Get your car thoroughly inspected if you suspect pothole damage.

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Destinations & Diversions

More Than Just A Car Show

Regular readers of this publication might recall that Skyline Drive Corvettes (SDC) of Reading, PA was the brainchild of a group of young guys from Berks County in the early 1960's. The club's first official meeting was held on June 7, 1964.

SDC's In-Vette-Tational debuted in 1979 at the Berkshire Mall in Wyomissing. A severe gas shortage nearly caused it to be cancelled, but "the shortage eased a bit", and the show went on. It was the first event of its kind in the area and was described as "three days of activities, parties, food, beer, fun and cars". After a second successful show in 1981, it was decided to make this an annual event.

Putting together a multiple-day car show every year was an overwhelming challenge for the relatively small club, so in 1985 the In-Vette-Tational was reduced to a one-day event. By 1990, it was not unusual for 60 to 80 Corvette owners to display their cars with the hope of winning one of the coveted trophies.

The In-Vette-Tational has been held at a variety of locations throughout Berks County, including the Owl's Field in West Lawn, Berks County Agricultural Center, Riveredge, Vanity Fair, the Fleetwood Park and Bob Fisher Chevrolet. The Oley Fire Company Fairgrounds has been home to the In-Vette-Tational for the past eight years.

The In-Vette-Tational has certainly grown and evolved. One of the show's significant turning points occurred in 2014, when "All Makes and Models" of cars and trucks were invited to the In-Vette-Tational to celebrate SDC's 50th Anniversary. With 14 beautiful "country" acres, the Oley Fairgrounds pro-

vided plenty of space for vehicles of all kinds (yes, even Corvettes and Mustangs parked side-by-side for the day!), activities and entertainment – a true "community event".

Experiences, lessons learned, hard work and determination have paid off. The 2021 In-Vette-Tational was SDC's best-attended show ever, drawing 279 registered cars from Berks, surrounding counties and even a few from other states. And some folks attended just to browse and enjoy the day – it's free to spectators!

Since its inception, SDC has been helping others and giving back to the community. The In-Vette-Tational was identified as a way to raise additional money for charities and to support local businesses who attend to display their goods and services. In 2009, the club created the SDC Scholarship Fund which provides financial assistance to local youth pursuing post-high school education in the automotive field. A large portion of proceeds from every In-Vette-Tational is dedicated to the Scholarship Fund.

This year, SDC will be hosting its 42nd Annual In-Vette-Tational on July 16, 2022 at the scenic Oley Fire Company Fairgrounds, 26 Jefferson St., Oley, PA 19547, rain or shine.

The show is open to all makes and models of cars, trucks, hot rods, muscle

cars, antiques, customs and classics. You are encouraged to join the fun, no matter what you drive! Registration is from 9 a.m. to noon.

The day will officially begin at 9:30 with an opening ceremony to honor our nation, veterans and active military. The scholarships will be presented at 1:30. In addition to the car show itself, there will be several hours of live music, raffles, a Tricky Tray auction, and a "slow drag" competition. A book sale will be offered by the Oley Library and there will a diverse group of vendor stands to check out. Good food prepared by the Oley Fire Company is available throughout the day. The show closes about 3:00 p.m. after a ceremony to present approximately 50 trophies for the winning cars. Any business or individual is invited to sponsor a trophy and have your name prominently displayed by the stage.

Although this continues to be a one-day event, the behind-the-scenes planning begins in earnest each January. Dedicated committee members and additional volunteers work tirelessly for months to offer a fun-filled "community event" that is "more than just a car show". Please join the fun!

For more information about the In-Vette-Tational, to register your car or to sponsor a trophy, email: INVETTE@SKYLINEDRIVECORVETTES.ORG.



Ship Ahoy: Americans Ready to Cruise

Cruise vacations are still a favorite choice among Americans according to new consumer research from AAA. Forty-one percent say they are considering a cruise in the future, with Millennials even more eager as over half (52%) say they are ready to return to the open seas. AAA Travel booking data shows that cruising is making a strong comeback with 2022 bookings nearing pre-pandemic levels. Of those Americans who say they are likely to cruise again, 41% cite a better understanding of the risks presented by COVID-19 as influencing their decision.

“The cruise industry has done an excellent job of prioritizing the health and safety of its guests while still creating a memorable onboard experience that makes cruising so special. This includes every major cruise line continuing to exceed CDC guidance, even though it is now voluntary,” said Paula Twidale, senior vice president, AAA Travel. “As things continue to improve, travelers are eager to return to the high seas to unplug and relax with those they love most.”

Something for Everyone

AAA found that 58.3 million (23%) Americans are considering a cruise in the next two years. The all-inclusive experience, quality time with family and friends and shore excursions top the list as the most attractive aspects of a cruise vacation. Younger generations, like Gen Z, are most excited about spending time with family and friends (57%) and

outdoor activities such as the pool and other similar amenities (44%).

“Cruising is a unique experience because it’s as much about the journey as it is the destination,” continued Twidale. “In one sailing, you may visit new corners of the world. And the best part – there is something onboard that appeals to every age.”

When it comes to cruising, international destinations like the Caribbean and Mediterranean are the most popular choices. Demand for all things travel – including cruising – is increasing, which means travelers should start planning their next trip. Cruise lines open up reservations as early as two years ahead of sailing and sometimes offer better rates for booking early.

Let the Experts be Your Guide

Whether you are new to cruising or an avid sailor, an experienced and trusted travel agent can help. Seasoned agents have many resources at their fingertips to help plan and organize a trip that fits a traveler’s specific needs and budget.



They have access to added benefits and offers that may not be available directly to consumers.

Travel agents can also take the stress out of making travel arrange-

ments, especially when traveling as a group or navigating any challenges related to itinerary changes due to things like weather delays, natural disasters, flight cancellations, lost luggage and much more that can quickly derail a vacation.

The travel landscape is quickly changing as pandemic-related restrictions are lifted and more people look to get out and see the world again. A travel agent is an invaluable resource who will serve as your advocate before, during and after a trip, including keeping you apprised of global events or conflicts that may interrupt travel plans. These individuals can explore available options for cruising plus provide counsel on:

- What to expect while onboard and while visiting ports or participating in offshore excursions
- Vaccine/testing requirements and safety protocols for individual cruise lines
- Cancellation policies
- Travel insurance options
- How positive COVID-19 cases are handled (for yourself, other passengers and crew)

Safer Sailing

AAA found that Americans view cruising as safe as resort vacations and safer than exploring large cities. In fact, 43% of Americans who plan to cruise in the future are satisfied with the cruise industry’s overall response to the pandemic. Cruise lines have implemented several safety protocols onboard, such as vaccination and testing requirements for passengers and crew; enhanced medical facilities; upgraded ventilation systems; hand washing and hand sanitizer dispensers in high traffic areas; contactless room service; use of medical-grade cleaning supplies and virtual safety briefings.

Renew Your Membership at [AAA.com](https://www.aaa.com)

New Vehicle Tech - Practice Doesn't Make Perfect

Owners of new vehicles equipped with driving assistance technology may understand it better after six months of use, but the depth of their knowledge is limited. New AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety research shows that a “learn as you go” approach still leaves gaps in understanding when compared to another group of drivers who had a very strong grasp of the technology, partially due to a brief intensive hands-on training session. Also, researchers noted the disturbing emergence of a small, overconfident group of drivers who falsely believed their time behind the wheel gave them expertise with the system.

“Our research finds that drivers who attempt the ‘self-taught’ approach to an advanced driver-assistance system might not fully master its entire capabilities,” said Dr. David Yang, executive director of the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. “In contrast, drivers who have adequate training are able to effectively use the vehicle technology.”

AAA recommends that researchers, automakers, and government agencies work together to better understand driver performance, behavior, and interactions in vehicles with advanced technologies.

Advanced driver-assistance systems are now common with features such as acceleration, braking, and steering in support of vehicle operations. The Foundation has previously documented gaps in drivers’ understanding of these technologies and the resulting safety implications. Less is known about how a driver’s grasp of new technology develops and changes over time, which is the focus of this new report.

For this study, the Foundation looked at one of the most prevalent advanced driver-assistance systems found in new vehicles, adaptive cruise control (ACC). This type of cruise control assists with acceleration and braking to maintain a driver-selected gap to the car in front. The Foundation examined how the understanding and use of ACC changed over the first six months of ownership for new vehicle owners unfamiliar with it.

The study found the following results:

- During the first six months of new vehicle ownership, many drivers demonstrated an improved understanding of the ACC system’s limitations.
- Despite learning more about ACC through regular use, the drivers failed to achieve the same level of understanding when compared to another group of drivers that received short but extensive instruction on the system.
- A potentially dangerous subgroup of over-confident drivers emerged who failed to grasp ACC yet were highly self-assured in their knowledge. This development demands future study.

Some of the gaps in understanding include the following:

- Falsely believing that the system will react to stationary objects in their lane, such as construction cones or other obstacles.
- Falsely believing that the system will provide steering input to keep the vehicle in its lane.
- Falsely believing the system can operate in all weather conditions.

“This research suggests that today’s sophisticated vehicle technology requires more than trial-and-error

learning to master it,” said Jake Nelson, AAA’s director of traffic safety advocacy and research. “You can’t fake it ‘til you make it at highway speeds. New car owners must receive training that is safe, effective, and enjoyable before they hit the road.”

AAA recommends that new vehicle owners follow this PLAN:

- **Purpose**—Learn the purpose of driving assistance technology by requesting hands-on training at the dealership, reading the vehicle’s owner’s manual and visiting the manufacturer’s website.
- **Limitations**—Do not make any assumptions about what the technology can and cannot do. A driving assistance system should not be confused with a self-driving one.
- **Allow Time For Practice**—Allow time for safe on-road practice so drivers know exactly how this technology works in real driving situations.
- **Never Rely On It**—Do not rely on this technology; instead, act as if the vehicle does not have it with the driver always prepared to retake control if needed.

For this research, 39 experienced drivers between 25 and 65 years of age were recruited. Each participant had purchased a vehicle equipped with ACC within the previous six weeks and it was not present on any vehicle they previously owned. Each driver was assessed at the start of the study and several times during the first six months. Please refer to the full report for methodology details, available at www.aaafoundation.org.



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 - All taxes and gratuities
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