

on the go

**A Festival for
All Ages**

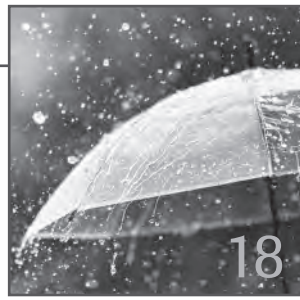
**Planning First
Camping Trip - 2**



**May
June
2024**

PERIODICAL

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Cover

Pictured is just one of the hundreds of artisans who will be displaying their talents and wares at the 2024 Kutztown Folk Festival. Traditional craftsmen will be demonstrating the making of jewelry, the process of chair caning, tole painting, soapmaking, tinning, blacksmithing, weaving and much more. More on page 6.

NOTICE - SPECIAL OFFICE HOURS:

Our office will be closed for the following observances - *Monday, May 27 Memorial Day; Thursday, July 4 Independence Day*

On The Go

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President's Note

Peter J. Armstrong
President/CEO

“Raising public awareness
is only part of AAA’s
commitment...”

Hat's Off to the Merry Merry Month of May

Scottish poet James Thomson penned, “Among the changing months, May stands confessed the sweetest, and in fairest colors dressed!”

As a month, May has a lot going for it. May Day, Cinco de Mayo, Mother’s Day, Armed Forces Day, National Maritime Day, and Memorial Day, just to name a few of the special observances packed into a 31-day time span.

Lesser known observances include School Principal’s Day (May 1), World Tuna Day (May 2), No Socks Day (May 8), Root Canal Appreciation Day (May 12 - thank your favorite dentist, I guess) and Dance Like a Chicken Day (May 14).

The seasonally transitional month of May is often the time chosen for spring cleaning. Just as we benefit from a clean home, the same can be said about the environment in general.

AAA recognizes the importance of conservation and the impact an organization of our size can have on the environment. As a result, AAA educates drivers on the maintenance needed to extend a vehicle's time on the road as well as ways to conserve fuel and reduce emissions.

Raising public awareness is only part of AAA's commitment to greater sustainability for the planet. The idea of being “green” is integrated into many of our business practices. Since 1992, AAA has collaborated with the National Parks and other similar groups to promote ecotourism. Two automotive initiatives, AAA's battery program and Car Care Month, offer ways for members and the public to operate and maintain their vehicles in an environmentally conscientious manner.

On a state and national level, AAA supports legislation that encourages drivers and industries to minimize the impact of vehicles on the environment. Many of our clubs have moved to paperless systems both with our members and around the office.

Employees across AAA also volunteer for a wide range of environmental activities, from cleanups to tree plantings to events promoting biking.

This month show your vehicle a little TLC to keep it in top shape. AAA offers these reminders:

- Monthly checks – pick a day that’s easy to remember and mark your calendar to check your tire pressure, tire condition and fluid levels like oil, coolant and windshield washer on the same day each month. If needed, top off any fluids that are low and inflate tires to the recommended level.
- Keep it clean – regularly wash and wax your vehicle. This simple task removes any grit or grime from the road that can damage paint and lower a car’s resale value.
- Vehicle inspections – AAA Approved Auto Repair shops offer a free vehicle inspection along with other types of service. Oil changes are the perfect time to take advantage of convenient inspections to make sure all the vehicle systems, the car battery and more, are operating at full capacity. Additionally, it’s a good opportunity to get to know your mechanic and stay ahead of any possible larger issues down the road.
- Pay attention – to sounds, smells or fluids leaking from your car. Ignoring these warning signs could lead to a major repair that could have otherwise been avoided.

Keeping up with these car care basics are not only easy but will help prolong the life of your car and may also alert you to a potential issue before you end up stranded by a breakdown.

Quiet Killer - Drowsy Driving

Driving while battling the urge to fall asleep is a familiar feeling for many. However, recently published research from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety reveals the shocking lethality of drowsy driving.

According to the new study:

- 18% of all traffic fatalities between 2017 and 2021 were estimated to involve a drowsy driver, accounting for nearly 30,000 deaths.

- 6,725 estimated lives were claimed by drowsy drivers in 2021 alone.

These figures are far higher than official government statistics, highlighting the underreported nature of drowsy driving crashes. According to NHTSA, there is agreement across the traffic safety, sleep science, and public health communities that the impact of drowsy driving is underestimated.

The AAA Foundation's study,

based on in-depth crash investigations and national fatal crash data, estimates that drowsy driving is a factor in roughly ten times as many traffic fatalities as traditional crash data indicates.

Drowsiness impairs drivers in several ways:

- **Reduced alertness.** Makes it harder to react quickly to hazards. Just one hour less than the expert-recommended minimum of 7 hours of sleep increases risk of crashing.

- **Hazardous Microsleeps** can cause momentary lapses in consciousness, leading to loss of control of the vehicle and failure to respond to dangers on the road.

So, what can you do to stay safe on the road?

- Get enough sleep before driving. Aim for at least seven hours of sleep per night.

- Travel at times of the day when you are normally awake. Avoid driving when you are tired or sleepy.

- Take breaks every two hours or 100 miles. Get out of the car, stretch your legs, and get fresh air. Plan and identify safe, comfortable places to take breaks. Don't wait until you're already feeling drowsy.

- Avoid heavy meals before driving. Eating a large meal can make you feel tired and sluggish.

- Avoid alcohol and drugs. Both can impair your driving ability. Besides harming driving directly, they can also amplify drowsiness.

- Listen to your body. If you start to feel tired, pull over and take a break. Don't try to push through it.

- Don't underestimate the power of a quick nap. A 20- to 30-minute nap can significantly improve your alertness.

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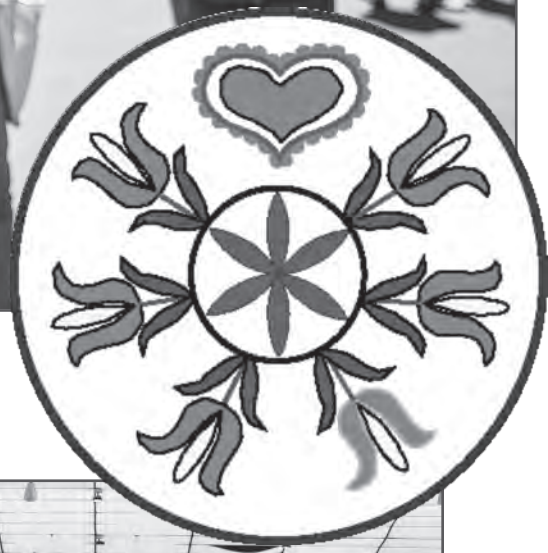
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a festival for all ages

By Lori B. Donofrio-Galley

Since 1950, visitors to the Kutztown Folk Festival reminisce about their “firsts” at the oldest continuously operating folklife festival in America...their first funnel cake, their first Opening Day, their first taste of the famous ox roast sandwich, their first obsession with a stunning quilt up for auction that they couldn’t pass on bidding, or their first visit to the Hoedown Stage to watch four generations of Lester Miller Family dancers—some as young as two years old!

These and many other firsts, for seventy-four years, have drawn generations of families, artists, musicians, craftsmen, quilters, entertainers, scholars, and purveyors of iconic food and food experiences to a festival recognized nationally for its authentic Pennsylvania German culture. In fact, this year, *USA TODAY 10BEST* ranked the Kutztown Folk Festival #3 in the category of Best Cultural Festival.

Located at the Kutztown Fairgrounds, 450 Wentz Street, the nine-day event will run this year from June 29 through July 7, 2024. Heather Zimmerman, Festival





Director, remarks, “We are so excited to approach our 74th Kutztown Folk Festival this June. This celebration of our PA Dutch culture brings friends and families from all over to enjoy our authentic foods, unique culture and craftsmen, lively entertainers, and handcrafted quilts. We invite everyone to come join us this year for a festival full of memories to be made.”

“...new this year, visitors will see demonstrations of machine-piecing, applique and quilting...”

The literal fabric of the festival has been pieced by generations of families invested year after year in celebrating traditions they remember fondly and want to share. “For a lot of the people—it is nostalgia—they want to see what they saw as kids,” noted Craig Koller, Quilt Auction emcee. Kay Bennecoff, host of BCTV’s *Your Berks Craftsmen*, notes, “Of course, to the people in Berks County, it is tradition. Kids grew up with it—now those kids, who are older, bring their kids and grandkids back to see it.”

The festival used to be a focus of the granges and 4-H Clubs. In fact, Lester Miller, renowned Hoedown Caller, and part of the “First Family of the Festival,” according to Dave Kline, award-winning singer-songwriter, explained that a dance competition among the granges and 4-H Clubs in the early years was the origin of the Hoedown Stage. To commemorate the Lester Miller family tradition, the Lester Miller Family Stage was dedicated in 2023.

A History Trail featuring local people who have supported and shaped the decades-long development of the festival was unveiled in 2023. Patrick Donmoyer, Director

of the Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center, designs the panels that pay tribute; new ones will be unveiled this June.

As inspirational as the festival founders and sustainers are the quilts that will be auctioned on Saturday, July 6, 2024, in the world-famous Quilt Barn. Cyndi Hershey, Quilt Education and Development Director, notes “I am planning to post “My Inspiration” cards around the Quilt Barn, and I’ve asked contributing quilters to send me their thoughts on what inspires them in their quilting journey.” She also shares that demonstrations of hand-quilting will continue, and, new this year, visitors will see demonstrations of machine-piecing, applique, and quilting. Education, after all, is an essential part of the Quilt Barn experience. “We offered our first quilt classes this winter with a variety of topics at the Kutztown Historical Society. Attendees seemed very engaged and offered positive feedback. We hope to offer classes in the fall and in other locations.” Anyone who wants to volunteer in the Quilt Barn can contact Cyndi directly at her-shey@kutztownfestival.com.

“The PA Germans were among the original settlers of this area—we need to remember not only the heritage, but also the contributions of the PA German culture,” observes Rev. Dr. Harry L. Serio.

Visit <https://www.kutztownfestival.com/> to purchase your advance tickets and to explore schedules, merchandise, vendors, and entertainment schedules.



Tire Wear Satisfaction Poll

A recent J.D. Power press release revealed the results of their latest customer poll regarding tire owner satisfaction rankings.

Michelin came out a clear winner in several categories. In the luxury tire segment, the innovative brand ranked highest for the 21st consecutive year. Goodyear came in second with Continental ranking third.

Michelin also took first place among passenger car owners. Goodyear placed second in the poll while Kumho came in third.

Performance sport tire customers also gave Michelin top scores, while Falken took first place in the truck/utility segment, followed by BFGoodrich and Hankook.

An interesting side note emerged from the poll data regarding con-

sumer expectation on tire wear. The widely recognized automotive data and research leader noted in their March 25, 2024 press release that “The satisfaction gap with original equipment tires between electric vehicles (EVs) and gas-powered vehicles is widening, as EV owners say their tires are wearing faster.”

“The widening satisfaction gap between EVs and gas-powered vehicles highlight an opportunity for tire manufacturers and automakers to educate EV owners on the differences in performance,” said Ashley Edgar, senior director of benchmarking and alternative mobility at J.D. Power.

Read the entire press release at www.jdpower.com.



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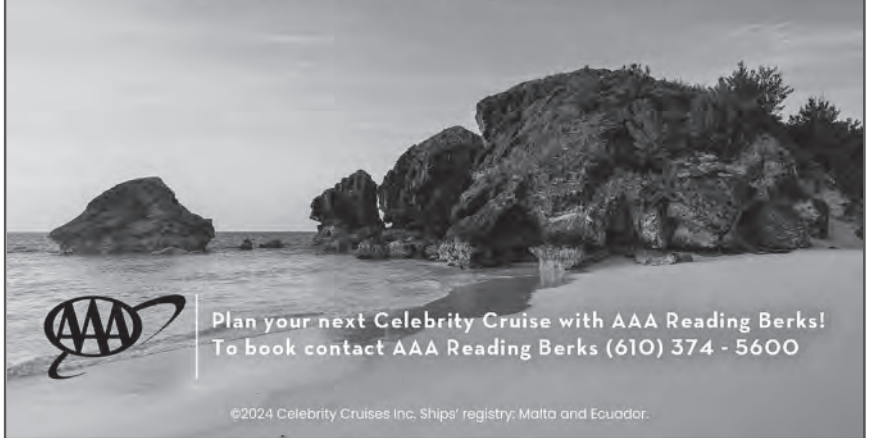
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Travel News

May Is Hertz Month!

With the summer months approaching, renting from Hertz can save AAA members money with fantastic benefits and up to 40% off the base rate in May!

Summer beckons with sunshine, open roads and adventure around every turn. Hertz knows how to offer the best deal for our members, just in time for vacation planning. In the month of May, which we like to call "Hertz Month", savings are up to 40% off the base rate when using the Promotion Code 211358 in your reservation. This offer is valid May 1 - 31, for rental pickup by June 30, 2024. You can even rent an electric car with this offer!

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A Loaded Question

Dear Ask Ed:

I'm not sure if you can help me, but lately I've been noticing more and more cars and trucks with what look like unstable loads. It's more than the it-would-be-funny-if-it-wasn't-so-dangerous cliché driver and passenger with their arms hanging out the window holding on to a mattress. There's a guy who drives a small pickup in my area that must be a junk hauler - rusty bikes, metal tables, and other unsecured trash. I've seen things fall off his truck but he just keeps going so the cars behind him have to deal with whatever it was that fell.

What chance does a safe driver have against these motorway maniacs? Do you have any advice for those of us who must be uber vigilant to make up for others who lack any type of common sense?

Thank you allowing me to rant.

Phil M.

Dear Phil,

Wow. I sense your frustration and I've seen that type of situation myself. Unfortunately, we have to deal with bad drivers who make bad decisions when trying to get some type of load from Point A to Point B (just sit in the parking lot of a big box store). That being said, we can and should exercise our common sense and be on the lookout for such situations so we're ready to take appropriate action. Here are some tips:

- Report unsafe vehicles, unsecured loads and road debris. You can contact PennDOT's online Customer Care Center at customer.care.penndot.gov/eCCC/eCCC.nsf or by calling 1-800-FIX-ROAD.

- Brush up on defensive driving, especially around trucks or other vehicles carrying large or difficult-to-secure cargo.

- Focus your vision farther down the road. Scan at least 12 seconds ahead so you have time to react to changing highway conditions including road debris. Sudden movements by cars ahead of you often indicate a hazard on the road.

- Sometimes it's safer to run over debris rather than trying to avoid it. If you can't change lanes, slow down. Striking minor road debris can be far less dangerous than veering into oncoming traffic or swerving off the pavement.



AskEd@aaardgberks.com

Knowing where the cars around you are will help you make the right decision.

Road debris, including "escaped" cargo that wasn't correctly secured, is estimated to cause more than 50,000 crashes annually in the U.S. Many of these crashes and the resultant repair costs and human toll can be prevented. For those who must haul a large load, use the correct type of transport such as a truck and proper safety straps, a van where the cargo can be contained inside the vehicle, or a trailer with the appropriate tie downs. Secure your cargo adequately before you hit the road and check it every time you stop.

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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planning your first camping trip

Part 2



The North American Camping & Outdoor Hospitality Report estimates that 92 million American households identify as campers and 58 million households camp at least once a year. If you'd like to get in on that action but aren't sure how, AAA can help.

In the March/April 2024 issue of *On The Go* we shared some tips for first-time campers on selecting the right type of camping for your family and how to select a good family camping destination. In this issue we'll share some more great tips to make your first camping experience a memorable one - and one you'll want to repeat.

What to Pack for Camping

Once you've chosen your level of camping and your destination, it's time to think about what to pack for your trip. If you rent an RV or stay in a pre-assembled glamping tent rental, you'll have less gear to worry about, as your furnishings and cooking and dining essentials will probably be provided. If tent camping sounds like a fun fit for your family, here is a list of the basic gear to consider:

Tent

Tents are available in a wide range of sizes, designs and prices. Look for a simple design such as a dome tent that will be easy to assemble. A screened roof with a removable cover provides shelter from showers and shades your belongings from the sun during the day while letting you see the stars at night. Tents are categorized by the number of people they sleep, but pay attention to the floor dimen-

sions instead. A four-person tent typically has just enough space for four sleeping bags side by side, with no extra room for belongings. When considering price, there's no need to splurge on an elaborate, costly design if you're planning shorter trips in mild weather. You can find a six-person, name-brand tent for under \$200 that will work fine for a family of four.

Practice pitching your tent in the backyard so you'll be able to set up camp quickly on your trip. You can even have a practice campout with the kids to test all your gear and let them experience sleeping outdoors.

Sleeping Bags

Like tents, sleeping bags vary in design and price according to purpose. Consider the climate and season where you'll be camping and choose your sleeping bag accordingly. An inflatable sleeping pad or mattress will make sleeping on the tent floor much more pleasant. In very warm climates in summer, you may want to skip the sleeping bag and use an old set of sheets over your sleeping pad instead.

Chairs

Bring a canvas camp chair or folding lawn or lounge chair for each person, as campsites typically only have a picnic table for seating.



Grill

Most campsites include a fire pit that may have a grill rack over it, and many also include a charcoal grill. Either way, you'll want to bring your own clean grill racks if you plan to cook your meals over the fire. Check ahead to see what your campsite includes; if needed, bring a small, portable charcoal grill. Campgrounds often have firewood available for purchase and may also have a camp store where you can buy charcoal and lighter fluid. Phone the campground before your trip to find out what's available.

Propane Stove

While it's possible to cook entirely over a fire, a propane stove is a great addition to your camping equipment collection. Portable and easy to set up, it allows you to cook anything you'd cook on the stove at home and quickly and easily heats water for your morning coffee so you don't have to build a fire.

Lanterns and Flashlights

As lovely as a campfire is, you'll need more light to find your way around the campsite in the dark. Bring several lanterns to hang around the campsite and at least two powerful flashlights so family members can navigate to restrooms and showers at night.

Cooking and Eating Utensils and Other Necessities

Depending on what you plan to eat on your trip, cooking necessities might include a frying pan, a saucepan, spatulas and a pot for boiling water. Hot dog skewers are nice to have, as are grilling accessories such as grill baskets for fish or vegetables. Aluminum foil also works for cooking fish and vegetables on the grill or over the campfire.

Adding a set of reusable eating utensils, non-breakable plates and bowls to your camping gear will reduce waste and give you one less thing for your shopping list for future trips.

However, be warned, some campsites discourage using communal water sources for washing dishes, so you may need to wash dishes at your campsite. For your first trip, consider disposables to keep dishwashing to a minimum. Phone your campground to find out what washing facilities are available. At a minimum, you'll need biodegradable dish soap, a sponge and dish towels, and you may need bins or buckets. You'll also need paper towels, napkins and trash bags, as most campsites don't have individual trash bins.

Cooler

Bring at least one large cooler with enough room to store perishable items. Ideally, bring a second cooler so you'll have plenty of room for ice and beverages.

Staying Safe Outdoors

Bring plenty of insect repellent and sunscreen. A little rain is no problem if you pack a few inexpensive plastic rain ponchos. A first aid kit is handy for those little nicks and scrapes that come with kids playing outdoors.

More Tips for a Fun, Safe Camping Trip

- Pack favorite toys and games for younger children as well as games, puzzles or playing cards for older kids and adults. These can provide fun, screen-free family time for evenings and rainy days.

- Download apps with activities your family can do together while camping. Two popular apps are Geocaching, in which families can search for hidden items using GPS coordinates, and Star Walk 2, which shows stars visible from your location and where to look for stars, constellations and satellites. Apps for identifying birds, plants and insects can make hiking more fun for kids.

- Store all of your camping gear together in plastic bins so you can simply toss the bins in the car when you're ready to go instead of having to hunt for and pack every item you'll need for every trip. Laundry baskets are perfect for storing and transporting foods that don't need to be in a cooler.

At the campsite, store food, including coolers, in your car so wildlife can't get to it. Don't keep any food in your tent, or you may return from a hike to find that your snack stash has disappeared through a new, raccoon-sized hole.

- Don't forget to pack masks, sanitizing wipes and hand sanitizer for any stops you make on your way to and from the campground and any restaurants, stores or attractions you may visit during your trip.



2024 AAA Car Guide - EVs, SUVs Tops

AAA awards the 2023 All Electric Mercedes-Benz EQS 580 4MATIC SUV with the overall top score for the 2024 Car Guide. This year, all category winners are either electric, plug-in electric hybrids or hybrids.

Additionally, the SUV category was divided into small, midsize, and large due to popularity among car buyers.

“SUVs are a popular choice since they are a great option for families and offer loads of additional compartments for storage,” said Megan McKernan, the Automotive Research Center manager at AAA. “To help distinguish between the overwhelming

drivers now can have everything they know and love about an F-150, designed for the electrified lifestyle. Researchers noted that the Ford F-150 Lightning has plenty of interior room for passengers and lots of standard ADAS features.

McKernan further added, “Our research is tailored to guide consumers in making informed decisions when purchasing a new vehicle. The 2024 AAA Car Guide is here to help consumers navigate this evolving automotive marketplace by ranking and rating the newest vehicles.”

The AAA Car Guide includes comprehensive reviews of each vehicle based on thirteen criteria, including the number of ADAS safety features, fuel efficiency, emissions, braking, handling, ride quality, and acceleration. These vehicles are tested, scored, and placed in one of seven vehicle type categories by the Automotive Research Center (ARC) of the Automobile Club of Southern California.

Overall winners, detailed evaluation criteria, vehicle reviews, and an in-depth analysis of the ADAS technology can be found at aaa.com/carguide.

Highest Scoring Ranked by Category

Overall

2023 Mercedes-Benz EQS 580 4MATIC SUV (electric)

Small Car

2023 Volvo S60 Recharge Ultimate Black Edition (plug-in hybrid)

Midsize Car

2023 Mercedes-Benz EQE 350 4MATIC Sedan (electric)

Large Car

2023 BMW i7 xDrive60 (electric)

Pickup Truck

2023 Ford F-150 Lightning Lariat (electric)

Small SUV

2023 Hyundai IONIQ 5 Limited (electric)

Midsize SUV

2023 Genesis Electrified GV70 Prestige (electric)

Large SUV

2023 Mercedes-Benz EQS 580 4MATIC SUV (electric)

Best Under \$40K

2023 Honda CR-V Sport Touring (hybrid)

Best Between \$40K-\$60K

2023 Hyundai IONIQ 5 Limited (electric)

Over \$60K

2023 Mercedes-Benz EQS 580 4MATIC SUV (electric)



number of options available, we introduced new SUV categories to make the decision process easier for consumers.”

Category Winners

Each of the AAA Car Guide winners has numerous ADAS safety features and performance capabilities. Announced in April, the 2023 EV Mercedes-Benz EQS 580 4MATIC SUV earned the top score overall, best large SUV, and best car over \$60k. Researchers noted that the Mercedes-Benz has a very comfortable ride, a quiet cabin, and excellent headlight coverage.

The Ford F-150 Lightning ranks first in the pickup category. With its cutting-edge design, advanced technology, and energy efficiency, US



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Destinations & Diversions



Where Were You in 1964?

If you or your family lived in Berks County in 1964, there's a pretty good chance that you know someone who spent Friday evenings in Reading to "cruise Penn Street". In the early '60s, it was the "cool" place to be, whether you were there to show off your own sweet ride or to meet those who were lucky enough to have one. It was also where a group of young Corvette owners talked about starting their own club, and quickly made it a reality. And here we are...still going strong 60 years later!

Please join us as we celebrate the Skyline Drive Corvette Club of Reading's 60th Anniversary at SDCC's 44th Annual In-Vette-Tational on July 20, 2024 at the Oley Fire Company Fairgrounds, 26 Jefferson St., Oley, PA 19547. Rain or shine!

But you don't have to remember 1964 to enjoy the In-Vette-Tational. This year's show promises to have something that will interest almost everyone, whether you are young, not-so-young, or somewhere in between. As we've been saying, the In-Vette-Tational is "more than just a car show". It has grown into an annual "community event", drawing folks from as far away as South Carolina.

So what's so special about the In-Vette-Tational? The first thing you'll notice when you arrive is that you won't have to spend a day walking around on hot macadam! With fourteen beautiful country acres, there is plenty of space to open your chair under a tree or on the grass, grab some good food, and relax. But with so much to see and do, you won't want to sit very long.

Sure, there's the usual stuff for motor heads...lots of awesome cars

and trucks of all makes and models including antiques, classics, muscle cars, hot rods, and some unique "creations" that enter the In-Vette-Tational, hoping to win at least one of the forty-eight coveted trophies (including a handmade custom trophy made and awarded by each SDCC Scholarship Recipient to the vehicles of their choice). We're hoping for a lot of 1964s to show up and be among the winners! By the way, your 4-wheeled "baby" doesn't have to be in showroom condition to be in the show. And if it isn't real fast, the "Slow Drag Race" might just be the event for you. It isn't as easy as it sounds. So if you love your car or truck and want to show it off, fill out a registration form and join the fun!

While at the In-Vette-Tational, you can take a stroll down memory lane as you check out the cars you remember from your youth, or see what your parents and grandparents drove "back in the day". Bring the kids along and watch the looks on their faces as they try to imagine spending time in a car without air conditioning and places to plug in their computerized gadgets, or having to crank the windows up and down by hand! And, no matter what your age, the new cars on display will blow your mind with their incredible technological advancements and body designs.

But there's a whole lot more...

Since you'll already be out of your chair, walking around and singing along to the live music, take time to visit the many vendor stands that include everything from auto-related products and services to hand-made glass items, beautiful wood crafts, cornhole boards, and travel information. And don't forget to stop by the

AAA table to hear more about their many services.

There will also be fun, interesting and educational displays. Learn about the history of racing in Reading and see several old race cars at The Reading Fairgrounds Racing Historical Society's display. See an authentic Army Jeep, hear about life in the U.S. military, get information about services available to veterans, or just stop by the veterans displays to express your appreciation for their service to our country.

Our special guest this year will be the Middle Creek Search and Rescue K-9 team. Their work throughout South Central PA and beyond is critical and includes many different areas of expertise that may surprise you. Their presentation is sure to be a crowd-pleaser.

While enjoying the show, please consider buying raffle tickets, taking a chance on the Wheelbarrow of Cheer and entering to win some great items available in the Tricky Tray Auction. A portion of the In-Vette-Tational proceeds supports the SDC Scholarship Fund (providing scholarships to local Vo-Tech graduates who will be furthering their education in the automotive field), veterans' organizations, JR. ROTC programs, and other local charities. Your support is needed and sincerely appreciated.

Find more information about the Skyline Drive Corvette Club and the In-Vette-Tational (registration forms) at www.skylinedrivecorvettes.org or visit us on Facebook. For questions about the In-Vette-Tational, contact Committee Chairman Bob Messner: bobmessner1@gmail.com.



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Effects of Rain and Dirt on ADAS

When it rains, wet roads and decreased visibility can make driving conditions more dangerous. But did you know it can also affect how your advanced driver assistance system (ADAS) performs? AAA conducted research and found that things like rain, bugs, & dirt can obstruct the cameras and sensors these systems rely on to do their job.

Research Methods

Rain: To simulate moderate to heavy rainfall, AAA engineers designed a system using a reservoir to hold water, a high-pressure pump for a consistent flow of water and a precision injector nozzle to spray the windshield. This system was secured in the cargo area of the test vehicle and was connected to a nozzle positioned above the windshield so that the spray pattern covered the entire windshield.

Dirt/Bugs: To simulate a dirty windshield, AAA engineers created a custom stamp applicator and a concentrated solution of dirt and bugs. The stamp was dipped in the solution and applied to the windshield in front of and around system cameras located behind the windshield.

Key Findings

- AAA tested lane keeping assistance and automatic emergency braking and found that overall, both

systems were impacted by moderate to heavy rainfall. Test vehicles traveling at 35 mph collided with a stopped vehicle in the lane ahead one third of the time. Lane keeping assistance struggled even more, with test vehicles departing their lane 69% of the time.

- During testing with a simulated dirty (bugs/dirt) windshield, minor differences were noted, however, performance of automatic emergency braking and lane keeping assistance were not impacted. ADAS cameras can still be influenced by a dirty windshield. AAA recommends drivers keep their windshields clean for their own visibility and to ensure their ADAS system camera is not obstructed.

AAA's Recommendation to Automakers

Typically, advanced driver assistance systems are tested in ideal conditions free of environmental factors like dirt, bugs, rain, fog, sleet, snow and lighting. Automakers and other vehicle safety organizations test this way in order to maximize test repeatability and limit variables that can skew results. AAA advocates for automakers and other safety organizations that test and rate vehicles to expand testing scenarios to include those that are more closely aligned with the real-world conditions drivers regularly face.

AAA's Advice to Drivers

- Stay alert and don't use cruise control or rely on vehicle safety systems in adverse weather conditions or in situations in which they are not designed to perform.

- Take time to learn more about these systems, especially if their vehicle is equipped with the technology. The best way to



do this is to grab your vehicle's owner manual, which will tell you when, where and how your vehicle's safety system works best. Regardless, this technology is only intended to assist and drivers must remain fully engaged (and in the driver's seat) when behind the wheel.

Adverse weather conditions, such as rain or snow, can make driving more challenging. AAA has also found that vehicle safety systems may not work as well in these situations. To help navigate slick conditions, AAA recommends the following to drivers:

- Keep windshield clean and ensure that wipers are not streaking.
- Slow down and avoid hard braking and sharp turning. If possible, follow in the tracks of other vehicles.
- Increase following distance to 5-6 seconds behind the vehicle ahead.
- Do not use cruise control in order to stay alert and to respond quickly if the car's tires lose traction with the road.
- If the car begins to hydroplane, ease off the accelerator to gradually decrease speed until your tires regain traction, and continue to look and steer where you want to go. Don't jam on the brakes—this can cause further traction loss.



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