



1938 Packard 1607 Formal Sedan owned by Peter & Andrea Hartmann, Paulden, Arizona

The Centennial-Beehive CARavan

September 19–27, 2021

By Ron Verschoor

with photos by Leslie Milliken and Vicki Zeiger

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ince 2008, Lonnie and Betsy Fallin have coordinated three successful CCCA CARavans exploring the most scenic part of the American west. The “Big Sky” CARavan in June 2008 brought us to Montana and the September 2013 “Sun Valley” CARavan explored Idaho. For 2021, the “Centennial-Beehive” CARavan took us through portions of western Colorado and eastern Utah during the second half of September.

Thirty-nine Full Classics® and CCCA members from 18 states and Canada participated, traveling the core route that covered approximately 650 miles. Optional side trips to National Parks and other points of interest (and the occasional wrong turn) added another 100 miles to the tour. Southern California Region representation was strong and included Mike and Patricia Adams, Pete and Andrea Hartmann, Fred and Barbara Lax (all first-time CARavaners), John and Leslie Milliken, Steve and Michelle Snyder, Carl and Vicki Zeiger, and Ron Verschoor and Rick Zeiger.

Sunday, September 19, participants arrived in Grand Junction for registration and the opening night banquet, plus a quick drive to the nearby car wash for a few of us who refuse to be seen in a dirty Classic. Lonnie outlined the tour, noting traditional CARavan protocols including “read the tour book” and “stay ahead of the trouble truck.” The evening ending with some quick catch-up conversations with club members not seen in two or three years. >



Our first lunch stop of the tour



Amazing Canyonlands

CARAVAN

Monday morning, we traveled about 50 miles along Interstate 70 heading into Utah. Highway 128 marked the start of what CARAvaning is all about: scenic, uncongested roads that are ideal for driving Classic cars. Our lunch destination was the Red Cliff Lodge, and that name says it all. Nestled in a valley carved by the Colorado River, we were surrounded by mountains and plateaus with perfect blue skies above. Just 15 miles down the road, we reached Moab, Utah and the Hoo Doo Inn, our gathering point for the next two nights.

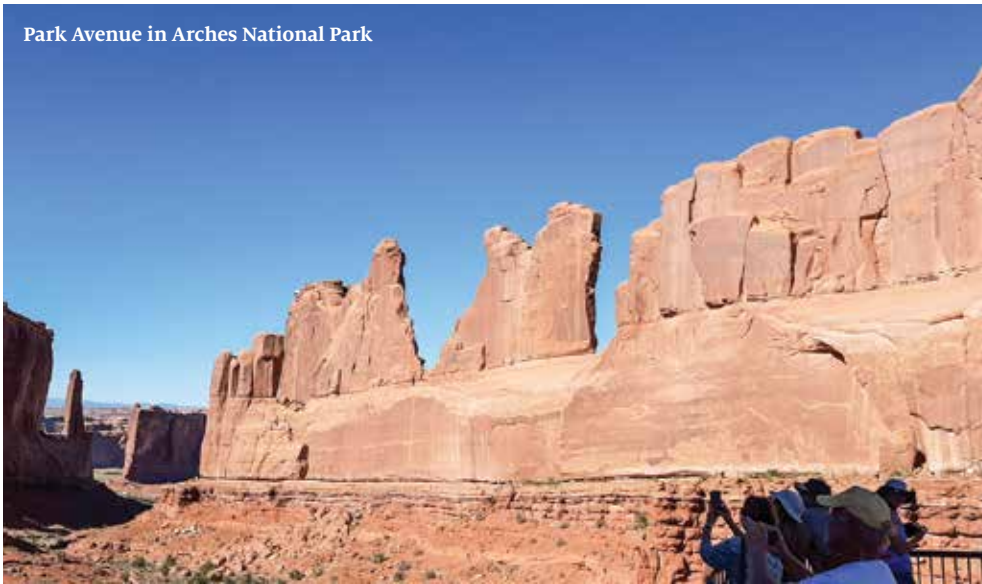
Moab is a nondescript town that serves as the gateway to two nearby National Parks. (The Moab Diner AND ICE CREAM SHOPPE is worth mentioning, thanks to the 16 flavors of ice cream offered there.) The balance of Monday and all of Tuesday were open to visit Canyonlands and Arches National Parks on your own as they're just 26 miles apart. The variation in rock formations at each provides vastly different takes on the forces of nature and Canyonlands has the added benefit of bordering Dead Horse Point, a Utah State Park.

The terrain, views and colors of nature rival or better what you will see at the Grand Canyon; they are all that spectacular.

After dinner Tuesday night, we boarded a flat boat for a trip up the Colorado River. As the sun set behind the mountains, we learned the history of the area, complete with a light

show projected on the cliff walls bordering the river. The boat trip ended with a perfectly timed full moon rising over the horizon, its light reflecting off the river's water. Bravo!

Wednesday morning, we departed Moab and headed east back to Colorado. Durango was our next stop and two-thirds of the way >



Park Avenue in Arches National Park



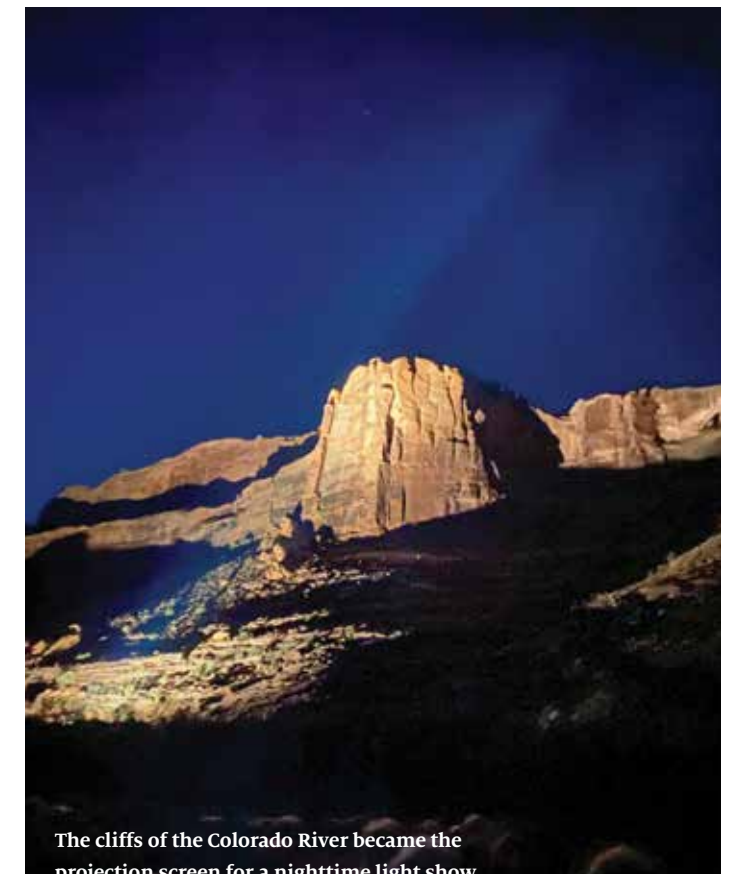
Wilson's Arch between Moab and Durango



Rick Zeiger enjoying the views at Arches National Park



Mesa Verde National Park



The cliffs of the Colorado River became the projection screen for a nighttime light show

there, we stopped for lunch at the Trinity Lutheran Church for a home-cooked meal. Durango is a historic mining town and its Main Avenue has been designated a Nationally Registered Historic District with a number of great restaurants located there. (Thank you, Leslie Milliken, for planning ahead and making dinner reservations.)

Durango also served as our lodging base to travel to nearby (a 35-mile drive) Mesa Verde National Park on Thursday. Mesa Verde was every bit as impressive as Canyonlands and Arches, but for different reasons. Its more than 50,000 acres make up the largest archaeological preserve in the country with more than 600 cliff dwellings. Thanks to Fred Lax for having the foresight to make reservations for access to a hike leading to the Long House cliff dwelling. A bit steep at times but well worth the effort, it let us experience the “homes” built by Pueblo Indians more than 800 years ago. We enjoyed lunch at the Visitor’s Center and learned that there are lodging accommodations within the park at the Fair View Lodge. (A return trip is in order.)

On Friday, our last day in Durango, we assembled at the Durango Depot to board one of the steam trains traversing the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. More than a few narrow and steep passages made for excellent photo ops, and our group mingled from car to car to catch up with club members while enjoying snacks and drinks along the way.

Saturday morning’s drive was just over 100 miles as we headed north to Telluride. The Peaks Resort is located about 1,000 feet above the historic downtown portion of Telluride, a steep drive for our Classics, but nestled among mountains and hills, it provided the perfect vantage point to enjoy the full spectrum of autumn colors. Upon arrival, our Classics took center stage downtown as part of the annual Telluride Festival of Cars and Colors and later in the evening the Classics were displayed at the Telluride airport as part of a participants’ reception. Upon returning to the Peaks Resort, an informal gathering of SoCal members took place in the lobby, complete with drinks, grilled cheese sandwiches and a substantial assortment of olives.



Steam Train to Silverton



View from the train



Carl & Vicki Zeiger’s 1941 Cadillac 62 Convertible Sedan at the Telluride Airport



1930 Duesenberg J Transformable Cabriolet by Hibbard & Darrin

Sunday morning, the Peaks Resort staged the Cars and Colors show, with many of our Classics displayed on the lawns of the golf course overlooking the hills. What a spectacular backdrop, pairing the beauty of nature with the mechanical beauty of our Classics. The rest of Sunday was open to explore Telluride, accessible from a gondola linking the hotel and downtown. A number of club members gravitated to Rustico Ristorante for dinner that night, an excellent choice featuring Italian cuisine.

Monday, September 27 was the last full day of the CARavan, the route stretching about 160 miles through Gateway Colorado on our way back to Grand Junction. This delightful drive through canyons at a leisurely pace included a stop for lunch (and more) at the Gateway Canyons Resort. A hearty soup and salad bar had enough variety to satisfy everyone but an additional treat was just a few steps away. The “and more” was an automobile collection established by John S. Hendricks, the founder of the Discovery Channel. This little-known gem of a collection was the ideal finale to a great CARavan.

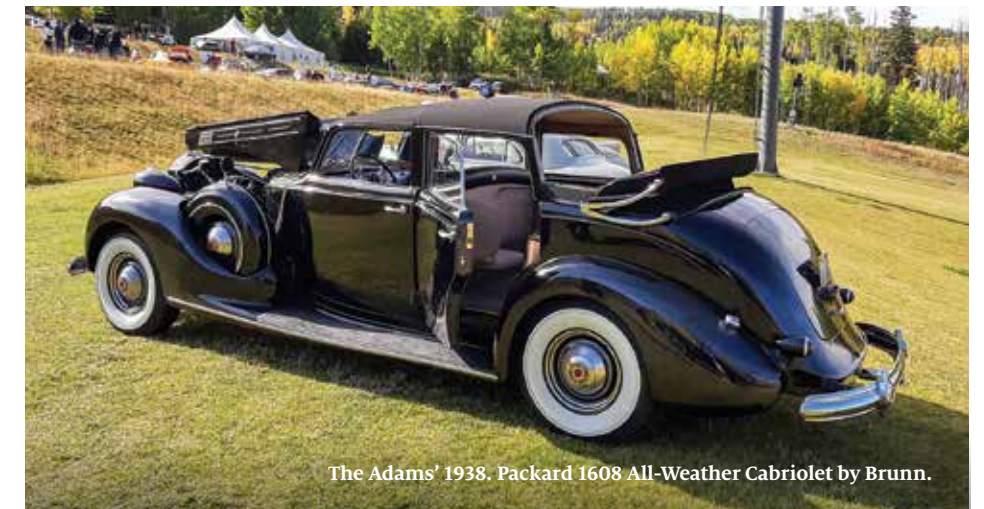
American Classics were abundant, ➤



Classics in downtown Telluride



The Milliken's 1941 Cadillac 62 Convertible Sedan carrying CARavan plate #41.



The Adams' 1938. Packard 1608 All-Weather Cabriolet by Brunner.



Fred & Barbara Lax with their 1934 Auburn 1250 Salon Phaeton

spanning Auburn, Cord and Duesenberg, as well as Packard, Cadillac and Lincoln. Supplementing those were dozens of 1950s and '60s American makes all in perfectly restored condition. Unique among the collection was the 1954 Oldsmobile F-88 show car (non-classic) a Motorama prototype illustrating GM's postwar dominance of the automobile industry. More than 50 cars are displayed at the Gateway Auto Museum and if you find yourself in this area, be sure to carve out a couple of hours for a visit.

The final banquet in Grand Junction provided the opportunity for good-byes (for now) to our CCCA friends from across the country. Awards presented that evening include the Crossett Award, given to the best Classic completing its first CARavan (Gordon

& Bettye Logan's 1928 Packard 443 Phaeton), and the Deutsch Memorial Award for the most helpful CARavaner on the tour. That award went to Leslie Milliken who went out of her way to spearhead a crew of CARavaners who assisted in the serving of dinner one night in Durango. Thank you, Leslie--your efforts will be remembered for many years to come and we will look back on that dinner and smile. But the biggest thanks go to Lonnie and Betsy Fallin (and their exemplary committee) who delivered a great tour in the midst of daunting COVID challenges. Your perseverance and hard work are greatly appreciated and reminded us all that CARAVING is the best part of membership in the CCCA. ●



The Snyder's 1947 Packard 2016 Club Coupe.