



The Dashboard

A Publication of Central Oklahoma Classic Chevy Club

June 2014

A message from the President...

We had a good turnout in Guthrie Sat 6/14 for the OHRA show. There were 10 club members' cars in pristine condition however the Late Greats beat us with 12 cars appearing out of nowhere! It was too windy to have an effective meeting so we will have more to cover at the July meeting. Prior to the July meeting if you have names and ideas of a local charity the club can support please bring those names to the meeting. We will make a selection and narrow it down to two.

And awards at
Robert Bogardus

Upcoming Events:

ALWAYS...FIRST STOP and check out our new club web site at WWW.55-57chevys.com
ALL the pictures from club shows are now being archived on our web site

July 12 Late Great Chevy's of OKC cruise to Knippelmier Chevy in Blanchard leave Tri-City Braums at 9:30

July 26 Cooper Electronics car show 4117 NW 63rd 8:00 – 11:00 registration and awards at 2:30

Also check out the Route 66 web site for more local show info.

<http://www.route66cruisersok.org/carshow.htm>

Also for a complete listing on local and nationwide shows refer to the OK Hot Rod Association calendar.

<http://www.ohra.us/>

Happy Birthday wishes go out to:

Robert Bogardus, JoAnn Harris, David Jones, Donna McIninch,

If your birthday was missed, or your e-mail and contact info has changed, please let Rustyne Harris or Russell Burke know and we will get her done and update the master member info file.

A great showing at the Guthrie OHRA car show Sat. June 14th.



Another great showing at the Peoples Church car show Sun. June 15 raising \$300 for our club.





Some interesting reading from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Unsafe at Any Speed

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Unsafe at Any Speed: The Designed-In Dangers of the American Automobile

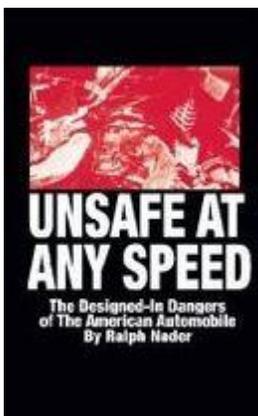


Exhibit featuring the book at [Henry Ford Museum, Detroit](#)

Author [Ralph Nader](#)
Publisher Grossman Publishers
Publication date 30 November 1965^[1]

Unsafe at Any Speed: The Designed-In Dangers of the American Automobile by [Ralph Nader](#), published in 1965, is a book accusing [car manufacturers](#) of resistance to the introduction of [safety](#) features, like [seat belts](#), and their general reluctance to spend money on improving safety. It was a pioneering work, openly [polemical](#) but containing substantial references and material from industry insiders. It made Nader a household name.

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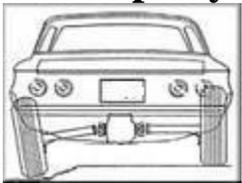
Theme

Unsafe at Any Speed is often characterized as the book "about the [Corvair](#)", though only one of the book's eight chapters covers the Corvair. The theme of tire pressures chosen for comfort rather than safety is recurrent, and the main theme throughout is the charge that the automobile industry evaded well-founded and technically informed criticism.

Organization and content

Each of the book's chapters covers a different aspect of automotive safety:

"The Sporty Corvair"



 1961-63 Corvair swing-axle rear suspension

The subject for which the book is probably most widely known, the rear-engined Chevrolet Corvair, is covered in **Chapter 1**—"The Sporty Corvair-The One-Car Accident". This relates to the first (1960–1964) models that had a [swing-axle suspension](#) design which was prone to "tuck under" in certain circumstances. In substitution for the cost-cutting lack of a front stabilizer bar (anti-roll bar), Corvairs required [tire](#) pressures which were outside of the tire manufacturer's recommended tolerances. The Corvair relied on an unusually high front to rear pressure differential (15psi front, 26psi rear, when cold; 18 psi and 30psi hot), and if one inflated the tires equally, as was standard practice for all other cars at the time, the result was a dangerous oversteer.^[2] Despite the fact that proper tire pressures was more critical than for contemporaneous designs, this was not clearly stated to Chevrolet salespeople and Corvair owners. According to the standards laid down by the relevant industry body, the [Tire and Rim Association](#), the pressures also rendered the front tires overloaded when there were two or more passengers on board.

An unadvertised at-cost option (#696) included upgraded springs and dampers, front anti-roll bars and rear-axle-rebound straps to prevent tuck-under. Aftermarket kits were also available, such as the EMPI Camber Compensator, for the knowledgeable owner. The suspension was modified for 1964 models, with inclusion of a standard front anti-roll bar and a transverse-mounted rear spring. In 1965, the totally redesigned four-link, fully [independent rear suspension](#) maintained a constant [camber angle](#) at the wheels. Corvairs from 1965 were not prone to the formerly characteristic tuck-under crashes.

George Caramagna, the Chevrolet suspension mechanic (who, Nader learned, had fought management over omission of the vital anti-sway bar that they were forced to install in later models) was vital to this issue. The missing bar had caused many crashes and it was Caramagna who precipitated the whole controversy by staying his ground on the issue.

"Disaster deferred"



Brilliant chrome-finishing at the dashboard and [A pillar](#) of a 1957 [Buick Roadmaster](#)

Chapter 2 levels criticism on auto design elements such as instrument panels and [dashboards](#) that were often brightly finished with chrome and glossy enamels which could reflect sunlight or the headlights of oncoming motor vehicles into the driver's eyes. This problem, according to Nader, was well known by persons in the industry, but little was done to correct it.



Ralph Nader in 1975

Apart from some of the examples given in the Corvair chapter, Nader offers much about the [gear shift](#) quadrants on earlier cars fitted with [automatic transmissions](#). Several examples are given of persons accidentally being run over, or cars that turned into runaways because the driver operating the vehicle at the time of the accident was not familiar with its shift pattern and would shift into reverse when intending to shift to park. Nader makes an appeal to the auto industry to standardize gearshift patterns between makes and models as a safety issue.

Early automatic transmissions, including GM's [Hydra-Matic](#), Packard's [Ultramatic](#), and [Borg Warner](#)'s automatic used by a number of independent manufacturers ([Rambler](#), [Studebaker](#)) used a pattern of "P N D L R", which put Reverse at the bottom of the quadrant, next to Low which was contrary to the pattern used by other manufacturers. Drivers used to moving the shift lever all the way down for "low gear" would accidentally select "R" and would unexpectedly move the car backwards. In addition, other manufacturers, such as Chrysler, used a push-button selector to choose gear ranges. Ford was the first to use the "P R N D L" pattern, which separated Reverse from forward ranges by Neutral. Eventually this pattern became the standard for all automatic-shift cars.

Chevrolet's [Powerglide](#), at least as seen on the Corvair, used a "R N D L" pattern, which separated the Reverse from the Drive gears by neutral in the ideal way, but which had no "P" selection, relying instead on the process used with a manual transmission of the driver selecting N (neutral) and using a separate parking brake when parking.

Chapter 2 also exposes problems in workmanship and the failure of companies to honor warranties.

"The second collision"

Chapter 3 documents the history of crash science focusing on the effect on the body as it collides with the car as the car hits another object (the [second collision](#)). Nader argues that much knowledge was available to designers by the early 1960s but it was largely ignored within the [American automotive industry](#). There are in-depth discussions about the [steering assembly](#), [instrument panel](#), [windshield](#), [passenger restraint](#), and the passenger compartment (which included everything from door strength to roll-over bars).

"The power to pollute"

Chapter 4 documents the automobile's impact on air pollution and its contribution to [smog](#), with a particular focus on [Los Angeles](#).

"The engineers"

Chapter 5 is about Detroit automotive engineers' general unwillingness to focus on road-safety improvements for fear of alienating the buyer or making cars too expensive. Nader counters by pointing out that, at the time, annual (and unnecessary) styling changes added on average about \$700 to the consumer cost of a new car. This compared to an average expenditure in safety by the automotive companies of about twenty-three cents per car. ^{[3]:p187}



^[3] *Unsafe at Any Speed* demonstrated that aggressive styling like that of the 1957 [Chevrolet Bel Air](#) was hazardous to pedestrians.

"The stylists"

Chapter 6 explores the excessive ornamentation that appeared on cars, particularly in the late 1950s, and the dominance of car design over good engineering. Of the 1950s designs, Nader notes "bumpers shaped like sled-runners and sloping grille work above the bumpers, which give the effect of 'leaning into the wind', increase ... the car's potential for exerting down-and-under pressures on the pedestrian." ^{[3]:p227} See current practice at [Pedestrian safety through vehicle design](#).

"The traffic safety establishment"

Subtitled "Damn the driver and spare the car," **Chapter 7** discusses the way the blame for accidents and fatalities was placed on the driver. The book claims that the road safety mantra called the "Three E's" ("Engineering, Enforcement and Education") was created by the industry in the 1920s to distract attention from the real problems of vehicle safety, such as the fact that some were sold with tires that could not bear the weight of a fully loaded vehicle. To the industry, he said "Enforcement" and "Education" meant the driver, while "Engineering" was all about the road. As late as 1965, he noted, 320 million federal dollars were allocated to highway beautification, while just \$500,000 was dedicated to highway safety. ^{[3]:p294}

"The coming struggle for safety"

Chapter 8, the concluding chapter, suggests that the automotive industry should be forced by government to pay greater attention to safety in the face of mounting evidence about preventable death and injury.

Government response

The book has continuing relevance: it addressed what Nader perceived as the [political](#) meddling of the car industry to oppose new safety features, which parallels the debates in the 1990s over the mandatory fitting of [air bags](#) in the United States, and industry efforts by the [ACEA](#) to delay the introduction of crash tests to assess vehicle-front pedestrian protection in the [European Union](#).^[4]

Industry response

Nader claims that GM responded to Nader's criticism of the Corvair by trying to destroy Nader's image and to silence him. It "(1) conducted a series of interviews with acquaintances of the plaintiff, "questioning them about, and casting aspersions upon [his] political, social, racial and religious views; his integrity; his sexual proclivities and inclinations; and his personal habits"; (2) kept him under surveillance in public places for an unreasonable length of time; (3) caused him to be accosted by girls for the purpose of entrapping him into illicit relationships; (4) made threatening, harassing and obnoxious telephone calls to him; (5) tapped his telephone and eavesdropped, by means of mechanical and electronic equipment, on his private conversations with others; and (6) conducted a "continuing" and harassing investigation of him."^[5]

On March 22, 1966, GM President [James Roche](#) was forced to appear before a [United States Senate](#) subcommittee, and to apologize to Nader for the company's campaign of [harassment](#) and [intimidation](#). Nader later successfully sued GM for excessive invasion of privacy.^[5] It was the money from this case that allowed him to lobby for [consumer rights](#), leading to the creation of the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) and the [Clean Air Act](#), among other things.^[6]

Former GM executive [John DeLorean](#) asserted in *On a Clear Day You Can See General Motors* (1979) that Nader's criticisms were valid.^{[7]^[page needed]} Former [Ford](#) and [Chrysler](#) President [Lee Iacocca](#) said the Corvair was 'unsafe' and a 'terrible' car in his book, [Iacocca: An Autobiography](#).^[8]

Criticisms of the book

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) issued a [press release](#) dated August 12, 1972, setting out the findings of 1971 NHTSA testing—after the Corvair had been out of production for more than three years. The [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) (NHTSA) had conducted a series of comparative tests in 1971 studying the handling of the 1963 Corvair and four contemporary cars, a [Ford Falcon](#), [Plymouth Valiant](#), [Volkswagen Beetle](#), [Renault Dauphine](#)—along with a second generation Corvair with revised suspension design. The subsequent 143-page report (PB 211-015, available from [NTIS](#)) reviewed a series of actual handling tests designed to evaluate the handling and stability under extreme conditions; a review of national accident data compiled by insurance companies and traffic authorities for the cars in the test—and a review of related General Motors/Chevrolet internal letters, memos, tests, reports, etc. regarding the Corvair's handling.^[9] NHTSA went on to contract a three person advisory panel of independent professional engineers to review the scope and competency of their tests. This review panel then issued its own 24-page report (PB 211-014, available from [NTIS](#)), which concluded that "the 1960-63 Corvair compares favorably with contemporary vehicles used in the tests...the handling and stability performance of the 1960-63 Corvair does not result in an abnormal potential for loss of control or rollover, and it is at least as good as the performance of some contemporary vehicles both foreign and domestic."

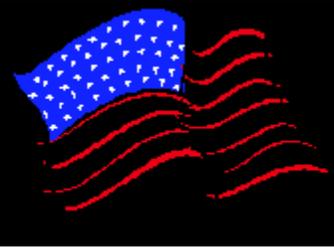
Social Scientist [Thomas Sowell](#) argued in *The Vision of the Anointed* (1995) that Nader was ignorant and dismissive of the [trade-off](#) between safety and affordability. According to Sowell, Nader also did not pay much attention to the fact that motor vehicle death rates per 100 million passenger miles fell over the years from 17.9 in 1925 to 5.5 in 1965.^[10]

Journalist [David E. Davis](#), in a 2009 article in *Automobile Magazine*, criticized Nader for purportedly focusing on the Corvair while ignoring other contemporary vehicles with swing-axle rear suspensions, including cars from [Porsche](#), [Mercedes-Benz](#) and [Volkswagen](#), notwithstanding the fact that Nader's Center for Auto Safety had published a book critical of the Beetle.^[11] Furthermore, *Motor Trend* magazine has noted handling problems with the 50's era Mercedes 300SL Gullwing.^[12]

Journalist [Timothy Noah](#) claimed the car wasn't significantly more dangerous than other American cars of its time, citing both a government report and an independent report: "... the car was not, in fact, appreciably less safe than a number of other cars on the market"^[13]

In 2005, the book was named by conservative publication *Human Events* as an "honorable mention" on its list of the "Most Harmful Books of the 19th and 20th Centuries".^[14]

NEXT CLUB MEETING
Sunday July 13th.
Earls Rib Palace Moore 3:00



I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

Central OK Classic Chevy Club
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