

Buick Nationals - Denver, Colorado

The Mile High Buick Club recently hosted the 2018 Buick Nationals at the Denver Marriott South located in Lone Tree. The Marriott is a beautiful hotel, with plenty of parking for a concours.



There were 171 Buicks on display and within those, 72 were judged to BCA 400 point standard. The span of years was 1908 through 2006. The featured year was the 1929 Silver Anniversary Buicks, and there were seven of those in attendance. There were an amazing 654 people registered for the event. This was a very well run event, and all of the club members of the Mile High Buick Club are to be commended for their herculean efforts.

If you are interested in Buicks, join the club at one of their monthly meetings on the 2nd Thursday of every month from 7-8:30 p.m. at the AutoNation Buick dealership at 8101 Parkway Drive in Lone Tree.



More Photos from the Buick National Meet



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The Fritchle: Colorado's First Electric Car
 by Ariana Ross / Research News / Denver News



When we think of electric cars, sleek Teslas and visions of the future generally spring to mind. But as is so often the case, everything old is new again.

Far from being the car of the future, the electric car is actually the preferred vehicle of the past. Electric cars enjoyed the height of their popularity over one hundred years ago. The undisputed leader in the field of electric automobiles was the



Well-dressed mannequins and a Fritchle parked in the window of Joslins luxury department store (Denver, March 1912)

Oliver P. Fritchle Company, headquartered in Denver.

A chemist and electric engineer by trade, Fritchle was fascinated by the batteries of the new electric cars. He established himself as a skilled repairman of electric car batteries, until he realized he could improve upon existing electric car models himself.

In 1906, Fritchle sold his first electric vehicle. In 1908, the Oliver P. Fritchle Company officially set up shop on Denver's Colfax Avenue.

(Continued on page 6)

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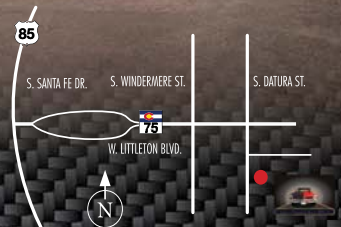
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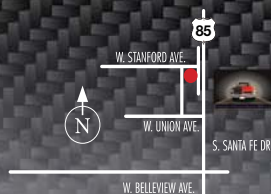


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The One Hundred Mile Fritchle

When the Fritchle electric car plant opened its doors in 1908, Oliver Fritchle boasted that his unique battery could carry his automobiles one hundred miles on a single charge. When skeptics challenged the claim as a mere publicity stunt, Fritchle set off on a cross-country road trip, stopping only when necessary. As he claimed, an overnight charge would last the car one hundred miles - an unheard of feat for the time. Orders for the "One Hundred Mile Fritchle" came pouring in from across the country.

Electric cars had been a favorite of elite women since their first appearance around 1900. Society ladies preferred the cleanliness and silence of electric vehicles, which they found more refined than the loud and often filthy gasoline cars.

The Fritchle was designed with Rocky Mountain socialites in mind. The wide seats and high ceilings gave wealthy women - with their large dresses, wide-brimmed hats, and many accessories - freedom to move without feeling constricted. The immense power of Fritchle's battery propelled the cars quickly up steep mountainsides, making them ideal for those who wished to go joyriding in their leisure time. Molly Brown was often seen driving around Denver in her beloved Fritchle.

Electric cars were considerably more expensive to make than gasoline powered automobiles, and Fritchle's luxury

electric cars were the ultimate status symbol of the time.

Henry Ford's cars sold for around \$500 a piece when the Fritchle plant opened. At roughly \$14,000 in today's money, it was a manageable investment for middle and upper middle class families. By contrast, Oliver Fritchle priced his cars at the princely sum of \$3500, or \$105,000 in today's money, making them unattainable for all but the wealthiest citizens.

In 1912, Fritchle set up offices on New York's Fifth Avenue, where the highly anticipated vehicles had a long waiting list before the plant put a single auto into production.

(Continued on page 8)

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Fritchle (Continued)

Unfortunately, Fritchle's charmed run did not last long. After nearly a decade as the gold standard of luxury automobiles, the Oliver P. Fritchle Company shut its doors, in 1917.

A number of factors contributed to the Fritchle's demise. Electric cars, with their reputation for being showy and expensive, fell out of favor as the United States entered the First World War. More economical gasoline cars soon overtook the electric automobile in even the elite markets. Improvements to the internal combustion engines of gasoline cars surpassed advancements in the engines of electric cars, where no electrical equivalent to internal combustion had been developed.

Outside of Denver, where electric charge stations (largely built and maintained by Fritchle himself) were ubiquitous, the relative scarcity of electric cars meant charging stations were few and far between. For those who wanted to venture beyond the Fritchle's one hundred mile range, this could mean needing to leave the expensive car at an electrical plant overnight to charge. By contrast, gas stations could be found across the country, meaning that even though the range of gas powered automobiles was smaller, they were easier to refuel.

The fall of Fritchle was the death knell in the already struggling electric car industry. Even with the advent of post-war prosperity in the 1920s, electric cars did not re-emerge. It would be another one hundred years before electric cars once again made their way into the mainstream.

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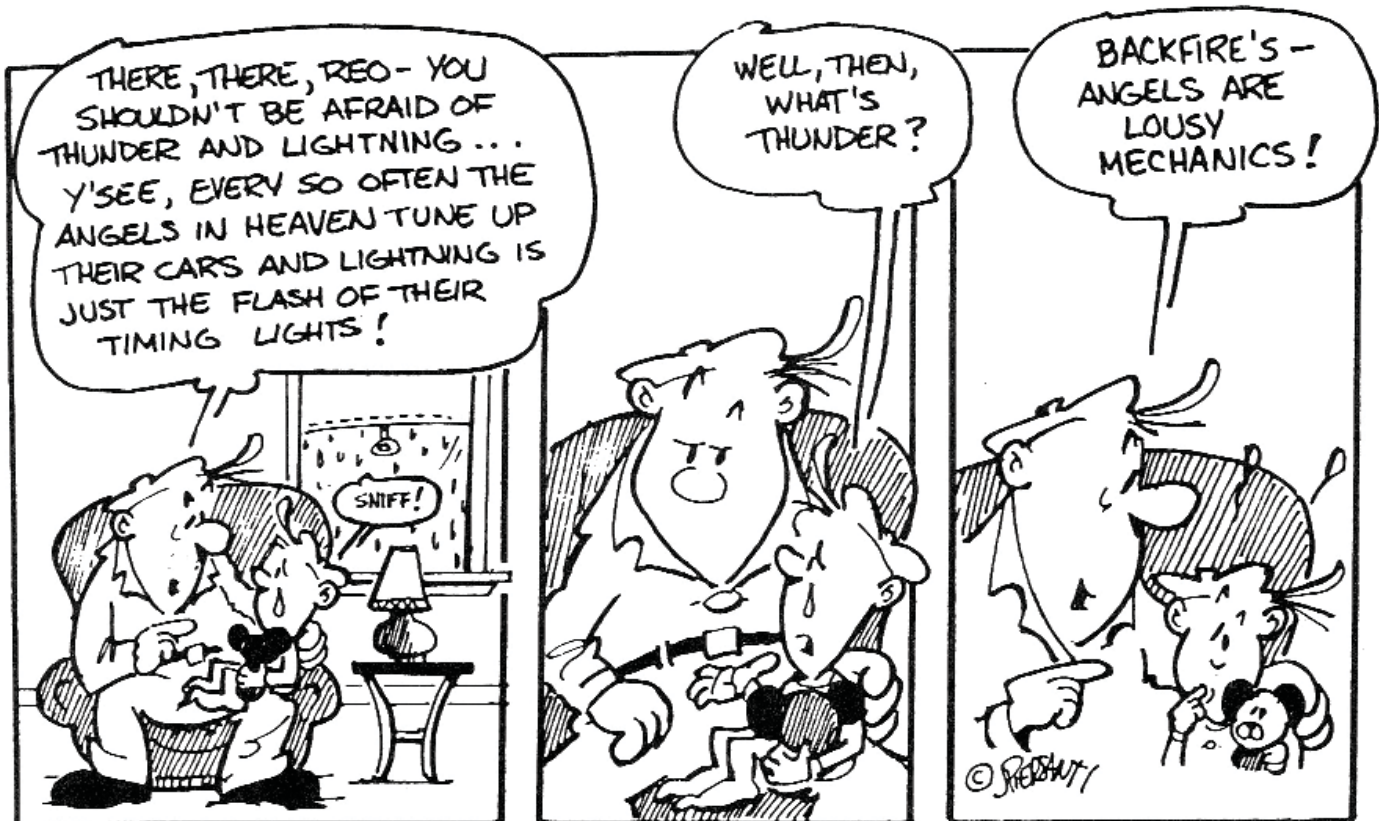
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Would you like to see this newsletter continue?

I would love to continue publishing this newsletter for the enjoyment of all car owners of clubs belonging to the CCCC. I enjoy writing and producing this newsletter, and I hope you enjoy receiving and reading it as well. To continue operation, *Colorado Collector Car News* is actively pursuing advertising. If you have a business who would benefit from reaching collector car owners or you know someone who would, please contact me. Thanks!

Greg Akiyama / Publisher / 303-680-8298

One Time Rate:

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Rates subject to change without notice

Colorado Collector Car News

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This is a monthly publication dedicated to the enjoyment of the collector car hobby in Colorado.

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ED: I am looking for other Cars of the Month. These cars do not have to be concours award winners, just cars that have owners who are proud to own them. (Don't we all feel that way?) To nominate a car and owner, please contact me at gakiyama@earthlink.net. Thanks.

ED: I am always looking for more subscribers. If you know someone who you think would enjoy getting my newsletter, please have them send me an e-mail complete with their name, club affiliation and phone number. I ask for a phone number because when (not if) an e-mail stops working, I can contact that person for an updated e-mail address rather than just stop sending them the newsletter. My e-mail address is: gakiyama@earthlink.net. Thanks.

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