



Invitation to the

2025 SACA Annual Meet

September 12, 13, 14, 2025

Dear SACA Members, Invitees, and other generally interested in steam people:

This is an invitation to the Twenty-first Annual Steam Club meet here in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Before that we had meets in Danville, Illinois for many years hosted by Al Reynolds and before that in Greensboro, North Carolina hosted by R. A. Gibbs.

These annual meets have been hosted by current and former club presidents or other officers and they are the *de facto* annual membership and business meetings, mostly because there is no other organization or entity in the club to do the hosting. The major prerequisite to hosting one of these meetings is to have an area—parking lot, farm roads, fairgrounds driveways, whatever—to park real or homemade steam things and then from time to time fire them up, blow steam all over, and sometimes get them to move under their own power. The minor prerequisite is to figure out how to get the doors unlocked for some indoor space that comes complete with indoor plumbing and then to have a table with coffee and donuts available.

I will describe what usually happens at these things, but first of all explain what these meets are not. Most of those who show up do not own a real steam automobile, in spite of the name of this organization, but most of them are knowledgeable about steam power and are interested in it and have worked with it at one level or the other. Therefore, this is not a steam automobile show where someone can arrive, stay a few hours and see everything there is to see. What we all want to see are several \$150,000 coffin nose Stanleys, all restored, shined up, and running perfectly giving out rides. These would have to come in an expensive double axle trailer pulled by an \$85,000 dually diesel rig, and few people with those assets have the time and energy to show up here for our entertainment. And so what we have is an on-going series of talks, presentations, introductions, and explanations. It is a lot of table displays of literature and pieces of small steam things that people have been working on. It is visiting during the coffee breaks. In fact, I often announce that the main purpose of the formal talks is to give us all a chance to rest our feet between coffee breaks. We attempt to reserve several miles of nice roads at the fairgrounds for driving around with our parking lot steam vehicles.

Please come prepared to tell us about yourself, history of interest in steam, projects worked on, and all. Bring things to drive, fire up, make move, and generally that will provide knowledge or entertainment for the rest of us. Most find it an enjoyable useful experience.

Call for papers: Let us know about your **planned and prepared** presentations. We will have a digital projector available.

Ken Helmick (SACA President)
964 Highlander Street
Lake Orion, MI 48362-1927
586-214-4795 kenatgm@aol.com

We look forward to seeing you.
Twenty-first Annual Meeting at Berrien Springs, Michigan of
the Steam Automobile Club of America, Inc., Chicagoland Chapter
Friday, Saturday, Sunday— September 12, 13, 14, 2025

Schedule of Events

Events are at different places. Talks and Registration will be at the Fairgrounds this year. Addresses and places listed below. Please pay special attention to places where events take place.

Thursday September 11	5:30—9:00	Shop Open all day for early arrivals-3867 E. Snow Rd. Reception, Tom's house 4671 E. Hillcrest Dr., Berrien Springs
Friday September 12	7:30—9:00 9:00—1:00 1:00—2:30 2:30—5:00 5:00—9:00	Registration and coffee, Fairgrounds Talks and presentations Lunch on your own Outdoor Demonstrations Fairgrounds Evening at Steam Shop , Snow Road, light dinner, furnished. Tours of Library and Collection
Saturday September 13	7:30—9:00 9:00—1:00 1:00—2:30 2:30—4:00 4:00—5:00 5:00—9:00	Registration and coffee, Fairgrounds Talks and presentations Annual open board meeting, lunch on own Outdoor demonstrations Membership Meeting Evening at Steam Shop , Steam Shop at Snow Road, light dinner, furnished.
Sunday September 14	7:30—9:00 9:00—1:30 1:30—2:30 2:30—9:00	Registration and coffee, Fairgrounds Talks and presentations. Lunch on own, Move from Fairgrounds Tours at Steam Shop , boiler demonstrations

Registration Fee

\$65	For three days coffee and donuts and light meals
\$25	For one day

Presentations, Talks, and/or show a component: Ken Helmick, 586-214-4795,
steamautomobile@aol.com.

Camping available on the grounds of the steam shop. There is plenty of room for campers and tents, but no hook ups. Shop has two bathrooms, one shower and will be open at all times.

MapQuest Location of: <http://www.mapquest.com/us/mi/berrien-springs>
Tom Kimmel (cell) 269-208-3931
Home: 4671 E. Hillcrest Dr., Berrien Springs, MI 49103
Fairgrounds: 9122 M-139 (Old 31) Berrien Springs, MI 49103
Steam Shop: 3867 East Snow Road, Berrien Springs, MI 49103

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Dear Steam Club People:

This is another take on inviting club members and any of their invitees to our annual meeting. We are trying to describe the meeting and how it is of interest and of educational value to any and all steam people. We have attempted to describe what happens and how it feels to attend this meet, which has happened often enough to have taken on its own life and comes with its own tradition. Mainly, what I have to say is that most who attend enjoy it. Of course most are multiple attendees of long standing and thus they enjoy it or they would not have kept coming back.

There are several types of people attend—newly interested steam people looking for more information, old-timers who like the social aspects of meeting old friends, and those with good solid steam experience who like to share that knowledge with others. What this is not is an old car show. Very few vintage steam people trailer their vehicles here. We like them and invite them and for two afternoons we have the large county fairgrounds with several miles of roads snaking through it for us to drive on. The real steam vehicle people are usually busy all summer with organized regional tours.

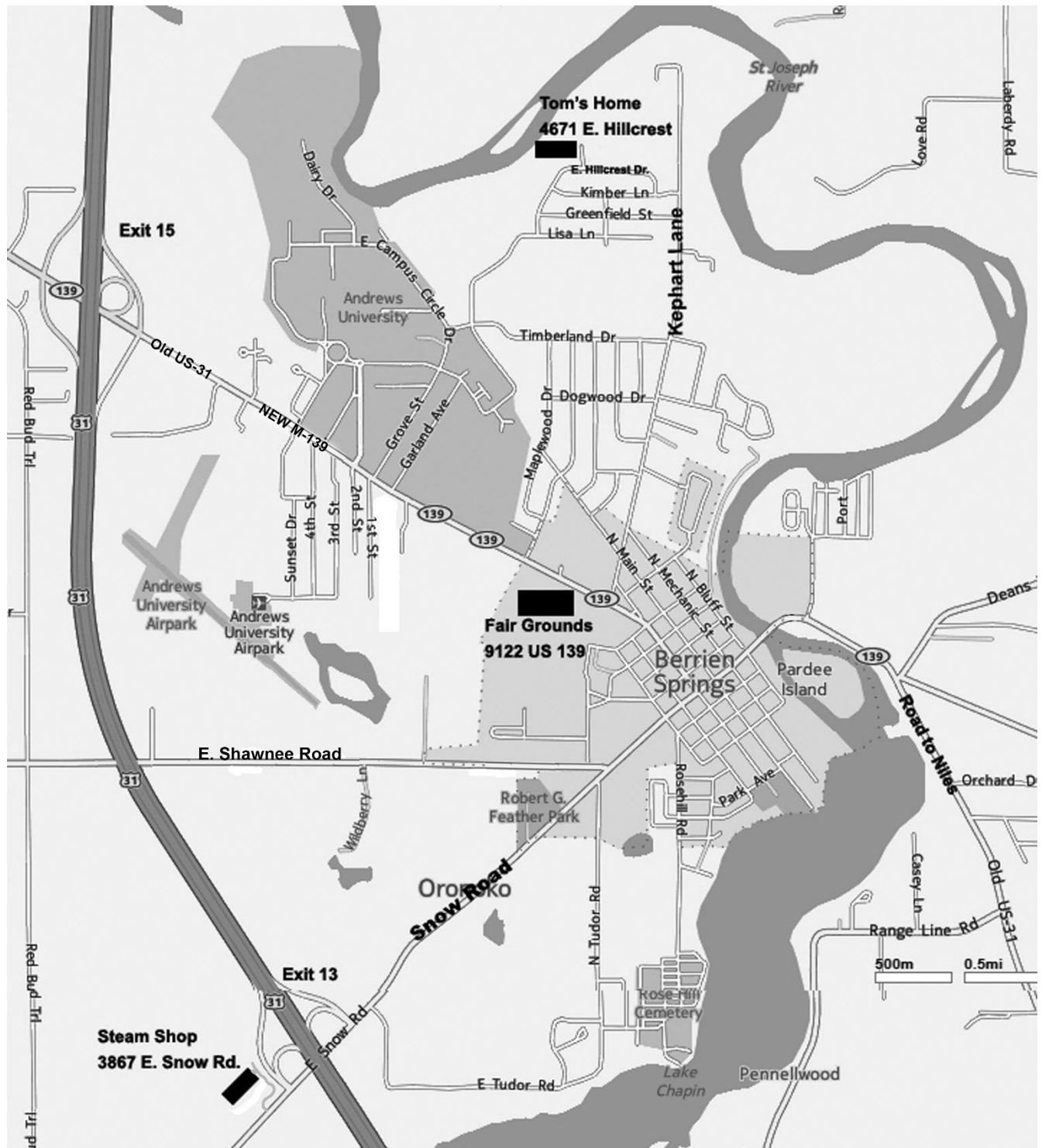
We particularly invite everyone who is working on making something steam related. We like to see what people are doing and sometimes we offer a little advice, based on what we have seen so far in life. We want to, above all else, make good use of people's time, which is why the program starts first thing in the morning and lasts until dark, or even longer. There is the usual coffee, donuts, granola bars, and bananas for those who did not get breakfast first. There is a reception Thursday evening for the early comers and evening meals provided on the premises Friday and Saturday. I think the most valuable display is my library and the second most valuable is the large collection of home-made steam things—burners, steam generators, engines, and vehicles. The late Art Gardiner used to tell me that I would have a good collection if I threw away 95% of it. Art was a purist who only wanted to see the best thermodynamically most successful steam things on display. On the other hand, I think that anything that someone went to the effort of making is worth preserving, and also, that more can be learned from really bad examples than from perfect examples.

Ken wants to use our time wisely and so he is trying to avoid our usual past tradition of the people giving talks spending the first fifteen minutes of each speech with their backs to the audience doing a free-hand drawing on the flip paper easel. I do not aspire to as much perfection as Ken aspires to, but I think that, at the least, the presenters should take some time early in the morning to do their freehand drawing on a table and without the rest of us having to watch the process. At least we are going to aim for a professional presentation whenever possible. We have AV equipment.

All new people are invited to introduce themselves, with mention of their backgrounds and interests and knowledge. Just being here to learn is enough. These days, we are working on several projects—Tim Nye is designing a Detroit Diesel two-cycle converted to steam power for a land speed record run. The design work is nearly done and now we are working on money raising and fabrication. Ken and I think that the present emphasis on steam will be in the off-gridders back-yard small co-gen wood fired electrical generators. We have had those with experience in restoring and maintaining vintage steam vehicles show up and tell of their experiences. They are the backbone of the club.

And so we are going to walk through the vehicles and components on display, describing their history and what has or can be learned from studying them. This will take place at my 50'x100' steel building steam shop with two bathrooms and my library afternoons and evenings.

Please bring books, literature, things, and stories. It is the presence of as many people as possible that gives these meetings value.



Directions:

From Detroit, Michigan take I-94 West to Napier Exit 30. Turn left unto Napier to 31 South, turn right and go to Exit 13, turn right (West) to 3867 E. Snow Road.

From Chicago, Illinois take I-94 East to Exit 16 Bridgeman, north on Red Arrow to the stop light at Lake St. turn right—Lake St. turns into Shawnee Rd, east 10 miles to Ferry Street. Take right to 3867 E. Snow Rd. (Note Ferry St. in Berrien Springs turns into Snow Rd.

From South Bend, Indiana take U. S. 31 to Exit 13, right (West) to 3867 E. Snow Road.