



Cadillac & LaSalle Club Potomac Region Caddie Chronicle December 2007



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE BY VINCE TALIANO

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NATIONAL CLC ADVISOR
NEWSLETTER COLUMNIST
RICHARD SILLS

The Big 5-0!

No, I am not talking about personally reaching that milestone age-wise. I am talking about the number of **Caddie Chronicle** issues we have published. **That's right, this issue is our 50th!** Who would have thought we would have grown as much as we have? When we started in November 2003, our goal was to keep the Potomac Region members informed on upcoming events and note-worthy happenings in the hobby and the area. Over the past four years, the newsletter has evolved into a world-wide publication that has won two different national awards, which would not have been possible if it weren't for the following individuals who have submitted numerous articles and photos over the years. The list includes Byron Alsop, Ezekiel Armstrong, J. Roger Bentley, Rita Bial-Boxley, Chris Cummings, Randy Denchfield, the late Paul Estaver, Alex Figueroa, Jim Govoni, Michele Hauf, Daniel Jobe, Maurice Jones, Jeffrey Journey, Don Michaels, R. Scot Minesinger, Aksel Olesen, Vern Parker, Dan Reed, Dan Ruby, Henry & Diane Ruby, Karen Ruby, Bob Ruckman, Harry Scott, Bill Sessler, Richard Sisson, Michael Veilleux and Ken Visser. Special thanks to Sandy Kemper, Richard Sills and Steven & Margo Sisson for submitting articles and photos, as well as proof-reading each issue prior to publication!

To celebrate our achievement of reaching 50 issues, I have developed this commemorative publication, which includes some of my favorite stories from the past four years. I focused on stories showcasing personal experiences and not reports on events to make my choices a little easier. Even by limiting the selection criteria, it was extremely difficult for me to choose the few stories that are included in this issue. Many more are equally-deserving, but their inclusion would exceed our newsletter size limit. A 50 page newsletter would be more than we can handle. I hope everyone enjoys reading these stories a second time as much as I did selecting them.

Happy Holidays!

Vince Taliano

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www.clcpotomacregion.org



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Vince

As a follow-up to the story in the Potomac Region's **Caddie Chronicle** about my '40 LaSalle that broke down in the Holiday Inn parking lot in Greenbelt, I would like to thank everyone who helped my wife and me get our disabled car taken care of, and get transportation back home to Norfolk. As Sandy Kemper's story ended, Bill Sessler generously hauled my LaSalle back to his garage in Manassas and then spent most of the next day going back to Greenbelt to pick up his own LaSalle. My wife, Dana, and I saw our friends Henry and Mary Jane Richter from our local region at the car show. They put us in touch with another Hampton Roads Region member, Brian McGarvey, who was returning home to Virginia Beach Sunday afternoon and offered us a ride. Then Henry offered the use of his trailer to pick up my car when it was ready to go.

Bill put his regular projects aside at Sessler's Automotive Repairs and went to work on my LaSalle. He overhauled the distributor and had the engine running in no time. Later that week, I trailered the car back to Norfolk. With a dwell meter and timing light, I was able to fine tune the engine and now it runs "like a Cadillac." So at the end of the day, a bad situation turned out to be a minor "bump in the road" because of the kindness and generosity of the Cadillac & LaSalle Club members. A note to all of you old Cadillac owners: never travel any distance without a spare set of points and condenser and the basic tools to replace them. Again, thanks to everyone who helped us at the car show. Hope to see you all again soon!

Clint and Dana Dalton
Norfolk VA
Members, CLC Hampton Roads Region

Vince,

As I read about Bill Sessler working on the '40 LaSalle at the Holiday Inn, I thought you might like to hear my Matt Innocenzi story. At our 32nd Annual Edgar Rohr Memorial Antique Car Meet, I went to look over Matt's '58 Sedan Deville, which was a contender for Best GM or Best Post-War. I didn't know him, but found him behind the car reading a copy of **The Self-Starter**. As we started talking, I found out that he had parted a '55 Cadillac and still had the rear left over. He insisted on **GIVING** it to me (mine needed one). I retrieved it this past weekend, and for good measure, he threw in a trim piece, oil pan and transmission parts. After spending quite a bit of time trying to coax the rear (still mounted to the springs and part of the frame) to my trailer, he jumped the dead trailer battery from his truck to power the winch and pull the beast up the trailer ramp. All this for someone he'd only met for a few minutes at a car show!

Franklin Gage
Greenbelt MD
Member, CLC Potomac Region / President, AACA Bull Run Region



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2007 / 2008 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT INFORMATION
Dec 1-2		East Coast Indoor Nationals	Timonium Fairgrounds Timonium MD	David Cohen at 410-628-6262 or www.eastcoastindoornats.com
Dec 9	2:00 pm – 6:00 pm	4th Annual Potomac Region Holiday Gala	Hilton Silver Spring MD	Steven Sisson at 703-724-7652 or sissonse01@cs.com
Jan 12-20		Barrett-Jackson Auction	Scottsdale AZ	www.barrett-jackson.com
Jan 17-18		CLC Winter Board Meetings	Scottsdale Resort and Athletic Club Scottsdale AZ	CLC Office at 614-478-4622 or www.cadillaclasalleclub.org
Feb 28- Mar 2		34th Annual Atlantic City Classic Car Auction	Atlantic City Convention Center Atlantic City NJ	G. Potter King, Inc. at 800-227-3868 or www.acclassiccars.com
May 4	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	17th Annual Capitol Cadillac Spring Car Show/ Automobilia Auction	Capitol Cadillac Greenbelt MD	Car Show: Diane & Henry Ruby at 301-894-8026, Automobilia Auction: George Boxley at 301-261-5634
May 15-17		AACA Eastern Spring Meet Hosted by AACA Queen City Region	Flintstone MD	Don Reid at 301-729-1653 or local.aaca.org/queencity/
Jun 1-6		CLC National Driving Tour Northern California Region	Sierra Nevada Mountains California	www.clcnorcal.com
Jul 12		CLC Inter-Regional Meet Sponsored by CLC Central PA Region and Upper Susquehanna Region	AACA Museum Hershey PA	Art Archambeault at 717-671-8768 or jandainpa2002@yahoo.com
Aug 12-16		CLC Grand National Meet Valley Forge Region	Cherry Hill NJ	www.vfrclc.org/GN08.htm

Happy Holidays!

Hope everyone can join us for our 4th Annual Holiday Gala on Sunday December 9th at the Hilton in Silver Spring, MD. The event is from 2-6 PM and includes a great holiday menu. The price is only \$35 per person. If you plan to attend, please mail your reply along with a check to Harry Scott by Wednesday December 5th.

The DVD of the *Legacy of LaSalle* will be available for distribution and sale at the Holiday Gala. DJ Mikey did an excellent job of taking the 130+ pictures from our website and adding LaSalle period music to create three segments: Attendees, Showroom and Showfield, which can all be selected from a Main Menu screen that features "the Bunkers" signing "**Gee our old LaSalle ran great!**" All together the DVD runs about 10 minutes. Stay tuned for ordering information!

Rooms are filling up fast for the Atlantic City Auction and the CLC Grand National. Make your reservations as soon as possible!



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NOVEMBER 19, 2007 MEETING MINUTES BY SANDY KEMPER

PLACE: Silver Diner, Merrifield, Virginia

TIME: 7:33 PM

PRESIDING: Director Vince Taliano

ATTENDANCE: Glen & Pat Cole, Sandy Kemper, Randy Denchfield, Brenda & Jim George, Steve Kirkwood, Jack McClow, Tom McQueen, Dan Ruby, Diane & Henry Ruby, Harry Scott, Richard Sisson and Margo & Steven Sisson

DIRECTOR'S REMARKS: Vince reserved his remarks to recognizing several members for their efforts at the *Legacy of LaSalle* show. First, Vince apologized for not mentioning Richard Sisson during his announcements at the show. Second, he commended Dan Ruby for the beef stew that Dan made for the workers to enjoy during the chill of the morning. Lastly, he applauded Randy Denchfield's rooftop photos of the event.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: The Minutes from the October meeting were not read since they had been published and distributed to all members in the November, 2007 newsletter.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The Treasurer's Report covered the time period from the October meeting to date. Harry Scott reported that the Region's income was \$3,219.77, most of which was from membership renewals. The total expenses for the same time period were \$1,591.56. Primarily the expenses were related to the car show and customary monthly expenditures. The checking account balance as of the meeting was \$4,577.80 and the Certificate of Deposit principal was \$5,506.02.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Richard Sisson reported:

- That membership has reached the long sought goal of 200. Everyone gave Richard a hearty congratulatory applause for his efforts as Membership Chairman. The 200th member is **John D. Williams**, a long-standing CLC member from Takoma Park, MD, who owns a 1947 Series 75 and 1948-49 Series 60 Specials. As the 200th member, John will receive his 2009 membership for free.
- In addition to mailing applications to current PR members, 2008 Membership Applications have been mailed to all National CLC members in the Potomac Region who were not PR members in 2007. So far, eight (8) additional National CLC members have joined as a result of Richard's latest mailing. The members are **George Rubenson**, Salisbury MD, 1949 Series 61 Sedan, **Edward M. Ranier**, Lutherville Timonium MD - 1970 Deville Convertible / 1975 Eldorado Convertible, **Holloway Wooten**, Washington DC - 1935 Cadillac Series 10 Sedan, **Tom Marty**, Woodbridge VA - 1977 Eldorado, **Dillard P. Coleman**, Alexandria VA - 1993 Allante and 2003 Escalade, **D. Richard Shonk**, Ashton MD - 1955 Eldorado and 2006 XLR-V, **Arthur E. Davis III**, Baltimore MD - 1956 Series 62 Convertible and **Eric Vandenbeemt**, Monkton MD - 1941 Convertible Coupe. Welcome!
- 2007 PR members who do not renew by December 31, 2007 will be contacted by phone in January.
- As required, our 2007 Membership Report has been submitted to the CLC Office.



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ACTIVITIES REPORT:

1. Recently held events:

- **“Legacy of LaSalle” Fall Show, Oct 28, Capitol Cadillac, Greenbelt, MD:** Vince played a DVD that has been produced by DJ Mikey featuring photo images from the show. The inspiration for the DVD began with Diane Ruby who got the idea from the Central PA Region’s Brenner show. Copies of the DVD will be distributed as gifts of appreciation and additional copies will be available for sale. On the related topic of our car shows at Capitol Cadillac, Vince reported that the 2008 Spring Show has been tentatively scheduled for May 4. Also, there was a lengthy discussion about possible themes for the 2008 Fall Show.
- **Fall Driving Tour, Nov 4:** Before Steven’s comments, Vince commended Steven for his continuing great work of organizing the Region’s driving tours for the past three years. Steven reported that the tour went extremely well. The weather was pleasant. There were a lot of cars to view at the **“Church of the Holy Donut”** gathering spot. The Railroad Museum in Ellicott City was enjoyable. The drive through the western suburbs of Baltimore ran smoothly. And Randy Moss, the owner of the Collector Car Corral, the last stop of the tour, was an excellent host. Steven said that 14 cars and 26 people participated in the tour.

2. Upcoming PR events: 2007 Potomac Region Holiday Gala, Dec 9: Steven displayed the flyer that has been distributed to members and encouraged everyone to participate in this event. There will be good food and holiday music.

3. Other upcoming events: Steven listed a number of events in the coming months, including the East Coast Nationals, Dec 1-2, 2007, Timonium Fairgrounds in Timonium, MD. Also, he noted, the AACA Eastern Spring Meet will be held in Flintstone, MD, near Cumberland, on May 15-17, 2008.

OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. 2008 Grand National, Aug 12-16, Cherry Hill, NJ:** Sandy attended the most recent planning meeting and reported the following: 90% of the rooms blocked by the host hotel, Crowne Plaza, have been booked even though the hotel has increased the amount of rooms in the reserved block four (4) times. An alternate hotel has been arranged. It is located ½ mile from the host hotel. The registration form and other info will be published in the January ***The Self Starter***. Vince has been helping the GN Committee with setting up the registration database similar to the one he developed for the Savannah GN.

NEW BUSINESS: The Maryland meeting location was discussed briefly since the noise in the Food Court at White Flint Mall has been distracting at times. A particular Chinese restaurant in Rockville was suggested but there was general disfavor to that idea. No other venues were suggested at this time.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, January 21, 2008 at the Food Court at White Flint Mall, Rockville, Maryland.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM. [*Many remained until almost 9:30 PM.*]



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***"MINNIE S."
BY PAUL ESTAVER
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN APRIL 2004***

Over the past 58 years, I've owned fourteen Cadillacs and one 1933 LaSalle. Except for the LaSalle, which I bought in 1954 for \$400 with a loan from Beneficial Finance, I didn't think of these cars as classics. I just loved them the way you'd love a big dog. I'm a jackleg mechanic at best, so I patched them together in with Gun-Gum and soup cans-plus-asbestos around the exhaust pipes and kept them running until they died or were stolen or otherwise broke my heart.

My first was a 1931 Cadillac V-8, a 7-passenger black sedan that I found in a hayfield in Gray, Maine, bought from a farmer for \$75, and drove home to Massachusetts on plates off my late, unlamented '37 Plymouth. That wonderful monster and I lived together from 1946 to 1949, commuting from Newton into Boston where I was a day student on the G.I. Bill at Boston University.

At that time, Boston University was still in Copley Square in the old Harvard Med School building, plus classroom space rented in office buildings wherever they could find it. I don't think there were meters there yet, but I do remember we had to park on the street wherever we could find space and move our cars every two hours if we didn't want to get tagged. At the end of the day, you did well to remember where you'd last left your car--even one as conspicuous as mine.

But to move, you had to start the engine, and therein lay the problem, because I never had the money to buy a new battery and got by as best I could on a series of used ones bought from junkyards for a dollar or two.

I lived on a hill, so I could pop the clutch to start in the mornings (after pushing it to get it rolling, then jumping into the driver's seat), and maybe if the battery was blessed it might hold the charge from the commute into town for the first two or three parking changes. But all too often, by the late afternoon, it would grind helplessly, and I would have to crank. I'd set the choke and hand throttle, grab the crank from the backseat floor and go to work.



**Paul Estaver with "Minnie S."
1931 Cadillac V-8
Circa 1946**



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On very good days I might get it to catch with one hard pull, but more often I'd have to go round and round with it, taking my chances on a broken arm. And when it began to catch, sounding like an asthmatic in death throes, I'd have to race to the driver's seat to coddle it into roaring life.

Its other serious problem was a shimmy that started at around 52 mph and increased exponentially to 57, then went away. So the trick was to keep it on the road until you got through that five mph increment, yanking it to left and right for a few seconds' respite. Oncoming cars sometimes found this disconcerting, especially in tunnels.

But what power! I swear I could have kids hanging all over that monster and drive it up the steepest hill in town to the Andover-Newton Theological Seminary, and it keep going in high gear down to 4 mph without a shudder.

My girlfriend, majoring in Sociology, named it "Minnie S." after a case study about a woman of the streets who was beyond redemption. And of course that back seat in combination with the jump seats did constitute something like a queen-sized bed. The final touch was a huge hot-pink quilt we kept on hand, because "Minnie S." had no heater. I will not confess to any activities in that back seat beyond noting that a Boston cop once admonished us, saying over and over, "Have ye no shame!"

"Minnie's" other weakness was a bad wheel bearing in the back whose seriousness I didn't understand until it froze one dark night as I was driving over to West Roxbury to see her. My buddy Billy somehow got it towed to his shop, but the only new rear end he could find for it had wire-spoke wheels--not a match for the artillery wheels in the front.

And even worse, the junkyard part cost \$75, which was far beyond my reach; even with the G.I. Bill money and the grocery-delivery job I had on the side. So Bill cut the back off the body, installed a crane, and made a wrecker out of poor "Minnie S."

But there remains one indelible memory from the year before. I'd innocently parked "Minnie S." on Marlboro Street precisely in front of my ex-girlfriend's father's dental office. I'd had no idea where his office was. And in plain daylight my buddy Kenny and his girlfriend had a conspicuous good time under that pink quilt. The only reason the dentist didn't call the cops was because he thought it was me.

I never saw Joannie (the ex-girlfriend) again, but I heard the story from my sister. When my name came up in conversation, Joannie's reaction was: "That son-of-a-bitch!"

[Editorial Note: Paul passed away in April 2005. This story helped to establish our newsletter as an informative and entertaining publication. Since that time, we have received numerous articles and stories from many members, some of whom are now known as Potomac Region "Newsletter Columnists."]



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DON'T RAISE YOUR BOY WITHOUT A CADILLAC
BY PAUL FRIGGENS, ASSOCIATE EDITOR
THE TOWN JOURNAL¹
MARCH 1, 1955
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN MARCH 2005

[Editorial Note - Over the past year, we have all enjoyed reading Chris Cummings' stories about the Cadillacs that he purchased during his teenage years in Albuquerque NM. Just recently, Chris informed me that his inspiration for purchasing a '41 Cadillac Series 75 at the age of 15 was based on an article that he read as a teenager in the mid 1960's. The story, which was originally published in the Town Journal in March 1955 and condensed and re-published by the Reader's Digest, was written by Paul Friggens about his teenage son Bob. It told the tale of how the young man's purchase and restoration of a '41 Cadillac Fleetwood 60 Special influenced his life. Bob Friggens says: "The best thing about this story is something my dad and I discovered together. Maybe you can find it too." It is as inspirational today as it was 50 years ago. Here's a condensed version of the original story that was published in March 1955].

One night two years ago when I was in Philadelphia on business, I got an urgent telephone call from my son Bob, at our home in Boulder, Colo. "Pop, I've got a big deal on. I've lined up a car." Bob had just turned 16 and I wasn't entirely surprised – on the morning of his birthday, he had camped on the courthouse steps waiting to take his driver's test. "I suppose you want a hot rod," I said. "No, I've spotted a Cadillac." I gasped. "What on earth do you want with a **Cadillac**?" "I want it to deliver my telegrams."

That winter Bob had been using his bicycle to deliver for Western Union before and after school. Now for about \$300 he wanted to buy an ancient Cadillac and make his deliveries in comfort. "Ridiculous!" I said. "You must have gone out of your mind." We argued for a while, then said goodnight and I sat down to write a fatherly letter.

"Son, at 16, your grandfather came to this country a penniless immigrant. By dint of his pioneering I was able to go to college and progress a bit further. Now, Bob, you have the best chance of all. But we haven't arrived at the point where you can deliver telegrams by Cadillac!" I dispatched my advice airmail. I could picture my son reading the letter.

Early next morning, I was awakened by another urgent long-distance call. "Pop, I've talked it over again with Mom and I've just **got** to get that car. It's real sharp and worth a lot more than \$300, and another guy's after it!" Then he used his clinching arguments. On his birthday, his mother and I had warned against the risks of riding in old jalopies. "With this big, safe car," Bob argued now, "you'll never have to worry."

¹ *Town Journal* (1 March, '55), copyright 1955 by Farm Journal, Inc., 230 Washington Square, Philadelphia, PA.



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We had also tried to teach him to save it for something big and purposeful. Now the comeback: "Pop, I've been saving my money for three years, and what better can I get with it than a Cadillac?" Clearly talked down, I gave my reluctant okay. Since then our family has progressed from one Cadillac crisis to another.

Now, my son's Cadillac was a 1941 Fleetwood sedan, a specialty number for which collectors pay fancy prices. It was equipped with just about everything, including a Sunshine Turret Top – a sliding roof-panel. But it had only one carburetor, and Bob was determined to have double carburetors, the hot-rodder's "necessity."



Bob Friggens works on his '41 Fleetwood with the Sunshine Turret Top. Note the Rocky Mountains over his left shoulder.

Circa 1955

Photograph by Bob Friggens

After days of searching, he located a second carburetor on a wrecked Cadillac ambulance. He commenced to tear his prize down and rebuild it on our kitchen table. We had carburetors for breakfast, lunch and dinner. In order to set the kitchen table, his mother had to remove a litter of metering rods, float gauges, power bypass valves, bolts, springs and "idle" screws. She gave Bob her largest baking pan to keep his parts together. One day I took a stand. "If they needed two carburetors on this thing, engineers would have supplied them in the first place." I said. "Besides, everybody knows that two carburetors will use double the amount of gas. Who's going to buy *that*?" "It's just the opposite, Pop. They're putting twin carburetors on lots of the new Cads. They step up the pickup and mileage because they give better gas distribution to the cylinders."

When he had finished rebuilding **both** carburetors, Bob dragged in other engine parts to clean and examine. It was bitter cold in the garage, so we consented to the invasion. Soon Cadillac parts soaking in distillate shoved us out of our breakfast nook. On Thanksgiving, his mother looked for her roaster and found it in the basement full of crankcase oil. About this time I had to go away again, so I left some parting advice: "Put back the single carburetor the way it was and leave well enough alone."

While I was away, Bob cut open the intake manifold and redesigned it with mounts for double carburetors. He had welded the job himself. I returned from my trip just in time for the trial run. **With a show of triumph**, the young mechanic adjusted the throttle linkage to the twin carburetors and signaled for me to step on the starter. The car roared, backfired, and we were off for the road test. We noticed at once that the engine was running rough. Carburetors not set right," Bob explained. Now the engine began to miss badly. Bob looked worried.



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We barely made it back home. In his haste and inexperience, Bob had done a poor welding job, leaving bits of brass inside the manifold. Sucked into the combustion chamber with the gas, they had seriously damaged the valves and pistons. I stamped into the house. Bob trailed me dejectedly. "All he wants to do," I told his mother, "is to tear a perfectly good car to pieces. I was a fool to let him have the thing in the first place." Then I laid down the law: "Bob, you'll have to fix this and pay for it yourself. After that, I think we'll get rid of it."

The damaged valves and pistons were a major garage job. It would cost \$196 to get the old car in running order – retaining the twin carburetors. We finally agreed to let Bob keep the car if he footed the repair bill. He was the happiest kid on earth.

On Saturday he took a downtown dishwashing job, and soon after we were deluged with callers at front door and back. Without telling us, Bob had advertised his precious woodworking tools – sander, table saw and drill press – to help pay the \$196 garage bill. All weekend his mother and I shuttled to and from the basement showing tools. Before long the boy had paid every penny.

I went away again on business for nearly a month and put the Cadillac out of my mind. On my first day home I was shocked to discover in the basement what looked like two or three old Cadillacs in spare parts. Bob had lugged home everything from grilles to tail fins, and for lack of space had even stashed a few fenders and doors under the porch.

I steamed upstairs to his mother. "Do you realize that **your** son has sunk the rest of his savings in second-hand junk? Now we **are** going to get rid of that Cadillac." I cornered Bob as soon as he came home from school. "You get that junk out of the basement by Christmas." "But Pop, it isn't junk – it's an investment. Look at those doors. I got four for \$10. Not a dent or a scratch on 'em. You know what a body man wants for one **new** door? Sixty-five dollars! You never know when you might need another door."

Bob defended his other "bargains": radio, drive shafts, steering column, starter, fog lights, fender skirts, hub caps, ashtrays and chrome trim by the yard. "Pop, you can't buy real chrome like that today on the **new** cars." I found that Bob had scoured nearly 50 junkyards in Denver and was on friendly terms with the owners. Some trusted him with their keys or gave him a cut-rate because he was careful to strip the parts without damaging the rest of the car.

He had accumulated sufficient parts not only to replace every worn piece on the Cadillac, but to start a small-parts enterprise on his own. He had everything inventoried, too. Already, other car-lovers were hunting him up. Suddenly, I began to see my son in a new light. We had a budding businessman in our basement. From time to time, now, Bob invited me out to the garage to tinker or talk shop or just prowl among the spare parts. I was pleased that he was selling enough parts at enough profit to cover the cost of replacements on his Fleetwood. Gradually, he was pushing his car to perfection – new brakes, new clutch, and new shock absorbers. With his basement stock, he replaced hood, fenders, doors and every piece of blemished chrome. He was mastering new skills. No longer a novice, but a fledgling mechanic! I was beginning to understand the urge that had been driving him all the time.



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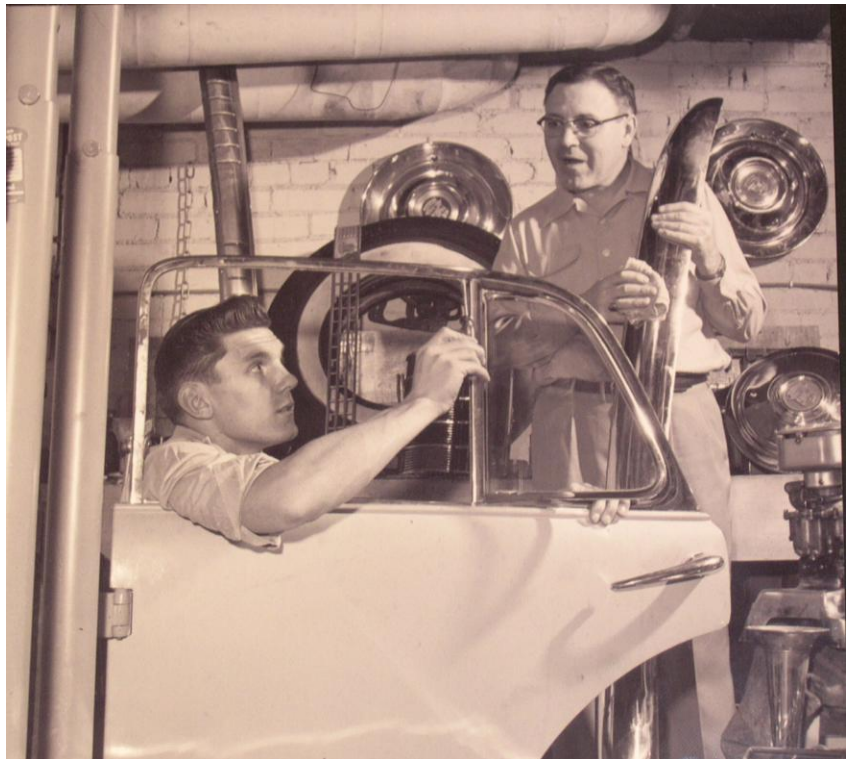


About a year after that first telephone call, Bob came to pick me up one day at the Denver airport. He was sitting proudly behind the wheel of the Cadillac – now nearly restored in a coat of many colors. “Look,” he exulted. “Hood off a Denver millionaire’s Cad, doors off a Texas oil baron’s buggy, and the rest I stripped off Fleetwoods from Cheyenne to Colorado Springs. Nothing left to do but the paint job. Step right in, Father.” And so, in a blue sedan with green hood, maroon doors and black fenders, we started the 30-mile drive home to Boulder. People stared at our mottled job, but I wasn’t disturbed. I was proud.

The 1941 engine purred more smoothly than the one in my new car. Bob grinned with satisfaction. “I milled the heads 60 thousandths of an inch and raised the compression ratio, Pop. More power! She’s good for another 100,000 miles.” I slid back the Sunshine Turret Top and looked up at the majestic Rockies. Just ahead loomed our town of Boulder and the University of Colorado. “Dad, I’ve decided what I’m going to take there next year,” Bob said. “Engineering.” And so, not long after he bought his Cadillac to deliver telegrams, my son became a student in mechanical engineering. At the end of his first day at the University he dashed home, his eyes shining. “They’ve got a Cadillac motor to experiment with in engine lab!”

Looking back now, that phone call in Philadelphia was probably the most important one I ever had. Bob had never come to grips with anything in particular before, but the Cadillac crystallized his interest in an engineering career and sharpened his application to *all* his work. As for myself, I learned how vital it is for a youngster to have an all-absorbing interest and to pour himself into something. Not necessarily a Cadillac – but *something*.

Out of our Cadillac crises Bob and I have grown a lot closer. He confides in me each new step. Just the other day he let me in on the latest. “Pop,” he said, “I’ve got another big deal on.” There it was, already parked in our back yard – another ‘41 Cadillac!



Paul Friggens [standing right] and Bob work on the '41 Fleetwood's rear door.

Circa 1955

Photograph by Bob Friggens



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Bob Friggens Today – 50 Years Later
with his 1940 Packard
Albuquerque NM
Photograph by Pat Friggens

[Editorial Note – After reading the story, I decided to contact Bob Friggens. Chris Cummings informed me that he was living in Albuquerque NM so I conducted an internet search and was able to locate his business phone number and address. I called and left a message with one of his colleagues and in less than 30 minutes Bob called me back. I introduced myself and explained that I was interested in re-publishing his father's story about him 50 years later.

Bob was very gracious, supportive and agreed to send me photographs for inclusion in this story, along with an update on his life since 1955.

As his father mentioned, he attended the University of Colorado. While in college, he learned mechanical repairs and body work working at the Cadillac agency in Boulder CO.

After graduating in 1958 with a combination degree in Mechanical Engineering and Business, he worked for Honeywell as a Controls Engineer. In 1964, Bob and a colleague began a mechanical consulting engineering firm in Albuquerque NM, Allison Engineering, Inc., which is still in business today.

He has been very fortunate to gradually acquire some of the very cars that he read about in articles in the 1950's. One example is a 1935 Mercedes roadster that was featured in a 1951 article in Road and Track (he still has the article). Years later, he met the owner in California and saw the car on several occasions. Many years later, when the owner decided to part with it, he delivered the car to Bob's house.

Bob has been married to his wife Pat since 1963 and has two grown children and one grandson. Working on older Cadillacs was a good way to begin a hobby that has now lasted for more than 50 years.

We would like to thank Chris Cummings, Harry Scott and especially Mary Rulinski at the Farm Journal and Bob & Pat Friggens for their cooperation and collaboration in re-publishing this story.]

[Editorial Note Addendum: My favorite story hands down! Not only is the story remarkable, but we were able to re-print it exactly 50 years after it first appeared in print, along with an update on Bob 50 years later. It is a story worthy of National publications.]



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A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO A JAZZ FESTIVAL!
BY SANDY KEMPER
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN AUGUST 2005



My purpose for being in Saratoga Springs, NY on a hot Sunday afternoon in late June was to join a dozen of my friends who make an annual sojourn to the Freihofer's Jazz Festival. Actually it's a reunion of sorts of college friends and the jazz festival is simply the destination. The two day jazz concert is held in the Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC). Just outside of the entrance gates to SPAC is an old Coca-Cola bottling plant. It's a lovely brick building that no longer serves its original purpose. Rather, it has been renovated to house the Saratoga Automobile Museum.

While walking to the festival, from what seemed to be miles from where I had to park my car, I noticed that there was an unusually large number of cars on the Automobile Museum grounds. As I approached, it became clear that all of the cars were **Cadillacs!** Imagine my surprise and delight to discover that the **CLC - NY Capital District Region** was holding what they call a **"Lawn Event"** on the grass in front of the museum. There were eighteen Cadillacs on display when I stopped to look at them. But I found out later that some others had come and gone. There was a good representation of model years from the late 1940's thru the 1960's with one car each from 1949, 51, 56, 57, 59, 60, 64, 66 and 1967. Among these was a gorgeous two-tone, robin's egg blue and white, 1956 Coupe deVille that some of you may have seen at the 2003 Grand National, a 1957 Series 62 with a vinyl roof (a 1957 option!) and Region President Bill Tomak's fine platinum gray 1960 Coupe deVille. Also on display were a pair of early 1970's convertibles, a 1970 and a 1971, along with an immaculate 1971 Coupe deVille. There was a 1984 with just over 18,000 original miles on the odometer. And I spotted one Allanté.

Most of the event participants had sought respite from the +90° heat under the shade of a nearby tree, which reminded me of our Region's recent attendance at the Catonsville All-GM show. They appeared to be holding a picnic also. Rather than crash their party, I roamed among the Cadillacs. While I was making a few notes about the cars on the back of my concert ticket, one of the members approached me. Apparently my more than casual interest in the cars and note-taking had gotten a few of the shade-dwellers curious. After I introduced myself as a CLC member, we were strangers no more. Soon I was in conversation with many of them.

The NY Capital District Region has a good relationship with the Saratoga Automobile Museum and they are able to use the Museum for meetings and events. In fact, one of their members, Armen Roubian has had his 1930 353 Fisher Special Coupe, the 2003 Grand National "Best of Show – Early" winner, on display in the museum. Roxanne Gershon, their newsletter editor, gave me a copy of their newsletter, **"Wheels of Distinction."** In it, I noted that their region holds its summer general membership meetings (which they call "Burger Runs") at different "cruise-in" burger or ice cream restaurants in the Greater Albany Area.

As I left the CLC **"Lawn Event"** to re-join my friends at the jazz festival, I thought to myself, "What fun it would have been if I had driven my 1959 Coupe deVille here and participated in the Region's show." And I would've had a considerably better parking place for the jazz festival too!



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OLD CAR WAR STORIES

BY RICHARD SISSON

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN AUGUST 2005

Return with me now to those thrilling days of yesteryear when a young antique car enthusiast could actually buy an old car for a reasonable price, and they seemed to be everywhere. The year was 1965 and yours truly had recently purchased his first "antique" car ... a nice baby blue 1953 Cadillac Series 62 Convertible for the hefty sum of \$300. Remember, this car was all of 12 years old at the time. The elderly gentleman was the original owner and when setting the price he decided an appropriate cost would be what he had paid extra for the chrome wire wheels when new.

Soon after I bought the car, I was driving from Silver Spring to Bethesda on East-West Highway near Connecticut Avenue when I spotted a rare white 1953 Cadillac Eldorado sitting in a circular driveway. At the time I had probably never even seen an Eldorado. Highly curious, I pulled into the driveway and knocked on the front door. A gentleman came out and proudly allowed me a closer look. The car was in excellent original condition with low mileage. He knew it was rare and showed me all of its special features.

He had recently bought the car from a storage company and offered it to me for \$2,500. Remember, I had recently paid \$300 for a good '53 Convertible so his price seemed astronomical to me. I thanked him for his time and was on my way.

Oh there's one more part to the story. As I was leaving, he causally mentioned this particular car had been used by President Eisenhower in the 1953 Presidential Inauguration Parade!

Editorial Note from The Cadillac Database:

Dwight D. "Ike" Eisenhower rode to his inaugural ceremony in one of the first production Eldorados colored Alpine White. The car in which he rode was NOT body #1 but #2 (engine #5362-08900 -- the build sheet reads: Condition for Inaugural Parade). The latter car was reported sold at auction in 1987 as the "Eisenhower Car" for \$104,000.

Stay tuned for more Old Car War Stories...

[Editorial Note Addendum: Richard's "those were the days" stories have entertained our readers over the years. This story is particularly interesting because of the historical significance of the 1953 Eldorado that transported President Eisenhower in his inaugural ceremony. Its historical significance and ties to the area are two reasons the 1953 Eldorado was chosen to symbolize the Potomac Region in our logo.]



Early factory publicity shot in color. This could be car #2, which was used by "Ike" Eisenhower in the 1953 Presidential Inauguration Parade.

**Photo: © 1953, GM/Cadillac
Source: The Cadillac Database**



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SAYING GOODBYE STORY AND PHOTO BY CHRIS CUMMINGS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN MARCH 2006

Recently, I drove the 1941 Cadillac limousine that took me through high school, college and law school for the last time. The car that saved my life on a busy Albuquerque, New Mexico thoroughfare one afternoon; ferried most of my third-year Latin classmates on a field trip; and taught me most of what I know about car repair and maintenance was no longer mine. A few weeks ago, George Boxley and I shook hands on a deal, and the time had come for me to drive the limousine from Bill Sessler's garage to Harry Scott's driveway where George would take it home in his trailer.



**Chris Cummings with his
1941 Cadillac Series 75 Touring Sedan
August 2003**

I bought the car in 1967 when I was a sophomore in high school. I had become fascinated by Cadillacs, first by the new and late-model years, and then by the older cars. That progression was, in part, driven by pure economics – a high school student with an after-school job had to consider what he reasonably could afford to acquire. But, the more I found out about the magnificent carriages Cadillac had built over the years, the more interested I became in the old classics. It didn't take me long to decide that a Cadillac V-16 (any year, any body style, but most preferably a limousine) would be the ideal set of wheels. I tried, within the means available to me, to find a V-16, but my efforts turned up not so much as a hint of the presence of such a car in the Albuquerque area or anywhere in the state. When my father pointed out a long, black, shiny 1941 Cadillac on a used car lot, I stopped, looked and fell for it.

It wasn't a V-16, but it was the next best thing – a recognized classic, prewar luxury car, with yards of wood paneling, jump seats, lull straps, running boards, a starter button and a manual transmission. I'd never personally seen a Cadillac without an automatic. The car had a really dignified bearing that spoke eloquently of class and elegance. It did not have a divider window between driver and passenger compartments, and so was not, strictly speaking, a limousine, but it was close enough for me. It ran well, and it had a cozy old-car smell that I just loved.

In 1978, I moved to New York City to pursue a performing career and left the Cadillac behind at my parents' house. My new life had no room for a car of any sort, let alone one worth caring for. As the years passed, I married and started a family and moved to the Washington, D.C. area.



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When my parents passed away, I had to consider the fate of the 1941 Cadillac, and with the urging of everyone who offered an opinion on the subject, I had it revived and shipped out to my home in Virginia.

Over the last few years I had fixed a lot of the things that I'd never gotten around to fixing years ago, as well as the things that resulted from its long dormancy. The car provided enjoyable neighborhood tours for family and friends. And with the correct 16" wheels and wide whitewall tires, it sure looked nice in the driveway. A new wiring harness and careful cleaning of connections had revitalized the electrical system. Harry Scott had helped me install a new windshield and dashboard, and I was finally able to obtain a new parking brake cable and replace most of the weatherstripping.

Then last year, I discovered the car that had been my heart's desire all along. It was a beautifully preserved 1930 V-16 imperial sedan, and as it turned out, I was able to acquire it. When the arrangements were made to ship the new purchase to my home, I had to move the 1941 limousine to make room. Bill Sessler was kind enough to let me board the car with him, while I set about selling the 1941 fastback coupe that was also occupying a garage slot. The fastback didn't sell as quickly as I expected, and the temporary arrangement with Bill gradually extended. I began to consider parting with it, especially if I could find it a good home.

Parting with a significant possession that has played a major role in a person's life gives rise to a symphony of emotions. All of the events, large and small, that involved the item play back like a retrospective slide show. And a certain grieving process begins, as well. No sooner did George and I shake hands, but my wife's eyes welled up (and mine threatened to). This car had carried my father and mother, my brothers, various cousins, aunts, uncles and friends (some of whom are no longer living). And more recently, it had carried my own family and new friends. Now it was leaving to act in someone else's life. ***I've often heard it said that we don't own these cars – we just take care of them until the next owner comes along.***

When the time came to say goodbye, Barbara and I drove to Bill Sessler's house and I saw the 1941 limousine for the first time since last August. It sat just inside Bill's garage door, patiently waiting. I opened the driver's door and the dome light glowed brightly. I straightened the sheet covering the front seat, climbed in and turned the key for the last time. When I pressed the starter button, the engine quickly caught and I let it warm up a bit. Barbara positioned the "chase vehicle" to follow me, and I backed out of Bill's garage and headed out of his driveway.

So however much it felt like an ending, I knew this was a transition. The car was going to an appreciative and capable owner. It was staying in the area, and in all probability, in the not-too-distant future I would see it again, improved and well cared for. Meanwhile, I had a V-16 limousine, the automobile I'd set out to own from the beginning. And the 1941 had survived my ownership of it with some significant improvements.

However tied our memories are to specific places and things; they stay with us, called to mind whenever we wish. Still, it's hard to say good-bye to an old friend.



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FLEETWOOD FEVER BY MAURICE JONES ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN SEPTEMBER 2006

When I was 10 years old, a man in my neighborhood named Junior Jackson bought a 1949 Cadillac Fleetwood. It was black with gray velour interior. It was the prettiest car that I had ever seen and it left an indelible mark on me. I said to myself that when I grew up I was going to buy myself nothing but a Cadillac Fleetwood and keep it forever.

Twenty-six years later, my friend Mike Parrish and I went to Capitol Cadillac, at that time located at 22nd & L Street NW, and Salesman Buddy Abell showed me a Galloway Green Firemist, paint #94, 1976 Fleetwood Brougham Talisman with black velour interior. Mike said that this is the car and I said, "You are right!" Due to the limited options of the Talisman's interior; however, I bought the D'Elegance instead so I could get the color interior that I wanted. I took the brochure to work and the car looked so good that Willie Talbert, a co-worker, wanted a Coupe Deville in the same color. So we called a buyers club in Detroit and ordered two Cadillacs. The Brougham listed for \$11,800. Three months later, Mike, Willie, my friend Kermit and I flew to Detroit, picked up the cars, and had a wonderful drive back to Washington, DC.



**Maurice & Dianne Jones with their
1976 Fleetwood D'Elegance
Photo by Vince Taliano**

After purchasing the '76 Fleetwood, I drove it to work and this young fellow named Michael Jackson, another co-worker, said that it was a beautiful car. I told him the story of Junior Jackson's 1949 Fleetwood that I saw when I was 10. **He said, "That's my father's name and my mother's name is Jean Smith Jackson." I could not believe it! It turns out that I knew his whole family. It took me back to the future.** He called his mother and gave her my phone number. She called me back and said that she had a picture of that beautiful 1949 Fleetwood that I saw when I was 10 years old. To this day, I can still see Mr. Jackson getting out of that car.

Since then, I bought a 1990 Fleetwood, which I sold, and a 1996 Fleetwood that I still have along with my '76. I wanted a Fleetwood that was 20 years newer than my first one and I plan on keeping them both for a long...long...time!



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\$100 ROSE

STORY & PHOTOS BY ALEX FIGUEROA
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN OCTOBER 2006

In the summer of 2003, I was on my way to my first Potomac Region event (picnic at past Director Bill Sessler's house) with my wife and kids when I remembered that a 1977 Coupe Deville that was for sale just happened to be on the way. So we decided to stop and check out the car. When I saw the Caddy, it looked so sad. It had been sitting underneath a lot of trees. It was filthy and abandoned, just waiting for me to help it. It had bumper stickers all over the car, not just on the bumpers. The fender extensions were cracked and the paint was faded.



**\$100 Rose on the
2003 Potomac Region Fall Tour**

I almost decided not to even inquire about the poor Caddy, but I did. I rang the bell and a man came out. I spoke to him about the car. He said that it was a family-owned car originally purchased by his late father. He drove it himself for awhile and then he let his 18-year old drive it. Bad move if you ask me. The son did nothing to the car for several months, except place bumper stickers all over the car. Reluctantly I asked if I could start the car. I pumped the gas pedal twice and the car started right up and idled correctly. It was a beautiful color, **Desert Rose Metallic**, with burgundy interior. You could tell it was all original, family-owned and it had never been painted or hit. The man wanted \$300 for the car and after talking with him for a few minutes I offered him \$100 and he accepted. I was now on my way to the picnic with my \$100 Rose that ran pretty good, and my wife and kids were in a 1976 Eldorado Convertible.

When I arrived at the picnic, I told everyone that I just bought this Cadillac for \$100. No one could believe it. The car was the hit of the party with everyone talking about how I was able to find a running/driving car, let alone a Cadillac, for \$100. One month later, I took the car on the 2003 Fall Potomac Region Tour to Sugarloaf Mountain. By then, I cleaned it up, took the bumper stickers off, put new fender extensions on the back, tuned it up, put on nice hub caps, new tires, and a new exhaust. The guys couldn't believe it was the same car. The car ran like a dream! It had about 130,000 miles on it then and I drove the car for awhile as my daily driver.



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While shopping at a mall in 2004, I saw a Chateau Mauve 1969 Coupe Deville. I stopped the owner and asked if he wanted to sell his car. He was a young kid about 19 or 20-years old. We spoke for awhile and he said he was trying to find a Cadillac that would be easier to maintain than his '69 Coupe. He was interested in something in the '70's. I told him about my \$100 Rose and let him drive it. We exchanged numbers. A few days later he called and we traded cars and some money for his 1969 Cadillac. I lost my \$100 Rose.

Since the kid did not know that much about repairing cars, he asked me if we could keep in touch, just in case he needed some advice on repairs. I said yes and we kept in touch for two years.

In August 2006, I got a call from him saying that he was going to go to school in Australia and that he couldn't take the car with him. He asked me if I wanted to buy \$100 Rose back for \$500. I really didn't need the car because I have too many already, but I asked him to come over with the car and we would talk. The car looked the same way it did when he got it except he put bull horns on the front like they do in Texas. He did; however, also put money into the drive train and brakes, and kept the car running good. After a long conversation, I managed to buy back \$100 Rose for \$200. This is the first time that I bought a car, sold it and bought it back again.

So now I have my \$100 Rose again and it is waiting for its next story, adventure or owner.



\$100 Rose after Alex bought it back for \$200 in September 2006



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THE SOLID GOLD CADILLAC BY RON SIEGRIST ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN JANUARY 2007

Once upon a time, a long, long time ago, I was a young man. It was 1952 and I had just graduated from the University of Maryland with a BS degree in Electrical Engineering. Obviously, I had come to that time in life when play time was over and it was now necessary to enter the real world – that is, if one wanted to continue eating. Fortunately, a gentleman named Tom Eaton offered me a Junior Engineer job in Baltimore, Maryland with his newly formed company. Incidentally, I was the third employee hired. Although I loved my job and thought the world of my boss, seven years later I moved on to new endeavors. Nevertheless, Tom and I remained good friends.

One day in 1966, Tom told me that his next door neighbor, John Gaultney, had talked him into buying a new Cadillac. At the time, John was the Service Manager for Swartz Cadillac, a local Baltimore dealer. Of course, I went to see Tom's new car as soon as possible. It was an occasion to remember. The car was beautiful – a sight to behold! It was an Eldorado Convertible and it was long, very long! The car's exterior was painted Antique Gold with



**Ron & Julie Siegrist with their "Solid Gold Cadillac"
at the 2006 All-GM Show in Catonsville, MD
Photo by Vince Taliano**

matching top, perforated leather interior and carpet. Consequently, Tom and his wife Maurine called it their "Solid Gold Cadillac." Coincidentally, I had purchased a 1966 Oldsmobile "98" Convertible the week before. As the years rolled by, Tom and I never sold our cars and as we and our automobiles were aging, we always compared notes.



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Eventually, Tom retired and he and Maurine moved back to Boulder, Colorado where he had grown up. After that, many more years passed and the bad news was that Tom and I did not see each other very often. Then, one day, even more bad news came – Tom had passed away. Since I still thought the world of him, it was very sad news for me. About a year later, Maurine spoke to my wife and invited us to spend a week with her in Boulder. At that time, she told me that she wanted me to have Tom's Eldorado and we should fly to Boulder and drive the car back to Baltimore. She said that Tom had thought I was the best employee he had ever had and told her that I would take care of his car better than anybody.

After Maurine entertained us for a week by showing us all the sights in and around Boulder, Colorado area, it was time for the Eldorado to return to its home town of Baltimore. The day before we left, I shined the original paint and chrome and put some patches on a few small holes in the original 25-year old convertible top. We also checked all lights, brakes, windshield wipers and front end alignment. Our son Sam flew into town to help us drive home. We spent the next four days driving, visiting relatives and driving some more. Considering that the car had hardly been driven over the last couple of years – it performed admirably.

Over the next several years, in keeping with my promise to Maurine, I restored the car to its original splendor. It has been repainted in the original Antique Gold color, with a brand new matching top and rear window well installed. All the original seats and interior door and quarter panels have been re-dyed to their original color tone. In addition, the original walnut wood garnish mouldings have been refinished and varnished. Similarly, the original carpets have been cleaned to like-new condition. I removed all of the original trunk lining and spare tire cover; dry cleaned them and reinstalled them. Since the engine only had 83,000 miles original miles, it did not need any major work. I simply rebuilt the carburetor, replaced the normal tune-up type components and installed a new proper battery. Then I cleaned and detailed the engine compartment. Finally, the chassis and underbody was cleaned, painted and/or undercoated.

Today Tom's (and Ron's) car is in "excellent condition" with 100,500 miles. It recently won People's Choice Best Cadillac at the 2006 All-GM Show in Catonsville, Maryland. It is a great example of the last rear-wheel drive Eldorado Convertible. It is built on a 129.5 inch wheel base, measures 224 inches in overall length, and is powered by a 429 cubic inch V-8, which develops 340 horsepower and 480 ft. lbs. of torque. Its equipment includes: turbo hydromatic, variable ratio power steering, self-adjusting power brakes, power windows, power vent windows, power door locks, automatic trunk release, cruise control, AM-FM radio with power antenna and four speakers, automatic climate control, automatic level control, automatic guide headlight dimmer, safety sentinel headlight control, automatic parking brake release, tilt and telescope steering, white wall tires, back up lights, day/night rear view mirror, remote side view mirror, six-way power seat, windshield washers, front seat warmers and lights in engine, glove and trunk compartments.

Despite the fact that so many years have gone by and this Eldorado is now an official antique, it is still a thrill to drive this powerful smooth-riding automobile! Of course, we still call it the "Solid Gold Cadillac" and Tom's slide rule is still in the glove compartment.



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GOING CROSS-COUNTRY IN A 1965 DEVILLE CONVERTIBLE – PART 3 BY DON MICHAELS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN FEBRUARY 2007

Parts 1 & 2 chronicled Don's cross-country journey in Doris, his '65 Caddy, from D.C. to Idaho.

It was late afternoon, Thursday, August 16th, when John and I left Twin Falls, Idaho, and headed south on U.S. 93 to pick up I-80 west. We faced another 300 miles before reaching Winnemucca, Nevada, our next stopover. The northern part of Nevada was not particularly scenic, but there were things of note along the way. We stopped for dinner at a restaurant near Wells, taking note that its name was the same as that on a billboard we passed earlier promoting a 'gentlemen's club.' I found a bit of irony in that – a brothel and a steakhouse jointly owned. Excitement for the rest of the drive that evening consisted of occasionally spotting smoke on the distant horizon and as night fell, the appearance of flames with it. There were reports of wildfires in parts of Nevada so we assumed that was what we saw. We arrived in Winnemucca just as the motel owner was getting ready to lock the door and go to bed.

The next morning we had breakfast at a nearby casino. The food was good, plentiful and cheap. It's apparently a common lure casinos use to attract diners who will then follow up a good meal with a turn or two at the slots. We resisted the temptation in favor of an early start on the road to California and a stop at Lake Tahoe before heading on to San Francisco. A few hours later we crossed into California. The sun was out, the weather was mild, the top was down, and the beauty of the Sierra Nevada Mountains reminded me that California never seems to disappoint.



**Icons of a bygone era
Photo by John Yanson**

It was lunchtime as we approached the turnoff from I-80 at Truckee, California, to head south to Lake Tahoe. Our friend in San Francisco had alerted us to a diner in Truckee that he thought we'd like, so that's where we headed for lunch. We didn't think the food rated much more than one-and-a-half spoons, but it was a fun experience. The diner had been relocated to Truckee from West Chester, Pennsylvania, by new owners, in 1995.

Since Doris was of the same era, we thought it fitting to take a photo of her in front of the diner. From there we drove the length of Lake Tahoe, stopping at several vantage points to take in the beauty of the lake and its surroundings. At the base of the lake we picked up U.S. scenic route 50 over the mountains and into Sacramento, where we joined up with I-80 into San Francisco.



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Traffic was heavy, but it zipped along and we made it into the city around 9:30. As we approached our friend's home in the Castro area, we faced the challenge of finding a parking spot for a car Doris' size. But, we found one just a block away, on a level part of the street – a rarity in the hilly Castro area. I was lauding Doris' parking karma, until I spied a sign at the end of the block revealing that street cleaning would take place on that side of the street early the next morning. I knew how difficult it would be to find another spot like it so I decided to take my chances. But, sure enough, the next morning I was greeted with a \$40 ticket on her windshield. A small price to pay, I figured, since she wound up parked there for most of my week's stay.

John and I spent the next day relaxing and sight-seeing. He caught a flight back to D.C. the next day. I spent another week in San Francisco with a respite from driving – taking in a San Francisco Giants game, running in Golden Gate Park, shopping downtown and being graciously hosted and well fed by my friend Larry. At the end of the week, my friend Jim flew in from D.C. to join up with me for a much-anticipated drive down the scenic coastal Route 1. Sunday morning, the 27th, Jim and I packed our bags, loaded up Doris, and headed west through Golden Gate Park to Route 1, heading south to San Diego, the final stop of my nearly four week odyssey.

This was my third time driving the route, but it was the first time for Jim and sharing in his excitement and awe of the incredibly beautiful scenery made it seem like a new adventure for me. It was a chilly day and we took note that from Half Moon Bay down to Santa Cruz there were few beachgoers; it also meant little in the way of top down time with Doris. After a late lunch in Santa Cruz, we headed to Monterey where we drove the privately owned 17-mile scenic road, gawked at the multi-million dollar homes and wound our way through the renowned Pebble Beach Golf Course, which was practically deserted. Although it was now early evening we decided to keep going so we could



Taking a rest at Big Sur
Photo by Jim Lamont

experience sunset from the vantage point of Big Sur. Before we made it past the Big Sur area darkness fell which made negotiating the winding mountain road and its tight turns in pitch black surroundings a challenge – less for Doris than it was for me! Once we were back onto flat open road we found a motel in the town of San Simeon and a Mexican restaurant where the food was good but where they only offered wine Margaritas. We were both ready for something stronger but that would have to wait for another time.



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The next morning we stopped in nearby Cambria for breakfast and for what turned out to be the most expensive fuel stop of my entire trip - \$3.859 per gallon. The weather was balmy, so down went the top as we set out for L.A. Along the way we stopped at the town of Morro Bay hoping to visit the Morro Bay Vineyard, source of one of our favorite cabernets. But after several futile attempts to find it, a local wine shop proprietor informed us that it was just a private labeler whose source of grapes was only remotely close to Morro Bay. Our next stop was Santa Barbara, where we spent a couple hours window shopping downtown and driving through the pricey hilltop neighborhoods where the appearance of the homes clearly suggested to us that this is where the other half lives – or more plausibly, the other 1%! Our closest brush with that lifestyle was booking a AAA-priced room at the Ramada Hotel in West Hollywood that evening.

We made a quick exit from Los Angeles the next day. Jim was not at all impressed with L.A. and had no desire to see more of it, which was OK with me because I was getting anxious to get to San Diego. But, we had one more stop along the way. A CLC member in Huntington Beach had seen my for-sale ad for Doris in *The Self-Starter* and we had arranged that I'd stop at his place of business that day so he could look her over. Doris is in good shape, but there is still more to be done to bring her up to showroom-like quality, so I was hoping for a buyer that would have a keen interest in doing that. This guy had already restored a 1950's vintage Caddy and it was a beautiful sight to behold, so I felt Doris would be in good hands with him. But, after looking her over he expressed reservations and said he wanted some time to think about it. I wasn't disappointed, because I dreaded facing the moment when I might have to decide to part with Doris. And she was making it more difficult for me to do so: In Monterey, her fuel gauge stopped working; In Santa Barbara, a screw holding the leather door pull on the driver's side door popped out and wouldn't stay in; and, in L.A., the climate control stopped working. As illogical as it seems, I felt Doris was trying to tell me something. We headed back out with the top down and Doris purring contentedly as we meandered through more picture perfect coastal towns.

By now, my mind wasn't so much on the scenery as it was flooded with memories of my good times with Doris. My first trip down the California coast was in Doris in 1988. My friend Brian, who lived in San Diego, owned her at the time. He bought her from a private owner and was in the process of restoring her – and enjoying her. He drove to San Francisco to meet up with John and me and the three of us made that trip together, and I fell irreparably in love with Doris. Several years later I was reunited with her, but under very sad circumstances. Brian had passed away in the spring of 1991 and John and I flew to San Diego for his memorial service, an outdoor occasion in which Doris participated with her presence. I had arranged with Brian's partner – also named Brian - to buy Doris, and John and I drove her to D.C. for the return trip.

My plan for Doris after this trip was to find a suitable place in San Diego to store her and leave her there if I didn't sell her. I figured I could get a friend to start her up and take her for a spin occasionally, but at least get her out on my periodic trips to San Diego. This wasn't ideal because she'd sit for long periods of time, but it was a plan. However, fate was to intervene.



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I've stayed in touch with Brian over the years, and shortly after Jim and I arrived in San Diego he invited us to his house for a cookout. Another guest that evening, Russ, had heard about Doris and was excited to see her for the first time. So excited, in fact, he flat out said he would buy her. Not being fully prepared for this moment of truth, I was caught off guard and put off talk about it for another time. But, a couple days later he called asking to take Doris for a drive and was more excited than ever, talking about the things he'd want to do with her. A week later, after much soul-searching, I accompanied him to the Dept. of Motor Vehicles and made it official. Doris was no longer mine. Two days later I was flying home to D.C. and an empty garage. Do I have regrets? Yes and no. The emotional side of me says "yes;" the rational side of me says "it was time." Will I ever feel it was the right thing for me to do? Only time will tell. In the meantime, Russ offered visitation rights when I'm in San Diego; I have lots of photos; and now, these chronicles of a very special cross country trip. But, most of all I have memories – lots and lots of really fond memories.



Sunset in San Diego
Photo by Don Michaels

Trip Stats	Doris Stats
324.50 gallons gas used	1965 DeVille Convertible
\$1,070.01 total spent on gas	429 cu in, V-8 engine
\$3.297/gallon average cost	340 Horsepower
13.22 miles/gallon	4,886 lbs., curb weight
4,289 miles traveled	Length: 18' 8" Width 6' 8"
\$1,028.84 servicing/repairs before and after trip	Built on February 16, 1965
\$5,453.14 total trip cost (lodging, meals, gas, repairs, parking tickets, etc.)	\$5,438 list price in 1965



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BETTE PART IV: THE RESTORATION PROGRESSES

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JIM GOVONI

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN MAY 2007

Parts I and II chronicled Jim's interest, pursuit and purchase of a 1953 Series 62 sedan. Part III, which was published in August 2006, ended with "Bette" being dropped off at Harford Restoration in Joppa, Maryland.



"Bette" patiently waits her turn to be painted

Well, the latest news is that I pulled the car from the restoration shop, **Harford Restoration**, a few weeks ago. Long story short, and believe me you want the short story, is that the car has been ready for paint since last November. Around that time, the shop had quit paying their rent and was about to be evicted by their landlord. Playing coy, the shop owner acted as if he didn't understand what was going on. As most can imagine, getting a formal eviction notice after eight months of not paying the rent shouldn't come as a surprise. In any case, I went to bat for **Harford Restoration** and filed court documents on their behalf and got the eviction postponed pending a trial. All in all, they were justified on some issues with their landlord, but you just can't stop paying the rent!



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Although very little was done on the car over the winter, I continued to get bills for small stuff that seemed redundant, especially since the car had been primarily ready to be painted for so long. I asked two times about completion, the delay, why other cars were done, etc. I wasn't stonewalled, but you get the picture.



Just hanging around!

Finally last month, I had enough. I talked to a few buddies who do car work for me and my barber who has restored a few hot rods. They gave me the name of a shop in Laurel, Maryland, which is much closer to my home. I met with the Laurel shop owner and he agreed to visit "Bette" with me, under the guise that he was a friend, and to assess the car. A few days after we visited "Bette", he told me that he would finish the car. So, a couple of weeks ago, we went to **Harford Restoration** with two vans and a towing company to pick up the unfinished car and its many parts. "Bette" is now safely home in her new abode in Bowie, Maryland. She will go to the new shop in a few weeks, then off to have her interior installed at yet another facility in July.

All in all, this has been one stressful project. Besides the problems with the restoration shop, another business involved in this project, **The Chrome Factory**, managed to rip me off for close to a grand. They lost some parts that had to be re-purchased. Also, I had to buy other chrome parts and have them re-chromed, which cost just under \$800.

Oh and the last thing, which was a real kicker, is that a few days before I went to get the car and take it home, **Harford Restoration** backed it into a construction vehicle, ruining the custom fabricated tail fin and buckling the entire right rear fender. Lovely eh?

My garage is full of organized parts and one very large 1953 Cadillac Series 62 four door awaiting assembly! Feel free to come by and visit.



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CADDIE CLASSIFIEDS

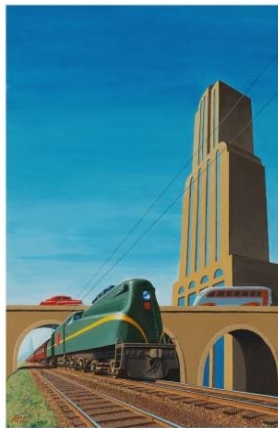
Cars For Sale

1968 Fleetwood Brougham – 60,200 original miles – Good paint and excellent vinyl roof – Unmolested! – Leather like new! – Was a family car – Runs great – Current tag and inspection sticker – No rust – Garage kept – Needs TLC and I need garage space – www.clcpotomacregion.org/68cadillacforsale.htm for picture – **Asking \$9,000** – For more info, contact Mark at 540-364-3034 or kazan@fuji.email.ne.jp – Car is located in Virginia

1972 Limousine – Seamist green with black interior – 44K miles – Exterior relatively good shape – Interior perfect – Runs well – www.clcpotomacregion.org/72cadillacforsale.htm for pictures – **Asking \$4,850** – For more info, contact Jay Burger, Capitol Cadillac, at 301-441-9600 – Car is located in Maryland

1996 Deville Concours – Black body with tan leather seats – CD player installed – Only 64,000 miles – In perfect condition – Garaged and complete with maintenance receipts – This is a VERY well-maintained vehicle – **Asking \$7,000** – For more info, contact Elena Murphy at 410-377-8474 – Car is located in Maryland

Print For Sale



Dan Reed Illustration's

"A Train"

12" x 18" prints are available of this original painting

Send \$25.00+\$4.50 shipping to:

Dan Reed

63 Dogwood Rd

Hamburg, PA 19526

dan@danreedillustration.com

www.danreedillustration.com

Congratulations to Dan whose "Silver Bullets" painting is featured on the front cover of the 2008 CLC International Membership Directory. The painting is based on a picture taken at the 2005 Capitol Cadillac / CLC Potomac Region Fall Car Show and features Gary Bacon's 1953 Series 60 sedan, Jim Preston's 1953 Series 62 coupe and Jim Govoni's 1953 Series 62 sedan.

Car Wanted

1959 Series 62 Convertible – Baby Blue / "Breton Blue" preferable – Looking for near show quality – If you know of one, please contact Rick Menz at rickmenz@northropteam.com or 410-465-7347.

Information Wanted

Dealer Code Number 421119 – Trying to establish a Dealer Code Database for several years but have not identified this dealer yet – Dealer 421119 was in the Capital Sales District – "**Dealer Code Number**" appears in the car "**Owner Protection Plan**" booklet under the name of selling dealer – Any help is greatly appreciated – For more info, contact Ralph Messina at rfm45@optonline.net

Legacy of LaSalle: 1927-2007 Show Merchandise



Order Legacy of LaSalle Show Merchandise! Package deal includes commemorative t-shirt (size M–XXL Hanes "Beefy T") and dash plaque depicting the show logo (see left) along with a color show program illustrating the History of LaSalle and a write-up on each LaSalle pre-registered for the show. **Order all three items for only \$15.00 plus \$5.00 shipping & handling, while supplies last.** Make check out to CLC Potomac Region and mail to Harry Scott – 14421 Aden Rd – Nokesville VA 20181-3122 (indicate t-shirt size).

Visit us on the web!

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