



Gas Gauge

Ye Olde Car Club

December 2015 Newsletter

The President's Message

Another year in the history book for Ye Olde Car Club...2015 is almost over! YOCC began in 1963 during which I was completing my junior year in high school and entering my senior year. At that time, I did not know about this new old car club forming in the Tri-Cities. If I had, I am sure I would have wanted to join then in what has become over the next almost fifty-three years a vibrant and growing car club of a fun group of people who share a common interest in cars of the past, and forming lifelong friendships.

YOCC members participated in at least 70 events in 2015...an average of 1.34 events a week! Figuring most activities are during the warm months of the year, many weeks had two and sometimes three YOCC events. Carolyn and I thoroughly enjoyed every event we attended, and are looking forward to a great 2016.

A constant during the more than half century of the Ye Olde Car Club has been capable and caring leadership in the officers, board of directors, volunteers, and general membership. This constant will continue in 2016 and with the support of the over 130 families currently in the club, I expect YOCC to be a premier car club many years into the future.

I want to express our thanks and appreciation for all of your support and contribution this year.

Robbin & Carolyn

BITS & PIECES

** A group of chess enthusiasts had checked into a hotel and were standing in the lobby discussing their recent tournament victories. After about an hour the manager came out of the office and asked them to disperse. "But why?" they asked as they moved off. "Because," he said, "I can't stand chess nuts boasting in an open foyer."

****Champion and AC spark plugs were both started by the same individual...Albert C. Champion. AAC magazine, Nov/Dec 2015

**If swimming is so good for your figure, how do you explain whales?

**What goes "oh oh oh"? Santa walking backwards.

**How do you know that Santa is a man? No woman wears the same attire every year.

**When I was a boy, my momma would send me down to a corner store with \$1 and I'd come back with 5 potatoes, 2 loaves of bread, 3 bottles of milk, a hunk of cheese, a box of tea and 6 eggs. You can't do that now...Too many security cameras.

**I didn't make it to the gym today. That makes 1500 days in a row.

A Little Christmas Humor

A couple were in a busy shopping center just before Christmas. The wife suddenly noticed that her husband was missing and as they had a lot to do, so she called him on her cell. The wife said "Where are you, you know we have lots to do" He said "You remember the jewelers we went into about 10 years ago, and you fell in love with that diamond necklace? I could not afford it at the time and I said that one day I would get it for you?" Little tears started to flow down her cheek and she got all choked up. "Yes, I do remember that shop" she replied. "Well I am in the bar next to that shop."

Thanks to Dick Johanson for this funny Christmas contribution

GIFT WRAPPING TIPS FOR MEN

This is the time of year when we think back to the very first Christmas, when the Three Wise Men -- Gaspar, Balthazar, and Herb -- went to see the baby Jesus and, according to the Book of Matthew, "presented unto Him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh".

These are simple words, but if we analyze them carefully, we discover an important, yet often overlooked, theological fact: There is no mention of wrapping paper. If there had been wrapping paper, Matthew would have said so: "And lo, the gifts were inside 600 square cubits of paper. And the paper was festooned with pictures of Frosty the Snowman. And Joseph was going to throweth it away, but Mary saideth unto him, she saideth, 'Holdeth it! That is nice paper! Saveth it for next year!' And Joseph did rolleth his eyeballs. And the baby Jesus was more interested in the paper than the frankincense." But these words do not appear in the Bible, which means that the very first Christmas gifts were NOT wrapped. This is because the people giving those gifts had two important characteristics:

1. They were wise.
2. They were men.

Men are not big gift wrappers. Men do not understand the point of putting paper on a gift just so somebody else can tear it off. This is not just my opinion: This is a scientific fact based on a statistical survey of two guys I know. One is Lloyd, who said the only time he ever wraps a gift is "if it's such a poor gift that I don't want to be there when the person opens it." The other is George, who told me he does wrap gifts, but as a matter of principle never takes more than 15 seconds per gift. "No one ever had to wonder which presents daddy wrapped at Christmas," George said. "They were the ones that looked like enormous spitballs."

I also wrap gifts, but because of some defect in my motor skills, I can never completely wrap them. I can take a gift the size of a deck of cards and put it the exact center of a piece of wrapping paper the size of a regulation volleyball court, but when I am done folding and taping, you can still see part of the gift peeking out. (Sometimes I camouflage this sector with a marking pen.) If I had been an ancient Egyptian in the field of mummies, the lower half of the Pharaoh's body would be covered only by Scotch tape. On the other hand, if you give my wife a 12-inch square of wrapping paper, she can wrap a C-130 cargo plane. My wife, like many women, actually likes wrapping things. If she gives you a gift that requires batteries, she wraps the batteries separately, which to me is very close to being a symptom of mental illness. If it were possible, my wife would wrap each individual volt.

My point is that gift-wrapping is one of those skills like having babies that come more naturally to women than to men. That is why today I am presenting...GIFT-WRAPPING TIPS FOR MEN

* Whenever possible, buy gifts that are already wrapped. If, when the recipient opens the gift, neither one of you recognizes it, you can claim that it's myrrh

* If you're giving a hard-to-wrap gift, skip the wrapping paper! Just put it inside a bag and stick one of those little adhesive bows on it. This creates a festive visual effect that is sure to delight the lucky recipient on Christmas morning...YOUR WIFE: "Why is there a Hefty trash bag under the tree?" YOU: "It's a gift! See? It has a bow!" YOUR WIFE (peering into the trash bag): "It's a leaf blower." YOU: "Gas-powered! Five horsepower!" YOUR WIFE: "I want a divorce." YOU: "I also got you some myrrh."

In conclusion, remember that the important thing is not what you give, or how you wrap it. The important thing, during this very special time of year, is that you save the receipt.

Thanks to John Butler for this wonderful look at gift wrapping.

Corvairs, Corvairs, Corvairs

Our love affair with Corvairs started in 1966 when we bought our first one as a daily driver for me to run errands and take the children to the doctor, etc. We bought a lovely green 1960 four-door sedan that was pretty stock. It served me well and didn't cause us any problems. We sold it in 1969 when we bought a 1962 Falcon station wagon that was better for me with three children to haul around.



Our second Corvair was a 1965 red convertible that was a cutie to look at but kept stalling on me half way home from the grocery store. We bought it in 1988 and sold it about 1 1/2 years later. The license plate on it read 'Hot Gran'.



Our third Corvair was a beauty! It was a deep midnight blue. It was a 1965 Corsa Turbo and it ran like a scalded cat. Corners were a dream to take in this car. It had a valve gear problem and Dennis spent many, many hours trying to fix it but never could get it right. We hated to sell this one but it had too many problems.



On October 23, 2015, we made a trip to Ballard, WA in the northwest part of Seattle and purchased our fourth Corvair. It is a 1965 Corsa with 39,000 original miles on it. It has the original interior and the paint color is the original color although it has been painted once. Dennis drove it home and it had no issues. We think this one is a keeper. Now that we have enough room to store more than one antique, I think that is the truth.



Frances McGillis

Women's Corner

MY NEW CHRISTMAS STORY

I remember my first Christmas adventure with Grandma. I was just a kid. I remember tearing across town on my bike to visit her on the day my big sister dropped the bomb: "There is no Santa Claus," she jeered. "Even dummies know that!"

My Grandma was not the gushy kind, never had been. I fled to her that day because I knew she would be straight with me. I knew Grandma always told the truth, and I knew that the truth always went down a whole lot easier when swallowed with one of her "world-famous" cinnamon buns. I knew they were world-famous, because Grandma said so. It had to be true.

Grandma was home and the buns were still warm. Between bites I told her everything. She was ready for me. "No Santa Claus?" she snorted. "Ridiculous! Don't believe it. That rumor has been going around for years and it makes me mad, plain mad! Now put on your coat and let's go." "Go? Go where, Grandma?" I asked. I hadn't even finished my second world-famous cinnamon bun. "Where" turned out to be Kerby's General Store, the one store in town that had a little bit of just about everything. As we walked through its doors, Grandma handed me ten dollars. That was a bundle in those days. "Take this money," she said, "and buy something for someone who needs it. I'll wait for you in the car." Then she turned and walked out of Kerby's.

I was only eight years old. I'd often gone shopping with my mother, but never had I shopped for anything all by myself. The store seemed big and crowded, full of people scrambling to finish their Christmas shopping. For a few moments I just stood there, confused, clutching that ten-dollar bill, wondering what to buy, and who on earth to buy it for. I thought of everybody I knew: my family, my friends, my neighbors, the kids at school, and the people who went to my church. I was just about thought out when I suddenly thought of Bobby Decker. He was a kid with bad breath and messy hair, and he sat right behind me in Mrs. Pollock's grade-two class.

Bobby Decker didn't have a coat. I knew that because he never went out to recess during the winter. His mother always wrote a note telling the teacher that he had a cough, but all of us kids knew that Bobby Decker didn't have a cough; he didn't have a good coat. I fingered the ten-dollar bill with growing excitement. I would buy Bobby Decker a coat! I settled on a red corduroy one that had a hood to it. It looked real warm, and he would like that.

"Is this a Christmas present for someone?" the lady behind the counter asked kindly, as I laid my ten dollars down. "Yes, ma'am," I replied shyly. "It's for Bobby." The nice lady smiled at me as I told her about how Bobby really needed a good winter coat. I didn't get any change, but she put the coat in a bag, smiled again, and wished me a Merry Christmas.

That evening Grandma helped me wrap the coat (a little tag fell out of the coat and Grandma tucked it her Bible) in Christmas paper and ribbons and wrote, "To Bobby, From Santa Claus" on it. Grandma said that Santa always insisted on secrecy. Then she drove me over to Bobby Decker's house, explaining as we went, that I was now and forever officially one of Santa's helpers.

Grandma parked down the street from Bobby's house and she and I crept noiselessly and his in the bushes by his front walk. Then Grandma gave me a nudge. "All right Santa Claus," she whispered, "get going." I took a deep breath, dashed for his front door, threw the present down on his step, pounded on his door and flew back to the safety of the bushes and Grandma. Together we waited breathlessly in the darkness for the front door to open. Finally it did, and there stood Bobby.

Fifty years haven't dimmed the thrill of those moments spent shivering beside my Grandma in Bobby Decker's bushes. That night I realized that those awful rumors about Santa Claus were just what Grandma said they were, ridiculous. Santa was alive and well and we were on his team.

I still have the Bible, with the coat tag tucked inside: \$19.95.

May you always have LOVE to share, HEALTH to spare and FRIENDS that care.

Thanks to my friend Pami for this inspiring story.

DaJuan Recknagle's Dad's 1950 Buick

driveable **dream**

Blue-Light Special

What this low-cost 1950 Buick Model 41D lacks in options, it makes up for in charm and driveability



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

Buick's Special, introduced mid-1949 as a preview of the rest of the 1950 models, was basically equipped, created to expand Buick's base among lower-priced car buyers. There wasn't a horn ring, turn signal, or clock in sight.

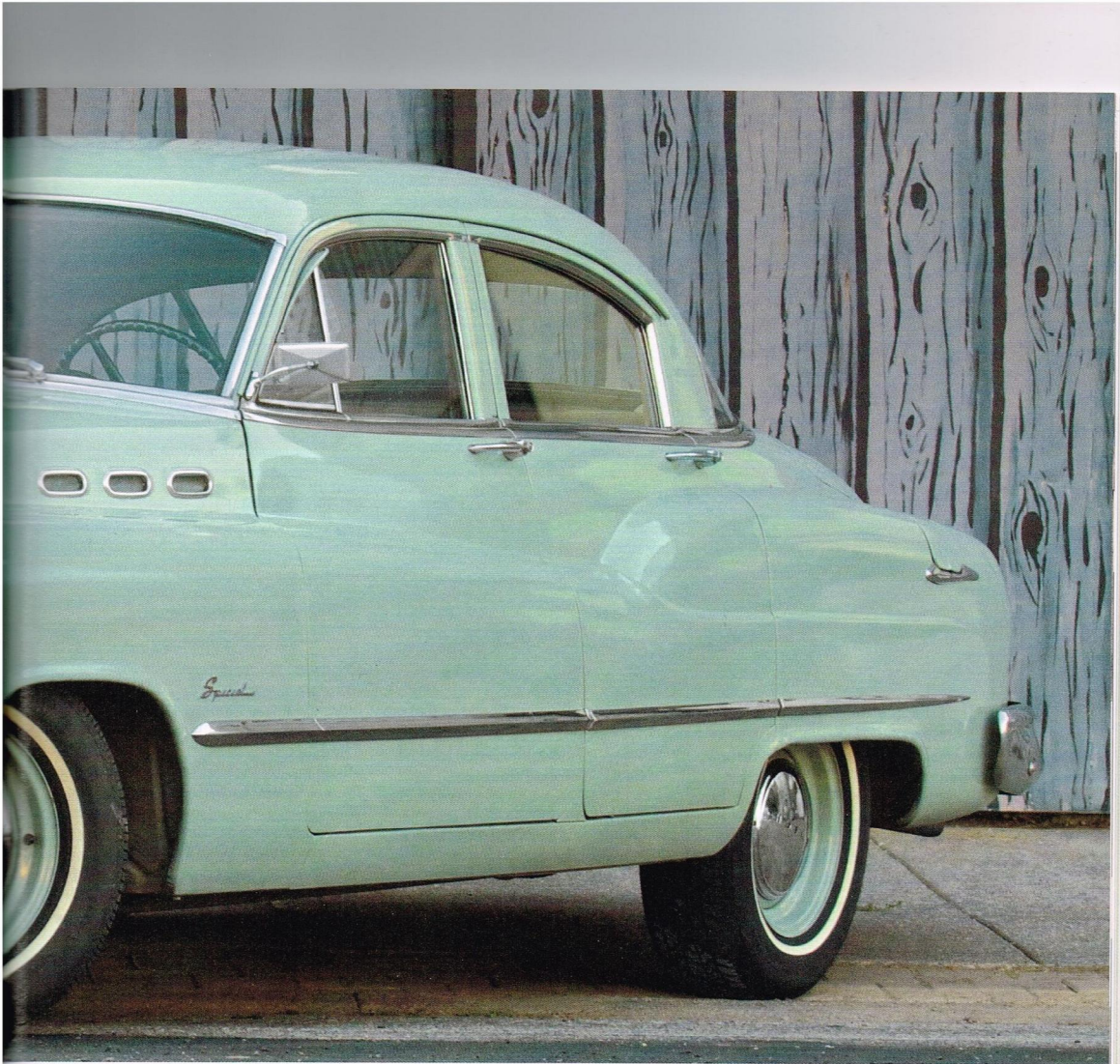
Pricing was low: the 41D Special started at just \$1,983. The play worked. Model-year production was a record 558,439 units, which included the mid-1949 Specials, good enough to keep Buick in fourth place in the sales race. Of those, the 41D sedan was the best-selling Buick of the year, with 141,396 leaving showrooms; more than 25 percent of all Buicks sold that year were 41D sedans. This

example sticks to the Special's plain brief, with only an underseat Weather Warden heater and a Sonomatic radio among the options list. The Fireball straight-eight engine was the standard 6.3-compression, 115-horsepower version. The Dynaflo transmission was available, of course, even on low-line Specials, but this example wasn't equipped as such.

In the fall of 1957, owner Herb Met-

tlter needed a reliable car to get to Billings Senior High School in Billings, Montana. Just a car. In those days, meaning when you were in high school, any car you get your hands on is going to be a terrific memory-maker. What that car is, when you're broke, is often a matter of fate and availability, rather than choice.

Fate and availability. Timing and happenstance. What Herb found—or



rather, what Herb's dad found—was a clean 1950 Buick Super, a green two-door hardtop with black top and manual transmission, for the princely sum of \$190. "I drove that car hard," Herb recalls. "There was no daytime speed limit in Montana in those days, and I was driving it at 80 MPH or more regularly. It rode and handled so sweetly." And for two years—his sophomore and junior years—the Super was Herb's ticket to school and freedom. For him, any 1950 Buick would forever be special.

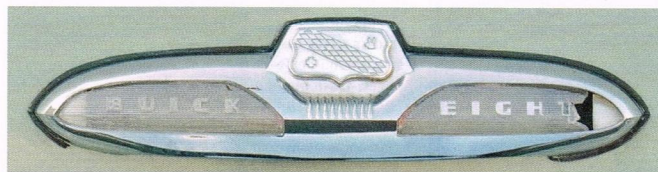
And then ... "I sold it," Herb confesses. "I went to Tacoma, Washington, for my senior year of high school, and I sold that car so I'd have some money when I got there. Eventually I bought a 1948 Ford." The resigned chuckle in his tone suggests

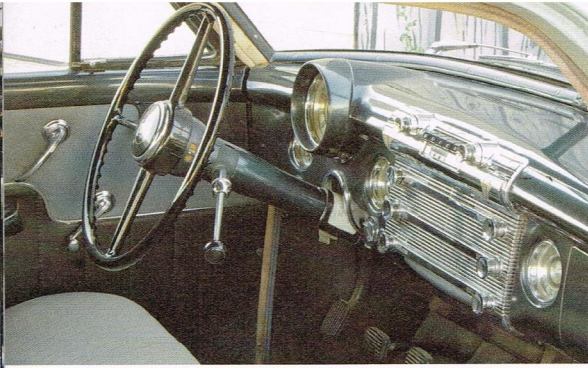
that, while he'd have plenty of other cars in the years to come, he'd made a foolish decision, and was spoiled by his Buick's solid-performing attributes.

That Super made enough of an impression, however, that Buicks became something of a fascination for Herb. He's owned dozens of collector cars over the decades since, but the ones that come to stay seem to favor the tri-shield marque.

Of the 12 or so old cars in his current collection, Herb has five Buicks, from a 1927 Brougham to a 1964 Skylark that he's taking to his 55th high school reunion. Sitting comfortably in the middle of the range is another 1950 Buick with manual transmission. This one, however, is a four-door Special, body style 4TD.

"Around 1990 or so, I was checking ads for a pickup truck for my son, and I





It looks fancy and special now, but in its day, this was a shockingly plain interior motif for a Buick—little filigree beyond handles, stalks and the radio (not even a horn button!). The prominent speedometer seems quite optimistic, while the odometer has been around once.



saw a 1950 Buick for sale. I called, and it was only a mile and a half from my house." Kismet, surely—and a sign that Herb was wise enough not to ignore. Turns out, this Special Deluxe sedan (the Deluxe model signified by the Special fender script and body-side molding, among other bits) was also a local car all its life. It was purchased new at Lithium Buick, in Pasco, Washington, barely 50 miles from Herb's home in Waitsburg.

"The seller bought it the year before, from the estate of the lady who had owned it since 1952." It's been a Pacific Northwest car for its entire life: "She bought it at 14,000 miles or so in 1952, and it had around 108,000 miles when we bought it in 1990. It's got more than 126,000 miles on it now." And, as often seems to be the case with old cars and rarely with newer

ones, "that owner kept records for everything from her buying it in 1952 up until the last entry in 1977. It must have been sitting since then." Herb paid \$1,500 for it—and it came with a service manual and a Tydol Oil banner rolled up in the trunk.

Although this Buick wasn't identical to the car that Herb owned years ago—it was a Special rather than a Super, and a four-door sedan rather than a two-door hardtop—30 years after the fact, it had one thing most surviving Buicks of that era didn't have: a manual transmission. That, more than anything else, sealed the deal.

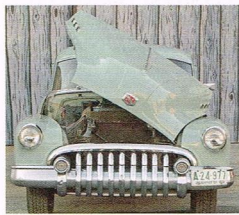
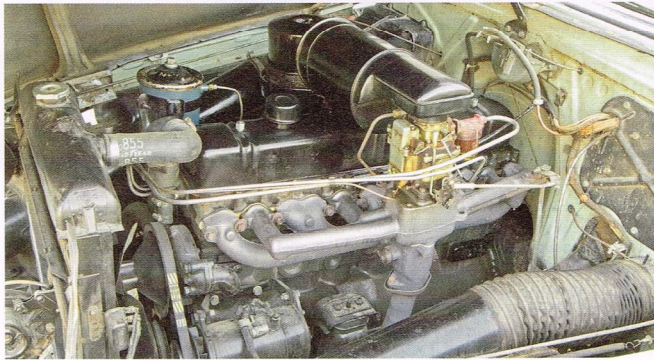
And in the quarter-century since Herb put his name on the title, what's he done to the car? Nothing. Well, nothing of note. "Evidently, the lady polished that car frequently, and she rubbed the paint off along the ribs, clean down to the primer.

So a friend of mine painted it the original Calvert Gray, but that was more than 20 years ago now. I keep it shined up with Meguiar's compound and spray wax, but with so many cars it never gets out so much that it really gets dirty.

"Beyond that, it's just been general maintenance: an oil change with Castrol 10W-40, whatever it takes to keep things running. I did put a clutch in it; the first driving tour we took it on had some steep hills, and it was slipping. Other than that, there's really been nothing else needed. It had an electrical short one time, and I fixed that by installing a new fuse, and I've put in new batteries a couple of times. The engine is like it came from the factory. It's a trouble-free car, and I've never had a problem with it." What's more, "nothing in the old lady's logbook indicates she did anything except change oil and put gas in it." It barely had any supermarket dents, much less a fender-bender. Sometimes, there is truth in advertising: it's not every car that is badged "Special" in inch-high chrome lettering on the front fender.

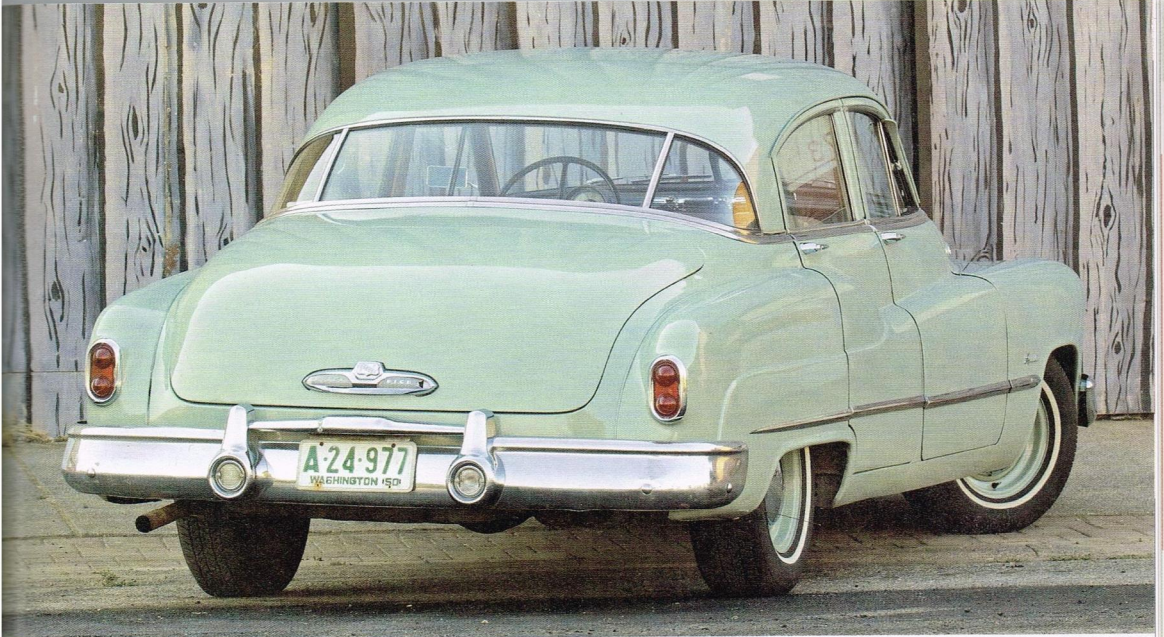
Driveability was key, as the Mettlers enjoy going on local, multiday driving tours around the region. No wonder they've taken this Special on so many of those. "The Spokane Model T Club, and car clubs in Walla Walla and Lewiston, all organize driving tours. They do one a year, and each year another club is responsible for organizing it, so it rotates. The first time I took the Buick was shortly after we got it, and on long tours it gets 20 to 22 MPG at 60 MPH," Herb reports. "The old Super I had would get that kind of mileage too, but I lived in Montana and drove it harder. They're such nice handling, nice-driving cars, these Buicks."

We took a quick spin, and there were a number of things that stood out. That steering wheel is huge and rather more in our laps than we might have preferred, but there was terrific head and shoulder room all around. Twist the key to "On," and hit the starter hiding there under the gas

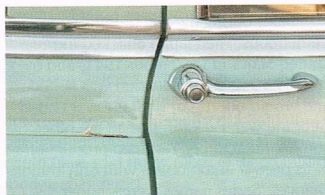


The Buick's hood is hinged on either side for easy access to the so-smooth-you-don't-know-it's-idling 248-cubic-inch, 6.3-compression, 110-hp straight-eight engine.





pedal as was the Buick way in those days. The clutch picks up at the very bottom of its travel, and the shifter on the column makes you wonder why they bothered ever moved it to the floor. Acceleration from the big straight-eight was glacial but constant, doubtless equal parts 115 hp, gearing and 3,745-pound shipping weight. It's a combination that Herb insists has seen 22 MPG at steady cruising. The rear-end gear ratio is said to be a 3.91, but that suggests a far snappier acceleration curve than we experienced. That said, it's very



Beyond one repaint, itself two decades old, little beyond standard maintenance has been done to this Deluxe-model Special. Even the upholstery is original and unrepaired.

happy cruising at 60 MPH, judging by our short time behind the wheel.

We expected a floaty ride (even *Motor Trend* used the dreaded M-word—"marshmallow"—in its period road test), and did not receive one. It was smooth, but with no float or flutter, you got the sense that the road was beneath you at every revolution of the wheels. As a bonus, there was considerably less lean on the open road than you might otherwise consider from an 80-inch-wide car with a 59-inch front track. (We suspect that the radial tires, installed by the owner, helped in this regard; so, surely, did the standard front anti-roll bar.)

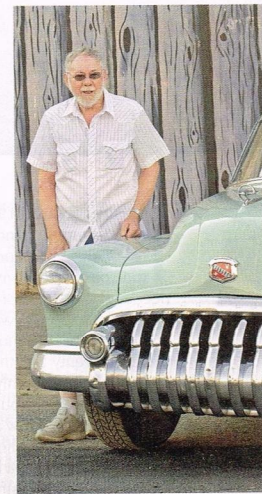
Steering was surprisingly firm at all speeds, and we found ourselves either under-steering or over-steering it—not that we're hanging the tail out, but it was simplicity itself to turn the wheel too much and end up over the center line on the road, or not enough and drift out over the rumble strip on the shoulder. It's not slop in the system by any means, but unfamiliarity with the car and roads. Time would realign our instincts and inputs.

It also felt solid, in that way that only factory-built cars feel solid and together. The paint isn't the shiniest, the upholstery is threadbare and coming apart in spots, but, darn it, this car has been together for 65 years. There's a reason it hasn't been taken apart yet: functionally, it hasn't needed to be. It really is the definition of a Driveable Dream, this 1950 Buick Special. It's not rare, or hugely valuable, but it's

a car that was purchased to be driven and enjoyed, a car that's so loved and appreciated that it doesn't want or need to come apart to enhance its pleasure. It's good enough to last two-thirds of a century without having to be rebuilt, efficient enough that it's the bucks-down choice for elegant vintage motoring in the modern age.

If that's not Special, then what is? ☞

“
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”



AIMING HEADLIGHTS

This is a simple process if you have aiming equipment. Not owning any, my crude procedure has been to drive a vehicle at night and adjust headlights as needed to obtain an acceptable pattern on the road.

After installing four new halogen headlights in my recently purchased 1965 Corvair Monza I wanted a faster, more accurate method.

One accurate way is to park on a flat, level surface 25 feet from a wall or garage door and mark targets on the door. The problem lies in finding a level place, as most driveways have a significant slope. Frances observed that our new garage is deep enough to back a car in and use the level floor with the inside surface of the garage door.

Use tape to mark a horizontal target line on your vertical surface as high as the center of the headlights and wider than the car. Add a vertical line at the center and vertical lines at the same spacing as the headlight centers. Quad headlights need four.

Be sure the car is square with the target wall. Sighting the center vertical tape line with the hood ornament and a Sharpie mark at the center of the back window is one way.

Turn the low beams on and adjust the vertical aim so the top horizontal cutoff (the top left half of the pattern) is located two inches below the horizontal line. Adjust the horizontal aim of the low beam so the point at which the top cutoff of the beam begins to slope upward and to the right is located at the vertical mark.

For quad headlights, hang a cloth over the low beams and adjust the high beams so the center of the illuminated area is located at the cross formed by the horizontal line and the vertical marks.

As a final check, drive the vehicle at night and observe the light pattern on the road.

Happy night time motoring.

Contributed by Dennis McGillis

Birthdays and Anniversaries in December



Birthdays

Judy Bergum	December 4	Randy Bunch	December 27
Dean Dennis	December 22	Anita Gough	December 13
Willie Gould	December 7	Rachael Hannah	December 29
Bill Houchin	December 27	Kent Madsen	December 2
Vern Marking	December 14	Dottie Marking	December 4
Leola Pankey	December 30	Lindell Smith	December 17
Ingrid Smith	December 12	Glenis Tarr	December 15
Thora Trumbo	December 5	Dwight Underwood	December 5
Colleen Wendler	December 9	Lorraine Williams	December 18



Anniversaries

Ray & Dolores Benson	December 22	Tim & Trese Benton	December 12
Gary & Bonnie Boehnke	December 12	Mike & Judy Bughi	December 14
Kelly & Beth Carothers	December 31	Dean & Mary Dennis	December 28
John & Elaine Kutrowski	December 3	Blain & Beverly McGillicuddy	December 27

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