

The Roadmaster

Buick Club of America—Portland Area Chapter

May 2021

Random thoughts and musings from your Director

Hello Everyone

Brenda and I are finally back in the NW. Not quite home yet as our remodeling project continues but at least we are there most days. We are hoping to get to sleep there later this week.

We happened to drive in downtown Vancouver this past Saturday afternoon and saw cars gathering for an impromptu cruise in. The decent weather is bringing out the car crowd. Didn't see any Buicks but hope someone has been attending these kinds of events to fly the flag. Which brings up the fact that we need to get something on the calendar for an event of our own. Let's put the first Saturday in June, the 5th at 11:00 A.M. on the calendar. Meet at the Beaches parking lot on the Vancouver side of the river and we will cruise somewhere for an hour or so. If you have any suggestions send them to me or you may end up someplace of my choosing. Let me know if you think we are up to a lunch stop or not if you prefer.

Zoom meetings are continuing with the next scheduled for Saturday May 22nd at 10:00 A.M. Watch for the email announcement with the link and please join us as we would like to see you – even if it is online.

The BCA Pacific Northwest Region Picnic has been given the go ahead for Saturday May 29th, at Fort Borst Park in Centralia. Details should be elsewhere in this newsletter. A great opportunity to catch up with our Buick friends from the other NW chapters.

I have heard no more from Clark County about our own chapter picnic on Saturday August 7, but I think there is a good chance we will get to hold it as more things seem to be opening up. We will let you know as we find out.

We have a feature article in this month's newsletter on Ken Dietrich and his 1967 Buick Skylark convertible. Please send me your stories and story ideas for you and your Buicks. The email address is: portlandbuick@yahoo.com

That's three Buick events over three consecutive Saturdays – hopefully you can participate in them all but if not try to get to at least one. I, for one, look forward to seeing and visiting with everyone in the near future.

Please stay safe!—Duke

My Car Story

by Ken Dietrich



This story begins when I graduated from college and was looking forward to full time employment. My ride was a 1963 Ford Falcon convertible, white with black top, red interior, bucket seats, four on the floor, and six under the hood. (I still consider this the best car ever owned).

My new full time employment meant I had some extra money. I could finally start dating. I had money in the bank! Oh, I worked for a bank in Billings, Montana.

Having a neat convertible with bucket seats and four on the floor hampered getting close to a girl. That began my rethinking about different cars. It was a hard decision to get rid of my best car ever.

I looked at the Malibus, the Pontiacs, and finally the Buick Skylarks—all convertible, of course. I knew that muscle cars were nice, but knowing me and speed, I decided that maybe to avoid them and settled on a Buick skylark with Automatic transmission and 300 horsepower under the hood and a bench seat.

What a deal: \$3,700 new price and with easy bank financing. Payments were under a hundred a month.

The new Buick Skylark car with bench seats did work as I was engaged to be married in the fall of 1967.

The story now continues as a family affair. Our little family soon to grew to four and we needed two cars and one more functional for a growing family. The 1967 Buick Skylark was demoted to second place with a future series of cars always keeping it in the background.

However, as the kids grew and even as second place, the Buick needed paint and a new top and other TLC. It was still a fun car in the summer months with the top down and the breeze blowing in my hair.

Over the next several years the paint was again fading and the top a bit shabby. Upholstery was showing its age and the question: "What to do?" A friend offered to paint the car for \$1,000 and he had it for a year in his shop in Butte, Montana.

Meanwhile we moved to Oregon and settled into a new life nearing empty nesting time. I finally received the call that the painting was completed. My son and I drove to Butte and enjoyed a nice ride back to Oregon. I then joined BCA and the Portland area chapter.

Several years and many more fun miles, I began to question the mechanical issue of my Skylark. I contacted Alan Dietrick, who had restored many cars over several years and he agreed to rebuild my Buick.

The engine, transmission, the entire brake, and steering system were completely disassembled. When the mechanical work was completed, it was time for a new top, floor mats, and new wheels.

It now 15 years later, without too many miles. The car still looks great, but my Skylark is a driver not a show piece and I love it.

Almost the end of this story: My son can't wait to inherit my one-owner Buick Skylark. It will be a long wait as I plan on many more fun drives.



BCA Pacific Northwest Region Picnic

May 29, 2021

Our Regional Picnic at Fort Borst Park, on May 29th, is now formally booked. I have paid the \$150 rental fee for the 3,500 sq. ft. indoor facility known as Kitchen #2. The building has a maximum capacity of 240 people. The current COVID-19 guidelines for Lewis County limit indoor gatherings to 50 percent capacity, which allows us to have 120 people in Kitchen #2. If COVID-19 has a resurgence, and the State of Washington tightens its Covid restrictions, then the next phase of COVID-19 restrictions would limit us to 25 percent capacity, or 60 people. We haven't had 60 people at a Regional Picnic in the past five years. So, we're good to go! Bring a mask, a picnic lunch, and a Buick. Kitchen #2 has private restrooms, a kitchen, tables, and chairs. What can possibly go wrong? Neither rain, nor snow, nor dreaded COVID-19 can keep us from our appointed picnic.

Governor Jay Inslee announced on May 13th that Washington will fully adopt mask guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Fort Borst Park is immediately adjacent to the west side of Interstate 5 at Exit 82. The official time for the picnic is 11:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., but we have Kitchen #2 rented for the entire day. See you there!

A caravan to Centralia will meet at 9:30 A.M. at the Gee Creek Rest Stop, at Exit 11 off Interstate 5 in Washington State.

Jack Gerstkemper, Director

BCA Pacific Northwest Region

Buick Pace Cars at Indianapolis 500

The 2021 Indianapolis 500 takes place on May 30, 2021. Did you know that Buick supplied pace cars for several races, beginning in 1939 with a Roadmaster four-door convertible (Sport Phaeton Model 80C)? Following that was a 1959 Electra 225 convertible, a 1975 Century Custom coupe with removable roof panels, a 1976 Century turbo V6, and a 1983 Riviera convertible. Here is a recent photo of the 1939 Roadmaster convertible. What is puzzling is that the earlier photo shows no side mounts. Maybe they were removed for the race to save weight (about 100 pounds). We can't tell if the wheel wells are in the fenders.



(Source: Barrett-Jackson)



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Parlez-vous français? Here is a great ad for the 1959 Buicks, and in French!