



Gateway Gazette

Monthly Newsletter of the St. Louis Chapter

BUICK CLUB OF AMERICA

Volume XXX, No.2 March 2011

Member Spotlight By Steve Dodson



Spotlight on Tom Roulston



This month's "Member Spotlight" focuses on Tom Roulston. Tom has a 1958 Super 4-door hard top which is almost ready to hit the streets.

When asked about his all time favorite car, Tom indicated that was a hard question for him to answer. However, when he was 16 years old, he had a 1952 Buick to drive. He owned it about a year before it was vandalized after which it promptly went to the junk yard. Although he has never heard the engine run on his 1952 Super, he is sure this car will become his all time favorite very soon.

Tom joined the Gateway Chapter, Buick Club of America three years ago. He has been an active member and has agreed to serve on the St. Louis 2012 Heartland Regional Show.

While he doesn't have much time for hobbies, Tom owns a kayak and enjoys getting out on the water. When he is not working he is spending time with his family.

Tom's occupation is mechanical maintenance for the City of St. Louis Parks Department. He said he keeps all those water fountains you find in the city parks working.

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Upcoming Events

Board of Director's Meeting, Monday, March 14, Pete Nathan's

Next Regular Meeting, Monday, March 21, Pujol's 5, 7:30

See Page 4 for Details

Annual dues + Easter Show Registration (\$15 each) are due in April

Director's Letter

Hi Everyone:

Well, spring will soon be here, and the old car game will begin. I'm trying to get as many "honey-do" projects finished as I can, so I can play with my boy toys. I can't seem to work fast enough!

We had a great turnout at the February meeting. There were two guest speakers, Jim and Steve Moats, who made an excellent presentation on Seafoam products. Everyone received a very nice goody bag full of product.

I'm working out the details for a guest speaker for our March meeting, who will speak on a paint process that looks like chrome plating, but is faster to apply, less expensive than chrome and will last a long time.

Please don't forget the Board of Director's meeting on March 14 at 7 p.m. This meeting will take place at Pete Nathan's home. Your Club needs your help with the 2012 Heartland Regional, which we are hosting. Your attendance would be appreciated in discussing the details.

It's that time again to make your dues payment. Dues are \$15 and can be sent to Pete Nathan. Also, if you plan to display your car at the Easter Concours d'Elegance Car Show, April 24, reservations need to be made soon. Reservations are \$15. Please contact Pete Nathan to get your name on the reservation list.

My Buick is starting to wake up from its winter sleep and wants to get on the road. I hope yours does too. See you at our next meeting.

Thanks!

Herb

Meeting Minutes, February 21, 2011

The February 2011 meeting was held on Thursday, February 21st at Pujols 5 in Westport Plaza. We had a good turnout, with 2 guests, Jim and Steve Moats with Seafoam Additives who gave a great presentation and lots of free samples.

The Club meeting was facilitated by Acting Director Herb Morris.

Pete Nathan gave the Treasurers Report. We have a balance of \$1332.72 in checking and have opened a separate account for next year's regional meet.

January/February Birthdays

Kevin Dierkes, Steve Dodson, Charles Doggendorf, Amy Eckstein, Rhonda Ford, Rosalee Hudson, Ina Hughes, Ed Keil, Scott Keller, Ed Lanfer, Bill Nolte, Patricia and Vic Panus, Donald Roehl, Chris Waltz, Kenny Williams, Caryl Wilson, and Anna Lasinski.

January/February Anniversaries

Jim and Doris Hall, John & Angie Midkiff, Sam & Susan Palazzolo, Mike and Susan Roth, and Bob and Linda Schurwan

Members III

None

March

Mar. 14 Board of Directors Meeting, Pete Nathan's House, 7:00 pm
Mar. 21 Regular Monthly Meeting – Pujols 5

Continued on page 4

March Birthdays

Helen Becker
Avis Meyer

Marty Hughes
Mary Ann Meyer

Bill Landers
Lynda Schurwan

March Anniversaries

Chad & Barb Thomas

Member Spotlight (Continued)

Tom became interested in old cars at an early age. His father and grandfather were members of the Horseless Carriage Club of Missouri and were always working on old cars. Tom remembers making trips with his family to

Hershey when he was five to ten years old.

Tom and his wife, Martha, have been married 26 years. They have two children and two grandchildren who they enjoy very much.

Tom served our country as a member of the US Marine Corps for 6 years—thanks, Tom.

2011 CALENDAR

March

- 14 Board of Directors Meeting. Pete Nathan's
- 21 Regular Monthly Meeting - Pujols 5

April

- 16 Spring Oil Change--Ladies Luncheon, La Bonne Bouchee
- 18 Regular Monthly Meeting - Pujols 5
- 24 HCCM Easter Show - Forest Park

May

- 7 Sinclair Buick Show
- 21 Picnic & Regular Monthly Meeting, ???

June

- 3-5 Oldsmobile Club TanTarA Show
- 17 MOT BOP Cruise In
- 20 Regular Monthly Meeting - Fuddrucker's Watson Road & S. Lindburgh
- 24 Board of Directors Meeting, Pete Nathan's
- 25 Doozle's Frozen Custard

July

- 6-9 BCA National Show - Danvers, MA
- 18 Regular Monthly Meeting - Fuddrucker's Watson Road & S. Lindburgh
- 29-31 Overnight or daytrip to St. Genevieve - Visit Crown and ?? wineries

August

- 15 Regular Monthly Meeting - Fuddrucker's Watson Road & S. Lindburgh
- 18-20 Heartland Regional, Reedsburg, WI

September

- 11 Wheels in Motion Show, West Port Plaza
- 17 Lunch at Fast Eddie's, cruise to winery in Grafton
- 19 Regular Monthly Meeting - Fuddrucker's Watson Road & S. Lindburgh

- 23-25 Route 66 Festival - Springfield, IL

October

- 8 or 9 ? Chile, etc at the Kunz Plantation, Regular Monthly Meeting
- 16 Fall Color Tour, Lunch at Big Chief
- 29 Fall oil change

November

- 21 Regular Monthly Meeting - Pujol's 5

December

- 3 Lunch on The Hill, Regular Monthly Meeting, Toys for Tots, Botanical Garden,

January 2012

- ? Holiday Party, Trailhead or Lewis & Clark ???

Club Dues. Please get your \$15 to Pete Nathan by April for the upcoming year's dues. Pete also needs the \$15 for the registration fee to the HCCM Easter Show by April 1st.

Upcoming Events

Board of Directors Meeting. Monday, March 14, 7 pm, to continue organizational work for the 2012 Heartland Show hosted by our chapter. From Manchester Road, turn north on Geyer Road for about 0.5 miles and make a right on Huntleigh Trails Lane. Pete's house is the first one on the right. Follow the drive to a parking area in the back.

March Regular Meeting. Monday, March 21, at Pujol's 5, at West port Plaza. Plan to arrive by 6:30 and enjoy dinner prior to the 7:30 meeting. Take Page Avenue east from I-270, and take the first exit from Page, Concourse Drive. Take the first right onto Lackland Road, then right on Westport Plaza Drive at the second traffic light. Follow Westport Plaza Drive over I-270 to a left at the second traffic light, then a right at the stop sign and into the parking lot. If you prefer indoor parking, continue for a couple hundred yards and turn left into garage A. Take the elevator up one floor.

Meeting Minutes, February 21 (Continued)

April

- Apr. 16 Spring Oil Change/ Ladies Luncheon at La Bonne Bouchee
Apr. 18 Regular Monthly Meeting – Pujols 5
Apr. 24 HCCM Easter Show – Forest Park

New Business

We have very nice Magnetic Buick Club Signs at \$18.00 ea.

Club dues of \$15 are due. See Pete Nathan.

Registration fee (\$15.00) for Easter Car show due to the HCCM by April 5th. See Pete Nathan.

***** *We need nominations for new officers. See Herb, Paul Meyer or Bill Landers if interested or want to make a nomination******

50/50 drawing

Won by Ted Becker.

Next Regular Meeting:

March 21, at Pujols 5

LADIES – SAVE THE DATE . The Gateway Chapter Annual Spring Ladies Luncheon will be at La Bon Bouchee, 12344 Olive Blvd., Saturday, April 16, 11:30 am.

Please call or e-mail Ginny at (636)-916-3310 or walanders@sbcglobal.net . Guys, if your ladies do not read the Gazette, please pass this invitation on to them.

FOR SALE/WANTED

Two 1963 Buick Specials. Car #1 is a convertible, 215 V8, 3 speed trans, factory air conditioning. Car #2 is a 2 door coupe, 215 V8, 4 speed trans. Both cars have bucket seats, both cars need right rear quarters, both engines turn over (not stuck), both seem to be complete. Sell as a pair, \$2000. Paul Meyer, 314-574-9853

Huge Quantity of 1964 Buick Riviera parts For Sale. Donated to our chapter by a Buick enthusiast, proceeds will be used to fund chapter activities, including the 2012 Heartland Regional Show. Call Paul Meyer, 314-574-9853, ASAP for the Riv parts you need.

Other Events in the Area

The 43rd Annual Model T swap meet. Sunday May 1, Fairmount Race Track, Collinsville, IL. For more information, call 314-830-0873.

Summer Cruise 2011. Thursday thru Sunday, June 9-12, on the grounds of the Neighbor Social Club, 4168 State Route 162, Pontoon Beach, IL. Forty plus original and restored '66 and '67 Dodge Chargers expected to attend Saturday and Sunday to celebrate the 45th anniversary of the introduction. Cruises, a mixer, and other events planned. For more information, call John Culiberk, 618-931-1564 or e-mail John at johnculiberk@charter.net.



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BUICK POWER STEERING CONVERSION

By Bill Bicknell

Driving any of the big Buicks is an enjoyable experience but can be more enjoyable if the car has power steering instead of manual steering. Buick introduced power steering in 1952. Many '52 Roadmasters came with power steering, but the Buick literature also references this option as being available on '52 Super models.

This article is intended to give enough information to help understand the process of converting a car with manual steering to power steering and to give enough encouragement to someone interested in tackling the job – it can be done. The operation is done easily when the car is apart for restoration, but can be done with the front clip in place and even the front seat left in the car (although removal of the front seat is recommended).

The information herein applies to 1950 thru 1955 Buicks, but the process may work on earlier models too. This author has made this conversion for a 1950 Buick and several times on 1954 and 1955 Buicks and has compared dimensions on several steering boxes for these years. While there may be some differences, I believe the procedure will apply to all of these years. The 1956 and newer is different and easier since in 1956 the steering shaft was split and there is a rubber coupling between the shaft and the steering box. But for 1955 and earlier, the steering shaft is one piece and goes into a very complicated power steering box. The good news is that the power steering box assembly does not have to be taken apart to make the conversion from manual to power steering.

The geometry of the steering box, pitman arm, shaft and mounting to the frame is essentially the same for all models and therefore allows this conversion. The difference is the length of the steering shaft depending on the year and whether it is a large body (Roadmaster/Super) or small body (Century/Special) car. The steering shaft length may have to be lengthened or shortened depending on which car the power steering box is coming out of and which model it is going into.

First, the steering wheel must be removed. Special care is needed to prevent damage to the horn wire contact. This is a spring-loaded fiber washer and brass contact on the end of the horn wire. A special tool or provision must be made so as not to damage this contact. The puller for the 1955 is a standard 2-bolt puller. However, for 1954 and earlier, a special 3-bolt puller is required with special step diameter bolts or rods.

The steering column has the shifter mechanism and the turn signal wiring in a housing that slides over the steering shaft. It is easiest if the front seat is removed, but can be done with the seat in place by putting protective blankets on the seat material. This column may be removed, or just tilted down after removing the under-dash bracket and when the steering box is loose from the frame. The column is attached to the steering box by a clamp where the column slides over the steering box (engine side of firewall). Once this is loose, and the turn signal wires disconnected from the fuse panel, the column assembly can be slid off the steering box. Just above the clamp is the electrical contact for the horn. Unsnap the connector and remove the spring-loaded contact from the column that is attached with two screws. Where the column assembly goes through the firewall, there is a rubber pad. This requires removal of the pad from inside the car and also on some models a steel bar on the engine side of the firewall needs to be removed to allow movement of the whole assembly.

At this point, the pitman arm should be removed from the steering box or disconnected from the lateral steering rod by removing the spring-loaded tensioner in the end of the rod.

The steering box is attached to the frame with four bolts and using U-shaped supports that are split to allow assembly. The steering box can be detached from the frame by removing the four bolts and U-shaped brackets/clamps.

WARNING: The steering boxes, manual and power are heavy and it is difficult to lift and maneuver them. Be careful when lifting these heavy items!

Once everything is loose, the entire assembly needs to be tilted to allow the column assembly inside the car to lie on the seat (if the seat is not removed entirely), and the steering box lifted out through the engine compartment. This is the most difficult part, but it can be done.

Once the steering box assembly has been removed, lay the manual box next to the power steering box and compare the measurements of the length from the box to the end of the steering shaft. In order for the assembly to fit, this dimension must be the same for proper fit of the steering wheel when re-assembled.

If the units are the same length, then re-assembly is next. If the shafts are not the same length, then cutting and welding is needed. Again, this can be done without disassembling the steering box

BUICK POWER STEERING CONVERSION

(Continued)

But first – remove the horn wire by un-soldering the wire at the lower end where it comes out of the shaft and is attached to a brass sleeve. The brass sleeve is insulated from the shaft with an internal rubber sleeve, so do not let the soldering iron get the brass sleeve any hotter than necessary to remove the wire. (Same on re-assembly, solder as quickly as possible.)

When cutting and welding the shaft to modify the length, the cut should be made near the top, about 10-12” from the upper end. There are three things to watch for carefully – 1) a good quality weld for strength; 2) good shaft alignment so the steering wheel will not wobble or side load the upper bearing; and 3) that there is still a hole in the center of the shaft after welding for the horn wire. The last item is generally not a problem, but the closer the weld to the top of the shaft, the easier it is to correct. An extended drill can be used to open up the center if weld slag has blocked the wire passage.

Next is re-assembly, which is just the opposite of the disassembly described above. Yes, there are a lot of parts and a lot of work, but the reward is worth it.

Once the power steering box is in place and all re assembly done, the next step is the power steering pump. This will be divided into comments for 1953-56 V8 engines and 1953 and earlier Straight-8 engines.

V8 Engines: The crankshaft pulley needs to be changed to the double groove type. On some engines this is a single piece cast pulley that has to be changed completely. On some engines this was changed to a damper type hub that has bolted on individual pulleys. If this is the case, just the extra pulley can be bolted to the hub.

Next is the power steering pump. Any pump from 1953-56 can be made to work, but each year is different as follows:

1. 1953 – Reservoir is taller than 54-56 and cannot be used on newer one due to hood clearance. Lid is stamped steel. Bracket has two slots for adjusting the belt tension.
2. 1954 – Reservoir height is shorter like 55-56, OK to use on 1953. Lid is same stamped steel as 1953. Bracket is same.

3. 1955 – Lid is cast aluminum with raised lettering. Bracket has one hole and one slot that allows pump to be tilted to tension belt. Note: this is a much easier adjustment than the two-slot design.
4. 1956 – Lid and bracket are all the same as 55, but the pump and reservoir are different than 53-55. The difference is in the fluid return line. On 53-55 the return hose looks like the high pressure hose and has the same type fittings that attach to the rear of the pump. On the 56, there is only one fitting for the high pressure hose on the rear of the pump. The return line is a smaller hose that returns to a tube on the side of the reservoir with just a hose clamp. (its low pressure anyway, so no problem.)

Note 1: The color of the power steering bracket is engine green, not black. There is also an angle brace about 7-8” long that goes from the pump bracket to the left cylinder head. This is needed to stabilize the pump and it is also painted engine green.

Note 2: When the bolts from the water manifold are removed to install the pump bracket, water will run out the bolt holes. You can either drain the water level down or change the bolts and install the bracket quickly without losing too much water.

Straight-8 Engines: The 2-groove pulley for the Straight-8 engine is almost impossible to find. Also, the pump mounts with a special bracket to the front of the block and water pump with a separate reservoir mounted to the cylinder head. If these parts are not available, there are a couple of options.

1. Use a 53-56 V8 pump and make a special bracket that mounts it above the generator. Get a 2-groove pulley for the generator and use the extra groove to drive the pump from the generator. The 2-groove pulleys were used on the Buick generators for cars with air conditioning.
2. Use a combination generator/power steering pump unit from a 57-58 Chevrolet with power steering. Some adapters will be required for the hose connections. Chrysler also offered a generator/power steering pump combination unit in about 1951-54(??). However, it was an Auto-Lite generator, not a Delco.

The *GATEWAY GAZETTE* is a monthly newsletter, free to paid members of the St. Louis Gateway Chapter of the Buick Club of America. Articles, technical information, For Sale and Want Ads, photos, restoration sagas and coming events are welcomed, but must be submitted by the first Monday of the month to assure inclusion in the next issue.

Our membership year runs from May 1 to April 30. Membership is renewable on May 1. Members joining between January 1 and April 30 are paid up through the next April. Dues are \$15 per year for the local chapter. Contact Pete Nathan, Treasurer. See address below. Current dues for the national club are \$50 per year, payable to: Buick Club of America, P.O. Box 360775, Columbus, OH 43236-0775.

The Gateway Chapter meets monthly on the THIRD MONDAY of the month. Meetings begin at 7:30 PM and guests are welcome to attend. We meet at various restaurants around St. Louis and most members and guests try to arrive by 6:30 or earlier to have dinner before the meeting.

For more information, our local mailing addresses are as follows:

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