



The Porthole



July/August 2020

Newsletter of the Mason-Dixon Chapter of the BCA

UPCOMING EVENTS -- MARK YOUR CALENDER

Mason-Dixon chapter items are in red

Summer and Fall 2020

Sunday July 19th - Mason-Dixon Chapter Membership Meeting 3:00 at C&D Grill and Bar Route 30 Near Cross Keys. Come for dinner first then meeting. We may have distributed seating but since we rarely have more than 10 people we should be good.

Saturday August 22nd. The Cadillac LaSalle club is holding a show at the AACA Museum. All makes of cars are welcome. We are planning to have a DJ and a food vendor, as usual. We have only a few awards at this show because we have no dealer sponsor -- Best of Show Cadillac, Best of Show Other Makes, and Long Distance.

Sunday September 20th Mason-Dixon Chapter Membership Meeting TBD since the pandemic restrictions on buffet locations like Hoss' may still have restrictions. I still would like a northern location for those members local to that region. Suggestions? **Otherwise...3:00 at C&D Grill and Bar Route 30 Near Cross Keys.**

September 28-30th 2020 1936-38 Buick Club annual tour Wilmington, NC.

I am planning on attending. This too is a tentative event dependent on what the summer health situation becomes.

October 1-3rd Fall Carlisle. If things are still open this should be similar to the June show

October 10th Hershey Car Show is still proposed even though the Flea Market had been cancelled.

Support your Buick Club events! There are many car shows, but no others that focus specifically on our favorite marque.

Directors Message Summer is here! (But, all dressed up and nowhere to

go!) At least that is the way I feel. When I wrote the May directors message I could not believe that we would still be shut down as a hobby group. I had a full calendar of activities, meets and shows to choose from into the fall. Now everything is up still up in the air as far as any planning. All summer activities had been cancelled for most all the clubs I belong to; the AACA, the HCCA, the VMCCA, and the BCA. The message from the BCA about the cancelation of the Stongsville, Ohio Buick Nationals in July was the final blow, (*I thought.*) **Then the blockbuster of the AACA fall Hershey flea market cancellation!** I felt badly that I had to cancel all our spring activities and meetings. I MISS YOU PEOPLE! Originally I felt that things would open up well before this late June time frame. Even the **Back to the Bricks at Flint** on August 15 is cancelled. Of course now the AACA museum is opening up for the same weekend as our car show was scheduled. But there are still severe restrictions in place for usage and access. Our newly identified health concerns will make all of us leery about gathering in large groups for a long while. Other BCA chapters have tried to hold their events only to be cancelled because of insurance issues and local permits. The New Jersey group is holding their annual picnic with numbers and distancing restrictions. The chapter is providing the meat and paper products. But, no traditional buffet style serving and they ask the attendees that they bring their own side dishes not to be shared. Even so they note a disclaimer that these things are subject to local restrictions. Since all counties (except rebel Lebanon has gone green at this writing.) I am scheduling a July 19th meeting at the C&D grill so we can see where we are going by this time for the fall. And even then there still may be restrictions for us to collectively and effectively meet as a group.

Praying for all be well and to stay well.

Larry

P.S.

I received this from Richard Sills as an event possibility. I will include in our calendar.

Thoughts?

Just a thought: the Cadillac club is holding a show at the AACA Museum on Saturday August 22. As always, all makes of cars are welcome. We are planning to have a DJ and a food vendor, as usual. We have only a few awards at this show because we have no dealer sponsor -- Best of Show Cadillac, Best of Show Other Makes, and Long Distance. If the Mason-Dixon chapter wishes to join us, it could sponsor an award for Best of Show Buick – or just join us without sponsoring an award.

Richard

Why I Am A BUICK Guy

This all started when I was 14 years old. I'd always been a car nut. My Granddad always swore the first word I ever uttered was not Mom, but car. Whenever he wanted to take a ride I always went along. He'd ask where I wanted to go, I'd say "the junkyard" I was about 5 then and it's still the same today, but when I was 14 my Dad dealt in wholesale foods and a food broker, John Startzman drove into our place in a new Mandarin Red 53 Buick Skylark. I told Dad that was the prettiest car I'd ever seen and someday I'd own one.

I had Buicks starting with a 48 and a 52 Roadmaster, finally getting one of my favorite "fancy rides" in 1965, a black Wildcat Convertible with a tan top, road wheels and a dark Brown and saddle interior. It was beautiful and I drove it for 7 years trading it for a 72 Pontiac Grandville, a handsome car that never measured up to the Buick. I almost immediately started my search for another Wildcat Convertible, even driving to Vermont to see one advertised in Hemmings that disappointed me when I saw it. I'd almost given up on my search in 1977 and drove to Beverly Beach to look at a Grandville Convertible because I also had convertible fever. It turned out to be a dud but, across the street sat a Regal Red 66 Wildcat Convertible. I immediately headed for it and my ex who was with me said "why are you going over there? It doesn't have a for sale sign." I said "no, but it has transporter temporary tags on it", so I knocked on the door and asked if it was for sale. The guy said, "hell, I just bought it yesterday" so I started to walk away. I stopped when he said that he just bought it from an old guy who had stopped driving to save it from the crusher. He asked if I'd give him \$300 for it? I could not write the check fast enough and drove it home two days later.

It had a broken front mounts on the front seat than set me back whenever I accelerated, faded paint and some damage on the right side, but actually ran pretty good. Everyone thought I was crazy to buy this car but over 40 years later it's still mine. It's been repainted twice, had an engine rebuild 15,000 miles ago at 103K, two new convertible tops and I've driven it over 60K miles since purchasing it. It has always been my primary summer driver until I purchased my 69 Electra Convertible in 2008 or thereabout and now they about equally share my summer runs.



The Wildcat has probably been the most trouble free car I've ever owned, new or used and I will never sell it as long as I can drive.



About 2 years after I bought the Wildcat, I saw a mandarin red 53 Skylark in Hemmings for sale for \$12,500. That was a lot of money to me then and a pretty hefty price for a Skylark at that time but it was what I wanted. The other problem was that it was in Wichita , KS. I called, was assured of it's condition and road worthiness as I told the guy I was planning on driving it back home which I did, after making the trip to Kansas to see it. I finally had the car of my dreams.

I had a lot of fun in the Skylark for 4 years and joined the 53-54 Skylark Club and became active in it and am to this day. In 1983, I was driving to the BCA National in Columbus, OH along with two other friends in their Buicks, passing a truck at 70 mph on the PA Turnpike when a rod broke and came down thru the oil pan with a terrible sound. Believe it or not I finished the pass of the truck pulled off the side and shut the still running engine down. It was towed to a truck stop in Somerset, PA where I retrieved it after hitching a ride to the Nationals and back with my friends. I found a new NOS engine in the crate in Tennessee and should have just replaced the engine and enjoyed the car but was persuaded to restore it instead . I put a lot of money in this restoration , received my AACA Junior at Lake Placid NY in 1986 and Senior at Huntington , WV a year later . I'd started a new business a few years before , just bought my 3rd shop that same year, and had also gotten bit by the snowmobile bug so put the car up for sale and sold it for \$35K to the first person who called. I was sorry ever since, but had purchased 5 53 Skylarks and 2 54 Skylarks from the guy I bought the engine from and was planning on restoring one of those.

Business and snowmobiling got in the way , I sold 4 of the Skylarks and parted 3 out and never did build another 53 Skylark. The price of Skylarks went thru the roof and I never got another 53 to drive agan. The rest is a story for a sequel article someday, but I'm still a Buick guy and today own 5 of them.

Dick Beckley

A Fathers-Day remembrance fulfilled.

John Kuchtiak

Welcome back home to PA the newest addition to the "Nail Bin"!

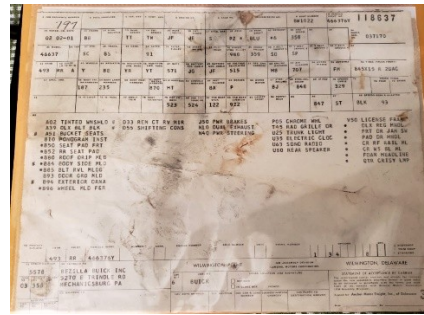


Another one year only model year 1966 Wildcat Gran Sport.

I purchased "Big Red" from Barry McClair's brother Don on a recent car buying trip to Don's home in Buford GA. 84k original miles with factory build sheet. The Wildcat was originally purchased at Bezilla Buick In Mechanicsburg by Bob Newhouse Sr. Barry owned it for a bit after Bob Sr. passed on, and eventually sold it to Don back in 1988.

The Wildcat GS is Red with the custom trim level dove colored interior.

The options include: Bucket seats, long floor shift console with Buick operating tach, power steering, power brakes, tilt wheel, AM/FM stereo radio. She is a 54 year old ten footer now with the mostly original paint, but I will improve her over time and hopefully restore her back to her original beauty.



I refer to my Garage as the "Nail Bin" as there is nothing but Buick Nail Head power in there!

My love for 66 Buicks has extended all the way back to my childhood when at age 9 my Dad bought a Burgundy Mist/ black interior 1966 Wildcat GS right off the showroom floor. My love affair for 66's started then and there, and has been a life-long passion for me ever since.

My first car at age 15 1/2 was a 66 Skylark Gran Sport, the same color combo as Dad's Wildcat GS. Lucky for me though, the Skylark was equipped with the Borg Warner T-10 four speed, and so then and there another love affair started with those wonderful nickel gears and that unmistakable gear whine!

Now, as my newly acquired treasure was almost the same as Dad's, I quickly named my GS "Chip", and referred to Dad's as "The Block". "A Chip off the ole Block". So why do I mention this? Because "Big Red" is equipped exactly as Dad's was, except for the colors. The key component being no factory air conditioning for either car. I have owned eight 1966 Wildcats and Wildcat GS's over my life, and this is the first one I have owned that does not have factory A/C. So you see, as soon as I laid eyes on it at Don's, Big Red was destined to follow me home as I instantly related it to my Dad, and all the memories of his car and the "440" air conditioning as he would call it! So Happy Fathers-Day Dad to you in Heaven, and I know you will be riding with me as I cruise in "Big Red"!!

Image of an era



TEXACO station in the Washington DC area. Late 1920s. The the left and right are 5 Gallon FRY pumps. Similar to one like I have. The center pump is a 10 gallon with a Totalizer attachment.

Best regards to you and Hillary. Be well!

Larry

On the home front with my Buicks.

Larry DiBarry

About a month ago on a Sunday drive my 1925 Standard with the expensive engine rebuild went BANG! at between 35 and 40 mph and started to run crappy. I thought maybe a roller lifter spring broke. Rollback ride home..... How embarrassing... I was looking for the easy stuff first. The sound seemed to come from the Starter/Generator. When I isolated the components it stopped. I pulled apart the S/G. Replaced the generator clutch and went through the unit. I reinstalled, re-timed and the noise was still there. The car starts right up! I pulled off all the roller lifter cages to check springs. All good. When restarted, the water pump housing seemed to be pulsating. Still with the noise. A more metallic scraping rather than the muffled thump I remember when the timing gear went out on the Master. I drained out the system, loosened the packing nuts and split the pump apart to check the impellor. At first all looked good there. My fear is that it is indeed the timing gear. Then finding the real cause. The new water pump shaft I had machined from stainless steel and made new bronze bushings. It had been running hot at the front bearing. That bearing had seized on the shaft and spun in the water pump housing.



BANG! Seized water pump bearing.

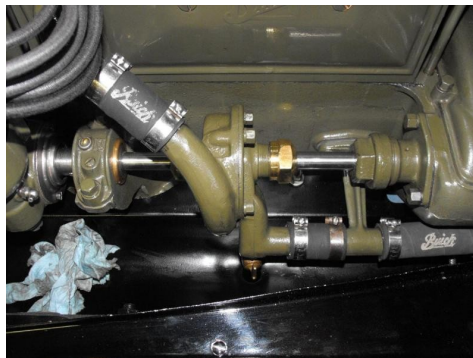
The timing gear is down-stream collateral damage.

I really wanted to have it be something easy since I had done the timing gear on my Master over the winter. But as some have indicated they would not trust the 90 year old originals. I asked Pat Reeve who rebuilt my engine about the gear before finishing up the rebuild and he said it looked great. My friend Dave drove his 1928 Standard 30 years before a timing gear went out. Not at under 400 miles from the rebuild. But the fault was not with the gear it was the water pump failure. Although Bob's has the all-fiber ones available for \$300. I have not heard anything about their longevity. I do have a spare original. But it appears to have some cracking on several teeth. "Then and Now Automotive" had the all fiber gear for \$195 and that is what I installed. No rest for the wicked...

Larry

Installed the new timing gear. Larry DiBarry

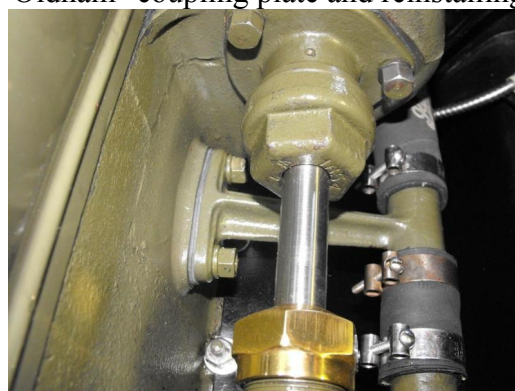
Installed the re-re-built water pump with new seals in the output side. New bushing and packing on the input side. Patrick Reeve of Reeve Enterprises who rebuilt the engine re-did the pump bushings (making sure the bearing bores were perfectly aligned) wanted to put the doubled up lip seals on that side also. But when the (expensive recommended) seals I had installed failed, the stainless spring wore a groove in the shaft at that area. So that side has traditional packing. WE wanted to save that SS shaft I made.



New fiber timing gear

After doing the static timing the engine fired right up and ran well. I let it run for about 20 seconds then shut down. (May 31st) son Alex helped me put the radiator and hood back on and fill the cooling system. I took her for a drive several times around the block about 2 miles. Still need to tweak the timing and carb etc. After I shut her down I tried to restart Oh, crap!! The starter is binding and not motoring! At least this time I knew what the problem was. Previously I had set the coupler to the S/G too tight and had the same problem. I had used the exact same pin locations on the shaft of the pump I rebuilt. (Not original to the car). Finding out later that these were fitted IN ASSEMBLY. After surface grinding .020 off the face of the "Oldham" coupling plate and reinstalling all was fine.

Reassembled pump unit.



Resurfaced coupler on the right

The same pump and shaft was reinstalled so what changed??? I made a new gasket for the front bearing to the pump shaft gear crankcase bore surface. Mistake... This time I used 1/32" sheet stock instead of the 1/64". So, effectively moving the shaft back .015 and causing binding at the coupling plate. I had to remove the taper pin at the retaining collar, undo the three bolts holding the bearing to the crankcase, slid the bearing back on the shaft. I then replaced that too thick gasket with the proper 1/64" thickness. Reassembled all and now the starter is functioning properly. In the above photo I also did another adjustment. There is a hose stand-off. Originally missing from this car. I took the one from my spare 25 engine. Great! Another found missing piece. Pat Reeve and I were concerned about the 1925 style pumps that since they "Float" (No solid attachment to the engine) that there may be too much lateral pressure on the pump unit. This time I was very careful when re-mounting the pump. Not much give with the short hoses. With the upper output hose attached the lower input hose stand-off was 1/8" off. To force the short hose on could cause twisting of the pump on the shaft causing binding and hot spots running on the bearing. I added (2) 1/16" gaskets to the stand-off mount. The input hose now slid on with no apparent twisting or tension on the pump. Keeping fingers crossed again.

Added 1/8 thickness to align hoses

Little things do mean a lot.

Please Note

....if you'd like to submit any information, articles, cars for sale...whatever....contact newsletter editor John Hess at (717) 757-7666 or via email at: hocusfocus@verizon.net or via snail mail at 1285 Christensen Rd., York, Pa. 17402.

Wanted

old signs, automobilia, petroliana, old gas pumps, barber shop collectables, etc.
Contact Dick Beckley at dbeckley@epix.net, phone 717-395-7128. PO Box 128, Lewisberry, PA 17339.

For Sale

1971 455 CID Engine with (2) cylinder heads. (2) valve covers. Intake manifold. (1) 4 BBL Carb. (1) Air cleaner from a 1971 GS. \$600 for All. Fred White 717-767-8903

For Sale

Parts For Sale

Set of 1969 Electra tail lights. Used condition. \$50.00
1969 Electra 4 dr. Rocker stainless. \$20.00
1949 Buick radio with nice chrome grill. \$100.00
1969 Le Sabre Convertible deck lid. \$50
1937 series 40 headlight pods and misc. pieces from Jack Frank's estate.
If someone needs it I may have it.
Larry DiBarry 717-263-3804

For Sale

I have a 1970 Buick Wildcat, all original and stock, located in Ocean City, NJ. Considering selling to right buyer. Car needs body work due to rust, but has decent interior and 455-4 engine. would need to be towed. Here's a video that shows all ...https://youtu.be/aESicCtP_GM

If you know anyone who is interested, please let me know - Jerry 646-267-2014

For Sale

1973 Apollo 2dr Hatchback Midnight Blue. 350 V8 2 Bl.. No rust AZ, car. Excellent Cond. Ace, HEI 189,500 miles. Asking \$10,000. Contact Mary Ann Rizzo 570-856-4681, Berwick PA. (Northeast PA)

