

## VILLAGE LOCALS

More 40th NZ Anniversary coverage

January 2014



# RONdezvous

Welcome to the first issue for 2014 and the "White Series".

As you know I have changed the look of our NZ club mag each year 'on my watch' and many months ago when contemplating what I might do for 2014, I thought rather than focus on a particular decade (or period) I would simply create what I hope you will discover is an 'stylish' theme in keeping with the 'Cadillac ethos' of wanting to engage the very best.

You know the biggest event we've staged in NZ to date must surely be our recent 40th, which occurred nearly 3 months ago now and hard to believe how quickly time moves on! Even now, I continue to receive positive feedback about what we got up to and so many pictures it looks as if our 40th coverage will extend to a Part 3!

Talking more about our 'event', I was given a number of old *Self Starter* mags (some dating back to 2003) and you know there are some great articles and pictures in those issues which I will share with you over this year. Whilst touching on the *Self Starter*, let us congratulate USA CLC *Self Starter* Editor, Steve Stewart who in 2014 celebrates 10 years in the seat. He too has tweaked the look and layout over the years to his credit and it is indeed 'looked forward to' by me each month - well done Steve!

Our FINZ continues to be an International read. For those that may want to easily find a past issue, each month it is up-loaded on [www.cadillacclubofnz.org](http://www.cadillacclubofnz.org) simply look under Regions and then Newsletters. I note that all issues receive generous 'hits' so it's great to know 'we are being read out there!' Whilst you are at the website home page check out all the other cool stuff they have there. The members 'Forum' is particularly fascinating - especially if you are searching for a part or answer

Our first 'Cover pic' for 2014 was sent to me by Wanganui/ Manawatu Regional Delegate, Bob Walker. He and his wife Lois are very active and pro-active in our club. Great shot of Bill and Myrie Wotherspoon's red '65 rag top parked next to Steve Gill and Carol Southcombe's white '60 rag top. A great shot taken at the Historic Village in Tauranga on our 40th. Thanks Bob and Lois

Ever heard about a 'barn find'? On page 7 is a great read about an amazing find uncovered by a 'CLC Motor City' (Detroit) member. The Caddy is incredible and did you know we have two NZ members with these exact models here in the country?

Can anyone help? Last issue we sent out a 'may-day' on behalf of The Motueka Museum who is the caretaker of one very cool 1929 LaSalle affectionally named "Lassie". Read on page 9 if you can offer some advice please

Also on page 9 is details about the cool CLC Australian calendar - a fund raiser for their April Nats, details of which were distributed at our 40th and also appear on our 'Fridge' page

Do you own a '59 or 1960 Caddy? On page 10 is details of a steering part that you may like to check out - just to be safe

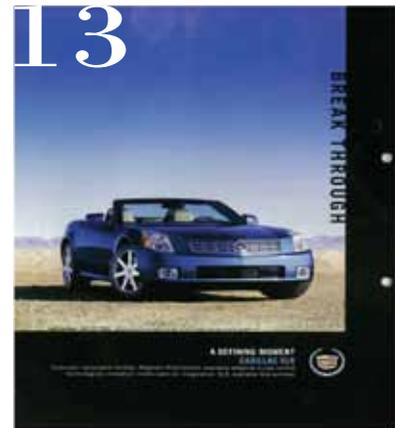
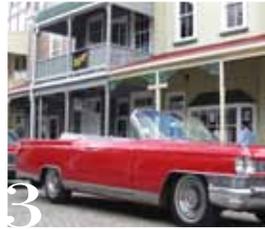
2014 will be a big year for the NZ club. Our longstanding Life Member and CLCNZ club President, Murray Scott has signalled that he does intend to seek re-election. Therefore we need a member to step into his shoes. Chances are you or a fellow member you know may like to take up the role? Now is the time to start talking amongst yourselves about who you think may like to be nominated for the position. Elections will be held at the 2014 AGM that will be held at McLarens Island (near Christchurch) in October. For us North Islanders might pay to start saving now for gas and the ferry crossing!

Well that's about it for this month. Please continue to email me with your stories and pictures of the good times you are having during our NZ summer. Best wishes together with our thoughts to our fellow members in the northern hemisphere under going the annual snow drifts, storms and without your Caddies given many are probably in hibernation for the next few months. Until next issue, cruise safely - Ron.



Your Editor borrowed BOP member's Steve Gill & Carol Southcombe's lovely '60 to deliver Santa to the Palm Beach Plaza in Papamoa. In fact I drove right into the centre and tooted the horn real loud! -Ed.

**Editor:** Ron Melville recipient of (CLC) The Yann Saunders International Activity Award 2013  
**Contributions:** Send to: [ron.melville@eves.co.nz](mailto:ron.melville@eves.co.nz)  
The Editor reserves the right to accept or reject any contributions. New Deadline is 20th of each month



# More 40th Anniversary fun - Part 2

The positive feedback continues to pour in with so many photos and stories there may have to be a 'Part 3!' Keep them coming - ed.

**Hi Ron, The quilt** is on our lounge for now. Our '59 is in pieces having an engine re-build and mechanical refurbishment ready for Busselton. When it is back on the road (end January), the quilt will be installed in its new home – the back seat. It couldn't have gone to a more appreciative owner. Regards - Michael Holding

**Ron - The Cadillac Nationals** in Rotorua was one of the best! The organizing by the Tauranga club was superb always smiling and keeping everyone happy and the overseas visitors were well catered for. So glad we went it was well worth it!! Regards, Myrie and Bill Wotherspoon.

**CLC CELEBRATIONS** - Special report by Caddie Anne in Qld

Feedback to the organisers reflects that the Queenslanders had an awesome time at the 40ths in Rotorua. The cruising in the Cadillacs to tourist spots in the Bay of Plenty was said to be an attraction in itself to Mount Maunganui and Tauranga on Friday. Many said it was good to view Graham and Lois's diner and Cadillac shed in person after having seen the article about it in La Cad. Saturday's cruise via some hot pools and boiling mud and Huka Falls to Taupo made for viewing Mother Nature in her extremes. No boiling mud in Queensland.

At the Friday night Hangi and Maori performance, Geoff Tyler, the Queensland president, was asked to represent the audience. Geoff along with Terry Griffin and his grandson Kai were among the blokes who did the Haka. Look up Cadillac La Salle Club NZ 40th Anniversary Haka to view this performance. (Ron Melville and Steve Gill, event organiser appears in this also). Robyn and granddaughter Imogen joined the gals for the "poi dance".

The celebration dinner on Saturday night was enjoyable. Kai and Imogen were assistants for the humorous auction where a couple of Queenslanders won some nice Cadillac-inspired items. More scenery for the Sunday night dinner at the top of Mt Ngongotaha. Travelling up in the gondolas a first for most of the Queenslanders. Geoff and Pauline each won a spot prize.

The Cadillacs, meeting up with old friends and the making of new ones, the scenery and Kiwi hospitality made for a rightful tribute to the 40th Anniversary of the NZ club. Many thanks to the organisers for a weekend combining entertainment with relaxation.

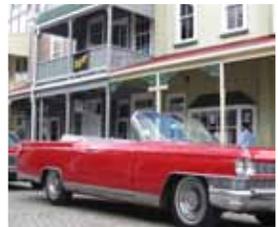
**Paul Dixon has sent** the Victorian Presidents report to La Cad – written by him, of course. Here's the part on the 40ths.

Thirty Four people, representing every state based club in Australia, and two couples from the United States, travelled across the ditch, from the "West Island", to join the New Zealand Club's Bay of Plenty region, at the end of October, to celebrate the 40th birthday of the New Zealand Cadillac La Salle Club.

Many of us met in Auckland on the Thursday morning, where we travelled the three or so hours to Rotorua in Cadillac's owned by members of the Auckland region. We stopped at the Classics Museum and Jukebox Diner in Hamilton for lunch, and admired the spectacular collection of vehicles and memorabilia on display. Friday saw us in "The Mount" and Tauranga, in addition to seeing, in person, the privately owned diner, as featured in the Winter 2013 issue of La Cad magazine. All present were certainly impressed at the (private) car collection, and in the way it was presented! Friday's activities concluded with a Hangi and cultural concert, where many club members were given the opportunity to participate in the Poi dance (women), and Haka (men). Saturday we took in some geothermal activity (geysers and boiling mud), the Huka Falls, Lake Taupo, and the formal banquet, including a fundraising auction conducted by the very enthusiastic Neville Carter, from the Taranaki region. Sunday, all the Cadillac's were displayed on the Rotorua Lakefront, and the more intrepid of us went on tour, zip lining through the forest canopy, amongst the thousand year old trees, and learning all about the native birds and wildlife; prior to the weekend finishing up with dinner on the summit of the Skyline Gondola. Based on the feedback I have received, all international visitors had a wonderful time, and were humbled by the friendliness and hospitality bestowed upon us by our Kiwi cousins; many of which are now new friends, that we hope to see again. By Paul Dixon, Pres. CLC Victoria



Great pics here of our Ozzie contingent, including the Haka dance. NZ CLC Pres. Murray thanking Gerry Steinard from USA. Geoff 'finger-ing' our cake! Terrific photo of Robyn and Terry, Kai and Imogen



More pics - the official banner; down at the Historic Village; an amazing aerial shot of the Rotorua 'Show & Shine'. Dave & Kay Corin; Dave & George Huse; Toni & George presenting Yann Saunders Award to Ron and Ross; George; Ron & Toni enjoying a coffee at Mt. Maunganui



# More 40th Anniversary fun - Part 2

**Dear Ron - To you,** your committee and members -many thanks for your hospitality. We had a great time - still talking about it. Special thanks to the lovely Enid aka Caddy Queen..

Regards from your Aussie friends - Honey and Peter

**Hi Ron - I am sure** you have more photos than you can poke a stick at. These are more aimed at the comings and goings we were involved in. Lovely note from Toni & George. Take care, Enid S

**From: Antonia Nabholz** [mailto:tnabholz@yahoo.com]

To: Enid Brian Service Cadillac Club Auckland NZ

Subject: Thanks, Thanks, Thanks!

Enid & Brian - There are not enough words to thank you for the Superfantasticfabulousfun time we had in New Zealand! All your planning, organizing, coordinating, and implementing resulted in a truly memorable experience that can never be replicated and we will never forget. Not only did you pick us up at the airport, but sent in smiling, bubbly Margo to greet us! Including us in your "fish 'n chips" picnic that evening was one time we will treasure. Your thoughtful present of two day tickets to "hop on hop off" resulted in a day full of great memories of what Auckland can offer. It was so nice to have the opportunity to meet the other club members that evening for dinner. What a fun group! Arranging for our transportation down and back from Rotorua is very, very much appreciated, and we know much work went into the details. Our entire experience at the 40th celebration showed the personal and friendly style of your club members. We came away with such a warm feeling, especially since we made so many new friends during this time. We are already looking forward to the next opportunity to spend time with you again. Until then, the next best thing is to keep in touch via email. We hope that someday we will be able to offer you our hospitality here in the U.S. We're attaching a few pictures that you might enjoy. Thinking of you -- Toni & George



Above, left, right and all-round in fact, those hospitable Aucklanders sure know how to give our American and Ozzie friends a great time



Thanks to Enid for sending down a number of these great photos. The 'Limo Group' from Auckland had a wonderful time, especially the 'fish & chips' - Kiwi style! Enid and her 'FINZ Front Cover Award!

At left, all the Ozzies and Americans - us Kiwis were so proud to have such a turnout and they enjoyed themselves too - ed.



Where was that Fish & Chip shop Enid? Mmmm, I can smell them now!

Brian says 'only way to travel is by Caddy Limo!'

Paul Dixon featured the 40th on the front page of his CLC Vic Newsletter >> right



VICTORIAN REGION NEWSLETTER  
November 2013

**CADILLAC LASALLE CLUB OF AUSTRALIA**

The President's Report  
Paul Dixon

Well, October has certainly been a busy month, what with two official events, a bit of drama, and some of us taking a few days out to tour with the New Zealand Club. Almost too much fun to cram into only four weeks!

The agreed date of our visit to The Healey Factory in Mitcham, turned out, at the last minute, not to be suitable for them. As a result of this, the event has now been rescheduled to December. Please ensure you update your phones or diaries, with the new date of December 9th. Your committee sincerely apologises at having to reschedule that event, especially at such short notice.

Just over thirty members had a wonderfully social evening at the club dinner, with the President and "First Lady", Dave and Michelle Bagger of the WA club, and our international visitors, Jerry & Janet Steinfeld from Detroit Michigan, in October. I consider that meeting fellow enthusiasts, like this, from other parts of the country, or world, is one of the unexpected benefits that I have received from belonging to such a friendly club as ours.

American GM Day, the following day, was a huge success for our club, with about thirty or so members showing their vehicles. 34 Aussie members then flew to NZ to help celebrate the Kiwi club's 40th birthday. Look out for my report on both events in the Summer LaCad.

Our friends in the Queensland club have produced an Australian Cadillac LaSalle Club (12 month) calendar for 2014. They are in the same format as the current calendars we all have.

Cost including shipping (in tubes) is \$30 per calendar. All profits will be going to support the 2014 Cadillac Nationals in WA. You can buy a copy on eBay or Gumtree, or alternatively, contact Terry Griffin in Queensland and place an order directly. I am told a Christmas stocking would not be complete without one of these collectibles in it. See you at the Christmas Party!

Paul Dixon, President.

Cars from the Cadillac LaSalle Club of New Zealand patiently waiting for their owners to return from lunch on the 40th birthday rally.

## THE HEALEY FACTORY Monday 9th December

**NEW DATE:** The re-scheduled date for the Healey Factory tour is Monday 9th December.

John Jenkins has arranged for us to visit and take part in this guided tour of their new facility in Mitcham.

To ensure we have sufficient numbers to justify the Healey team staying back for the evening to show us their facility, we have combined this event with our friends in the Dandenong Valley Historic Car Club.

We will be divided into 4 groups to inspect the Engine building and modification plant; Body repair; Restoration and custom shop; Paint shop; Servicing; and the Showroom

**The Details:**  
Meet at 6.50pm for a 7pm (sharp) start at The Healey Factory main showrooms, 646 Whitehorse Road, Mitcham. [Melways 49:A9]

CLC contact is John Jenkins 9551 2968



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# Barn-find of the Year!



**W**hen I read the following article in early November I thought, wow, fancy that happening and I wonder whether any of our readers have personally discovered a 'barn-find?' For those reading this and thinking, 'what is a barn-find?' Well, quite self explanatory really - it is generally an old car that has been 'parked up or left unused or untouched' for a long, long time. One day it is discovered - hopefully a genuine enthusiast and not by someone just wanting to make a quick buck. Anyway enough of my rantings, read this great article courtesy of the 'Motor City Region' - thanks guys! [turn page>]



Here's Michael Rizzuto's story

Even thirty years ago, when I first started getting interested in 57-60 Broughams, only on extremely rare occasions would you run across something like this! These days it is virtually unheard of! Enclosed are a few pictures of a 58 Brougham that has to be the barn find of the year!

Body #700: Currently Unlisted on the Cadillac Data Base among Broughams known to exist! 26M original miles! Last registration tag on the California black plates is 1967! This car had been left absolutely untouched for many decades in the same garage I recently pulled it out of!

This 58 Brougham is original and unmolested right down to the OEM radiator hoses and clamps. It still has the OEM markings on the upper radiator hose! Airride is completely untouched and in place as it left the factory. It also has the original spare tire in the trunk! The only two things I can see that have ever been touched are a few parts of the exhaust system at the rear, and the 4 tires. However the tires look very similar to OEM so they are no doubt this cars first new set installed back in the 1960's.

By carefully examining this car I have learned small restoration details about the Brougham that I have never been able to confirm before in my 30 years of specializing in this model car! It is absolutely one of the most untouched original Broughams I have ever seen, and is in remarkable original condition. It is the kind of car you could easily make a 95 point driver out of without doing a body off restoration costing hundreds of thousands of dollars! It of course would also be an incredible car to start with for 100-point body off restoration, but unlike the vast majority of the Broughams out there it would not be required if you did not want to go quite that far. select this year for my original search was that I did not think that I had a chance of finding one.

It took 8 years of diligent effort to buy this car! It had been sitting untouched in the same SF bay area garage for over 40 years! Only 34 of the 704 57-58 Eldorado Broughams were built in this very elegant dark blue metallic. (Known as Fairfax Blue, code 126)

In my mind color makes or breaks a car. Over the years I have intentionally collected Broughams in rare colors because they are more exciting to look at and will definitely have higher value over the long term. Over half of all 704 Broughams built over 2 years were either Black or White. While all Broughams, regardless of color, are special and magnificent automobiles #700 is something extra special! It took 8 years of diligent effort to buy this car! It had been sitting untouched in the same SF bay area garage for over 40 years! Only 34 of the 704 57-58 Eldorado Broughams were built in this very elegant dark blue metallic. (Known as Fairfax Blue, code 126)

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For the benefit of those who would like to know (Who could resist knowing the details?) I will describe the condition further: Exterior: Perfectly straight and rust free. It does not get any better than this. Strangely the car had been painted a very long time ago. It was done in Lake Placid Blue, code 122. I can see absolutely no evidence of the car ever having had any body damage of any kind. (I am an expert body man and can spot these things a mile away) This leads me to believe it was a dealer color change, which was done a lot on Broughams when they were brand new. 1958 was a recession year. The dealers had trouble selling these very expensive cars so they would often tell customers that if they did not like the color of the car they would re-paint it in the color of their choice. I have heard many such stories from original owners and dealership people over the years. This appears to have been one of those cars.



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Having worked in the auto body business over 30 years ago I can say the quality of the job is consistent with dealer work back in those days. (Not great in other words) Exterior Trim: Trim is original and in very good condition. Needs to be re-chromed for a high point show car, but looks very decent as is.

Interior: In addition to the rare exterior color it has what I consider to be the best type of interior combination. Three color tones with fabric to offset the various colors with texture differences. This type of interior is far more interesting to look at than the two tone and full leather interiors. It is Dark Blue on top, Ivory leather bolsters and door panel centers/dash bottom, and Medium Blue around the bottom of the door panels with shimmering Parisienne cloth fabric cushions, wool headliner, and mouton carpet to give it texture. This looks absolutely stunning, and would contrast beautifully with the correct dark blue exterior. (It also looks great with Lake Placid Blue!). The interior is in original and absolutely amazing condition. With a little bit of dye and misc. other work here and there this original upholstery could look 98% as good as new. The original leather on the bolsters is the best I have ever seen. I have seen many re-upholstered cars that do not look anywhere near this good. In fact I would go as far as to say 99% of the re-upholstered cars I see do not look even half as good as this leather! The Parisienne cloth seat fabric is not worn through on the drivers seat like 99% of these cars are. Unfortunately there is some damage on the RR seat backrest cushion.

The original carpet is in excellent condition. Strangely according to the body tag and factory records this car was delivered with mouton carpet. However the carpet is absolutely untouched original karakul loop. (I have discovered quite a few errors in the factory records over the years) Since this was one of the very last Broughams built they probably ran out of blue mouton, which I can tell you from my personal experience is a very hard color to make, so they simply installed the loop instead.

Mechanical: I have not yet tried to start the engine.. I would want to remove the valve covers and rocker shafts first to check to make sure some of the valves are not stuck in the guides, which is a common problem on old Cads that sit for a long time. To prevent damage to the engine it is important to check this first, otherwise it is possible to bend valves and crack pistons while trying to start the engine. I have not tried to operate any of the other systems yet. Even though everything is complete and intact it is best to proceed methodically, and with caution, on all this to avoid damage.

Also enclosed is a picture of another Brougham that is painted in Fairfax Blue, which is the correct color for #700. Out of the 34 cars built in this rare and desirable color there cannot be many with a great looking interior combination like #700! The one in the picture has full gray leather, which is only a two-tone option. It simply does not have enough contrasting textures and colors to properly set off the rich exterior color. It looks nice, but not nearly as spectacular as it could have been had the original buyer put more thought into matching blue color and fabric choices. If you could image this exterior color with the magnificent interior described above. It would be absolutely stunning!

I thought I would share this exciting news with you just for the fun of it. I sincerely hope you got some enjoyment out of hearing this unusual story. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all very much for the interest you have shown in my work over the years. It is always appreciated.

Sincerely, Michael Rizzuto

PS: Just when you think there is nothing left to find the unexpected happens!



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**AUCKLAND** - Hi Ron (and Enid) - We attended the ACCC Christmas party on Sunday at the Glenbrook Vintage Railway, and it was an excellent day. The weather started off a bit overcast but soon turned stunning, after meeting at the BP on the Southern Motorway the procession then "cruised" out through the beautiful farm lands and great cruising roads through the Karaka, Paerata, Kingseat areas, then in to Glenbrook. There would have been close on 40 cars that showed up for the day, with a fantastic lunch put on, the chance to go for a ride on the steam train and check out their workshops, and all the cars while sitting in the sun chatting, it was a great day. Lots of families turned up also, and a great variety of cars from all eras. Some photos are attached. Thanks Rich - Richard Bayes



**BAY of PLENTY** - Hi Ron, Excellent FINZ on the 40th. Enclosed pic of some of us attending Stragglers Cambridge Car Show which was diverted to Lake Karapiro Domain last weekend because of tree safety issues in the usual domain in Cambridge. A marvellous setting indeed. Photo of Thrups 59 ragtop, Blair & Sonja 64 ragtop and our 59 flattop. Over 900 cars attended. Not one to be missed ever. Gavin Antony, Secretary/Manager, Whangamata Club Inc. (Note - all red Caddies - ed)  
**BAY of PLENTY** - Also Santa was delivered recently to the Palm Beach Plaza at Papamoa. Ron drove Steve & Carol's "Whyte Ice" right inside the Plaza much to the delight of scores of kids, parents and shoppers!  
**BAY of PLENTY** - Another great turn-out of American Iron at the Annual 'All USA Day' car show in Tauranga, mid November organised by our brothers at the BOP Mustang Club. Lovely examples on what was another hot BOP spring day. Another great annual event to try and attend - ed.



### 18 The Weekend Sun Christmas Gift Ideas Santa's Cadillac style at plaza

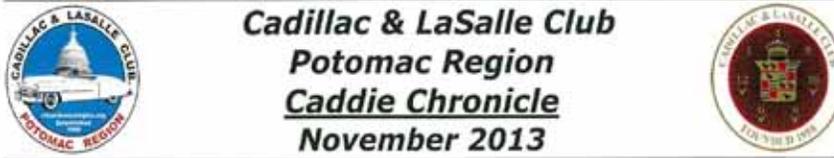
**BAY of PLENTY** - Left, Toni Nabholz sent me this great pic of the three flags proudly flying at the Sudima Hotel we stayed at in Rotorua during our 40th. We asked the Hotel ensure all 3 nations were represented (Australia; USA & New Zealand) - thanks Toni - ed.  
**BAY of PLENTY** - Stragglers pic below - ed.



plaza's every great store - and a score of festive fun happening during the month.  
 The plaza is currently arranging 150 free Santa photos each day, and gift wrap-ups have wrapped about 1000 gifts for free so far.  
 "Santa has been quite busy and has been receiving lots of messages of good behaviour, lots of requests for toys - generally with 'I'm from [USA, NZ, etc.]' and of course thank-yous, sweets and good wishes."  
 David says Santa brings a final parcel for Christmas and emphasises the importance of family, giving and having fun during the festive season.  
 "There is certainly a real buzz in the plaza now."  
 "The renovations have started. The Warehouse and Concessions are in full swing, and the specialty retailers are representing a fantastic increase in fun, fashionable gear."

USA - The Potomac Region in Washington State recently acknowledged our own late Grant Patterson on the front page of one of their issues, thank you Vince (ed. of Potomac Region Newsletter) - Ed.

AUSTRALIA - Hi - Just a quick email to advise you that the Cadillac LaSalle Club of Australia 2014 Calendar is ready for sale and shipping. Cost per calendar is \$A20.00 including packaging and postage. If you wish to purchase one of these calendars, contact either Terry or me via email ([terry@cadillacqld.com](mailto:terry@cadillacqld.com) or [robyn@cadillacqld.com](mailto:robyn@cadillacqld.com)) with your request/order. The calendar/s will be sent out on receipt of payment. The payment may be made to: BSB: 484-799 Account#: 270012483, bank is Suncorp, account is TP & RM Griffin. Please ensure that in your email order you quote your bank transfer reference. If you require alternative payments, please let us know. All profits will go to the WA Nationals, so please support this venture. I have attached a couple of photos to give you an idea of what they look like. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me. Kind regards, Robyn Griffin [Love the cover, I have ordered one! - Ed]



### DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE BY VINCE TALIANO

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- CAR SHOW MASTER OF CEREMONIES**  
NATIONAL CLC ADVISOR  
NEWSLETTER COLUMNIST  
RICHARD SELLS

Special thanks to Scott Milestone who graciously donated one-week stays at his beach-front home in Bethany Beach, Delaware to the top five bidders of the auction held during the **Colossal Convertibles** fall car show. Scott has requested that the proceeds be used by the club to support our members locally. As a result, the officers voted to use the funds to pay the full amount (except for cash bar purchases) for our upcoming holiday party for members and their guests who RSVP by January 19, 2013. More details are available in the holiday party flyer in this issue.



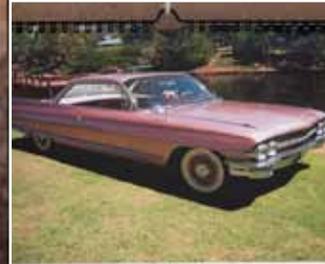
Our sincerest condolences go to the family of Region member Jerome "Jerry" Holiber, who recently passed away. As fate would have it, Jerry collapsed while at a Cadillac dealership and passed away a few days later. It was a sad but fitting end as he was a Cadillac of a guy who will be missed by all who knew him.

The Region offers their condolences to the family of Lewis Jenkins, owner of Jenkins Restorations in North Carolina. For years, an interior by Jenkins has been considered the pinnacle of Cadillac interior restorations.

Also, our condolences go out to the family of Grant Patterson, a CLC member from New Zealand who recently passed away. Grant attended our 2010 summer picnic at Roger Bentley's home (Grant (l.) & Roger (r.) in photo).



*Vince Taliano*



Santa was spotted making deliveries!



### In the December issue of FINZ we highlighted a couple of 'calls for help' regarding "Lassie", a vintage La Salle owned by the Motueka Museum. WE NEED answers please!

Hi Ron, I thoroughly enjoy receiving this mag and reading right through it. Thanks heaps for continuing to send it. I've a couple of questions to ask due to my almost complete lack of knowledge re vintage cars. Our "Lassie" as you would know is run on a 6 volt system. There is a bit of pressure from some to have her converted to 12 volt. I ask them why fix something that's not broken, but I don't really have a good argument that sounds as though I know what I'm talking about. Would it be better to have her converted or would that compromise her original condition status? What would be the advantage of going to 12 volt anyway? We have just replaced the battery after 5 years and it only went dead because I didn't know to keep it full of water. As I say steep learning curve for me. Apparently keeping it on a trickle charge evaporates the water. Now I know I'll watch that. It would be interesting to see what you and your readers think on this issue.

Next query, what is the best way of having indicators put onto her. We must do this as people just do not look up at the driver and we have all had (me and the other three drivers) near misses with people passing when we are turning in both left and right turns. Very scary to find a car passing on the left when turning to the left. Unbelievable too. We do not want holes drilled in the body work at all.

Thirdly and with much dismay our "Lassie" has had an accident. A fully loaded logging truck trailer side swiped her front right wheel arch. No injuries but a very upset Bride/Groom and family and devastated driver. Huge gouging dent and buckled wheel arch. We are now concerned as to getting it fixed. Insurance company says we choose the fixer. Is there anything I need to know?? I don't really know what questions to ask?? Sorry to be a pain but I find the local VCC group helpful in some things, but I often get conflicting opinions too. La Salle people should know I hope. As I said before a steep learning curve....

Looking forward to some help I hope. Many many thanks in advance.

Cheers - Jen C. Secretary / Treasurer - MOTUEKA DISTRICT MUSEUM TRUST. 'LOOKING FORWARD OVER OUR PAST



PLEASE EMAIL YOUR HELP/ ANSWERS TO:

[ron.melville@eves.co.nz](mailto:ron.melville@eves.co.nz)



# The 1959–'60 Cadillac pitman arm saga

BY DAVID A. GREENBURG

**D**id you know that 1959–1960 Cadillacs were the subjects of a safety recall in 1978? It was due to a defect that could cause the pitman arm to break, resulting in a loss of steering.

Fortunately, virtually all of the documented failures that gave rise to the recall occurred during high-stress, low-speed steering maneuvers, such as parking and very sharp turns. Nonetheless, it is unsettling to think that the steering in your 2½-ton baby could be defective. After my recent experience seeking the correct pitman arm for my 1959 Fleetwood 60S, I realized that there is a considerable amount of confusion and misunderstanding about the pitman arm recall and the correct replacement pitman arm for these cars.

This article examines the history of these problems on these cars, the recall and for those of you who own one, explains how to determine whether your car has the redesigned pitman arm. It is an interesting story involving metallurgy, the pope, and precedent-setting federal litigation focused on a most mundane part, the pitman arm on 1959–'60 Cadillacs.

I first became aware of the pitman arm recall in 1990, while employed as an attorney for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in Washington, D.C. This was several years after I purchased my '59 Fleetwood. I learned that these cars had been recalled due to the potential failure of the pitman arm. I contacted a local Cadillac dealer, who agreed to replace the pitman arm on my car.

The service manager informed me that while the replacement pitman arm was no longer available from GM, they would obtain a replacement from a well-known supplier of used Cadillac parts. The repair was completed and I thought nothing more about it.

Twelve years later, my Fleetwood and I are happily ensconced in rust-free northern California, and I am underneath the car enjoying the view and looking for leaks, when I happen to notice the part number on the pitman arm. Something about it bothers me. Wasn't it the same as the old part number? Further investigation, as detailed below, revealed that the replacement pitman arm on my car was also one that had been recalled. I began a search for the correct part, contacting numerous parts suppliers and placing a parts wanted ad in *THE SELF-STARTER*.

During my search, I encountered a great deal of misinformation surrounding the '59–'60 pitman arm recall. Parts vendors and others gave me incorrect information about part numbers; some people tried to tell me the recall never occurred. There was even confusion about the nature of the pitman arm failure. Some people thought that the ball stud on the end of the arm came loose. In fact, if the arm fails, it simply snaps like a stick at the narrower end of the arm near the ball end. I also heard from one person who told me how he had twice had pitman arms fail on his '59 in recent years.

I decided to get to the bottom of the pitman arm question and set the record straight.

I contacted GM and NHTSA, as well as a former NHTSA colleague involved in the federal litigation concerning the pitman arm recall. I also reviewed numerous documents in NHTSA's files concerning the recall. Here is what I learned:

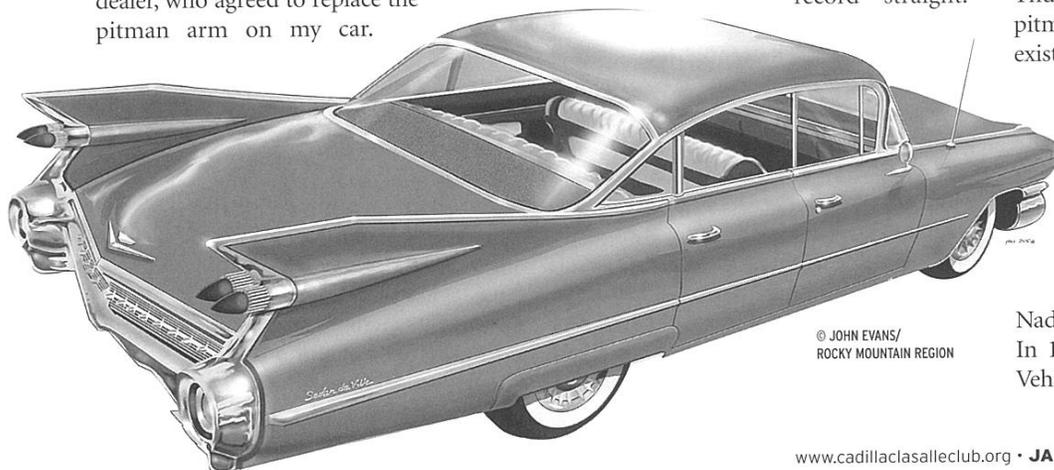
## THE PITMAN ARM PROBLEM

As early as 1960, internal GM memoranda subsequently provided to NHTSA referred to reports of pitman arm failures on 1959 and 1960 Cadillacs. A June 1960 GM memorandum discusses failed pitman arms on two '60 Cadillacs owned by Carey Cadillac Rental service in New York City. This memo also states that Saginaw, the supplier for the pitman arms, had agreed to increase the Brinell hardness on the remaining pitman arms for the 1960 model run, effective June 10, 1960. Brinell hardness (Bhn) is a measure of the relative hardness of metals. The higher the Bhn, the greater the tensile strength of the steel.

A June 1961 GM memo acknowledges five known pitman arm failures, and states that while a change order increasing the minimum Brinell hardness of the pitman arms from 197 Bhn to 217 Bhn was issued in June 1960, the change was implemented so close to the end of production that the change "did not become effective in the 1960 Model Year." This statement suggests that few, if any, of these cars actually left the factory with the strengthened pitman arm.

Interestingly, this memo also notes that "field stock was not recalled or replaced." Thus, it appears that the strengthened pitman arms were simply added to the existing supply of original parts.

GM took no further action at that time with respect to the '59–'60 pitman arm issue. There was no one at that time suggesting that GM do otherwise. In 1960, there was no federal law requiring manufacturers to remedy safety-related defects. There was no NHTSA; Ralph Nader was just two years out of law school. In 1966, the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966 (the Safety Act)



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was passed, which gave the federal government authority to investigate automotive safety defects.

By 1972, NHTSA had begun looking at the issue of '59-'60 Cadillac pitman arm failures. Around that time, NHTSA interviewed several owners of '59-'60 Cadillacs concerning alleged pitman arm failures. The agency also requested information from GM relating to pitman arm failures and sales of replacement pitman arms. The data provided by GM indicated that the company was aware of 91 reported cases of pitman arm failures on '59-'60 Cadillacs. The data provided by GM also showed that through 1971, the replacement rate for pitman arms on '59-'60 Cadillacs was 9.3 percent, as contrasted with 1.68 percent for the 1957-'58 model years, and 1.48 percent for the 1961-'62 model years.

NHTSA also had engineering studies performed on the '59-'60 pitman arms. These studies showed the tremendous increases in stress upon the pitman arm that occurs during low-speed maneuvers, such as parking. According to the test results, while a normal steering correction at 70 mph created a load of 23.4 pounds on the pitman arm, a 90-degree turn at 10-15 mph created a load of 468 pounds and normal parking maneuvers created a load of 1,090 pounds. Parking fully against the steering stops generated a load of 1,780 pounds, while doing so with the stops missing generated loads of up to 2,150 pounds (better check to be sure you've got those stops!).

NHTSA concluded that the design of the pitman arm was "inadequate to perform its operational functions involving repeated high-stress maneuvers." The pitman arm failures were almost always at very low speeds; either during parking or during low-speed turns under 20 mph, although the investigation did reveal one reported failure that occurred at 50 mph.

### THE RECALL AND LITIGATION

A brief bit of background on the Safety Act is in order. The Act gives NHTSA authority to investigate motor vehicle defects and enables NHTSA to require manufacturers to notify vehicle owners of defects where it has determined that the "defect relates to motor vehicle safety." Under current law, NHTSA may also require the manufacturer to recall affected vehicles and remedy the defect without



ALAN CLARK/NORTHEAST REGION

**THE 1960 COUPE DE VILLE, with its graceful, flowing lines, was part of a 1978 safety recall due to a defective pitman arm. CLC member Jon Riley of Chicago, Ill., displayed this car at the 2004 CLC Grand National. Previous page: John Evans of Arvada, Colo., illustrated his 1959 Sedan de Ville Six-Window. Evans has sent several pieces for inclusion in future issues of THE SELF-STARTER.**

charge. At the time of the '59-'60 pitman arm investigation, however, the statute did not explicitly require manufacturers to remedy the defect, although many people believed that this authority was implied, and most manufacturers at that time, including GM, generally agreed.

On Jan. 10, 1974, NHTSA notified GM that the agency had determined that a defect relating to motor vehicle safety existed with respect to the pitman arm on 1959-'60 Cadillacs. NHTSA ordered GM to notify the owners of 1959-'60 Cadillacs of the defect, urging GM to recall the cars for replacement of the pitman arm.

The pitman arm case was one of the first NHTSA safety-related defect investigations. As a result, both NHTSA and GM found themselves in largely uncharted territory, dealing with a new law that was open to various interpretations. Did the low-speed pitman arm failure constitute a defect? If so, was this defect "related to motor vehicle safety" under the law? While it may seem incongruous today to suggest that a sudden loss of steering is not related to motor vehicle safety, at the time, the meaning of this term under the federal statute was not clear.

GM objected to NHTSA's order and filed suit in federal court seeking to set aside the order. The central issue at trial was whether the potential for pitman arm failure constituted an unreasonable risk of harm that would constitute a safety-related defect. GM argued that since the pitman arm failures occurred only in low-speed, high-stress maneuvers, and since there were no documented instances of death or injury from pitman arm failures, there was not an unreasonable risk of harm. The government asserted that once a crack had started to form in the pitman arm as a

result of high-stress, low-speed maneuvers, even a high-speed, low-stress maneuver could cause the pitman arm to fail.

The trial court concluded that while the high percentage of pitman arm replacements indicated a large number of failures, NHTSA had failed to prove that the failures amounted to an unreasonable risk of accidents or injuries. Thus, in April 1975, the court set aside the order directing GM to notify owners of these Cadillacs of the pitman arm defect. In reaching its conclusion, the trial court noted that there had been few documented accidents, no documented deaths or serious injuries, and that as of the end of 1973, 96 percent of the life of these cars had been completed!

NHTSA appealed and on June 28, 1977, the United States Court of Appeal reversed the trial court and ruled in NHTSA's favor. In a decision that has become one of the leading cases in automotive defect law, the Court of Appeal concluded that since GM had sold six times as many replacement pitman arms for the 1959-'60 Cadillacs as for the adjacent model years, and that since the driver loses control of the car if the pitman arm fails, these facts demonstrated an unreasonable risk of accidents stemming from the defect. For those of you who are lawyers or who might be amused to read about federal judges discussing Cadillac pitman arms, the citation to the appellate decision is *U.S. v. General Motors* 561 F.2d 923 (D.C. Cir. 1977), cert. denied, 434 U.S. 1055 (1977); the trial court decision is unpublished.

Following this decision, GM notified the owners of 1959-'60 Cadillacs that it was able to locate the defect, and recommended that the cars be brought in to a dealer for inspection and, if necessary, replacement of the pitman arm.

## THE POPE'S PITMAN ARM

Allan Kam, formerly a senior enforcement attorney with NHTSA involved in the appeal of the trial court decision in the pitman arm case, relates the following course of events that occurred after the recall. Shortly after the final court decision, NHTSA received a call from the Notre Dame Alumni Association. It seems that the Association had long ago given Pope John XXIII a new 1960 Cadillac as a gift (I have been unable to determine the model). After hearing about the recall, the alumni had become concerned about the pope's welfare. Joan Claybrook, the NHTSA administrator at the time, alerted GM to the problem. GM made arrangements for a garage in Rome to make the repair, and arranged for an airplane to fly a new pitman arm and a mechanic to the Vatican. When the Vatican was informed that arrangements had been made to perform the repair, however, word came back that the pope no longer had the car. He had given it to Mother Teresa, who sold it, perhaps to help feed the poor.

The pope's pitman arm was even the subject of discussion by Jane Curtin on a "Saturday Night Live" Weekend Update segment in 1977. She informed viewers that while 1960 Cadillacs, including the pope's, were being recalled for a steering defect, the pontiff was reported to be unconcerned, since his Cadillac was usually carried on the shoulders of Vatican aides. One wonders where this car is now!

## HOW TO DETERMINE IF YOUR PITMAN ARM HAS BEEN REPLACED

If your car has had the pitman arm replaced as part of the recall campaign, it should, at least in theory, have a sticker under the hood stating that the pitman arm was replaced pursuant to the recall.

Otherwise, if you are concerned about the status of your pitman arm, you will need to get underneath the car in order to check the numbers on the pitman arm. You may see the part number, which will be either 5672806 or 5672808. This number can be on either the top side of the arm, in

which case it will not be visible from under the car, or, as is more often the case, on the bottom of the arm, in which case it should be plainly visible from under the car. But this number is not determinative of the pitman arm's status, as the strengthened arm did not have a different part number. My parts book shows the number as 5672808. The potentially defective arm that I removed from my car was stamped 5672806. The NOS strengthened pitman arm that I finally found had 5672808 as the part number on the original shrink-wrapped GM packaging, but the actual part is stamped 5672806.

Instead, the number that you are looking for is a separate four-digit number. As you can see from the pictures, if the number is present, it will be much more subtle than the part number. As with the part number, this number may be on either the top or bottom side of the pitman arm. You may need to clean off the arm with degreaser or alcohol in order to read it. On all of the '59-'60 pitman arms that I have seen, this number is found near the upper (big end) of the arm. If there is no such number, or the number is "1035," then the pitman arm is potentially defective and should be replaced.

If the number is "1038," congratulations! You have the strengthened replacement arm. Obviously, it is much easier to inspect if this number is on the bottom side of the arm (on the same side as the part number), which makes it easy to check from under the car. The "1035" arm on my car was on the top side of the arm (facing up). The top side of the arm is much more difficult to inspect unless you remove it from the car, but it can be inspected on the car. Clean it off very well, and use a bright portable light and a small inspection mirror to examine the

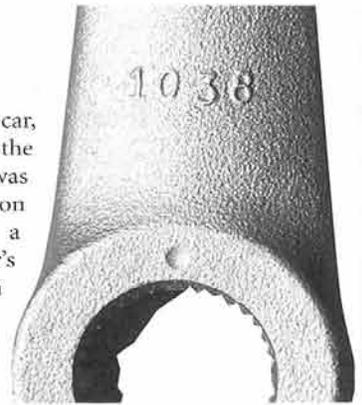
top side. On my car, the number on the original arm was so hard to see on the car, I used a piece of plumber's putty to make an impression of the number, which enabled me to confirm that the last digit was a "5," and not an "8" without having to remove the arm.

The four-digit number refers to the SAE number for the steel used to make the pitman arm. The "1035" arm is made from SAE 1035 steel, which has a lower Brinell hardness number (and lower tensile strength) than the SAE 1038 steel used in the strengthened arms bearing the "1038" designation.

Actually removing and replacing the pitman arm is quite simple as long as you have a pitman arm puller. The step-by-step instructions are set forth in the shop manual on pages 5-8 and 5-9 as a part of Job (8) Steering Linkage, as well as in the bulletin that GM sent to dealers. The more difficult part, at least for me, was finding the correct "1038" pitman arm. As with so many things on these cars, patience pays off! ■

*The author wishes to thank Allan J. Kam of Highway Traffic Associates, LLC, as well as David Doernberg of NHTSA's Technical Information Services for their assistance in developing this article. David A. Greenburg is a CLC member from Corte Madera, Calif.*

**FAR LEFT: OEM pitman arm, denoted by the "1035" marking. Top: The much stronger replacement arm with a "1038" designation. Middle: A comparison of the two pitman arms, with the 1035 on the left.**



**Special Alert for '59-'60 owners**  
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### Cadillac Christmas Cheer



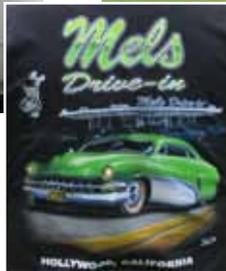
With four dogs of various sizes welcoming us to their home the Queensland Cadillacs drove in one by one. Phil and Mary-Anne have a lovely rural home south of Brisbane. Underneath the shed awning the tables, BBQ and ice boxes were all prepared for our Christmas lunch. What a lovely spread. Rob and Phil were in charge of the barbeque. Superb steak.

Pauline and Sarah organised nibbles, prawns, cold chicken and salads. Mary-Anne the desserts, including the most lovely chewy pav. Pauline made a superb Christmas cake to enjoy with our coffee.

The Cadillacs looked smart under the trees. Engines were perused and discussed as always. Joe wore his dinner shirt and was captured on digital looking at the 1952 AEC bus that he might like to live and dine in. The front of his t-shirt asks "Where were you in '62?" (a line from that all time classic movie American Graffiti – Ed.) Ah now, a few of you have to think about that one, huh? Childhood memories. As were made by the children who enjoyed a swim, some tennis and cart-wheeling on the lawn. Father Christmas showed up with gifts. Jayne and Bev showed us their youthful side.

With everything tidied away Ruby the pig was let out and came running to forage for leftovers. Unfortunately the dogs had beaten her to it. However I do know she had a couple of apples and nibbles taken down to her during the afternoon.

The Queensland CLC wishes all FINZ readers a happy social season with your families and friends. Happy cruising.



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57 Eldorado Biarritz conv. Frame up restoration back to orig. cond. Dual 4 barrel carbs with orig. air cleaner. If anyone in club is interested have them get in touch with me. I'm 80 years old and getting rid of some of my cars. **US\$125,000.** James Clack, Georgia, USA EMAIL: jclack@tds.net



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Each month I receive mail copies of the CLC e-newsletters from around the world:

> Potomac Region (Washington); CLC Canada; Valley Forge Region, USA; North Texas Region, USA; 63/64 Chapter, USA

> Rocky Mountain Region Chapter, USA; Cadillac friends of Norway; The Cadillac LaSalle Club France; Magazine of the CLC Netherland; Motor City Region, Detroit, USA - If you would like a copy, please email me: [ron.melville@eves.co.nz](mailto:ron.melville@eves.co.nz) - Ed

Hi Ron, I don't know if you saw the auction on Trademe but the 1959 pink Cadillac sold for \$29,800. So that was a good result. We are still trying to find / track paperwork for the '62 hearse and the '70 convertible but so far have had no success. They will need to be sold soon regardless. So probably in a week or two they will be on TradeMe. Regards, Scott Newman. Phone or text 027-270-3779. Is shift worker. You will need to arrange time to view. What a find! Ed.



Ron - an advert for next Finz please. For Sale complete set of front brakes with master cylinder etc for 1959 Cadillac. May fit other years as well I guess. Contact Gavin Antony 027 297 0618. Secretary/Manager Whangamata Club Inc. Ph: 07- 865 8705. Mob: 027 297 0618. Fx: 07- 865 6290 Email: [manager@whangamataclub.co.nz](mailto:manager@whangamataclub.co.nz) Website: [www.whangamataclub.co.nz](http://www.whangamataclub.co.nz)



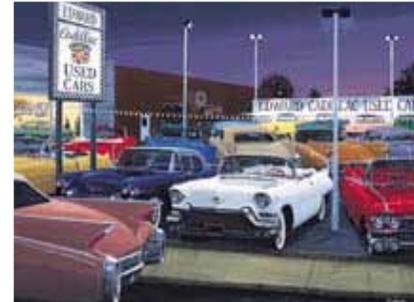
Hi Ron, here's an idea from an old patch I had. The red colour is a lot brighter and has a white cotton trim. It is embroidered and would cost \$10.50 plus GST; woven ones can be done overseas for less. If you or anyone in the club want to "make some money off this idea", feel free. I got them done by Display Associates here in Wanganui (I paid for the set up cost etc). The company can be viewed on [www.displayassociates.co.nz](http://www.displayassociates.co.nz) or phone 06 349 0495 Cheers - Bob Walker, Wanganui/ Manawatu Regional Delegate

Hello from College station, Texas, home of the Texas A&M Aggies. Merry Christmas and a BIG Thank You for the Newsletter. I look forward to receiving it. I am a long time Cadillac restorer/collector. You have one of the best newsletters in the Cadillac world. Bob Smits [Our FINZ is featured on the [www.cadillacclub.org](http://www.cadillacclub.org) website each month under Regions/ Chapters - Newsletters and receives a good volume of hits via the parent club website. Click on the link above and 'follow your nose!' - Ed.

The Editor was gifted a bunch of old Self Starters by Enid and Brian Service at out 40th (thanks guys they have been certainly fumbled over and some will find their way into our FINZ in the future) and I found this in a SS May 2004 issue: (that is two thousand and FOUR!) <http://www.davidsnydercarart.com/dsartwork.html> and there are some lovely GM prints for sale including Cadillac ones, check it out - Ed.

Paul Dixon sends: "Teen driver plows through surf shop, into classic '59 Cadillac"

<http://www.bakersfieldnow.com/news/local/133123033.html?tab=video&c=y>



You can advertise or comment here for free! Just email Ron

**FOR SALE** From: jackie & Darryl [<mailto:d.dowman@xtra.co.nz>] Red Eldorado for sale, \$25k [Jan14]

**FOR SALE** - '59 Coupe DeVille. First regd in NZ in 1960s. Amazing interior, vg exterior. Owner has passed on to me to say 'engine a bit fumey but runs and gets WOF every six months'. Stored in Papamoa. Phone Barryt Connolly 021-914 139

**FOR SALE** - I received this via 'snail-mail'. Oct 8, 2012 - New Zealand Cadillac Club. I have a very rare Cadillac I would like to sell. It's a 1957 Eldorado Biarritz conv. It had a frame up restoration back to orig. cond. Has dual 4 barrel carbs with orig. air cleaner. If anyone in club is interested have them get in touch with me. I'm 80 years old and getting rid of some of my cars. **US\$125,000**. James Clack, 345 Horse Pt. Blue Ridge, GA 30513 - Phone 706-455-7427

**FOR SALE** - '81 Seville Hi Ron. My name is Matt Patten, I have been talking to Ed (0276636012) about selling my caddy. I have owned my Caddy for about two years, been to two Beach Hops, two Kumeu Hot Rod Shows and the Galaxy of Cars (where my caddy was photographed and published in Petrol Head mag - page 3). I'm sorry to say that I am just not using it enough. The details of the car are:- 1981 Cadillac Seville Blue /Black 79,000mls 6.4v8 Rego expires next Feb (2013). Has been in NZ for over 20 yrs on black plates. Right-hand drive. asking **\$6500ono**. Matt 027-2700170

**FOR SALE** - Cadillac El Dorado 1970 2 door Coupe. Excellent condition. Asking price is **\$25,000** firm and a very reluctant sale. James - 021 02535460 Kay - 021 0547314 Or email at [kaylenegallagher@hotmail.com](mailto:kaylenegallagher@hotmail.com)

**FOR SALE** Both my black 1958 Cadillac Eldorado's for sale. No1: 1958 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz original black car #2 condition lovely driver car - \$110,000 AUD All options but is not air conditioned. Black & white interior. No2: 1958 Cadillac Eldorado Seville original black / white vinyl top car #3 condition car - \$40,000 AUD Fully optioned car and was original on air ride. Black cloth and silver leather trim. If you know anyone who might be interested can you please pass on my details? Jeff Randell - Perth Australia E-mail: [jeffvintage@hotmail.com](mailto:jeffvintage@hotmail.com) Home: + 61 892998081 Mobile: +61417072280



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#### April

9th - 14th

The 2014 Cadillac LaSalle Australian Nationals' (held in WA, Aust) Hey you Kiwis start saving to fly there and attend. We will be well looked after, see article in this issue - ed.

#### October

NZ Club Cadillac Nationals & AGM - McLeans Island, Christchurch, South Island (details in 2014)



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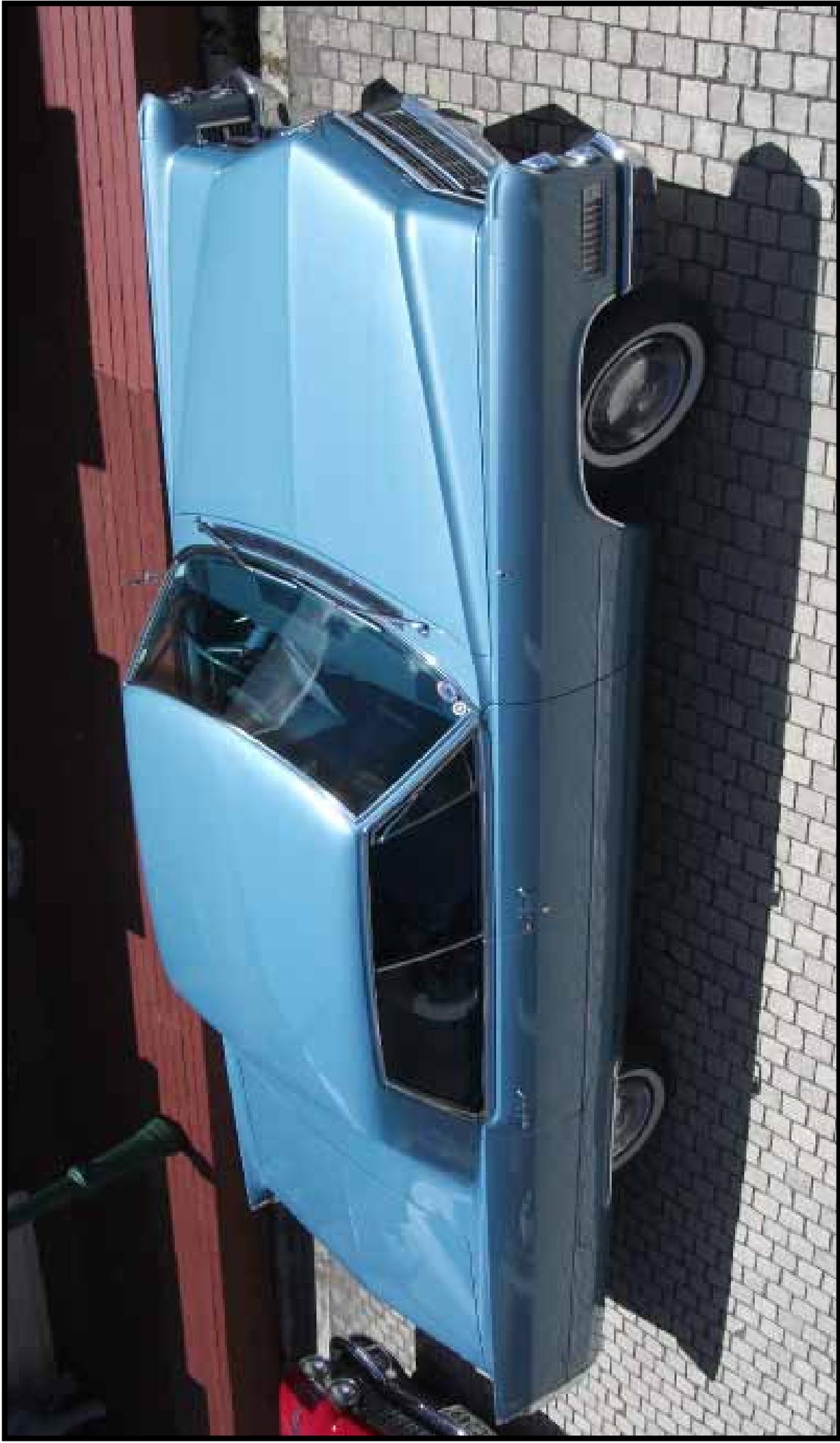
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*New members, Bruce & Trish Jefferies of Taupo brought along their very sharp '65 to join the 40th Celebrations*

**TRAILBLAZERS**