



# THE "OLD CRANK

The Lakehead Antique Car Club Newsletter

April 2009

## My First Classic Car

*Comic Dave Thomas fights middle age by restoring a classic car.* Reprinted from National Post

Somewhere around age 55, a flock of new aches and pains descended upon me. My doctor told me it was old age. Thanks! According to him, there was nothing I could do except take Advil. With the benefit of hindsight, I'm pretty sure that's why I decided to buy a classic car and restore it. I figured if I couldn't fix my body, at least I could fix up a car. It was a way of fighting back at old age and the pull of gravity that works relentlessly to drag us down, shrink us and turn us to dust. Well, maybe gravity was going to get me, but it would have to put up a real fight to get my classic car. I decided that I was going to leave behind a nice, shiny, two-ton memorial made of steel, glass and chrome that would outlive me by at least a century.

There was no question in my mind which car I would restore. Cadillac ruled the roads when I was kid. Sure, I'd owned Mercedes and BMWs in adulthood, and my wife even drives the big, kid haulin' Chevy Suburban. But nothing said luxury and success like the Cadillacs of the 1940s, '50s and '60s. Hell, if it was good enough for Elvis, it was good enough for me. So I started looking for a Caddy. Because I use the Internet for research in my work, I started there. And, like a lot

of classic car buffs, I ended up on eBay.

I chose the 1958 for a lot of reasons. First, it was big! And it had fins. I wanted a Cadillac that could swim along the freeway like a big, scary Great White shark. I liked the 1958 Caddy better than the '57 because it had twin headlights on each side. And I liked it better than the '59 because I didn't like those Jetsons' rocket ship tail lights Cadillac added that year. To me, the 1958 Caddy was truly "Motordom's Masterpiece," big but not too big, garish but not too garish--perfect in design and style.

There were two 1958 Cadillacs for sale on the Internet that I liked. One was a Series 62 Coupe up in Canada and the other was a Sedan De Ville owned by Cadillac LaSalle Club (CLC) member Chris Bruno in San Francisco. I was worried about buying a car from Canada and getting it over the border to the Los Angeles area where I live. So I e-mailed Chris, made him an offer for his car and asked him to stop the auction. He agreed and I went off to a Father's Day barbecue at my in-laws, very pleased with myself and telling everybody about my plans to fly up to San Francisco and drive the big Sedan De Ville home. But, when I got home, Chris phoned me and told me he



Photos by Peter J. Thompson

had not been able to stop the auction. A Norwegian had outbid me and paid immediately through Pay Pal, closing the deal. That was my first lesson in buying an old Cadillac -- never underestimate the Scandinavians. They love 1958 Cadillacs, they move fast and they are willing to pay top dollar to get them.

I went back to look at the Canadian Series 62 Coupe, but the seller had withdrawn it from the auction because he didn't get his reserve price. So, I e-mailed him, got his phone number and made him an offer. I didn't even go to Canada to look at the car before buying it because the seller had posted about 50 detailed pictures of the car on the

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# THE OLD CRANK

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Canada

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Clarence Merko: 623-1275

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Cheryl Alberta: 683-5124

### Newsletter Editors

John & Marilyn Johnston: 683-7000

### Sergeant at Arms

Mike Frowen (acting)

### Phone Committee

Pending

Pending

Ray Brown

### Sick & Visiting

Taken care of by Executive

### Public Relations

Clarence Merko: 623-1275

Submissions for inclusion in future issues of this newsletter may be emailed to [lacc@tbaytel.net](mailto:lacc@tbaytel.net)

This includes feature stories typed in Microsoft Word, photographs scanned at 300 dpi, classified and display advertising. Any questions can be directed to the editor.

# From The President

I really enjoyed our meeting (and garage tour) at Gord Ellis'. The 1932 Ford, he has had for 50 years, is coming along nicely in its restoration. Many '32 Fords have been "rodded" and customized; and although I really appreciate the great '32 rods that I have seen, it is nice to see a few of them restored to their former glory. Gord even showed us some of the modifications he had done as a teenager; and how he is trying to undo these changes. Keep up the great work, Gord, and thanks for the hospitality (and inspiration for those still struggling with their own restorations).

I think we should consider the idea, Ray & Terry had, for offering a free 1-year membership. Many old car owners have never belonged to a club before. We need to tell them of the Seniors Homes Tours and other fine community work we have done. We also need the next generations to get enthused about the old car hobby. It may be time to invite the younger people into the club; even with their more modern Japanese and European sports cars. A change in our Constitution might be needed. I do not wish to see the club's name changed, in an effort to attract new members, however. I am encouraged by The Next Generation articles in Hemmings Classic Car magazine (yes, there are teenagers who now own, and drive, old cars from the '60's and older). The membership needs to encourage their children and grandchildren to attend Cruise Nights, Shows, and the tours we go on.

As I write this, I think about the members who have passed away, and those who are having health problems. Jim Alberta is awaiting much needed surgery (out of town); while Cheryl Alberta is coping with the recent loss of her mother, as well as Jim's pending surgery. They have done much work for the LACC; and are proof that car enthusiasts can belong to 2 car clubs and support both clubs (as others have done). I wish Cheryl & Jim all the best; and I hope they are able to enjoy this summer's cruises and shows. Even if I do not have an old car to enjoy (on the road at least), I am grateful to have met many great people throughout this hobby. In the end what matters, in the club, is the quality of our membership; not the quantity, necessarily.

So let's put on a fun Show at Murillo. Maybe the youngsters can find some reasons to join us, someday.

Sincerely, Peter Knutson

*My First Classic Car  
continued from page one*

Internet, including the engine and undercarriage, so I had a pretty good idea of what I was getting. Keep in mind, I'm also a guy who will "hit" on 19 in Blackjack, hoping to get a 2. But I got very lucky with this Series 62 Coupe.

What I found out almost six months after I bought the car was that the seller had purchased the car from its original owner 26 years earlier. And the original

owner lived in Victoria. That meant two things: First, I was the third owner of the car; second, the car spent all of its life on the Canadian West Coast where it rarely snows and salt isn't put on the roads. Other than a California car, Victoria or Vancouver cars usually endure far better than their eastern counterparts.

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## Meeting Minutes February 18, 2009

The meeting started at 8:08pm, with 12 members present. **Peter Knutson** presided the meeting.

New member, **Michael Gilders**, was introduced and is a good friend of member **Lori Epp**. We hope he enjoys being a member of the LACC.

**Lori Epp's** father, **Henry Epp**, passed away. Henry operated Big Pines Trailer Sales & Service, on North Cumberland Street. Some of the members have dealt with Henry's business, and he will be sadly missed. A sympathy card was given to Lori, with expressions of our sorrow for her, and her family's, loss.

Peter talked about the loss of a great family friend, **Don Love**, from Toronto. Peter showed photos of the 1929 Ford streetrod that Don finished when he turned 80. He was a great man, and a fellow enthusiast.

The Minutes of January 21/09 were deferred, on a motion by **John DeGrazia**, seconded by **Terry Bruley**, and carried.

**Bob Walker** read the Treasurer's Report. We had no income or expenses. There are 29 members paid up for 2009. Bob said that the year-end bank balance equaled the bank statement's balance. The report was adopted as read, on a motion by **Tim Poulin**, seconded by **Cheryl Alberta**; and carried.

### Correspondence

The following was received:

A letter and donation-request card was received from the TBRHSF.

### Old Business

We still need people to volunteer to be Secretary, Phone Committee members, and Sick & Visiting personnel. **Cheryl Alberta** volunteered to help out. Thanks so much Cheryl.

The proposed amendment to Section 3 ELECTIONS paragraph (c) received the 6 required signatures and an acceptance vote (with an "escape clause"). The amendment will be reflected in a reprint of the Constitution.

**Bob Gill**, being the sole recipient of the 2008 Achievement Award (for completing the restoration of his 1953 International pickup truck), was given his award by Peter. Congratulations Bob!

The issue, of new club jackets, was discussed. A deposit would be required,

prior to ordering any jackets. If you are interested in having a light jacket, with the club's logo on it (for use in late-Spring, Summer, early-Autumn), please phone Peter @ 767-4352. We need an idea of how much interest there is, from the membership, before proceeding any further with designs and styles. We will have further discussions once some members return from "the sunny south".

We need volunteers for the 2009 event, and for hosting a bar-b-que ("Welcome to Thunder Bay") event at the KOA Campgrounds, in 2010, for the Coasters 2010 Tour across Canada. Please volunteer, SOON, so that arrangements and contacts can be made.

The Show & Shine & Flea Market is to be held on Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 to 3:00. The "rain date" is to be on Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup>. The Murillo Fair-grounds are booked. Members shared ideas of events that could make the show more interesting; such as a race to change wheels, a "dunk tank" (with someone, with the initials C.M., being the "dunkee"), guessing when an engine would seize (with no fluids in it), etc.

Peter has subscription forms from Collectible Automobile and Hemmings Classic Car magazines. See Peter if you wish to subscribe to these publications.

Please give articles, stories, or photos to John Johnston, for future newsletters. He can be reached at 683-7000, or by e-mail address [lacc@tbaytel.net](mailto:lacc@tbaytel.net)

### New Business

The Motors & Muscles Show will be on Saturday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> at the "old casino lot" (on Cumberland Street, near the Current River Dam). They are interested in having cars there, as well as the usual motorcycles.

Churchill High School is planning to have another Car Show in its parking lot. More information is to come.

The Seniors Homes Tours will be planned and scheduled, again for 2009. **Terry & Joyce Bruley** have offered to contact the Homes, and set up the schedule. Thanks to Terry & Joyce for, once again, organizing this great annual tradition.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20pm, on a motion by **Cheryl Alberta**, seconded by **Daral Travis**, and carried.

The 50/50 draw was held, with \$5.50 going to **Tim Poulin**; and the membership draw, of \$5.50, going to **Joe Bamford** (present).

## Meeting Minutes March 18, 2009

The meeting started at 8:20pm, with 11 members present. **Peter Knutson** presided the meeting.

A big Thank You to **Gord Ellis** and his wife, for hosting the meeting at their great house (and garage). The members enjoyed coffee, tea, cake, and cheese & crackers. Gord showed us his 1932 Ford that he has had for 50 years, and is currently restoring. Gord's friend and neighbor, **George Rempel**, was there and joined the club. George is restoring a 1936 Ford 5-window; and has other old cars. Welcome to the LACC, George!

**Ray Brown** told the members that **Dino Martin** (longtime LACC member) has diabetes, and is on kidney dialysis. Dino has had other health problems, due to his kidney troubles. We wish Dino well, and look forward to seeing him touring, Thunder Bay, in his Cadillac.

The Minutes of February 18/09 were deferred, on a motion by **Ken Crooks**, seconded by **Bob Gill**, and carried.

**Bob Walker** read the Treasurer's Report. We had income of \$125 from 5 memberships. We had expenses of \$18.10 total. There are 32 members paid up for 2009. The report was adopted as read, on a motion by **Ken Crooks**, seconded by **Tim Poulin**; and carried.

### Correspondence

>The following was received:

- (1) The February & March 2009 newsletters from the MHVVC.
- (2) The February & March 2009 newsletters from the MCAAC.
- (3) A Thank You letter from the GJCF, for our donation of \$109 collected at the 2008 Christmas Party.
- (4) The January & February 2009 newsletters from the Nifty 50 Cruisers

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(5) A letter from the Thunder Bay International Baseball organization. They have asked the LACC to be one of 12 host clubs for the World Junior Baseball Championships to be held, in Thunder Bay, in 2010. They need each host club to take one of the 12 visiting teams for a tour of key sites and attractions. Peter will attend an information session, then discuss the ideas at the April Meeting.

(6) A letter from the OLG's head office. The OLG has agreed to sponsor the LACC's Show & Shine in June. Peter scheduled an Executive Meeting for 7:00pm on Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>.

## Old Business

We still need people to volunteer to be Secretary, Phone Committee members, and Sick & Visiting personnel. **Ray Brown** and **Gord Ellis** have volunteered to be on the Phone Committee. Thanks, guys for your efforts.

**Mike Frowen** will amend the Constitution [Section 3 ELECTIONS paragraph (c)] to reflect the changes.

**Bob Gill** talked about the restoration of his 1953 International pickup truck, including where he got the 3 trucks that were used to create this one.

The Show & Shine & Flea Market was discussed. The poster will need to include the OLG logo, which has been sent by **Mary MacRan**, from OLG head office, to the club's e-mail address. The poster's design will need to be approved by OLG. Terry thought that the show cars should be allowed in for free; and the show car owners and the vendors could buy a \$5 ticket for a draw of (for example) 3 cash prizes. The draw would be held at 3:00pm, to keep everyone there to the end.

We will try to contact someone who is organizing the 2010 Coasters tour.

The Seniors Homes Tour will be organized for every Wednesday. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month (meeting night) will be scheduled at Homes in the South end of Thunder Bay. We will need more posters made up (we have only 4 left from 2008).

## New Business

An Executive Meeting is planned for 7:00pm, just before the April 15<sup>th</sup> General Meeting. This is very important, as the agreement with the OLG must be

reviewed and sent away **SOON**.

The **GJCF** will have their annual Soap Box Derby in early June. More information is to come.

**Ray & Terry** had an idea to offer a 1-year free membership to attract new members to the club. This may also help attract participants to the June Show & Shine, especially if promoted at the Cruise Nights, prior to the Show.

Please submit stories of the cars you have had, restored, etc. We would enjoy hearing the story of Gord's 1932 Ford, Bob's 1953 International truck, and others.

The meeting adjourned at 9:17pm, on a motion by **Ray Brown**, seconded by **Terry Bruley**, and carried. TOC

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*My First Classic Car  
continued from page one*



Shipping a car from Canada is a major pain in the you-know-what! Most American transport companies don't want to deal with the paperwork required at the border. I tried about six U.S. carriers and they all turned me down. Finally, I went after a Canadian company called TFX International, which transported the car to me in California in an enclosed carrier.

When the car arrived in Malibu, the transport driver called me at home. He couldn't get his big rig down our street, so my son Harry and I drove up to a school where the driver had parked and we off-loaded the car there. I asked the driver what he thought of the car. "Starts up every time!" he said. So Harry and I drove the big 1958 Caddy the quarter mile home and parked it in the driveway.

The next day, some friends came over and I took pics of the car. It was what you'd call a 10-footer. But the interior was exceptionally nice -- the front and back seats were still covered with that factory plastic. And everything worked

except the radio antenna and the clock. What else is new?

I had done my homework while waiting for the car to arrive. In fact, I joined the Cadillac La Salle Club before I even got the car. CLC member Chris Bruno helped me a lot, advising on what to do with an old car to avoid big problems, such as flushing out all the liquid systems in the car -- gas, oil, water. Another CLC member, John Milliken, was also extremely helpful. He lived near me in California and I cold called him, asking him for help with painters, replaters and the whole team I'd need to take my car from a 10-footer to a "one-incher." John graciously spent a long time on the phone with me, giving me names and phone numbers. And I could tell he knew what he was talking about. The proof was that the following year, John's 1941 Caddy

convertible won Best in Show (Pre-War) at the 2006 CLC Grand National in Anaheim. When talking to Chris and John, I really felt as if I was entering a new world. These guys who owned old Cadillacs seemed like a different breed than the show folks I normally worked with in the entertainment industry. They would spend time with you on the phone, generously giving free advice and bending over backward to give a new guy like me shortcuts they had learned from their restoration experiences. It was a nice feeling for me to walk into a friendly group like that. TOC



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