



#### DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE BY DAN RUBY

#### 2020 OFFICERS:

REGIONAL DIRECTOR AUTOMOBILIA AUCTIONEER SUMMER PICNIC HOST DAN RUBY

ASSISTANT REGIONAL DIRECTOR CENTRAL VA REGION LIAISON NEWSLETTER COLUMNIST CHUCK PIEL

TREASURER BILL HILLIARD

<u>SECRETARY</u> <u>ASSOCIATE NEWSLETTER EDITOR</u> SANDY KEMPER

ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR SCOT MINESINGER

CAR SHOW COORDINATOR NEWSLETTER COLUMNIST VALLEY FORGE REGION LIAISON LYNN GARDNER

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR FRANKLIN GAGE

NEWSLETTER EDITOR WEBSITE MANAGER VINCE TALIANO

NATIONAL DIRECTOR NEWSLETTER COLUMNIST JACK MCCLOW

**OTHER KEY POSITIONS:** 

NEWSLETTER COLUMNIST RITA BIAL-BOXLEY

NEWSLETTER COLUMNIST CHRIS CUMMINGS

NEWSLETTER COLUMNIST SUSAN DENCHFIELD

CAR SHOW SPONSOR AND HOST DANIEL JOBE & CAPITOL CADILLAC

NEWSLETTER COLUMNIST TOM MCQUEEN

CAR SHOW MASTER OF CEREMONIES CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA REGION LIAISON NEWSLETTER COLUMNIST RICHARD SILLS We are now rolling into the fall months and still in a pandemic. Many shows have been cancelled, but we are gearing up for our car show at Capitol Cadillac on September 20th, with restrictions in place (please see flyer on pages 6-7). As noted on the flyer, the Automobilia Auction will not be held, but I'll be on hand to collect items for future car shows. Please bring anything you'd like to donate to the show. Current Prince George's Country quidelines state that events must adhere to a **50 PERSON** 

MAXIMUM ATTENDANCE, so only a limited number of cars and people will be allowed. As a result, **YOU MUST PRE-REGISTER** AND INCLUDE HOW MANY PEOPLE PLAN TO ATTEND! If you

have pre-registered and don't plan to attend, please let us know in advance, so others can fill your spot. Show your Region pride at the upcoming car show by wearing gear <u>ordered</u> at our club store.



Hopefully we can still plan a Cars & Coffee in October, if we get a decent response from members who would want to attend. Please let me know. As of now we will continue to hold our monthly meetings virtually via "ZOOM" and encourage your participation. If this changes, you'll be notified by email.



Congratulations to Marty Watkins, Langhorne, PA, for winning an AACA Senior Grand National award in Class 19E for his 1941 Series 60 Special I was fortunate to attend two car shows in Pennsylvania last month, one to support the Central Pennsylvania Region at the AACA Museum in Hershey and the other in Gettysburg for the AACA Grand National Meet. There were a number of beautiful Cadillacs on display at both events. Also, there is something new and exciting from the CLC, a "Virtual Gran

National." See the flyer on page 5 with information on how to enter (cash prizes)!

I look forward to seeing everyone on Sunday, September 20th!

Dan Ruby





#### AUGUST 24, 2020 MEETING MINUTES BY SANDY KEMPER

 PLACE:
 Virtual Meeting via Zoom Application

 TIME:
 7:30 pm

 PRESIDING:
 Director Dan Ruby

**ATTENDANCE**: Randy & Susan Denchfield, Franklin Gage, Lynn Gardner, Paul Gass, Dale Graves & Dianna Moy, Larry Good, Bill Hilliard, Sandy Kemper, Jack McClow, Grady McMahan, Rick Menz, Chuck Piel, Earl Rutter, Jr., Harry Scott, Vince Taliano and Christopher Winter

**DIRECTOR'S REMARKS:** Dan thanked everyone for attending. Dan mentioned that he had received a "thank you" card from Jan Archambeault for the kind words and flowers she received from the Potomac Region on the passing of her husband Art. Also, we recently found out that long-standing Potomac Region Member Guy Hawkins (pictured left) of Fulton, MD passed away at the age of 83. Guy was a business owner who worked in the auto glass industry for more than 40 years. He enjoyed classic cars and restored many of them over the years. Guy is survived by his wife, Nancy Hawkins, daughter, Lynn Harper, three grandchildren and three great grandchildren. In addition, Dan received a notice that one of the earliest members of the CLC, Nancy Porter, has died. She was CLC Member No. 3.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** The Minutes from the July 2020 meeting were not read since they were published and distributed to all members in the August, 2020 newsletter.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** The Treasurer's Report covered the time period from the July 2020 meeting to date. The Region's income was \$147.95, mostly from car show registrations. The expenses for the same time period were \$863.86 that included the purchase of dash plaques for the car show and the \$500 donation, approved by the Region's officers at a recent officers' meeting, to "adopt" the Betty White 1977 Cadillac Seville at the AACA Museum.

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT:** Our 2020 membership stands at 180.

**ACTIVITIES REPORT:** The following activities were discussed:

#### 1. Recent Events:

- CLC Central Pennsylvania Region Car Show, Aug 22, AACA Museum, Hershey, PA. Dan Ruby, Lynn Gardner and Earl Rutter provided details about the show. Besides the host region, members from the Potomac, Raritan River and Valley Forge regions attended. Nearly 20 cars were parked on the front lawn of the Museum. Of special note, Jan Archambeault, the wife of the late Art Archambeault, and her adult children attended in Art's four outstanding cars: 1949 6269 Sedan, 1962 6039 Fleetwood, a 1963 6367 Eldorado Biarritz and 1978 Coupe deVille. A story with photos will be in the September newsletter.
- AACA Annual Grand Nationals, Aug 21-22, The Wyndham, Gettysburg, PA. Dan Ruby shared photos of the Cadillacs and Franklin Gage, who served as a judge, provided a recap, as well as Randy Denchfield, who also attended. Over 400 cars participated.





#### 2. Upcoming PR Events:

- 28th Annual Capitol Cadillac /CLC Potomac Region Car Show & Automobilia **Auction.** The show flyer was revised and published in the August newsletter. The officers of the Region have met several times to ensure that the show will be held safely. Under current Executive Order from Prince George's County, we will be restricted to having no more than 50 people at the show. This includes owners of registered cars, their quests, show volunteers who may not have registered a car in the show, and all spectators, regardless of club membership. Sandy will send an email to all Region members in a few days to (1) remind everyone of the 50-person limit; (2) encourage anyone planning to register a car to do so soon (pre-registration is required) and (3) request an RSVP from anyone who plans to attend the show (without a registered car). We are concerned about possible walk-up spectators from the restaurant next door to Capitol Cadillac or from the street. So it is our plan to have caution tape and signs announcing that the show is adhering to County orders so that we may not be able to permit them to enter. As always, volunteers are needed to help with the day of show assistance. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Car Show Coordinator Lynn Gardner at lynngardner@clcpotomacregion.org
- 3. Other Upcoming Events:
  - Sykesville American Legion Post 223 Fall Car Show, 7327 Slacks Rd., Sykesville, MD, Sun, Sep 27, 8:30 am – 3:00 pm. Hosted by the Royal GTOs & Pontiacs, the show is open to all makes & models.
  - Grillin' & Chillin' at the Museum Car Show, AACA Museum, Hershey, PA, Fri, Oct
     9. The Museum just announced today that this event has been cancelled.
  - AACA Eastern Fall Nationals, Hershey, PA, Sat, Oct 10. This meet is being planned as a car show only this year. It will not include the multi-day flea market and car corral. The AACA, AACA Hershey Region, and Hershey Entertainment & Resorts are hoping to hold this meet. But approval to hold the meet by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is required and has not yet been secured. Go to <a href="http://www.aaca.org">www.aaca.org</a> for updates.
  - Rockville Antique & Classic Car Show, Rockville (MD) Civic Center Park, Sat, Oct 17. The show has been cancelled.

To view more events, visit <u>http://www.clcpotomacregion.org/eventslisting.htm</u>

**OFFICER ELECTIONS for 2021-2022**: Sandy reminded everyone that after the Car Show, in accordance with our By-Laws, we will be holding the bi-annual Election of Officers for the term 2021-2022. All members are encouraged to consider serving the Region by becoming an officer.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION:** The floor was opened for general discussion from the attendees.

**NEXT MEETING:** Our next meeting is scheduled to be held on Monday, September 28, 2020. This will be a good opportunity to discuss the show, what went well, what areas need improvement, etc. It is likely that this meeting will be held using the Zoom application. An email with the meeting access information will be sent in mid-September.

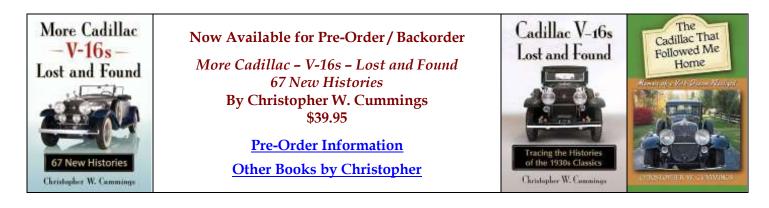
**ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.





#### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

| DATE                        | TIME                          | EVENT  | LOCATION                                   | CONTACT INFORMATION   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Sep 1-23<br>Tue-Wed         |                               | CLC Gran National<br>Virtual Car Show  | Online                                     | <u>Visit website</u>  |
| Sep 4-6<br>Fri-Sun          |                               | <b>NEW DATES</b><br>Greenbrier Concours<br>d'Elegance<br>featuring Cadillac                    | The Greenbrier<br>White Sulphur Springs WV | <u>Visit website</u>  |
| Sep 12<br>Sat               | 8:30 am -<br>3:00 pm          | 31st Annual All Chevy-GM<br>Car Show hosted by the<br>Maryland Camaro Club                     | CACI Parking Lots<br>Annapolis Junction MD | <u>Visit website</u>  |
| Sep 19<br>Sat               | 8:00 am -<br>3:00 pm          | CANCELED<br>45th Edgar Rohr Memorial<br>Antique Car Meet hosted by<br>the AACA Bull Run Region | Manassas Museum<br>Manassas VA             | Bill Sessler at 703-361-5491  |
| Sep 20<br>Sun               | 9:00 am -<br>3:00 pm          | <b>NEW DATE</b><br>28th Annual Capitol Cadillac<br>Car Show/ Automobilia Auction               | Capitol Cadillac<br>Greenbelt MD           | Lynn Gardner at 703-303-7310 or<br>lynngardner@clcpotomacregion.org |
| Sep 24-27<br>Thu-Sat        |                               | POSTPONED TO 2021<br>11th Annual Cadillac Fall<br>Festival and Concours<br>D'Elegance          | Gilmore Car Museum<br>Hickory Corners MI   | <u>Visit website</u>  |
| Sep 28<br>Mon               | 7:30 pm –<br>9:30 pm          | Potomac Region<br>Monthly Meeting  | Capitol Cadillac<br>Greenbelt MD           | Dan Ruby at 301-343-1463 or<br>danruby@clcpotomacregion.org         |
| Sep 30-<br>Oct 4<br>Wed-Sun | Gates<br>open daily<br>at 7am | Fall Carlisle  | Carlisle PA                                | 717-243-7855 or<br><u>Visit website</u>                             |
| Oct 10<br>Sat               | 7:00 am -<br>2:00 pm          | TENTATIVE<br>AACA National Eastern Fall<br>Meet  | Giant Center<br>Hershey PA                 | <u>Visit website</u>  |
| Oct 17<br>Sat               | 8:30 am -<br>3:30 pm          | POSTPONED TO 2021<br>City of Rockville<br>Antique and Classic Car Show                         | Rockville Civic Center<br>Rockville MD     | 240-314-5022 or <u>Visit website</u>                                |
| Oct 19<br>Mon               | 7:30 pm –<br>9:30 pm          | Potomac Region<br>Monthly Meeting  | Silver Diner<br>Merrifield VA              | Dan Ruby at 301-343-1463 or<br>danruby@clcpotomacregion.org         |
| Nov 16<br>Mon               | 7:30 pm –<br>9:30 pm          | Potomac Region<br>Monthly Meeting  | IHOP Restaurant<br>Rockville MD            | Dan Ruby at 301-343-1463 or<br>danruby@clcpotomacregion.org         |









For more information on how to register, visit website.





#### THE SHOW IS STILL ON, BUT THE AUTOMOBILIA AUCTION HAS BEEN CANCELED.

28th Annual Capitol Cadillac / CLC Potomac Region Car Show NEW DATE Sun, Sep 20, 2020

# Car Registration:

9:00 am – 12:00 pm Please read the <u>Car Show Rules</u> on the following page Car Show Hours: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm Awards presented at 3:00 pm

*6500 Capitol Drive Greenbelt, MD 20770 301-441-9600* 

#### LOCAL DIRECTIONS:

#### From Capital Beltway (I-495/95)

- Use Exit 23 Kenilworth Avenue Route 201, proceed South on Kenilworth Avenue to first exit - Greenbelt Road, Route 193
- At light, proceed East on Greenbelt Road -Route 193 (left)
- At traffic light make left onto Walker Drive (*TGI Friday's* Restaurant on corner)
- Make an immediate right onto Capitol Drive (Dealership is on your left)

#### From Baltimore-Washington Parkway (Rte 295)

- Use Exit for Route 193 (Greenbelt Road)
- Proceed West on Route 193 Greenbelt Road
- Make first right after underpass onto Capitol Drive (Dealership is on your right)

#### <u>FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:</u> Lynn Gardner Car Show Coordinator 703-303-7310

lynngardner@clcpotomacregion.org

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#### Car Show Rules

- <u>Government and COVID-19 related safety rules apply</u>: (subject to change up to the date of the event)

   All activities will be outdoors. <u>TEMPERATURE CHECKS ARE REQUIRED</u> to enter the dealership for bathroom use only.
  - MASKS ARE MANDATORY. This is necessary to offer an environment of reasonable safety.
  - Government regulations currently <u>LIMIT TOTAL ATTENDANCE TO 50 PEOPLE, S0</u>
     DEE\_DECISTRATION IS REQUIRED for planning purposes. There will be limited on site register:
  - PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED for planning purposes. There will be limited on-site registration, only if the maximum limit has not been reached.
- **<u>Rain Date</u>**: Because all activities are outside, there will be a rain date of Sunday, September 27. If it is raining or threatening rain, please check your e-mail early on the day of the show. (Email Address required with registration form)
- <u>Safety:</u> If a vehicle has fluid drips or leaks, the owner must bring absorbent material or drip pans to avoid slippery conditions and to protect the show field parking lot. **The Potomac Region reserves the right to prevent any cars with excessive fluid leaks from entering the show field.** It is recommended that a working fire extinguisher be in every vehicle.
- Judging / Parking Rules: The Potomac Region reserves the right 1) to determine each vehicle's judging class and 2) each vehicle's placement in the show field. VEHICLES WILL BE PARKED IN EVERY OTHER SPACE and no parking will be allowed on the grassy areas, due to sprinkler heads and possible rut damage. Vehicles will be peer judged by the individual owners of the registered cars. Registrants will be able to judge vehicles in all classes, including their own. 1st, 2nd and 3rd place awards will be given to winning vehicles in each class depending upon the number of vehicles registered in each class.
- Food and Drink: NO FOOD VENDORS are allowed, so all participants and guests should bring their own food and drinks.
- <u>Chairs:</u> Since all activities are outdoors, <u>NO SEATING WILL BE PROVIDED</u>. Participants and guests should bring their own lawn chairs.

#### **Car Show Registration Form**

| Judging Classes                         | Other Awards  |
|---|---|
| Class A: 1902 – 1942 Cadillac / LaSalle | Best of Show  |
| Class B: 1946 – 1958 Cadillac           | Best Post-War (Early: 1946-1964)  |
| Class C: 1959 – 1964 Cadillac           | Best Post-War (Late: 1965-Present)  |
| Class D: 1965 – 1970 Cadillac           | Dealer's Choice   |
| Class E: 1971 – 1976 Cadillac           | Henry Ruby Memorial Award   |
| Class F: 1977 – 1992 Cadillac           | Ladies' Choice  |
| Class G: 1993 – Present Cadillac        | Long Distance (Driven Cars Only)  |
| Class Z: Display Only                   | Judge's Choice  |
|   | A vehicle receiving "Best of Show" or one of the "Best Post-War"<br>awards will not be eligible to receive an award in its respective<br>Judging Class. |

#### Registration Form (PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)

Make checks payable to CLC Potomac Region and US mail with completed registration form to:

Bill Hilliard, Treasurer 12602 Eldrid Ct

Silver Spring MD 20904-3505 Name(s):

 Address:
 Email Address (required)

 City:
 State:
 Zip:

 Vehicle Registration Fee: (up until September 13: \$15/per car)
 Vehicle Registration Fee: (up until September 13: \$15/per car)

 Circle Make: CAD LAS
 Model:
 Year:
 Class:
 Check box if you want your vehicle to be Display Only

 Circle Make: CAD LAS
 Model:
 Year:
 Class:
 Check box if you want your vehicle to be Display Only

NOTE: By attending this Car Show, you and any guests voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure to COVID-19 and agree not to hold neither the Capitol Cadillac Company nor the Cadillac & LaSalle Club Potomac Region liable for any illness.

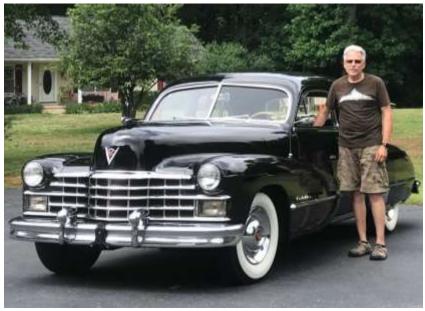
Visit us on the web! www.clcpotomacregion.org Total Number Attending:





#### NEW CARETAKER OF DAD'S 1947 CADILLAC FLEETWOOD SERIES 60 SPECIAL BY LUIS ARANDA PHOTOS BY JUAN ARANDA AND LUIS ARANDA

Recently, I became the third caretaker of Dad's 1947 Cadillac Fleetwood Series 60 Special. Dad became the second one in 1966 when the car had 8,000 miles. Now she has a whopping 37,000 miles and is still all original. Recently, I read the article Filters and faux Pas by John Washburn in the June 2020 issue of The Self-**Starter**. This subject was just in time for me, as I was planning on installing a rebuilt carburetor the same weekend because the gaskets were leaking around the base. John referenced the two phenolic spacer sizes and the benefits gained by installing  $\frac{1}{2}''$  vs  $\frac{1}{4}''$ to help prevent vapor lock. This is



where John's article and photos that I used for comparison came into play.



After removing the carburetor, I discovered the center of the ¼" phenolic spacer was missing, the center of the bottom gasket between the spacer and manifold was missing and the top gasket between the spacer and carburetor was still there but damaged. After some Internet research and an email to John, who replied superfast with detailed information and

resource information, I soon learned the last installer of the carburetor used a ¼" phenolic spacer for a Stromburg WW carburetor in conjunction with two (correct) gaskets for the '47's Stromburg AAV-26 (and no, it wasn't Dad).

As mentioned, John provided his source for a replacement spacer. After looking at the seller's options between a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " or  $\frac{1}{2}$ " spacer, I have decided to stay with the  $\frac{1}{4}$ " for one reason. I inspected each fitting to determine if the  $\frac{1}{4}$ " increase in elevation would hinder any connections and found one. The line that will not reach is the heat riser from the exhaust manifold to the automatic choke. This is the original line with the factory insulation still intact, so I will not tempt fate (unless anyone has any suggestions).







My next lesson was after removing the brass fuel line fitting (45° elbow) at the rear of the carburetor. When I removed it from the old carburetor, the brass screen/filter came out. Now this is where I was perplexed. The screen was rolled into the shape of a tube running parallel with the fuel line/flow and orifice, so fuel ran thru the center/opening never passing thru the screen (I can't figure that one out unless someone can explain). The rebuilt carburetor has, what I assumed to be, the correct, flat screen that fits flush at the carburetor orifice.

While waiting for the new phenolic spacer to arrive, I decided to service the nasty oil bath air breather. **There has to be a better way**, so it's back to researching the amazing Internet. Guess what's the first link I find? That's correct, CLC member John Washburn discussing this very issue. After reading the information, I was off to the local auto parts store and, of course, they did not carry the recommended Fram CA-148 air filter, but they cross-checked it to Purolator A30057. I liked the Purolator better because it was black instead of orange and won't stand out as much. Now everything is reassembled but the car runs rough, so now I need advice on adjusting the carburetor. The saga continues.

*Editor's Note: Congratulations to Luis for becoming the next caretaker of the Fleetwood. As he described, John Washburn's advice and expert information has been of tremendous assistance. It is with great sadness to notify everyone that John passed away on Friday, August 21 due to complications from lung surgery. His column in The Self-Starter, titled <u>Washburn's Wisdom: Advice as I know it</u>, had a large following (see the <u>tributes</u> posted on the Discussion Forum). Rest in peace, John!* 



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#### 14TH ANNUAL CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA REGION CAR SHOW AACA MUSEUM BY LYNN GARDNER PHOTOS BY RANDY EDISON, LYNN GARDNER AND DAN RUBY



Even the threat of morning and afternoon thunderstorms and the ongoing pandemic did not keep the dedicated members of the Central Pennsylvania Region, led by Region Director Richard Sills, from hosting its 14th Annual Show at the AACA Museum. They were joined by members from the Potomac, Raritan River and Valley Forge regions. Of special note, Jan Archambeault, the wife of the late Art Archambeault, and her adult children attended in Art's four outstanding cars: 1949 Series 62 sedan, 1962 Fleetwood, 1963 Eldorado Biarritz and 1978 Coupe Deville.

Quite a few Potomac Region members attended including Randy Edison (Dark Sapphire Blue 1988 Brougham D'Elegance), Lynn Gardner (Jennifer Blue 1975 Sedan Deville), Chuck & Debbie Piel, Dan Ruby, Harry Scott (Black 1941 Series 67 Imperial Sedan) and Christopher Winter.

From the Valley Forge Region, attendance included Toni Rothman with her Pearl Yellow 1993 Allanté, Earl Rutter with his Terra Cotta 1974 Fleetwood Talisman and Michael Stinson with his Firethorn Red 1976 Fleetwood. Bob Crimmins drove his almost new 1993 Fleetwood Brougham from Manalpan, NJ with the factory window sticker still attached. Other attendees included Jeff Montgomery, CLC VP Northeastern Regions, Michael Cascio, CLC VP Information Technology and Eric De Virgilis, among others. This is just a small sample of the members and great cars on hand. In addition, the Betty White 1977 Seville and a 1993 Allanté Indianapolis 500 Pace Car, donated by Potomac Region member Nicholas Ferrantino of Houston, TX, a 1941 Convertible Coupe and a 1959 Coupe Deville were prominently displayed inside the Museum.





Overall the show was a resounding success given the threat of wet weather, the ongoing response to COVID-19 and the AACA Grand National that was being held in Gettysburg, PA.



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#### FLYING CARS WERE A DREAM THAT NEVER GOT OFF THE GROUND BY JAMES R. CHILES COPYRIGHT 1989 SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM SMITHSONIAN ENTERPRISES ALL RIGHTS RESERVED REPRODUCTION IN ANY MEDIUM IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE

*Flying cars were a dream that never got off the ground in the postwar euphoria of the 1950s, cars with detachable wings seemed about to fill up the skies with flocks of commuters* 

Perhaps in some alternative universe, on some alternative Earth, the dreamers were right. On a typical day there, the dawn sky is spotted with thousands of commuters flying from their woodsy homes and beach houses, heading for work in the city. Each Saturday, the flying families take to the air again for visits to far-scattered friends and relations. Hearing a suspicious rattle on the way from Wichita to Salt Lake City, one of these pilots has no reason to panic, because U.S. 36 has roadside landing strip every ten miles. He lands, folds the wings and drives to a full-service gas station at Last Chance, Colorado, for a quick fix. Then, noticing thunderheads over the Rockies, he avoids all danger by sticking to the highway and driving underneath the storm.

On our Earth, however, the auto-airplane never took flight with the buying public. Though several prototypes were in daily use during the 1950s and one amazing model got within heartbreaking distance of full production, the problems of nationwide deployment proved insurmountable. Federal agencies curled up in horror at the thought of hundreds of thousands of amateur pilots meeting daily over major cities. The design of a good airplane, which puts a premium on light weight and high power, clashed with the ideal qualities of an automobile: sturdy, cheap and roomy.



A 1951 magazine cover heralded a new age with an aircraft in every garage.

The failure was not for lack of imagination. Since 1936, the U.S. Patent Office has seen filings for more than 30 designs. Some inventors even gave their paper designs the ability to float, no doubt figuring that any place a boat-car-plane couldn't go wasn't worth visiting. Many plans were the result of backyard tinkering and never made it into the air. Of those cars that did fly, at least three prototypes crashed; one model, a Pinto wearing wings from a Cessna Skymaster, killed its developers. Only two models were ever licensed for production.







Flight designs were as much a part of the 1950s as earthbound automobiles like the streamlined Lincoln Futura of '55.

The flying car, which now may seem only a wild fling in our romance with the automobile, peaked during a postwar love for anything with wheels, especially four wheels. It was a time of garish prototypes shaped to grab front-page photographs: two Ford offerings of the mid-'50s were the bubble-topped Lincoln Futura and the torpedo-like Ford FX-Atmos, a car with fins big enough to shame a shark. General Motors replied with the titanium-bodied, gas-turbined Firebird II. But progress sidestepped them all and left them as prey for collectors and museums.

The usefulness of a car that flew seemed so obvious that it was dreamed of before there were even cars or aircraft – a gliding carriage was built in 1808. Many

schemes followed, and the first car to really fly arrived not long after Orville Wright touched down on the sands of Kitty Hawk. In 1917 the Curtiss Autoplane, an aluminum-framed car with three wings, appeared at the Pan-American Aeronautical Exposition in New York City. It wasn't for the Model T crowd: a pilot-chauffeur sat in the front and two passengers basked in their own velvet- curtained and leather-lined compartment. It did fly, though not briskly. American inventor Glenn Curtiss dropped the idea with the nation's entry into the European war.

Curtiss had used a simple set of chains and gears to take power from the engine and drive a four-bladed propeller. The inventors that followed had no end of trouble, though, solving the problem of how to run their contraptions on the highway without making them too heavy to fly. A French design called the Aviocar mounted a small gasoline engine on the tail wheel to push it around the boulevards of Paris.

The simplest answer was to run the propeller on the highway – and several designers did just that. One prototype out of Georgia was a folding-wing modification of the popular Ercoupe, an easy-to-fly airplane of the '30s and '40s intended for the mass market of weekend pilots. Warned one magazine writer dryly about the model: "Propeller guard as now designed does not adequately screen the whirling blade to prevent a person from falling into the propeller from the front."

This gruesome possibility was preventable with better prop guards, but nothing could have prevented street- level propellers from sucking up hats, deafening pedestrians and reshuffling the racks of sidewalk newsstands. The prospect of these vehicles hitting the mass market, with whole streetfuls of such machines at rush hour, is hair-raising.





The first flyable cars with a chance for mass production rose out of a Roaring '20s plan for an airplane cheap and durable enough for nearly anyone: in the lingo of the time, a "flying flivver." It looked like a job for Henry Ford, and he backed experiments that brought forth a pocket airplane called the Sky Car. Ford lost heart after it killed one of his friends, though, and no other manufacturers shouldered the project.

The new Roosevelt Administration believed it worthy and in 1933 appointed a flying firebrand by the name of Eugene Vidal to get something going. Vidal, a former Olympic athlete and military pilot (and the father of author Gore Vidal), planned at the outset that his Bureau of Air Commerce, using Public Works Administration funds, would build the planes itself and sell them for \$700 apiece. Government lawyers vetoed the idea, however, and instead Vidal sponsored a competition for a cheap "safety airplane." The contest attracted more dreamers than designers, and he held back the prize to name five groups that would produce prototypes for the government to study and test.



The Arrowbile, out for a drive in Santa Monica, could reach 70 mph.

The results were remarkably ugly. Several are at the National Air and Space Museum's Garber Facility in Suitland, Maryland: the welded-steel structure of the Pitcairn AC-35 entry gives it the complexion of the Tin Woodman after a fistfight; the Hammond is covered with corrugated metal that makes it look like a flying toolshed. But by and large they were sturdy, good fliers and as foolproof as anything with wings can be. The Pitcairn was an autogiro, meaning it could use short runways: it had a nose propeller, like an airplane, but had top- mounted rotors, like a helicopter. It also had a powered tail wheel, so a company official delivered it to Vidal by landing in downtown Washington, D.C. and driving to the Department of Commerce.

Another clever entry, the Waterman Arrowplane, was later adapted for highway use as the Arrowbile with a simple transmission and detachable wings. Both models were more airplane than car, though, and accordingly fragile on the ground. An owner would have been foolish to drive them in daily traffic. Like the rest of Vidal's brainchildren, neither made it to mass production.

Vidal resigned in 1937 and took his dream with him. Then the war suspended all civilian flying plans, whether baked or half-baked, but compensated by promising a tremendous postwar boom in flying. Weren't the Army Air Forces and the Navy training fliers by the tens of thousands?





Wouldn't these pilots come home with both feet off the ground and eager to spend war earnings on some kind of family airplane? Everyone with access to printer's ink seemed to think so. "Consider a landing strip as you consider a driveway in drafting your land plans," warned *House* & Garden early in 1945. Polls and predictions pointed to as many as 15 million private airplanes after the war. In early drafts of the 1944 Highway Construction Act, Congress was calling for roadside landing strips alongside all major highways. And right after the war, for a little while, it appeared possible. Americans bought some 30,000 private planes in 1946; Macy's and Wanamaker's department stores in New York hung small planes from their ceilings.

The time looked ripe for the flying car. Consolidated Vultee, a major warplane manufacturer, got under way with its Convaircar, a fiberglass auto that a driver could take to the nearest airport whenever he felt the need to fly. There a Consolidated franchise would rent him a rig that would mount atop his auto to make an airplane. (The rental unit was essentially a 190-horsepower engine with wings, fuel tanks, steering wheel and tail; it sat on three spindly legs long enough to allow the car to back in underneath. The instrument panel and flight controls dropped down through a hatch in the roof.) After all the connections were complete, the part-time pilot would fold the storage legs and fly off. At his destination airport he would turn in the wings and drive on.



Theodore Hall's Convaircar would rent its wings at airport franchise, then back into position for hookup.



Airborne with its flying rig, Convaircar was ultimate in comfort aloft. Its prospects ended with crash landing.

The Convaircar first flew in 1947 and performed tolerably (the designer, Theodore P. Hall, had participated in the design of the B-24 bomber and the Catalina flying boat), but on the ground it would have captured no race trophies. And it never got the chance. The prototype crashed during flight testing when it ran out of gas, reportedly because the pilot had his eyes on the auto's fuel gauge rather than the airplane's. The company folded the project in 1948, when it was apparent that the expected postwar flying explosion was a fizzle. (Private airplane sales in 1948 were down to a quarter of those in 1946 and still diving.)





Another designer of the '40s agreed that the flying car should leave its wings at the airport. He was Robert E. Fulton, a successful manufacturer of gunner-training devices during the war. Immediately after Japan's surrender, he took on the flying car problem. Fulton was untrained aerodynamics, but versatile enough (architect, cinematographer and welder) to put his idea in the air.

His small company camouflaged its operations out of fear of alerting the big manufacturers. His buyers obtained aircraft parts through fronts, his first Airphibian went through runway tests only at night, and the road tests used remote country lanes. When the Airphibian went public in 1946, magazine and newspaper reporters leapfrogged one another in praising it. *Life* followed Fulton and wife on an evening flight from Connecticut to New York City for a performance of *Kiss Me, Kate*. Even at the height of the publicity, Fulton was so wary of competition that he refused to discuss the mechanical details.



Without its wings, Robert Fulton's Airphibian could cruise along the highway (safely) at 45 mph. The pioneering vehicle, unveiled in 1946, could also fly up to 400 miles on 30 gallons of gas.

The Airphibian had two sections: a wings-and-tail unit, which came off in one piece and stayed at the airport between flights, and a narrow two- seater convertible car with four airplane-size wheels sticking out on struts. For highway driving, the operator unbolted the propeller and left it behind with the wings and tail.

Fulton got approval from Federal Aviation Administration inspectors to manufacture the Airphibian, but never found the way to market. Eventually, he sold his beloved idea to Taylorcraft, a lightplane manufacturer, which shelved it permanently. Today, one of his prototypes is on dusty display at the Pate Museum of Transportation near Fort Worth, Texas.

Beneath the glowing reports lay a number of problems, many of which were shared by all flying cars. "In daily use you have a rugged little coupe capable of its share of the normal chores of life," read the Airphibian ad copy, but the vehicle was anything but rugged. It would have suffered expensively from city traffic; a minor collision with the rear end of a bus would have punched the propeller shaft right off the Franklin engine. Repairs would have required the costly services of a licensed airplane mechanic. It was underpowered as an airplane and overpowered as a car.







In 1949 demo for *Life*, Fulton flew Airphibian from his suburban home for a night out in New York City.



After landing at airport, storing wings and driving into town, Fulton parked to catch a Broadway musical.

The flying auto that most neatly solved the wing-storage problem and came nearest to commercial success was Moulton Taylor's Aerocar. Taylor's homegrown company built seven by hand between 1946 and 1967. Throughout, the citizens of Longview, Washington, bought his stock and cheered him on.

His two-seater Aerocar had many jumps on the competition. A changeover from plane to car took less than five minutes and needed just one tool, a handcrank; the operation transformed wings, tail and propeller into a trailer towable by the car. (The trailer wheels popped out of compartments in the wings' leading edges.) That trailer completely liberated the owner from airport hangars. He could take his wings home, park them in the garage and use the fuselage as a front- wheel-drive sports car; or he could tow the wings for hundreds of miles until he felt like flying again.

The Aerocar had many ingenious features. The same 143-horsepower engine served both the tail-mounted propeller and the highway wheels. All airplanes need some kind of automatic noisemaker to warn the pilot of a stall; the Aerocar honked its horn. If the pilot goofed and forgot to lock the wings on firmly, safety interlocks disconnected the starter until he got it right. As an airplane, the Aerocar was remarkably stable in flight. The aviation official who approved the design for sale in 1956 has called Taylor an inventive genius of the first order.







Taylor's wife got into prototype of Aerocar I after hotel stopover in '50s. Folded wings and tail were towed in trailer.

If true, then the project's cogenius was an aircraft mechanic by the name of Jesse Minnick. Both Minnick and Taylor are still around; I met them in the building that holds what is left of Aerocar Inc.

It's a faded, two-story, blue metal box on the south side of Longview, well within nosewrinkling radius of huge pulp mills on the Columbia River. The building is part workshop, part office and part museum. It holds so many aircraft pieces and airplane artifacts, and its occupants have so much evident love of flying, that it seems the whole building might take wing in a stiff breeze. Tables are heaped with old flying magazines, plans, models, awards and

specifications. Souvenirs of the Aerocar era are visible throughout, although Taylor dropped the project for a 20-year period. He's been designing small experimental aircraft for home assembly by hobbyists, and this is the main business of the workshop in the rear.

I found Taylor at the desk in his roomy office, wearing a brown sweater over comfortable khaki clothes. He speaks in bursts of persuasion, using phrases polished by decades of proselytizing, to describe the wonders of the Aerocar and what might have been.

Taylor, born in 1912, remembers watching barnstorming pilots land in mint fields west of Longview and then hitchhike to town. Perhaps it was their extended thumbs that started the youngster thinking about the fact that an airplane was good only from airfield to airfield. For whatever reason, Taylor devoted his working life to putting wings and engines into the air. Spotted around his office now, among Aerocar memorabilia, are scale models of pilotless airplanes and guided missiles. This was Taylor's specialty during World War II, as a Naval Reserve officer directing development of pilotless aircraft.





During a wartime visit home, he met Jesse Minnick, a seasoned airplane mechanic, at a local seaplane base. Minnick had earned his boyhood flying credentials in Kansas by bolting wings to a motorcycle and crashing on takeoff; he started working on real airplanes in 1920. They agreed that the postwar public would jump for a flying car. Taylor was to provide business and design know- how, and Minnick would build it. After the war the pair spent three years designing the first prototype, on capital raised by tapping 50 local businessmen for \$1,000 each. In 1948 Taylor had a quarter-scale model, which he took up to the University of Washington in Seattle for testing in a wind tunnel. It was satisfactory; the next step was to build a prototype at a tiny factory on the south side of Longview. They borrowed some of the running gear from a Crosley auto and machined the rest. "We had to build the front-wheel drive from scratch, starting with steel pipe," recalled Minnick. "We couldn't use a Jeep's front drive. Too heavy." Minnick was the man who took Taylor's general ideas and made them work. (Minnick is still the kind of man who can squeeze the last bit of usefulness out of any device. He showed me a putty knife he bought around 1920 and carries to this day; decades of metal scraping have shortened the blade to a stub.)

Aerocar first flew in 1950, but not very far because the propeller fell off. The explanation was not a loose nut, but a major mechanical difficulty posed by Taylor's determination to mount the propeller on the tail and connect it to the engine with a long shaft through the tail boom. Each time a cylinder fired, the engine wound up the long drive shaft like a spring because the propeller on the other end was lagging slightly behind; then the propeller would catch up and untwist the shaft, the brutal "snap-torque" quickly breaking it. The Wright brothers, Taylor knew, had faced a similar problem on their *Flyer* because they drove their propeller with chains, which often snapped. They solved the problem with a 40-pound flywheel, but Taylor wanted a solution without dead weight.

He consulted aircraft designers and they told him to give up. Anybody else might have done so, but Taylor is the sort of man who could give snapping turtles a lesson in persistence. A tailmounted prop was important to him because it was ideal for a flying car that shed its tail for highway operation. It also kept the wings free of the swirling airflow caused by a nose- mounted propeller. And it saved the pilot from having to unbolt the prop from the nose every time he wanted to drive anywhere.

After several years of frustrating experiments with everything from gears to rubber, Taylor and Minnick finally found the answer in a European invention that used a few pounds of tiny steel balls as a sort of dry fluid drive. It quelled the vibrations, and Taylor had finally achieved his breakthrough. His company won all its permits by 1956 and built five vehicles for sale, dubbed Aerocar I. Taylor and Minnick set out on the motel-and-hamburger circuit to pump up interest in the \$25,000 machines. They flew in air shows and attended car meets from sea to sea. They flew to Cuba and took Fidel Castro's brother up for a ride. They lugged an Aerocar onto the set of the TV quiz show *I've Got a Secret*.





"I never got tired of all the attention," Taylor said, explaining that driving one through a city typically caused so much gawking that police were needed to direct traffic.



Aerocar peaked in 1961. That year, actor Robert Cummings was using one in his television comedy; Portland radio station KISN featured another for traffic reports; and Taylor was deep in negotiations with a Texas manufacturer for mass production at \$14,000 apiece. Dealers started lining up for franchises.

The next year, though, Aerocar hit a wall. CBS canceled Cummings' show and he sold his model back to Taylor; the radio station shifted to a different airplane for traffic watching; and the Texas plans collapsed in hard feelings. But Taylor kept trying and began work on an improved model.

Bob Cummings flew, landed and drove an Aerocar in 1961 TV comedy series.

Just how well did Aerocar I perform? One historian dismisses all flying cars as akin to putting roller skates on crutches, but some who flew in the Aerocar are more nostalgic. Allyn Merris flew one regularly as a traffic reporter for KISN; I found him at an insurance office in

Vancouver, Washington. "It was underpowered," he said after a thoughtful pause. "It had unique flight characteristics, some of which were good, some fluky and some not too swell at all." His model was difficult to start: "It was a matter of gritting your teeth and holding your tongue just right," he said. And in hot weather it climbed only with difficulty. One day, when its pilot and the passenger it carried were both heavy, it refused to lift off the runway.

"It was a marvelous piece of machinery, though," he said. "The turn signals for the automobile part were like the turn signals on London taxi-cabs instead of flasher lights, these little flippers would pivot up and out of the side. That seemed unusually complex and un-aerodynamic, but pilots always used the turn signals in midair because it was so much fun. And we'd honk the horn at the seagulls. It was a maintenance hog and not a great airplane, but I never felt unsafe in it," Merris summed up.

Equally impressed with the gadgetry is Gary Norton, owner of a flight museum near Boise, Idaho. He keeps his Aerocar in flying condition. "When you're making the changeover from plane to auto, it seems like whenever you're looking for a support or a wheel or an attachment, it pops out of a little door right when you need it," he said.

Taylor made many improvements in his second version, the Aerocar III (he had assigned numeral II to a plane). It was quieter and much more streamlined. Aerocar I had a dowdy appearance – looking like a lemon with wheels and wings – but the red- bodied Aerocar III was remarkably sleek and sporty. Taylor built just one and made his last reach for the mass market. In 1970 top executives of the Ford Motor Company considered adapting Aerocar III for the public. Internal reports were optimistic, forecasting sales of 25,000 yearly, and the Ford men took Taylor to visit with the U.S. Department of Transportation. To hear Taylor tell it, agency officials were aghast at the prospect of amateur pilots by the thousands routinely flying through metropolitan areas.





Ford soon lost interest and Taylor's other financing disappeared. Now, almost 20 years later, he's working on yet another design: Aerocar IV. This time he would mate a Honda two- door subcompact car with lightweight flight components based on the old Aerocar approach. He would use a separate turbine engine for the propeller and mount it in the tail. The buyers would also be the builders, under federal rules that allow hobbyists to construct "homebuilt" experimental aircraft. This would eliminate manufacturer's liability difficulties that he says would make the plan impossible otherwise. And because the Honda is already approved for highway use, it would avoid some of the manufacturing paperwork required. (Even so, the owner would have to carry a big wallet: Aerocar III took eight state and federal licenses to operate.) It's hard to tell how serious the pair is about the idea of starting over again on another flying car. "I'm doing this to stay out of a rocking chair," said Minnick. "Or, in my case, a wheelchair," added Taylor.

I asked Taylor if all the decades of frustration were worth it. He didn't even need to stop and think. "If I'd known back then what was ahead, I'd never have done it," he said, but then he laughed as if to take it back. Ironically, while the Aerocar never made Taylor a dime, the Longview land he bought for his Aerocar factory brought so much on resale that it fixed him for life. He can also be grateful that



Moulton Taylor holds minimodel of Aerocar IV, designed for home assembly using the body of a Honda CRX.

he came away with his life after all the flight testing he did in 20 years of Aerocar work. And Taylor can be proud that he went further than anyone else in taking the automobile – arguably the most useful machine of the century – and pushing its usefulness to the absolute limit. He went so far, unfortunately, that he left the buyers behind.





#### CADDIE CLASSIFIEDS

#### Cars For Sale Car #1 Two 1930 LaSalle Four-Door Sedans & Parts - Nearly identical in good condition - Both have black tops and fenders w/maroon bodies, have always been stored inside, their V8 engines run and are drivable – Car #1 has a Fisher Body, purchased from the original owner in 1965 and restored around 1968 - No dents or body damage, but several scratches and chips in the paint on the fenders – Interior is gray and in fair condition – Car #2 also has a Fisher Body and was restored around 1975 – Same exterior color combination as the first one with no dents or body damage, but a very few scratches or chips in the paint - Some of the wiring for its lights needs to be replaced – Interior is red and in very good to excellent condition Partial list of spare parts included in the sale are a set of four doors in excellent original Car #2 condition, two transmissions, engine (long block), starter, four carburetors, trunk, picnic carrier, pair of headlights, dash (restored) with an oil gauge and speedometer and a pair of rocker panels (restored) that run below the doors between the front and rear fenders - See pictures - \$38,000 for the cars and parts - For more info, contact Steve Nicas at SNicas@aol.com - Cars are located in San Diego, CA 1941 Series 61 Woodie Station Wagon - Stock #S3342 - 13,504 miles - VIN#5342864 -346 C.I. V8 w/3 speed manual transmission – Burgundy w/tan leather interior – 1 of only 14 Cadillacs converted by a special restoration shop based in Costa Rica - Recognized in the Cadillac & LaSalle Club Potomac Region for several years – Original 6-volt generator and starter professionally rebuilt in 2018 - Hand-fitted and custom finished the wood framework - Took 2nd Place honors in its class at the 2017 CLC Grand National – Participated in the Celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the 1941 Cadillac in 2016 - See pictures - Offered at \$89,900 - For more info, contact Jon Faust at 800-957-5707 or info@stlouiscarmuseum.com - Car is located in St. Louis, MO 1941 Sixty-Special Fleetwood Imperial - Stock #3534 - 82,301 miles - VIN#6342531 -346 C.I. L-Head V8 w/3 speed manual transmission - Black w/beige interior - Very rare Fleetwood Sixty-Special imperial with power glass partition window - All new interior in 2017, and all new exterior paint in 2018 – Loaded with options including spotlight, front and rear radios, windshield washer, heaters, and more - Very nice example for driving tours - See pictures - Offered at \$59,900 - For more info, contact Jon Faust at 800-957-5707 or info@stlouiscarmuseum.com - Car is located in St. Louis, MO 1946 Series 62 Convertible Coupe - Cream, beige cloth top and burgundy interior - First place Touring Class at the 2017 CLC Grand National in McLean, VA - This beautiful convertible is a dependable driver that participated in the 2014 Hemmings Great Race, finishing 3rd in the Rookie Class – Original drivetrain with automatic transmission – Car was completely restored 3,297 miles ago – See pictures – **\$64,000** – For more info, contact Daniel Jobe at danieljobe@ecapitol.com - Car is located in Greenbelt, MD 1948 Series 75 Limousine - 46,650 original miles - Although 1,262 examples were manufactured in 1948, just 446 cars were built with body style 7533, of which only a small percentage were finished as seven-passenger limos - Offering great originality and the distinction of executive transport – Rare and remarkable originality, offering an outstanding example of Cadillac's celebrated long-wheelbase Fleetwood - Optioned with a Hydra-Matic transmission, radio, heater and fog lights – Driver's seat is black buttoned leather and the rear seat is tan wool and in beautiful condition - Jump seats offer room for a total of nine passengers – Professionally repainted in its original black in the last 15 years – Always garage kept – Don't miss out on this rare classic! – See pictures – \$24,750 – For more info, contact Baxter Saucier at baxter.apc@gmail.com or 337-366-2370 - Car is located in Lafayette, LA 1950 Series 62 Convertible Coupe - Stock #S3526 - 71,928 miles - VIN#506248889 - 331 C.I. V8 w/automatic transmission - French Gray w/blue leather interior - Factory correct color combination - All number's matching - Nicely equipped with power top and windows, heater, reverse lights and more – Excellent driver – See pictures – Reduced to \$74,900 – For more info, contact Jon Faust at 800-957-5707 or info@stlouiscarmuseum.com – Car is located in St.

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Louis, MO





| <b>1953 Coupe Deville Series 62 Coupe</b> – Stock #S3443 – 48,905 miles – VIN#OR67977 –<br>331 C.I. V8 w/automatic transmission – Artisan Ochre Yellow w/yellow interior – Power steering<br>– Hydraulically-operated power windows – Power brakes – Autronic Eye auto-dimming<br>headlamps – <u>See pictures</u> – <b>Offered at \$49,900</b> – For more info, contact Jon Faust at 800-<br>957-5707 or <u>info@stlouiscarmuseum.com</u> – Car is located in St. Louis, MO  |
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