



Cadillac & LaSalle Club Potomac Region Caddie Chronicle February 2022



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE BY DAN RUBY

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NEWSLETTER COLUMNIST
RICHARD SILLS



Photo by The Calvert Recorder

In the picture above I am driving my friend, Maryland State Senate President Mike Miller, in his last parade shortly before his passing. It turned out to be the last parade with my 1958 Eldorado Biarritz; I sold it at the end of December. The car was the result of work my father and I started in 1983. We both enjoyed the car for many years, taking it on many trips to events together. I felt it was time to sell it and the offer was right. It's now time for someone else to have the privilege of driving it. No worries, however, because I still have my 1953 Coupe deVille to drive and show, and it won't ever be for sale. There will be a new addition in my garage soon. Stay tuned!

A huge thank you to the members who displayed cars and volunteered at the Washington Auto Show. The four cars looked spectacular under the lights (see page 6)!

Next up is the Betty White Memorial Dinner at the AACA Museum in Hershey, PA (see page 4) followed by our Annual Holiday Party in Springfield, VA (see page 5). In addition, I will be planning an "officers only" meeting soon to discuss the club's future, including our bi-annual election scheduled for this fall.

Hope to see everyone soon!

Dan Ruby



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IN MEMORIAM: J. FRANCIS WERNETH BY VINCE TALIANO AND MARGARET WERNETH



**Francis & Margaret Werneth
at 2006 Fall Hershey
Photo by the AACA Chesapeake Region**

Former CLC Potomac Region member J. Francis Werneth of Carney, MD passed away on January 7, 2022, at the age of 87. Beloved husband of Margaret, he is survived by many family members and friends.

After graduating from City College in Baltimore in 1953, he held a couple of jobs including Insurance Agent at the Home Beneficial Life Insurance Company (now AIG). He retired at 55, allowing him to spend more time with his family and hobbies – antique cars and listening to early jazz.

In 1976, he founded and served as the first president of The DeSoto Owners Club of America. He was also a member of the AACA and its Chesapeake Region, where he served as a past president, in addition to the Buick Club and Ford V8 Club.

He owned many antique cars over the years, but his favorite was his 1959 DeSoto. He also researched and wrote the history of Maryland Duesenbergs, which was published in the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Club newsletter from 1991-1998.

Growing up not far from their home, I had the pleasure of visiting with Francis & Margaret a few times before the COVID pandemic. It meant a lot to me that Francis reviewed my research on [early 20th century Cadillac dealerships in Baltimore](#) because he was a local historian and collector of literature and artifacts from bygone eras.

Rest in peace, Francis!



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IN MEMORIAM: SARWAT 'SID' HUSSAIN BY DAN RUBY, TELANGANA TODAY AND VINCE TALIANO



CLC Potomac Region member Sarwat 'Sid' Hussain of Washington, D.C. passed away on December 13, 2021. A relatively new member who joined in May 2021, he quickly became active by attending events such as Tech Day at Scot Minesinger's home and Cars & Coffee at the Silo Falls Restaurant, in addition to some Zoom monthly meetings. After meeting fellow members, he ordered a name tag, so he could proudly display his membership in the Region.

At Silo Falls, Dan Ruby suggested he display his 1983 Eldorado at the 2022 Washington, D.C. Auto Show, which he proudly agreed to do. After his passing, his wife, Vidya Bhandarker, contacted the club to inform us that it was Sid's desire to have the car at the show.

Dan & JoJo Ruby drove to their home to pick up the car to clean and transport it to the Convention Center to be displayed along with the other Cadillacs. Pictured below are Dan and Vidya in the middle, along with Sid's brother, Safwat, on the far left, and a former colleague at the World Bank, Eric Chinje, on the far right, at the 2022 Auto Show. Thanks to Dan & JoJo for helping to fulfill his wish.



Sid was an alumnus of the Department of Communication and Journalism at Osmania University (OU), where he received three degrees between 1983-1989. Recently in November, Sid and Vidya visited OU to endow the Dean of Social Sciences Gold Medal to honor the memory of his parents, the late Major S.M. Hussain (Retd) and Amina Begum. Sid also received his master's degree in Mass Communication at Texas Christian University.

Sid joined the World Bank at its headquarters in Washington, D.C. in 1993. He worked there in many capacities, including as a former Head of Sustainable Development Communications, and Head of Communications, World Bank Agriculture Global Practices.

Rest in peace, Sid!



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Celebrating Betty White's Life

**Saturday, February 5, 2022
5:30 PM to 8:30 PM
AACA Museum
161 Museum Dr.
Hershey, PA 17033**



Due to weather, the **FREE** buffet dinner (cash bar available) to celebrate Betty White's life at the AACA Museum in Hershey, PA, scheduled for Sunday, January 16, was postponed to Saturday, February 5. There are still a few spots available, so if you would like to attend, please email Christopher Winter at cchwinter@cavtel.net.

The dinner is being sponsored by CLC Potomac Region member Nick Ferrantino of Houston, TX, who donated Betty's 1977 Cadillac Seville to the AACA Museum where it is on permanent display. The car was given to Betty new by her late husband, **Password** host Allen Ludden. She named it "Parakeet" and now the car is affectionately called "Betty."



"Betty" was used as a prop on the TV show *Mama's Family*, episode titled "[Mama for Mayor: Part 1](#)"

Betty White is synonymous with television. Many of us will remember her from her roles on ***The Mary Tyler Moore Show, Mama's Family, Password, Match Game, The Golden Girls, Saturday Night Live, Hot in Cleveland***, and many other comedic productions. To celebrate her work on TV, dinner attendees will be able to participate in re-creations of the game shows ***Match Game*** and ***Password***.

Come join fans of Betty White and "Betty" along with fellow CLC members, friends of the Museum, and lovers of classic cars

RSVP REQUIRED by end of day
Friday, February 4, 2022, to Christopher
Winter at cchwinter@cavtel.net



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Announcing the Potomac Region's Annual Holiday Party

**Join your fellow Potomac Region members
for good food, beverages and holiday cheer!**

Sunday, February 13, 2022

12:00 – 4:00 PM

Springfield Golf and Country Club

8301 Old Keene Mill Road

Springfield, Virginia 22152

703-451-8600

Price: \$35/per person

**Spouses/Significant Others and
Children are welcome!**

For information, contact

Christopher Winter

at 410-869-8619 or

cchwinter@cavtel.net

DIRECTIONS FROM I-495 BELTWAY:

- Take I-495 to Braddock Road West (Exit #54A)
- Turn left on Rolling Road (VA 638S)
- Turn left on Old Keene Mill Road (VA 644W)
- Club is on your right immediately past the Shell station

**Plenty of parking for your
Cadillac or LaSalle**

Enjoy the Springfield Buffet

- **Mixed Greens with Almonds and Dried Cranberries (Balsamic Vinaigrette and Ranch Dressing)**
- **Chicken stuffed with Broccoli and Cheddar Cheese**
- **Beef Bourguignon with Wine, Carrots and Mushrooms**
- **Whipped Garlic Potatoes**
- **Roasted Vegetables**
- **Warm Rolls and Butter**
- **Assorted Cakes and Pies**
- **Coffee and Tea**
- **Cash Bar: Wine, Beer, Cocktails**

RSVP (Accepts Only by February 1, 2022)

Number Attending: _____ x \$35 = _____

Name(s): _____

Name(s): _____

Name(s): _____

Name(s): _____

**Make check payable to
CLC Potomac Region and mail to:**

**Bill Hilliard, Treasurer
12602 Eldrid Ct
Silver Spring MD 20904-3505**

Dress Code: Holiday Casual

**Visit us on the web!
www.clcpotomacregion.org**



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2022 WASHINGTON, DC AUTO SHOW BY VINCE TALIANO PHOTOS BY FRANKLIN GAGE AND DAN RUBY

The 2022 Washington, DC Auto Show ran from Friday, January 21st to Sunday, January 30th. This year's space was on the first floor and was much bigger than the space occupied at the top of the escalator during the three previous shows. Cadillacs on display included Larry Good's 1947 Series 61 Sedan, Constantin Jiga's 1959 Series 62 Coupe, Maurice Jones' 1976 Fleetwood Brougham and the late Sid Hussain's 1983 Eldorado Biarritz (pictured below). In addition, a Pink Cadillac stage prop was onsite as a photo op for kids and adults.



Pictured left in our Pink Cadillac stage prop are David & Mary Alice Adelberg of Falls Church, VA. They and other picture takers graciously left donations to the Region as a thank you.

Thanks to the owners of the cars plus Dan Ruby, Chuck Piel, Franklin Gage, Christopher Winter and all of the volunteers. Special thanks to Daniel Jobe and Gibbs Fogarty for their support in securing the space.



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SCREWS OR RIVETS? THOSE FASCINATING 1953 CADILLAC BODY TAGS! BY LARRY GOOD

Were the 1953 Cadillac body tags attached with screws or rivets? Every day people stop me on the street and ask me that (Just kidding). The truth is that Cadillac was not consistent with these fasteners or with placement of their aluminum body tags under the hood that year, and many of us in the hobby want to know how to restore this detail authentically.

1953 Eldorado restorer Quentin Hall first made me aware of the different fasteners and wondered why they were like that. I had no answer. His question inspired this study. The subject has been discussed in more than one CLC forum but without clear conclusions. So, I started collecting pictures of 1953 body tags, about 140 of them, from all models. That's a very small sample from the 109,651 cars. More than half of the tag pictures were clear. The rest just served to indicate the tag position under the hoods of different models at various times of the year. About 50 of the tags were from Eldorados. Hardest to find were Series 75 limousines and Series 86 commercial vehicles.

The investigation yielded the following results for 1953 Cadillacs.

- All Eldorados had their body tags mounted vertically with rivets on the firewall between the wiper motor and the battery.
- Body tags of all other models in early production through February were mounted exactly like the Eldorado.
- Beginning in March, the factory changed the tag mounts on all non-Eldorados to a horizontal position with sheet metal screws on the passenger's side of the cowl.

Exceptions found to date:

- Eldorados with screws, not rivets, on firewall: #365, #412, #433 (represents 7% of the Eldorado tags examined with visible fasteners)
- Late cars with tag on firewall, not cowl:
 - 1 Series 62 convertible built on Mar. 24
 - 1 Series 62 coupe built circa Nov. 27

Before going further, let's bring everybody onto the same page with terminology since words can mean different things to different people. Firewalls and cowls form the front of an auto body. For the purposes of this article, "firewall" means the vertical panel, a bulkhead, that separates the engine compartment from the interior. "Cowl" is the sheet metal band that wraps over the top and sides of the firewall and supports the windshield. Note that dual cowl phaetons have two windshields, therefore, two cowls. In 1953 Cadillac put body tags on either the firewall or the cowl as indicated above.



Cadillac & LaSalle Club

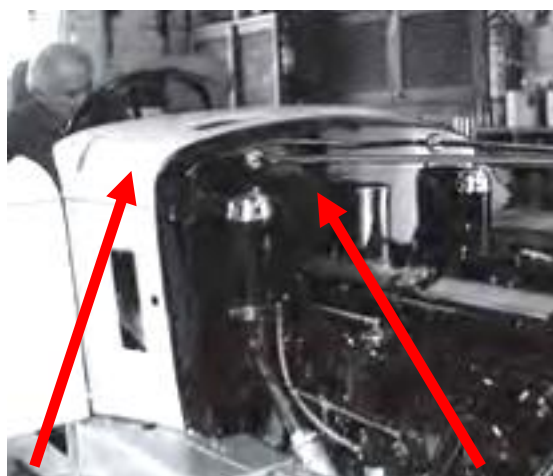
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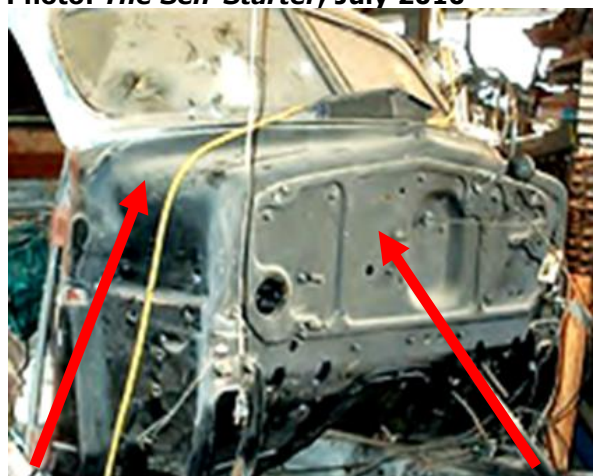
1920s: Original Style Firewall and Cowl
Openings Cut for Cowl Vents
Photo: *The Self-Starter*, March 2005



Cowl

Firewall

1940s: Later Style Firewall and Cowl
Pressed Sheet Metal with Step Cowl
Vent in Open Position
Photo: *The Self-Starter*, July 2010



Cowl

Firewall

High-end cars from the early classic period around 1930 had cast aluminum firewalls. It was real armor, which added a lot of weight. Before the end of that decade the industry had switched over to stamped sheet steel. These lighter cowls had a step pressed into the surface that acted as a shelf to accept the back of the hood and fenders.

Back to the subject: Based on date codes in the lower right corner of each body tag and the VINs, approximate body numbers on the changeover date, March 1, appear in the table on the right. The large chassis cars lack enough information to know, but they were low production anyway.

Records show that most bodies with a date code indicating March 1 would come out of the Clark Avenue assembly as complete cars to be invoiced and shipped between March 4 and March 9. Engine numbers (VINs) in this transition period ranged from 25000 to 27000.

Model	Body #s
Series 62 sedan	11,500
Series 60 Special	4,800
Coupe deVille	3,000
Series 62 coupe	2,700
Series 62 convertible	2,100
Eldorado	N/A
Series 75, Series 86	Unknown

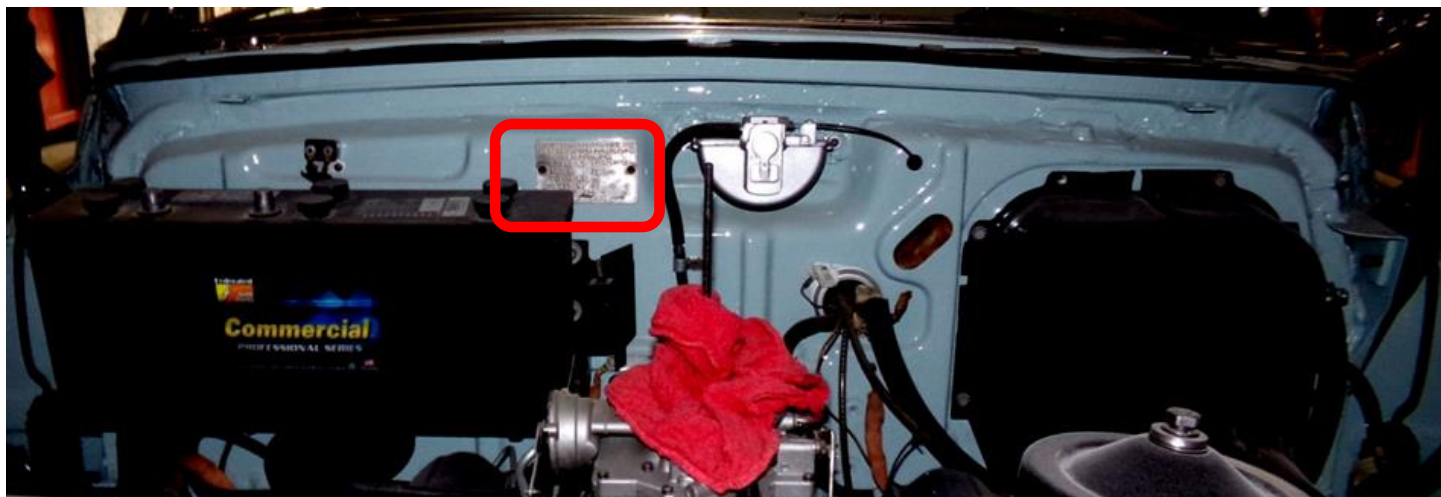
Below are two possible reasons to move the tag location.

1) Visibility after assembly (car's entire service life): In the Fleetwood Fisher body plant, front and center on the firewall was an easy spot to see during body assembly and transfer between plants. After the body drop, however, with everything in place the tags are extremely difficult to read. You have to remove the batwing top of the air cleaner to see even a part of the tag. It is much more accessible on top of the cowl.

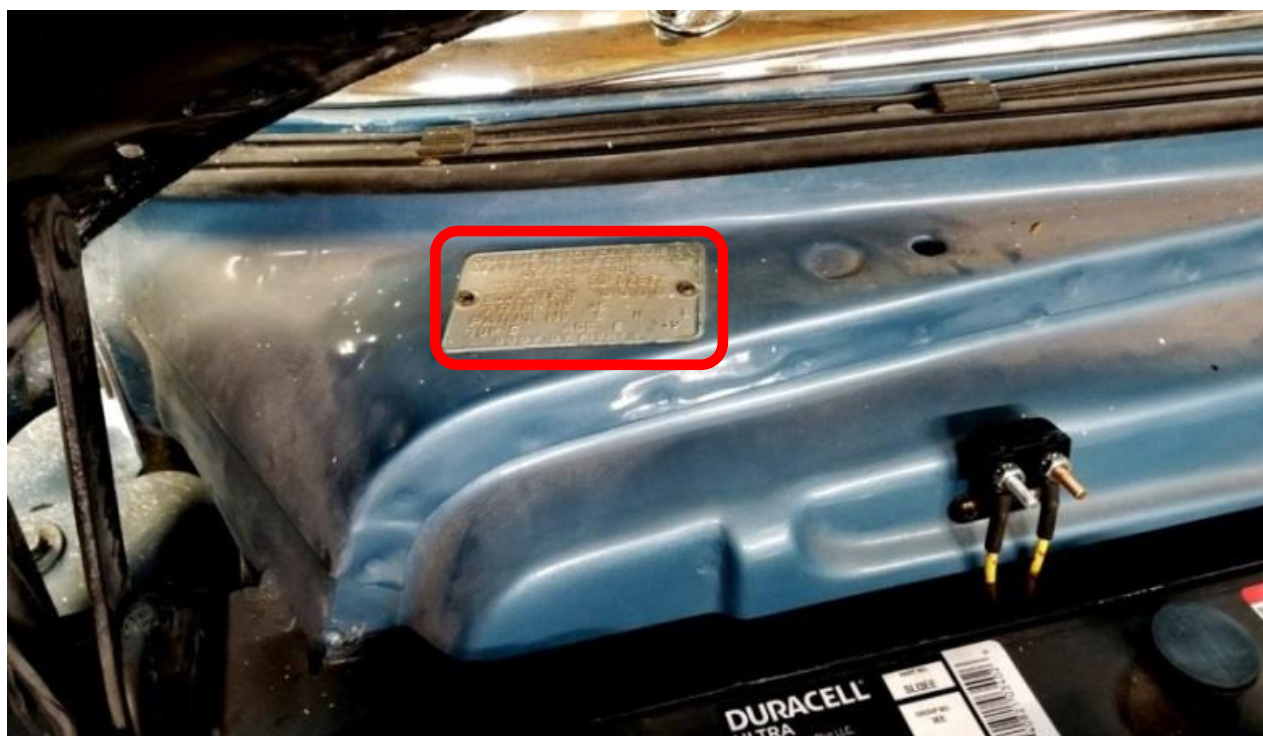
2) Tag replacement: There was often reason to replace the body tag during assembly. This was difficult with rivets on the firewall after the body was mounted on the built chassis. The second position with screws and no hood made this operation far easier.



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**1st Position: Body Tag Riveted onto Firewall
Between Battery and Wiper Motor, Normally Hidden by Air Cleaner**



**2nd Position: Body Tag Screwed onto Passenger's Side of Cowl
Under Corner of Hood (Courtesy Gary Pennington)**

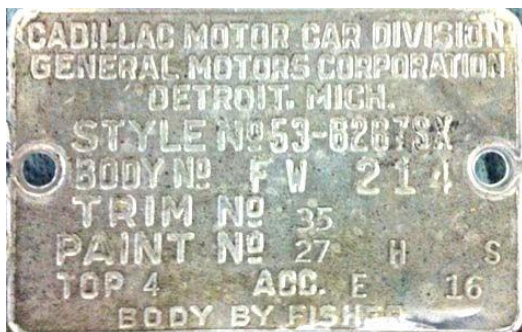
Remember, none of this changeover business applies to Eldorados. Engineers had to redesign the Eldorado cowl to fit its unique wrap-around windshield. Body tags wouldn't fit on this odd cowl, so they were mounted on the firewall with rivets.



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Let's take a closer look at the rivets. Nominal hole size for rivets was 1/4". For restoration, you can buy correct replacement rivets from various GM old parts suppliers.

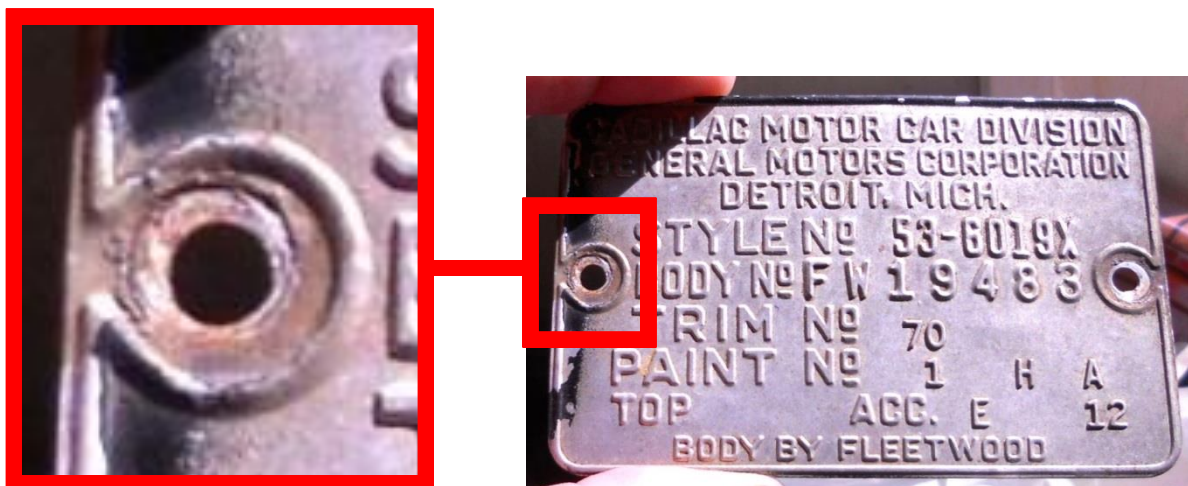


**1/4" Holes for Rivets in Body Tag
Removed from Eldorado #214
Photo from The New Cadillac
Database circa 2012
and courtesy of Marcus Conte**



**Body Tag Attached to Firewall of
Eldorado #62 with Correct Type
Rivets**

Examining the screw fasteners, we see smaller 1/8" holes in body tags that use screws.



**1/8" Holes for Sheet Metal Screws in Body Tag Removed from a Sixty Special,
Showing Impressions Left by Screw Heads
Photos courtesy of Bob Mooney**



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Three out of ten body tags found today, regardless of model, had a type of paper stapled to them. It looks like card stock (see below). Staples (or their empty holes) remain on these tags to this day, but the paper is long gone, removed some time before shipping from the factory. What was written on the paper remains a mystery. Quentin Hall saw pictures once of a 1960 Eldorado with the paper tag still intact but illegible. The best possible explanation comes from CLC member Tom Payette, who actually worked in the Cadillac manufacturing facilities in the '50s. Tom suspects that replacement tags may have had notes stapled to them indicating changes. Tags often had to be swapped out during assembly either due to a change order in progress or for correction of earlier errors, so paper notes explaining the changes might have been attached to the aluminum.



**Body Tag on Convertible
Cowl with Staples and Correct Screws
Courtesy Hemmings Auctions**



Staple Still Holding Chad of Paper



Phillips Dome Head Sheet Metal Screw

The stapled paper phenomenon is more cryptic than a message in a bottle. At least you can find the paper and read the message when you open the bottle. Potomac Region member Mark Brodsky found an index card slipped behind the tag on his '53 Eldorado, presumably at the factory, with just the body number written on it... another mystery.



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In Tom Payette's understanding of the process, he believes the aluminum body tag was a short permanent summary of the build information contained in the detailed "broadcast sheet." This was an 8x10 paper document describing each car, with copies sent to all manufacturing operations. The copies were taped to the windshield on the body and to the various sub-assemblies. This broadcast sheet guided vehicle assembly and brought all the right components together as a finished Cadillac. Abbreviated data on the more permanent aluminum body tag offered future reference to the car's prominent features after leaving the factory.

Aluminum tags could not be attached to the bare steel of the body, or corrosion would have formed underneath. So, at what point then were they attached? It was probably during or just after painting the body. In the painting operation, body shells were sandblasted, filled, primed, sanded, color coated and baked. This happened about two weeks before leaving Fleetwood Fisher. Most body tags were put on after the color coat, probably after baking, because they have color under them. That seems logical, but for unknown reasons some tags were attached between the primer and color coats. These are interesting.

In one CLC discussion forum thread, member Paul Allen wrote about his restoration. "Before the car went in for paint, I removed the tag... under the tag was just primer." Quentin Hall experienced the same thing. Although most Eldorados he's worked on had factory color under the tags, Eldorado #8 was different. "When (the owner) removed the rivets the body colour under the tag was red primer, not red paint. So, the tag must have been on prior to paint and masked up."

This is true. Body tags in 1953 weren't painted, so they had to be masked off if attached before final paint. It was an invitation for inaccuracy that would lose points if judged today.

UNDER MASKING: Some tags have color on the edges where the masking tape didn't completely cover the aluminum during painting. It's natural to jump to a conclusion and blame a careless body shop for doing a cheap repaint. However, I believe some of the poor masking may have happened in the factory. To the manufacturer, tags were just a technical production detail, out of sight under the hood. The Fleetwood Fisher factory wasn't restoring engine compartments to meet today's judging standards. Picture the body moving down the line, slowly getting away from the painter. With pressure like this, masking may have gotten all of three or four seconds of the painter's attention, so some paint got on the aluminum tag edges, indicated by a sharp line from under masking.

There are reports of overspray on body tags. Overspray is fuzzy, not a sharp line. This could only come from repainting with no masking at all. Repaint could have been done in the factory as a manufacturing repair or later out in the world for any reason.



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OVER MASKING: For the same masking reasons, other cars have exposed primer showing on the body around the edges of the body tags where the masking tape was overextended. The spray was blocked, and color missed the body as in the picture right.

Another possible reason for primer showing around the edges is that a replacement tag didn't fit exactly in the same place as the original.



**Red Primer Showing Around Edges of Body Tag
Posted on the CLC Forum by Paul Allen**

Then there's the case of Eldorado #8, whose body tag was attached over primer, and it also had a paper stapled to it. How in the world did they mask that off to shoot the color coat and bake it? They didn't. To fit Tom's hypothesis, employees attached the first tag onto the primed surface with no paper stapled to it. Then they masked off the aluminum tag, painted the body and baked it. Sometime later down the assembly line the tag had to be replaced. The new tag had paper stapled to it but did not have to go through the paint spray booth or the baking oven with its paper. That explanation fits what the owner of Eldorado #8 found.

The precise meaning of the "date code" on the aluminum tag is still not clear. The late Cadillac historian Matt Larson named it that way because the numbers cycle from 1 to 30 and parallel the body number sequence in each model. That makes good sense, but we need more research to know just how the day relates to the production process.

In summary, the first 25% of all 1953 Cadillacs had their aluminum body tags mounted vertically with rivets near the center of the firewall. On the rest of the cars with body tag dates from the beginning of March, except on Eldorados, their tags were fastened horizontally, face up, with sheet metal screws on the passenger's side of the cowl. The changeover to the cowl manifested itself on completed cars invoiced and shipped in a short transition period early in March. Finally, in our limited sample of body tags, 30% of all models show staples that once held paper tags with uncertain text. Stapled tags may have been replacements of the originals due to changes during assembly. If anyone understands more on how the 1953 body tagging process worked, please contact me at lgood@goodllc.com. Let's find the truth.

Special thanks go to CLC member Tom Payette, who actually worked at Cadillac in the '50s. Tom's personal consultation as well as his published information provided much deeper understanding of the Cadillac assembly process as a basis for this article. See his articles in the November-December 2020 and August 2021 issues of **The Self-Starter** as well as his commentary in the November-December 2021 issue.



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PIEL BROTHERS ROAD TRIP BY CHUCK PIEL PHOTOS BY CHUCK PIEL AND CLASSIC AUTO MALL

I am blessed to have three younger brothers living in the Mid-Atlantic area. We are all close. Every once in a while, we do a "brothers' road trip," and recently picked a trip to the [Classic Auto Mall](http://www.classicautomall.com) in Morgantown, PA for our road-trip destination.

My three brothers are: David, who recently retired after 45 years in automotive retail and consulting, Richard, who retired as a Lieutenant after 34 years with the Baltimore City police and "baby brother" Jimmy, who works as an Assistant Vice President for FNB Bank. All are car buffs, but also like sharing a good meal. So, part of our trip to Pennsylvania was to find and partake of a good diner. We weren't disappointed when we stumbled upon the Round the Clock Diner near I-83 on Route 30 in York, PA for breakfast.

The [Classic Auto Mall](http://www.classicautomall.com), which is just off the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Morgantown, is quite a sight to behold. It is a former shopping mall with over 336,000 square feet and over eight acres under roof, all holding up to 1,000 cars. It was purchased and repurposed by a real estate developer who happens to be a collector of very original antique and classic cars. Upon arrival, there was no admission cost. We were told there were over 800 vehicles on display, most of which were for sale as consignments.





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As this was a day trip, and we needed time for another meal on the return trip, we figured we had about two-three hours to tour the Mall. As such, we decided to “cherry pick” our viewing to focus on Cadillacs. We weren’t disappointed, as there was a great assortment of Cadillacs on display and for sale, ranging from 1904-2012.

We first spotted a light blue ‘55 Cadillac Series 62 convertible for sale (pictured right). This car had special significance to us, as our dad had a very similar car from 1956-1962. My first car, in which I learned to drive and took my driver’s test, was a black ‘55 convertible with a red leather interior. All of us had fond memories of those cars, so this car was a trip back in time for us.



I was particularly interested in three 1941 Cadillacs for sale: a black Series 63 Sedan (pictured below left), a Cavern Green Series 67 limo and a burgundy Series 62 convertible sedan “resto-mod” (pictured below right). These cars had wildly different consignment prices and were in decent condition. The resto-mod convertible sedan was sporting a Cadillac 472 engine, power steering and aftermarket wire wheels.





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Fans of '70s Cadillacs, especially Eldorados, would not be disappointed, as there was a nice selection of 1976-1978 Eldorados, including two '76 convertibles and several Biarritz coupes, including the '77 below. These huge cars sharply contrasted with a 1904 Cadillac Runabout (pictured below right) – part of the owner's collection.



LaSalle fans would be drawn to a 1940 LaSalle Series 50 convertible coupe (pictured right), also part of the owner's collection.

In terms of quality of car coupled with a reasonable price, all of us were attracted to a beautiful original '53 Fleetwood. This car, fully loaded with factory air and Cadillac wire wheels, was stunning in mostly original black paint. This car was advertised as being totally original, including the interior, running gear, and chassis finishes. When you closed the doors on this car, you experienced the vault-like "thump" that only a factory original car would yield. If you are interested in a large '50s sedan as a tour car, complete with factory air, this car would be a great candidate!





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1953 Cadillac Fleetwood

We saw many other Cadillacs—too many to review here—but our time was now running short, so we needed to head out. To thoroughly view all the cars on consignment and in the owner's collection, you would need the better part of a full day. The Mall is adjoining a Holiday Inn Express, so over-night accommodations are on-site. There are meeting areas in the Mall for car clubs, but alas, there are no on-site eating facilities except for a vending machine room (not to despair, there is a McDonald's on the other side of the parking lot).

While the consignment cars are inventoried online, they are constantly changing and best viewed live and in-person.

Our return trip meal ended up being at the Round the Clock Diner again. Several restaurants where we stopped either weren't serving inside or had long waiting times – another COVID side-effect.

All-in-all, the Piel brothers thoroughly enjoyed the [Classic Auto Mall](https://www.classicautomall.com/) and heartily recommend it for club tours or individual excursions.



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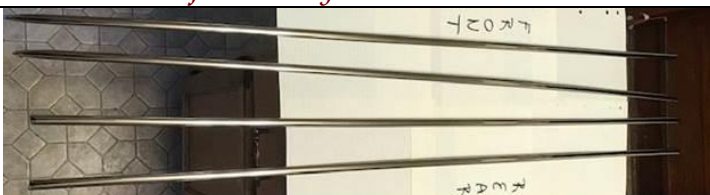
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