

# HOOSIER TAILFIN



A publication of the Indiana Region of the Cadillac and LaSalle Club

WINTER 2023



*Concours d'Elegance*  
HILTON HEAD ISLAND  
November 6, 2023

**1957 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz convertible**  
**Robert Thomas**  
Indianapolis, Indiana

- 1957 saw the Eldorado (in both Biarritz convertible and Seville hardtop body styles) receive new styling with an exclusive rear-end design featuring a low, downswept fenderline capped by pointed in-board fins.
- The 1957 Eldorado Biarritz is an iconic classic. With its Dagmar front bumper and sweeping fins it is the ultimate example of 50s excess.
- Special order car that was ordered with a white exterior and an all white interior.
- Subject of a 20 year complete frame off restoration.

Peoples Choice Number **14234**

328 American 1948-1973 - Open - Luxury Marques  
Hilton Head Island Concours d'Elegance & Motoring Festival





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*On the Cover: Bob Thomas' recently restored 1957 Cadillac Eldorado Convertible won Best Production/Performance car at the 2022 Hilton Head Concours. Congratulations, Bob!*

*Above: 1957 Biarritz owned by Georgia CLC member Jimmie Leonard as seen at the 2022 Hilton Head concours.*

*Photos: Bill Reedy*

## Board of Directors



**DIRECTOR**  
Warner Young  
warneryoung@msn.com  
317-919-8890  
317-842-7990



**DEPUTY DIRECTOR**  
Pat Carney  
pcarneycgcs@earthlink.net  
812-948-9801



**SECRETARY/TREASURER**  
Jim Smith  
jjsmith3739@gmail.com  
317-847-5565



**BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE**  
Jeff Shively  
Cad19651941@yahoo.com  
765-721-1659



**BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE**  
Lars Kneller  
cadtbird@aol.com  
219-326-8830



**BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE**  
Andrew Shepherd  
andrewthedada@gmail.com  
419-349-5692



**EDITOR**  
Michael Fellenzer  
michael@fellenzer.com  
317-251-6962



**BOARD MEMBER EMERITAS**  
Barry Wheeler  
Fltd6019@nwcable.net  
574-967-3752

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# Thoughts from the Director

Warner Young

Ah, winter, we've just been through the merriest time of the year (according to some). We need to appreciate our modern cars in the winter. Imagine having my '40 as a daily driver, no thanks.

We now have 60 Indiana Region members and 74 National only members. This is a decline in our Region from 2021. Note that 2023 dues are now due. Several of our members have already paid for 2023. Dues are \$15 payable by check to Jim Smith in Carmel.

The Indiana Region will host the National Driving Tour for 2023. We will start near Ft. Wayne, travel to northwest Ohio and southern Michigan before ending at the Fall Festival at the Gilmore Museum.

The dates are Sept. 17 – 21. Much of the planning has been completed by Jeff Shively, Lars Kneller, Bill Shepherd and Barbie & Andrew Shepherd.

For 2023 we will likely have a couple joint driving tours days with the Lincoln and Continental Owners Club. Our member, Joe Columbe, is the Director of the Indiana LCOC. Also, don't forget we would much like to see your background story about your favorite Cadillac ride for the Tailfin. Just photos and caption are good also. That can be sent to our Editor, Michael Fellenzer (michael@fellenzer.com).

Our Indiana Region is the host club for the BOPC meet in Lebanon in June. That will be here, before we know it. Jim Smith is the Chairman.

## NEWS and EVENTS

### 2023 EVENTS

**January 28**, Bob Thomas Collection Tour, 10:00, (CCCA event)

**March - April**, Saturday drive, TBD

**June 3**, BOPC, Lebanon

**June 17**, Columbe picnic, Noon, east of Shelbyville

**June 20-24**, CLC Grand National, Albuquerque, NM

**July 13**, Keeneland Concours d'Elegance, Cadillac is the featured marquee, Lexington, KY (*not a CLC event*)

**August 5**, Summer with the Symphony Car Show and Concert, Foster Park, Komomo (*not a CLC event*)

**Sept. 17 -21**, Indiana Region hosting the National Driving Tour

**Sept. 22 -23**, CLC Fall Festival, Gilmore Museum, Hickory Corners, MI

**Oct.**, Saturday driving tour, TBD



Rear view of Jimmie Leonard's 1957 Biarritz as seen at the 2022 Hilton Head concours. Photo: Bill Reedy



Bob Thomas' 1957 Eldorado Convertible during restoration as seen in a 2021 tour of his collection.

# Barn Update

Lars Kneller



As Christmas was approaching in northern Indiana, I was enjoying an official blizzard with 4-5 inches of snow and 40-50 mph winds! Thus, a perfect day to pen my latest Update.

Once my fall chores are concluded, it means more barn time! The **1941 Cadillac's** radio is now home, but not yet installed due to other projects in the (heated) work barn, and it is residing in the (unheated) storage barn. I purchased a correct antenna for it at this year's Grand National, but, of course, it doesn't work. I have turned it over to my friend that fixed the antenna and trunk pull-down on the 1958 Fleetwood to give him a new challenge. He seemed up to the task. He plans to fabricate a new disc and seals to restore its vacuum operated raising and lowering functions. I took the 1941 to dinner with family (6 people aboard) last fall, and on the way home one of its fender skirts fell off after hitting a pot hole. This is the second time this has happened. I didn't notice it until we got home, and could not find it in the dark that night. I commissioned a search and rescue team the following morning and found it off of the road (thankfully as it didn't get run over) at the edge of

some woods. The paint was scratched up but it otherwise is in good condition. It has been dropped off to my body man for repair. This is the Lincoln one who tends to move faster and is more able to be prodded than the Toronado one.

I repaired the choke tube on the **1958 Fleetwood** that goes from the choke to the exhaust manifold. It had come apart at the manifold end due to corrosion. With that now hooked up, the choke works properly. The car starts more easily and idles down nicely once warm. When it was up on the lift getting its oil changed I noticed more holes in the exhaust. You may recall I replaced the rusty resonators last spring. The pipes from the mufflers to the resonators are now "holy." I ordered and have received





new replacements from my favorite exhaust vendor, Waldron's in Michigan. The ladies that answer the phone even remember me when I call. I won't tackle that job myself as the pipes are welded together, so it will go to my shop in the spring.

The **1966 DeVille's** cracked exhaust manifold has been replaced. I started to do the job myself, but found several of the bolts very challenging to get at, and not wanting to budge loose. My trusty mechanic had it done in a day and did not complain about the job's difficulty, so it must have gone well. She is now quiet again. I successfully replaced all of its carpet too. That job is not quite as easy as it looks, due to having to cut holes here and there for the seat attachments, dimmer switch, etc.

Continuing in my oil changing woes, while the **1972 Eldorado** was up on the lift, I noticed the outer boot on the driver's side drive shaft was shredded and coming apart. These were new when I restored the car 1000 miles ago, so I was a little irritated it hadn't lasted all that long. Investigation found the cotter pin securing the lower nut on the upper ball joint had slipped,

and its end bore right into the rubber boot like a can opener. I purchased a rebuilt drive shaft since they're not all that expensive and replaced the entire assembly. However since the other drive shaft is low mileage, I also purchased a new boot and replaced it, so now I have a spare one.

My body man finally got the front-end parts done for the **1966 Toronado**. Why he didn't finish the one rear piece at the same time, I do not know. Nonetheless, the front end is now all back together. I've been on his @\$\$ to get the rear panel done



and he promised “by Christmas,” which is now 2 days away. I think I can have that car all back together in a day once he gets it back to me. In the interim (I think my lift is bad luck), I had the car on the lift as it’s easier to work above and below the car without me having to crawl on the floor anymore. I noted dripping from under the master cylinder, and it had sprung a leak. Long story short, it has been replaced with a rebuilt one and the brakes are functioning again.

I have included a picture of our museum’s **1978 Eldorado**. A member at the Fall Festival asked me why it had incorrect gangster whitewalls on it, and I answered that is how we got it (you may recall the story from a past Update when I painted the orange wheel covers it came with, to match the car). He was very generous and donated the money to purchase a set of new tires with correct whitewalls. The picture is of it with it new tires just installed last week.

I have officially begun disassembly of the **1955 Thunderbird**. So far the hood and deck lid have been removed along with the front bumper and grille. I am preparing to remove the engine and transmission together as the general consensus among the Thunderbird crowd, is that is the easiest way to do it. I have removed several parts and accessories from under the hood and the engine in preparation. I have discovered the engine seized, and am working through several options I found on You Tube, all claiming to have the best way to break it loose.

Happy New Year to all!



Lars & Jaunda welcome a granddaughter to the Kneller barn, Mila Lynn Vajda. Congratulations!

# Tailfin Quiz

1. GM purchased the Australian Holden division in 1931 and it produced cars until 2017. True or False?
2. GM’s first concept car::  
A . Cadillac Cyclone  
B. Cadillac Orleans  
C. Buick Y-Job D. Olds F-880
3. Cadillac offered the first power steering in 1952. True or False?
4. Automotive turbocharging was introduced in the US by GM in 1962 on the Corvair and F-85. True or False?
5. Security Plate Glass (shatter proof) was introduced by Cadillac in what year?  
A.. 1926 B. 1928 C .1930 D. 1931
6. GM’s hands-free driving was introduced by Cadillac in 2017. True or False?
7. Cadillac has announced a Flag Ship all electric car for 2024, the Celestiq. 600 HP and priced at \$300,000. True or False?
8. What year was Supplemental Restraint System (SRS) (air bags) made mandatory?  
A. 1994 B.1996 C.1998 D.2000
9. Cadillac offered the first factory installed CD player in 1987.. True or False?
10. Cadillac offered the first heated seat on the Eldorado in 1967. True or False?
11. Cadillac offered the first in-car GPS in 1995: True or False?
12. Cadillac DeVille offered the first intermittent wipers in 1970:. True or False?

Answers on Page 13



## Keeneland Concours July 13-16, 2023

This year marks our 20th year showing exquisite vehicles at the magnificent Keeneland Race Course in beautiful Lexington, Kentucky. Join us for a fabulous weekend with a full range of events. All proceeds from the weekend events support Kentucky Children's Hospital.

[KeenelandConcours.com](http://KeenelandConcours.com) • (859) 806-3245  
Featured marque Cadillac

## Special emphasis on Cadillac for 2023 - nominate now!

### 1,000,000th Cadillac, November 25, 1949

On this day in 1949, a 1949 Cadillac Coupe de Ville rolled off the assembly line, marking the 1,000,000th Cadillac to be manufactured since the company's inception in 1902. Pictured with the vehicle above are John F. Gordon, General Manager; Don E. Ahrens, General Sales Manager; and C.A. Raftrey, Works Manager.

Standard specs for the 1949 Cadillac Coupe deVille included a 331 V8 that made 160 horsepower. It could power the approximately 4,250 pound car to nearly 100 mph. It averaged 13.5 miles per gallon when equipped with 4 speed Hydra-Matic transmission.

While it took Cadillac nearly 50 years to reach the one million

mark, it'd only be 9 more before the two millionth Caddy hit the streets. It was February 7, 1958, when that car, a Cadillac Sedan deVille, was completed.  
*Credit: automotivehistory.org*



# ANNUAL MEETING & Christmas Party



**December 10, 2022**

By Warner Young

The Indiana Region's annual meeting and Christmas party were held at the Garrison Restaurant at the Fort Golf Resort in Lawrence. Twenty-two Indiana members attended with some traveling from as far as Maumee, OH, New Albany and Jeffersonville. There was much lively conversation with, undoubtedly, some fact stretching, per normal. Our food preparation and service were quite good and certainly up to the Garrison's high standards.

Our business meeting consisted of a review of 2022 activity, a Treasurer's report from Jim Smith, a short Editor's report supplied by Michael Fellenzer and a web update from Carl Carney. We reviewed the planned activities for 2023 and noted that it is likely we will have one or more joint activities with the Lincoln Continental Club.

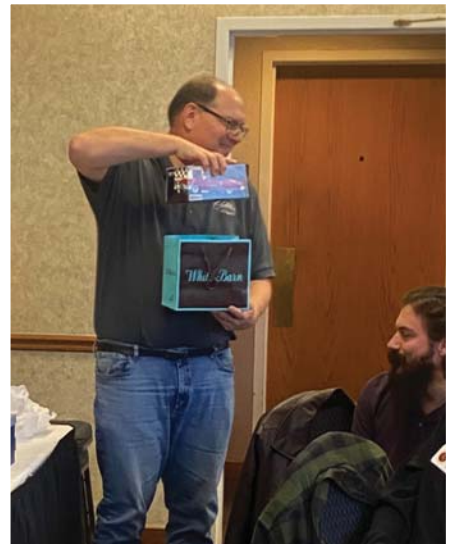
Jeff Shively, Andrew Shepherd and Bill Shepherd discussed the 2023 National Driving tour through northeast Indiana, northwest Ohio and southern Michigan. The tour will end at the CLC MRC Fall Festival, September 21, 2023. The Indiana Region is hosting this driving tour. Bill Reedy gave a photo presentation of their travels on the 2022 National

Driving Tour that went from Virginia to Hilton Head Island, ending at the Hilton Head Concours. Steve Henderson of Wabash also participated in the 2022 driving tour. Note that Bob Thomas won Best Production/Performance car for his recently restored 1957 Cadillac Eldorado Convertible at the Concours.

2023 Club Officers were elected. Our Board will be: Warner Young, Director; Pat Carney, Deputy Director; Jim Smith Sec./Treasurer; Lars Kneller Member-at-Large; Jeff Shively Member-at-Large; Andrew Shepherd Member-at-Large and Michael Fellenzer Editor. Barry Wheeler is a Board member Emeritus.

After our business meeting we enjoyed a game of "Heads or Tails" and a gag gift exchange that most any younger group, such as ours, would want for their Christmas Party. And so another fulfilling year is in the books.





Merry Christmas and wishing you a Merry 2023. We're guessing Santa had the jumper cables on his '70 Caddy to be ready for the big day.



# Gets Drafted Into The Army

Jay Wignall

## Part 3

Restoring anything, be it a piece of furniture, an entire house, boat, airplane or automobile involves dedication, knowledge, an end game plan and financial resources. Most of us who restore anything are likely better at one type of project over the others, but personal satisfaction of the completed work carries with it a pride of accomplishment, on which it is difficult to put a monetary value.

I recently spoke with a fellow car enthusiast, age 84, seeking a set of side-mount fenders which were stored in my mini-barn. For him, it was the last major item to finish his Cadillac. Alas, the ones I had were not consistent with his need, they were off by a year and the wrong model. Round peg in a square hole sort of problem. He ultimately did find what he was looking for and at our last conversation he said he'd sold his restored Cadillac for something just north of 90,000. However, he said that his cost at the end of the restoration was a few pounds over 98,000. Now I'm no CPA, but a 8,000 difference adds up to a whole lot of pride in the project, a further demonstration that the old car market isn't what it formerly was. He had replaced nearly every nut, bolt and screw; consequently, the new owner ended up with a very complete restored vehicle, at a relative bargain.

## Authenticity VS. Affordability

When doing a restoration, we have to weigh cost vs. value, the balancing point being pride. Most of us will make some sort of profit, large or small, perhaps it really doesn't matter in the long run. Total authenticity is commendable, seeking and gaining that 100 points is very rewarding, and such a car will fetch a fine price should you decide to sell. Be sure that radio works and enjoy all of those AM stations. Some of us are not so particular, more than likely because of financial resources, not as much knowledge, or we age out, die, and our grandchildren sell our dream for whatever they can get, after-all, it likely didn't cost them much, if anything. If you listen to some in the younger



generation, they will tell you that the internal combustion engine vehicles will soon become dinosaurs just like the folks who owned them.

Such has gone the restoration of Miss Montana. In some ways the car was altered enough before becoming mine as to never to be a 100 point car, and honestly, that isn't why she was purchased in the first place, I just wanted a nice looking older than me car to take out on sunny days and drive for my own pleasure. Never mind that the 1939 Detroit masterpiece now has a few parts belonging to a 1940 or 41, I can live with that. No, I didn't drop a short-block Chevy engine in it, that would be extreme, I'm not that mechanical, not to mention really depreciating the value. Actually, she still has the engine she came with.

At present, she is resting in the garage waiting for an electrical issue to be resolved, some final chrome work, (isn't that always the case) fine tuning several small time and treasure consuming problems. You are never finished with a restoration until you sell it, we are all tinkers at heart.

Offered here are photos of how she sits today, warts and all, not totally authentic, not finished. The judges can walk right past her to that other vehicle just down the line. She is appreciated no less, a prideful possession and thank you for the classification category of modified.



# 1941

## Cadillac Series 63 Touring Sedan—Update

By Jim Smith

As I said in the last article, the '41 is in pretty good shape overall, but needed some maintenance work done on pretty much all of the systems within the car. It's important to make a detailed list of the projects that you wish to accomplish, and then put them into a flowchart order so that when you tackle one item, it's likely that you can accomplish several in the same general area.

The first order of business was the ignition system, and thankfully parts are plentiful for Delco GM distributors. Cadillac flatheads are easy to work on since the distributor is a two-part assembly—remove the hold-down bolt, and the upper half separates from the tower on the engine block. This allows you to completely strip down the internals and check the bushings, the advance weights, the ball-bearings on the breaker plate and the grease cup. Make sure that everything is free and not binding and lightly lubricate any pivot points. Clean out the grease cup and fill it with new grease to keep the shaft bushings lubricated. At this point, replace the points, condenser, and check the internal wiring to be sure it isn't compromised. Set the points with a feeler gauge and re-install the upper half of the distributor.

I buy my ignition parts from the Brillman Company; they carry the premium-quality components you'll need, and they have plug wires made with the correct solid-core wire with quality boots. I installed new sparkplugs and wires, new rotor and cap (these have the proper copper contacts, not the cheapo aluminum ones), set the dwell with a dwell meter and adjusted the timing. The vacuum advance was working properly, so all was good to go on the ignition side.

With a kit sourced from Daytona Parts (the best carburetor kits available), the Stromberg AAV-26 carb was completely stripped, cleaned and re-



assembled with the Daytona kit. I believe that Daytona has the best upgrade for the needle and seat; it's included with the kit and offers a much more accurate flow of fuel than the stock items. All gaskets provided are ethanol-resistant, and the kit has all of the parts needed including new idle circuit needle screws. Always install a new heat insulator block under the carb with gaskets to help prevent vapor lock--order part #CBP-360 from Bob's Automobilia (805-434-2963); this is 7/16" thick and fits both Buicks and Cadillacs that used the AAV-26 carbs, and it's half the price the Caddy guys charge for the same part. After adjusting the choke and the idle circuit, the car starts instantly and runs strong.

The fuel pump was sent to Terrell Machine (254-893-2610) for a rebuild—turnaround time was minimal, and they also use all ethanol-resistant materials. They do excellent work, and can service almost any screw-together fuel pump, both single and double action. I also was able to buy the very last remote oil filter kit from Bruce Berghoff, and installed that on the radiator core support.

When checking the brakes, I found that all of the shoes were worn and needed to be replaced, and that all four of the shock absorbers were leakers. I

also needed new shock links in the rear, and these are very hard to find because they don't interchange with any other make or series in the GM parts books. And since all of the drums will be off, it's a good time to replace the wheel bearings and grease seals. Fortunately, All Cadillacs of the '40's had the parts and was having a pretty generous sale at the time I placed the order.

Brakes, bearings and suspension are the next ones on the list, and that will happen over the winter months. At the same time, the cooling system will be serviced, water pump sent to the Flying Dutchman in Oregon for a rebuild, all hoses replaced, and

maybe I'll spring for a thermostat if I can find one. Since this car has both front and rear heaters, we will see what kind of condition they are in when the system is emptied, and I'll replace the thirty feet of hoses feeding them as well. The wiring harness is still on backorder; maybe I'll see that sometime this winter as well and can start that process. I need to pull the fuel tank and replace the sending unit (wiring is good as well as the gauge), and drain/refill the Hydramatic.

We are moving along nicely—the '41 will be a different car next spring!

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April 11, 1939  
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\$45,694 in  
 2023 dollars!

**Quiz Answers**

- |                                |                       |                                     |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. True                        | 5. B. 1928            | 9. False, 1987 Lincoln Town Car     |
| 2. C. Buick Y-Job, 1938        | 6. True, Super Cruise | 10. False, 1966 DeVille             |
| 3. False, on the 1951 Imperial | 7. True               | 11. False, 1995 Olds 88             |
| 4. True                        | 8. C. 1998            | 12. False, 1970 Lincoln Continental |



*Cadillac*

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*Car illustrated is the New '50 Special*