



## Feature Vehicle:

### *The Mysterious Saga of the 1940 Buick Pickup Truck: Part One*

**Owner: Marvin Stephenson, Flushing, Mi.**

**Article written by: Gary Hopcraft, member FMRCOA**



1940 Buick Pick-up before restoration

I have been closely involved with the final restoration of this vehicle and have taken on the project of compiling the history for it. Not a FORD or MERCURY but you still “Gotta love this truck”.

Almost everyone loves a mystery, so here are the clues to the existence of the only 1940 Buick (Roadmaster) pick-up truck known to be in existence. Here is a real vehicle, the one Buick Pick-up truck that was never “officially” built as concept or prototype vehicle but, was custom crafted by Buick Engineering in Flint, MI. for use only as intra-factory service.

The vehicle featured here does have a very vivid history, and though as difficult as it has been to absolutely prove who the “creator” of this 73 year old truck was, there are three very important points to consider. First, in 1940 there were no known private individuals or “custom shops” in the Flint, MI. area who would have had a reason to start and complete a “custom” project like this one on their own. Second, it is very doubtful that Buick Motors would have contracted such a project to an outside source. Third, anyone other than Buick Motor would have taken a lot of credit for this truck, and there may have been much more documentation available to show the sale or transfer of the “body” from Fisher Body to Buick Motors.

Generating the history for a 73 year old Buick that was never titled when built, had no “official” VIN as we have on our vehicles today, and having no survivors of that era that remember actually seeing, driving, or building the trucks, I have had to rely on interviews and the information that the past owners have compiled for myself and the current owner, Mr Sephenson.

#### The History:

Sometime in late 1939 as the first 1940 Buick bodies were produced at Fisher Body in Flint, MI. Buick Engineering managers at the Buick complex in Flint, requisitioned [fact] four completed Bodies, all Roadmaster Coupe Model 76S, Body Style 4427C, Fisher body numbers 620, 621, 622, 623, and brought them into the engineering and experimental shop on Hamilton Avenue in Flint, MI. All four may have been modified to the pick-up truck configuration as featured here. Three were reportedly painted black, and one painted red, which also had a 1.5” fire hose / reel mounted in the bed with brackets for fire extinguishers installed. This red vehicle, one of the three bodies #621, #622, or #623, was used by the Buick in plant Fire Department. The three black trucks were to be used within the Buick complex to “chase parts” or “run errands” as needed. There are no records of any of the four trucks ever being titled or licensed during their existence at Buick. Their sole purpose were to be used within the Buick complex. It can be assumed that from time to time the trucks were sent on errands outside the Buick complex, with or without

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# The Rotunda Times



## The Rotunda Times

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### **ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS**

When you hear of a member/spouse's death, please get all the information such as the funeral home and address, viewing times and dates, and the service time and date.

Then contact one of the following people:

#### **Jim Crawford**

734.259.8079 or jrcrawfo1@wowway.com

#### **Bob Guetschow**

248.328.9113 or guetschowr@yahoo.com

These folks will ensure that the membership at large knows of the death.



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The Ford & Mercury Restorers Club is a hobby organization whose purpose is to foster and promote the acquisition, preservation and use of all Ford vehicles.

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## President's Message

**MARCH 2015**

Thanks to Jim and Stan for running the last meeting. The Club bid "Thank You" and "Good Bye" to St. Mary's. Stan Miller and Dave Kunz discovered an interesting speaker which they arranged to speak, great meeting. My wife and I were in Florida for a couple of weeks, enjoying the sun and 85 degree temperatures; it tempts a person to be a snow bird.

**OUR NEXT MEETING WILL BE AT THE:  
AMERICAN LEGION POST 32  
9318 Newburgh Rd. • Livonia, MI 48150  
APRIL 7<sup>TH</sup> (TUESDAY)**

**\*\*\*REMEMBER THE NEW DAY (TUESDAY)  
AND LOCATION A.L. POST 32\*\*\***

We will make the best of our new location which allows us many new options that we have not had and we on the board will make every effort to continue making meetings enjoyable, interesting and fun. Anyone having speakers or suggestions for meetings e-mail or let one of the board members know.

We are turning the corner towards the Swap Meet, Car Show and our new event The Model Car Show. The flyers are available to members to pass out, please take every opportunity to get them in the hands of car people. Anyone knowing of clubs, cruises, or events in central or western Michigan let us know. We are making a strong effort to advertise to these car collectors. We did attract new vendors and swappers from the west but they are more spread out and it takes a new approach or effort to reach them. All Board members and chairpersons are involved and bringing tasks toward completion.

We could use members to volunteer to chair some areas at the swap meet, please consider volunteering.

Smell the Tulips and Happy Easter to all:

**TIM**

## MARCH SHOW AND TELL



Harry McAuliffe brought in two examples of vintage intakes



Harry McAuliffe's first car picture



Bob Assenmacher brought in early books from the Edison Institute & Henry Ford Museum

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL 7<sup>TH</sup>

TUESDAY CLUB MEETING • AM LEGION POST 32

APRIL 19<sup>TH</sup>

MONROE SWAP MEET AND CAR SHOW

MAY 2<sup>ND</sup> & 3<sup>RD</sup>

DAVIDSON SWAP/CAR SHOW: FOWERVILLE SWAP MEET

MAY 9<sup>TH</sup>

DEARBORN GATEWAY CLASSIC CAR SPRING FLING

MAY 16<sup>TH</sup>

CLINTON TWSP SPRING CAR SHOW

MAY 23<sup>RD</sup>

ANN.ARBOR CLASSICS AT THE CLUB SHOW

MAY 31<sup>ST</sup>

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FMRCOA

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For more information on becoming a member go to [FMRCOA.org](http://FMRCOA.org) or write to the above address



## YOUR CAR!

The Rotunda Times would like to feature your old car or truck in an upcoming issue. We are interested in how you came about finding your vehicle of choice, and what you have done to enhance its beauty, and/or mechanical condition. Simply mail or email us your article accompanied with a photo to:

**TIM PUSILO**

313.278.1325 • [dean35aw@gmail.com](mailto:dean35aw@gmail.com)

Our monthly club meetings are held at

## AMERICAN LEGION POST 32

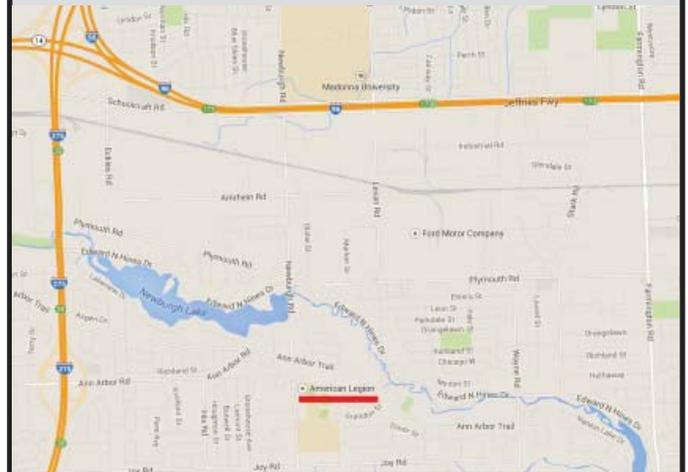
9318 Newburgh Rd. • Livonia, MI 48150

Between Plymouth and Joy Roads

This is a great facility where we had our last dinner dance. It has large parking lot (to the south) enabling club cars to easily park together.

Meetings are on the first Tuesday of each month and begin at 6:30pm with a snack.

**DO BRING A FRIEND!**



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**March 2015**  
**FMRCOA MEETING MINUTES**  
**March 4, 2015**

In President Tim's absence, VP Jim Crawford called meeting to order shortly after 7:40pm. The 59 members took the Pledge and welcomed guest Domenic Garatoli and guest Speaker Brian Golden. Jim began new business with an announcing the new meeting hall and day next month. We will meet at the American Legion Post 32 {this years Dinner Dance location} and that the meeting day has changed to Tuesday April 7th 6:30pm. Jim explained in detail the discussions with both St Mary's and the A.L. Post 32. Jim laid out the decision process and rational for actions taken considering the overall benefit to our Club. He gave us the who what where when how why things were done. The floor was opened to the membership for a Q and A session. The staff from St Mary's were acknowledged given a round of applause in appreciation for their service over the years. The newsletter was in the mail and feature car articles are needed. Dearborn Swap Meet updates were given pertaining to the model car show, car show trophies , fliers, and inviting the local Thunderbird clubs. Jim will update the webpage this week. Secretary Mark and Treasurer Stan gave their respective reports. Director Bob Topping will shop Dearborn 2015 T-shirt prices. The March garage tour was set for Wrencher's and Vanguard. 3-21-2015 at 10am. Maps were available. Bob Assenmacher brought in Edison Institute pamphlets for show and tell. Harry McAuliffe brought us a photo of his first car -32 Model A. He bought it at age 14 for \$12. Harry also shared examples of unique Flat Head intake manifolds. A Dick Edelbrock pre-war Sling Shot intake as well as a 2 piece intake which put the "Flat" into a Flat Head as it was about 2 inches tall. 50/50 was then followed by our guest speaker- Author Brian Golden. At dinner, he said his talk would last 10 minutes but feel like 40 minutes. In actuality, his slide show presentation highlighting his book research of the Detroit Urban Railway interurban trolley system as well as turn of the 19th century photos of early area roads and buildings lasted about 40 minutes, but felt like 10 minutes since it was very interesting. He ended up with slides with pictures of the various types trolley cars used around southeast Michigan. Brian Golden's book "Farmington Junction A Trolley History" 9:20pm Adjourn.

**Guest Speaker Brian Golden**



**Author of book :  
Farmington Junction A Trolley History**



**LAWS OF NATURE:**

**Submitted for you approval by:  
Wally Wigand**

1. Law of Mechanical Repair: As soon as your hands are covered in grease your nose itches and you need to go to the bathroom.
2. Law of Gravity: Any tool,bolt ,nut when dropped will find the least accessible spot to end up.
3. Law of Probability states that the more stupid the act the more people will be watching you.
4. Law of Wrong Numbers: If you dial a wrong number someone will always answer. Second Law of Wrong Numbers states that when you tell someone they have dialed a wrong number they will call back within 30 seconds.
5. Law of Checkout Lanes: The shortest is always the longest and whatever line you choose will need a price check.
6. Law of the Bath Tub: As soon as you get in there will be someone knocking at you door.
7. Law of Biomechanics: The more severe itches occur where you cannot reach.
8. Law of Repairman: When demonstrating what is wrong your item works perfectly.
9. Law of Coffee: As soon as you pour a hot cup you will be distracted until it reaches room temperature.
10. Law of New Clothes: The ugliest always fit the best.
11. Law of Marketing: As soon as you find a product you like they stop producing it.

## BRIAN'S TIP TRASHIN'

This article has nothing to do with the preservation of cars, but it certainly does have a lot to do with the preservation of this country. With the weather we've been having lately it seems that the snow is gone for good, and eventually the 'snirt' (combo word of 'snow/dirt') will be gone too. Maybe it's just some decent people that really think, THINK being the key word here, that so many men and women have died for this country. We keep track by numbers of how many have died for this country, but we don't keep records of how many have lost arms, legs, eyes, fingers, toes, brains etc. The numbers of wounded by far outnumber the deaths, and the ratio is a whole lot more than you would expect, a number that I myself do not remember because it's hard to fathom.

With the snow vanishing we get to see how many people just don't give a damn about this country, because we get to see all the litter that the snow kept covered for so long. The word disrespectful comes to mind, disrespectful people that just can not wait until to get home to properly dispose of their own trash that must throw it out of their vehicle's window. These people apparently want to show the world they don't give a damn about this country, much less the people in it, and way much less about the people that gave their lives and limbs preserving what so many disrespect. Why do so many do this disrespectful act? Is it the thinkers, non thinkers, or just regular in between people that do this? They want to keep the inside of their vehicle clean, so they trash the planet that we live on, the planet that we must leave behind for the generations to follow. There is a lot to be said about leadership by example, and looking around lately I can't help but notice there are not many who can lead anything, so I sincerely hope that these people will never become parents.

If you ever have the chance to safely walk a freeway, pay attention and notice that you can not go even a few inches without trash being virtually everywhere. Even after a respective county has done it's clean up, the smaller junk is still there and will never get cleaned up, ever. Even notice there are people that can't even clean up after themselves at our monthly dinners? Ever notice how much is left behind after a car show? Ever notice how much clean up is needed after our FMRC swap meet? I know anyone that reads this will put themselves in the 'not me' category, but really, I am sure everyone has littered at one time or another, and maybe still continue with their foul habit of improperly getting rid of their junk and trash. C'mon everyone, it does not take hardly any effort to clean up after yourselves, so why not just do it?!?!?

## STEAM POWERED PADDLEWHEEL AIRCRAFT CARRIERS IN WW2 ?

by  
Mark Sapienz

After Pearl Harbor and Midway, the U.S. Navy had learned that the Pacific War was going to require a vast new Fleet based around the Aircraft Carrier. With German and Japanese submarines roaming the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf of Mexico, the Great Lakes offered a safe haven to train the Pilots and Aircraft Crewmen needed to man this new Fleet.



The Navy could not spare any front line ships in 1941, so it was determined to convert 2 coal steam paddlewheel ships into carriers. The SS Seeland and SS Greater Buffalo passenger excursion ships that cruised the lakes were tasked to become Aircraft Carrier Training Vessels USS Wolverine IX-64 and USS Sable IX-81. By the beginning of 1942, conversion and addition of flight decks to these ships were finished. Their vital role of training our Navy Aviators as well as countless Deck Crew for future combat began immediately. Each Pilot had to complete 8 take off and landing in order to become Carrier Qualified. 17,000 Naval Aviators made over 135,000 landings on the decks of the 2 Great Lake Aircraft Carriers. One of these men was future President George

Bush who also honed his piloting skills on the USS Sable as well as at the Grosse Ile Naval Air Station. The Carriers were based in Chicago and would steam out into Lake Michigan where flight deck operations were performed. They were used until the end of the war in 1945. Thus the Great Lakes region known as the Arsenal of Democracy molded the Men as well as making the Armaments they used to win WW2.



## **POSTCARDS FROM THE PAST**

by

**Lou Ironside**

Since Belle Isle has been in the news recently, I thought that this month I would show a historic view of that island. The photo is of the Horticultural Building, and as you can tell by the cloths the ladies are wearing, this wasn't too recent. The buildings and lawns are immaculate, and show what this island once was... and maybe can again be in the future. This postcard was issued by the Detroit Publishing Co., and the series number places it in the 1908-1909 era. What



is really special to me is that my grandfather William Watt Ironside took this and other photos while employed by DPC. He took literally thousands of photos all over the United States and sent them back to Detroit where they were made into postcards. After he got married in 1912, he settled down and remained a photo engraver for DPC until they went out of business in 1932.

## **ROVING REPORTER**

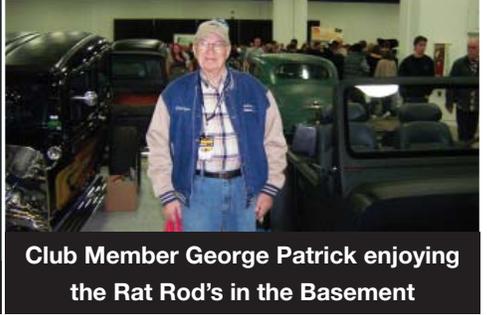
Two Has been a slow month for swap meets, some I use to attend have gotten so small that it isn't worth the drive, and other have just plain disappeared. One swap meet I did attend and vend at, was the 45th annual East Side A's swap meet in Macomb, MI. This year they had 170 tables sold, and preliminary numbers show the attendance nearly doubled. The crowd was strong, and the swap meet didn't close down until after 1:30 pm which is unusual for a local meet. The weather was perfect, and they had vendors

and spectators from: Canada, Ohio, Indiana, and of course Michigan. Several FMRC members were either vending or in attendance. Everyone seemed to be having a good day sales wise, and many good bargains were to be had. The ladies of the club run a food booth, so having a coffee, donut, or hot dog while wandering the aisles was reasonable and easy. A fun local meet, a close drive for many of us, and wide variety of parts. Well worth putting on your calendar for the month of March next year.

# 2015 AUTORAMA



Miss Hurst Linda Vaughn



Club Member George Patrick enjoying the Rat Rod's in the Basement



Feature Vehicle Cont....

a license plate as the occasion required. It may also be assumed that if any one of the trucks did venture out of the complex without a plate, no local law officer of that day would question the vehicle, even if the driver did something to be stopped. These trucks were well known and well identified as Buick Motor Division Vehicles. [ Note the door lettering designating the Buick "EXPL" This lettering was copied and reproduced exactly from the original doors before restoration was started ] They may have had Manufacturers plates available for them for their off property trips. These trucks served Buick most likely through the WWII years and saw many hard miles in the 2.5 mile long Buick Complex. Over the years many vehicles were built by Product Engineering for testing purposes both prior to (pilot vehicles) and during production. After their usefulness it was a practice to destroy the vehicles which carried unique body and serial numbers for accounting use, the vehicles were never to be released to the general public. Sometime after the end of WWII, three of the trucks were ultimately destroyed by Buick Salvage Department, forever lost. But #620 managed to escape.

Body #620: This truck.

The starting 1940 chassis serial number for Buick Assembly, Flint, was 13596807 and the chassis serial number on this vehicle is 13597027, making this the 220th chassis for the 1940 production year. This chassis has body #620 on it, presumably being mated with the chassis in Engineering building rather than on the "assembly line".

It is rumored that a Buick Engineering manager, was able to obtain this truck before it was sent to salvage, and relocated it to a hunting camp in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, many miles from Buick, where it was well used and out of sight for many years.

After several years at the camp, it was brought back to the Flint area and stored in a saw mill barn on a local farm. It is estimated that the truck was stored (abandoned) in this barn until late 1970's at which time the farm and buildings were sold to a builder for new homes. The builder discovered the truck buried under lumber in the building and as he had no use for it, offered it to a friend for \$300.00 with the caveat that the new owner would restore the truck, or sell it back for the \$300.00.

This new owner started restoration, and over the next few years (1980 - 1990's) and reportedly spent over \$20,000.00 on it. During this period this owner was able to acquire a State of Michigan Title for the truck. In the late 90's, restoration not complete, and the owner finding a need for cash, offered it to the present owner, Marve Stephenson for the amount of \$10,000.00 as is. (I interviewed this owner, Bob Joseph, in 2010, shortly before his death)

Next Month Part Two

Jeff Schembri



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**CLASSIFIED ADS**

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Roger Hodyka 517-282-4738

1971 Ford Pick-up 4x4 long bed 6 cyl. 4 sp. some rust 7 foot Western plow 135,000 miles \$3,000 trades considered. /// 428 CJ motor STD needs 1 sleeve C80E-N \$250.///1994 Ranger 4cyl 5sp no rust cap 145,000miles \$3,500 trades considered.

Larry Wolohon 734-454-4816

5 Tires/wheels 5 1/2inch lug pattern Sears radial P215/75R 2 of 5 have groove from '48 tie rod. \$50 OBO./// 4 Moon Hub Caps and 4 Ford Truck Hub Caps that will fit these tires Each set \$50 a piece.

Paul Coleman 734-397-1685

1974 Buick Riviera Grand Sport Stage1 455 totally rebuilt also driveline new rear fenders installed correctly ready for paint \$4,300. {engine alone worth it}

Steve Thomas 734-309-3992

1949 International Harvester Dump Truck KB-5 for restoration or parts \$1,500.

Don Jettie 313-383-6778

Ford/ Mercury shop manuals 60's 70's 80's /// 1963 Ford Fairlane Grille \$45.

Hank Dawson 810-231-3184

History and Development of 567 GM Loco Engine by EW Kettering circa 1951 \$20./// Maintenance Manual Generator Set :Model 6016D Detroit Diesel Engine Div. circa 1943 \$20/// Ford SL46 Diagnosing Tire and Drive Train and Noise and Vibration/ Harnesses 1967 \$10./// GM Basic Electrical Standards for Industrial Equipment 1968 \$6. {Tech Center Publication}/// New Car Brouchures 1979 to 2010 reasonable pricing have to go/// Holley 4160 Carburetor new in box tested by Kar-Go ready for car \$300.

Mark Hamilton 313-563-1892 8 items

Clicker Style Torque Wrench - \$50. Star Test Checks Computer in Fords 1980-86 - \$100. 1966-67 Lincoln Radio, Freshened up in May, 2009 - \$400 OBO. 1966-67 Lincoln Hub Caps (8 Total) - Make Offer. 1966-67 Lincoln Heater Radiator Core Still in Box - \$200. 1966-67 Lincoln Radiator Shroud - \$200. 1966-67 Lincoln Various Walnut Side Panels For Arm Rest Door Window Hardware - Make Offer. Various Relays 1966-67 For Top, Most New, Some Used - Make Offer. Chrome Pulleys for 1966-67 Lincoln MAC Scanner, Works From 1980 to 2007 Updates Available - Cost \$2,800 New - Will Take \$650 OBO.

**WANTED**

Grant Beard 248-305-8031

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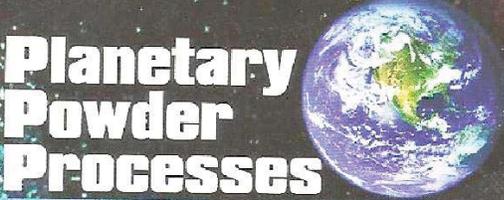
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