



Gateway Gazette

Monthly Newsletter of the St. Louis Chapter

BUICK CLUB OF AMERICA

Volume XXX, No.11

December 2011

Member Spotlight by Steve Dodson



Spotlight on TJ Rinn



This month's "Member Spotlight" focuses on T.J. Rinn, who joined the Gateway Chapter and BCA two years ago.

TJ currently owns a 1982 Riviera Select 60 Convertible, a 1976 Lincoln Mark 4 Lipstick edition coupe, a 1980 Scout II, and a 1977 GMC Palm Beach Motor Home. Earlier, he owned a 1979 Regal Limited Sport Coupe with the 3.8 liter turbo. He acquired this car from his Grandmother. Later he owned a 1985 Somerset Regal Limited in Firethorn red with a 4-speed. It was heavily damaged in a Nebraska hailstorm and went on to a new owner.

If you attended the 2010 BCA National in Ames, IA, you likely saw his '82 Select 60 Rivi convertible which won a Gold new senior award. The history of the select 60 Rivieras is not as well researched as the select 60 Reattas and TJ is looking to fill in some of the details.

When asked which was his all time favorite car, TJ said it was his red and white 1976 Lincoln Mark 4. When asked why, he said because he drove this car while in high school and he still owns it.

TJ lost his father a few months ago and has been unable to attend our meetings as he worked to clear the estate. However, he is looking forward to being more active in the future.

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Upcoming Events

Annual Holiday Party, Sunday, January 15, 4:00 pm, at C J Muggs

Next Regular Meeting, Monday, February 20, Pujols 5, 7:30 pm

HCCM Easter Show, Sunday, April 8. \$15 to Pete Nathan by March 8

See Page 3 for Details

The Gazette will not be published in January

Director's Letter

Merry Christmas Everyone!

Our December 3 lunch for Toys for Tots at Rigazzi's on the Hill on was not well attended, but for those of us who did go, we had a great time. We did receive quite a few toys that I took to my place of business's collection box for the Marine Corps.

Well it seems our new winter meeting place, The Sports Café, has received a better offer of a yearly commitment for our time slot. I believe Pete Nathan will try to get Pujol's 5 back for us for the winter months. If anyone has a better idea, please let me know.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at our Holiday Party at C.J. Muggs in Webster Groves on January. The party starts at 4 p.m.

Please have a safe holiday!

Herb

Meeting Minutes, November 21, 2011

The November 2011 meeting was held on Monday, November 21st, at The Sports Café, our winter location. We had another good turnout with 23 members and two visitors from the performance club, BPE.

Meeting Minutes, November 21, 2011 (Cont')

The Club meeting was facilitated by Paul Meyer, Assistant Director.

The minutes of the September 2011 meeting were approved as printed in the Gazette.

Treasurer's Report: \$1795.72 Club Account, \$1685.76 Regional Account

November Birthdays – See the November Gazette

November Anniversaries – See the November Gazette

Members III – None Noted

Upcoming Events

December

3 Luncheon/Toys For Tots – Rigazzi's on the Hill

January

15 Club Holiday Party, 4pm, C.J. Muggs, Webster Groves

Old Business

Magnetic Club Signs - \$18.00 ea.
Belt Buckles -

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December Birthdays

Gene Hughes
Mike Marx
Dave Smith

Barb Knudsen
Jeanne Palumbo

Ginny Landers
Jim Poole

December Anniversaries

Bill & Ina Bicknell
Bob & Barb Brasses
Aaron & Rhonda Ford
Jim & Donna Reale

Merry Christmas/Happy Hanukkah and a Happy and Prosperous New Year to all our members and their families.

Member Spotlight (Continued)

TJ is an interior designer and has owned his own business for the past 23 years: TJ Rinn Interior Design, LLC.

Other than enjoying old cars, TJ likes Golfing, travel, food, and enjoys being outdoors. His family had a home on Lake of the Ozarks for years.

TJ caught the “Old Car Bug” early in life, as his father was an auto mechanic and there were always old cars in the driveway. When he was 13 years old, he and his father started restoring a 1964 Chevy Impala and when he turned 16 he started driving it to high school and later on to college.

TJ moved here from Omaha, Nebraska and has called St. Louis home for the last 17 years. TJ we’re glad to have you as a member of the Gateway Chapter.

Meeting Minutes, November 21, 2011 (Cont’)

New Business

The BPE group has offered their services to help judge at the Regional next year.

Bob Windal has Reatta parts for sale.

An ad has been placed in Buick Bugle for next year’s Regional

No January regular monthly meeting. (Holiday party on January 15)

50/50 drawing – won by Joe Horvath III

Next Regular Meeting:

Dec. 3 Rigazzi’s on the Hill, 12:00 noon

Upcoming Events

Annual Holiday Party. Sunday, January 15, 4:00 pm, at C J Muggs, 101 West Lockwood Avenue, Webster Groves, 63110, 314-963-1976. From the north, take I-270 south to US40/I-64 east or I-170 south to south on Brentwood Blvd. Follow Brentwood south for approximately 2.2 miles to a left onto North Elm Avenue. After approximately 0.4 miles, turn right onto West Lockwood Avenue. After 0.1 mile, the restaurant will be on the right, on the corner of Lockwood and North Gore. If you turn right on North Gore, there will be a covered parking garage on the left.

From the south, take I-44 to the South Elm Avenue exit, and go north for approximately 0.9 miles to a left onto West Lockwood. After 0.1 mile, the restaurant will be on the right, on the corner of Lockwood and North Gore. If you turn right on North Gore, there will be a covered parking garage on the left.

Regular Monthly Meeting. Monday, February 20, 7:30 pm, at Pujols 5 in Westport Plaza. Our former meeting place, the Sports Café wants an organization which will commit to meeting there every month through the year. Since we move back and forth between the north and south, we couldn’t give that commitment and another organization did. If you have ideas for a meeting place, please bring it up at the meeting.

Horseless Carriage Club of Missouri Easter Show. Sunday, April 8. Meeting time and place TBD.

Pete Nathan needs the \$15 entry fee by March 8 to meet the HCCM date.

Pete’s address is on the last page of the Gazette. To save time and stamps, just include next year’s dues of \$15 (**due by April 30**) in your check.

BUICKS AND PARTS FOR SALE

1968 Riviera, price reduced to \$6200. Very nice car with 38K original miles, factory air (needs Freon), excellent interior, no rust, has been in heated garage. Pictures available, Ray, 314-298-0604, anytime.

1953 Roadmaster. Recently rebuilt transmission, new ring gear, new radiator, plus more. 50th Anniversary model with first of the V-8s. Has P.S., P.B., P. seat, P. windows. Matching numbers. Shop manuals and other original documents. Gene Hughes, cell 314-504-4844. Pictured on cover of May 2007 Gazette.

Two 1963 Buick Specials. Car #1 is a convertible, 215 V8, 3 speed trans, factory air conditioning. Car #2 is a 2 door coupe, 215 V8, 4 speed trans. Both cars have bucket seats, both cars need right rear quarters, both engines turn over (not stuck), both seem to be complete. Sell as a pair, \$2000. Paul Meyer, 314-574-9853.

Huge Quantity of 1964 Buick Riviera parts For Sale. Donated to our chapter by a Buick enthusiast, proceeds will be used to fund chapter activities, including the 2012 Heartland Regional Show. Call Paul Meyer, 314-574-9853, ASAP for the Rivi parts you need.

1962 Special. Extra engine and transmission, various parts and books, pictures available. Best offer. Steve, 314-393-0996, 314-487-8586 or swarringin@hotmail.com.

1978 Skylark 4-Door. Very good condition with automatic, PB, PS, A/C, new battery, lots of factory chrome trim. Has 46,XXX actual miles. Pictures available. Recently passed state safety test. Marilyn, 618-975-6316 or rubato@htc.net.

1954 Century Wagon. Power steering, 5 wire wheels, 79,000 miles, very little rust (mostly surface). Car was running when parked. Florissant, MO, asking \$3500, call Joe Konieczny, 314-882-8226.

1977 Electra 225 4-Door HT. All power, vinyl top, runs, was driven by owner every day until he passed away 2 months ago. Daughter is selling the car, in Hazelwood, MO, Asking \$2500/OBO. Call Dawn at 314-484-3944.

1966 LeSabre 4-Door Sedan. The original engine has 1600 miles after rebuild. The car has 4 quarter-sized rust spots. Located in Fairmont, IL, asking \$5000. Call Rema Sawyer at 618-274-6743.

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Eccentric? Genius? By Ted Becker

Have you even known an eccentric genius? I sure have. I worked for 36 years in various engineering departments and met many engineers in my days. Not that all engineers are geniuses, but a lot of them (us?) are sure eccentric.

Tom worked in the training department at Caterpillar. Following the acquisition of the Towmotor lift truck company, Tom was offered a position in the training department at the plant near Cleveland, Ohio. Tom was excited about his new job and the move to Cleveland. Why anyone would be excited about moving to Cleveland escapes me, but that is neither here nor there. Tom was working on a 1926 Dodge and needed the facilities to complete his project. He and his wife made a few trips to Cleveland to become familiar with their new environment and they bought a house which satisfied their family requirements as well as his car project needs.

OK, so far, so good. Caterpillar had a pretty reasonable and fairly generous relocation plan so all the moving expenses were paid. That is until the move of his Dodge came up in negotiations. Nope, Caterpillar would not pay for moving a project like that. He was told to either store it, sell it, or pay for the move himself. "Oh man, wish I had known that up front" he thought to himself. Well, not to worry, Tom was a bright guy and he could figure out a cost effective way to move his Dodge. He did not own a trailer, nor was he prepared to pay what a moving company would charge for such a move. A tow truck move was also prohibitively expensive relative to his expectations for the cost.

What to do, what to do, what to do? "Hey, I've got it" he told himself one day. Here is the plan. The car is movable and towable, but the driveline was not complete so it could not be powered. So, how about an alternative form of power? How about a rear engine, rear wheel drive Corvair for the power? "Aha, that will work."

Tom found a Corvair with front end damage, but a good rear and good power train. He bought the car and brought it home for his project. He got out his torch (pre Sawzall days) and cut away the front of the car midway between the B and the C pillars. Now, he had a half car with an engine and transaxle and 2 wheels. Then he built a trailer tongue arrangement for the front of his half car to make a powered trailer. The front tongue arrangement was then attached to the rear of the Dodge and appropriate accelerator linkage was fabricated to go between the accelerator pedal of the Dodge to the half car Corvair. Somehow, he got fuel from the Dodge to the half car as well as hooking up taillights. This gave him the power source that he needed and still had the brakes and stopping power that the Dodge provided. The mechanical brakes of the Dodge were only marginal in stopping the Dodge on its own, so hard to imagine how it would handle the added weight and momentum of the half car behind it.

Moving day arrived and the Dodge was driven, or pushed depending upon your perspective, from Peoria, Illinois to Cleveland, Ohio. Not sure of the stability of his arrangement nor the legality of it, but he made the 600 mile trip and lived to tell about it.

Where do you think this fits between the eccentric and the genius descriptions? You make the call. Unsafe at any speed – I would think so!

From the Editor: Welcome to new members, Larry Green, Don and Pat Pfitzinger, and Buick and Dani Tharnish. Also Larry and Nancy Longworth rejoined after an absence.

On a less happy note, the attendance at the December lunch and scheduled meeting was rather disappointing. For those who couldn't attend, was the problem the place, the date, or the time? I hope that more members will attend the planning meeting early next year to determine what activities and dates will generate significant member participation. If any members have ideas for next year or a critique of this year's calendar, call or e-mail me (e-mail address and phone number on last page of the Gazette) and I will print or pass on those remarks to the Board of Directors, as you wish.

Best Lawyer Story of the Year

A lawyer purchased a box of very rare and expensive cigars, and then insured them against, among other things, fire.

Within a month, having smoked all the cigars, the lawyer filed a claim with the insurance company. In his claim, the lawyer stated the cigars were lost in “a series of small fires.”

The insurance company refused to pay, citing the Obvious reason—that the man had consumed the cigars in the normal fashion.

The lawyer sued and WON!

Delivering the ruling, the judge agreed with the insurance company that the suit was frivolous. He stated that nevertheless, the lawyer held a policy which warranted that the cigars were insurable and also guaranteed that the company would insure them

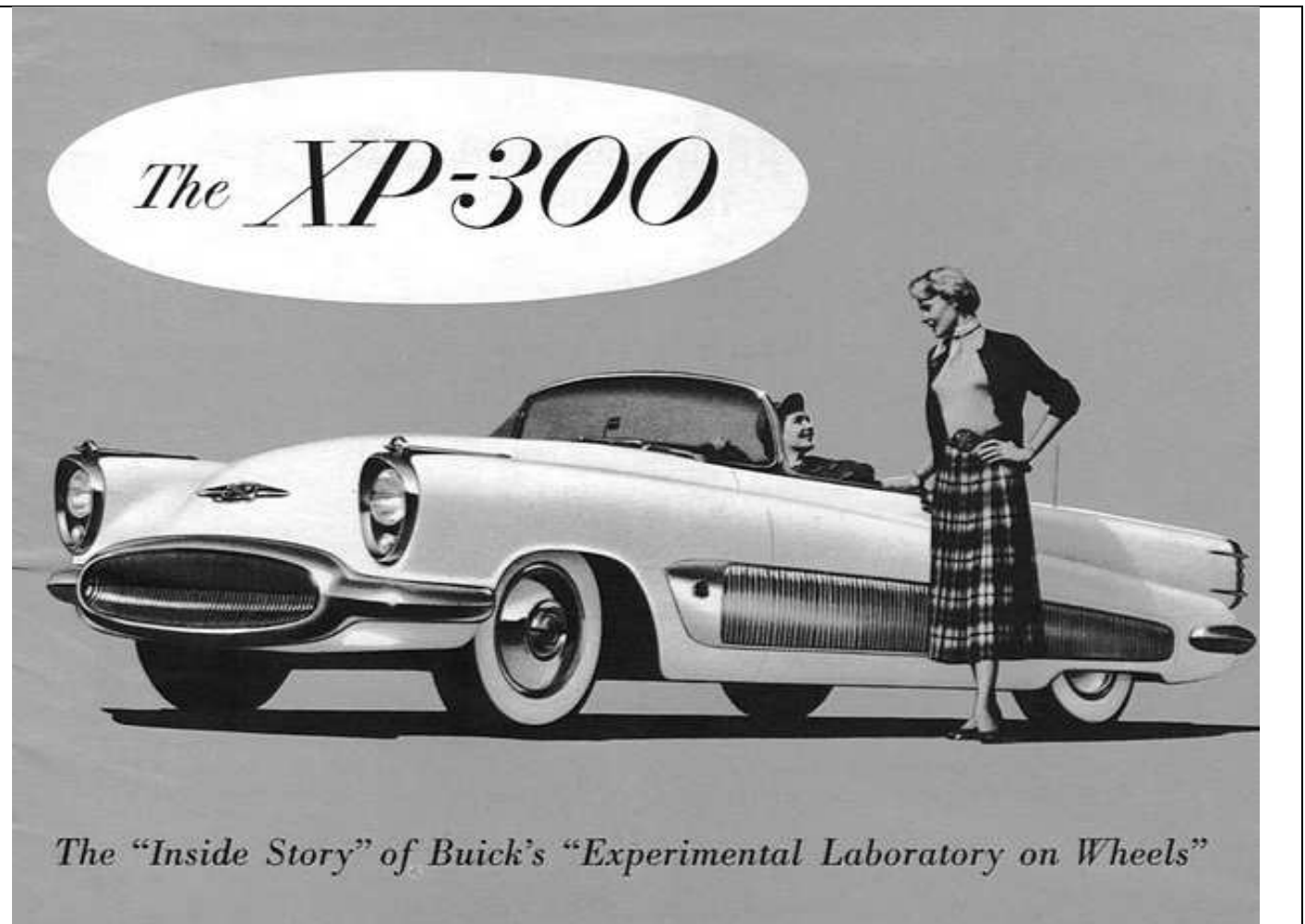
against fire, without defining what is considered to be “unacceptable fire” and was obligated to pay the claim.

Rather than endure a lengthy and costly appeals process, the insurance company paid \$15,000 to the lawyer for the loss of the cigars which perished in the “fire”.

After the lawyer cashed the check, the insurance company had him arrested on 24 counts of arson.

With his own insurance claim and testimony from the previous case being used against him, the lawyer was convicted of intentionally burning his insured property and was sentenced to 24 months in jail and a \$24,000 fine.

This true story won first place in last year’s Criminal Lawyers Award Contest.



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The "Inside Story"... (Cont')

This custom-built, super-streamlined car with its 335 horsepower engine is obviously not the forerunner of soon-to-be-produced General Motors stock cars. A glance at its equipment, the materials from which it is made, and the way it is powered quickly make that clear.

Nor is it a "sports car" in the sense that term is used today: a speed car for the racing driver or an automotive plaything for the motorcar faddist.

What is it, then? And why did Buick build it?

To answer that, you have to understand the basic problem of the men who engineer and style the modern motorcar. Their job is to design cars within rather clearly defined limitations —limitations established to some extent by the current difficulties incident to the acquisition of the necessary machinery and tooling; by analyses of customer preferences; by availability and cost of materials and by many other factors seldom appreciated by the customer. And—of course—they have to design these cars so that they can be produced at a price the public can pay.

At the same time, because of the American urge for new and better things, engineers and designers must strive continuously within these limits, to advance the performance, comfort, safety and beauty of the family motorcar.

This starts on the drawing boards of the engineers and the stylists. From there, it continues through the experimental shops, where the ideas take on size and shape. Finally, after the parts are built, they are subjected to the grueling tests of the engineering and research laboratories. Eventually, if they stand up on these tests, they are tried under actual operating conditions at the General Motors Proving Ground. Only after lengthy tests prove a design to be practicable is it released for production.

Even so, General Motors has always felt that GM engineers and stylists should enjoy an even greater freedom to thrust ahead into the automotive future. For only by advancing far beyond the immediately practicable to the remotely possible can GM make the dreams come true that mean — more and better things for more people.

THE "Y JOB"

That's why year after year GM engineers build experimental cars which, though they look much like our standard cars, contain all manner of tryout features. And, going beyond these, it's why, way back in 1938, the

General Motors Styling Section, in cooperation with Buick, built the famous "Y Job" — "an experimental laboratory on wheels"—containing many features, particularly in styling, at least a decade ahead of our fast-moving automotive industry.

In fact, so advanced was this 1938 "Y Job" that a news service reporter, seeing it for the first time in 1948, thought it must be a 1949 Buick and sent a picture of it, named as such, around to the editorial desks.

But what is important to remember is that the "Y Job" proved extremely useful — as do all such carefully studied experiments. For many of the "dream" features of the "Y Job" are now found on present stock models. Among these are electrically actuated convertible tops and door windows, tail lamps recessed in rear fenders, and fender extensions over doors. Various styling lines and grille treatments also appeared in production cars after 1938, all inspired by "Y Job" innovations.

THE XP-300 AND LE SABRE

In 1946 GM decided the "Y Job" had served its purpose. It was time to build a successor. Yet our stylists and engineers had so many innovations they wanted to test, it was quickly apparent one experimental car couldn't hold them all. So it was agreed to build two: The XP-300 and Le Sabre.

Both cars were the result of a long-term cooperative activity involving the General Motors Styling Section and the Buick Motor Division Engineering Staff. Integrating and directing the over-all project were Charles A. Chayne, former Buick Chief Engineer and now GM Vice President in Charge of Engineering Staff, and Harley J. Earl, Vice President in Charge of Styling Staff.

The two cars differ in many of their individual experimental features. But both were designed with the same over-all goal in mind: to build an extremely high-performance car without sacrificing passenger comfort or ease of handling. For, until the arrival of XP-300 and Le Sabre, it was a widely accepted belief, not shared by GM that high performance had to mean hard steering and a hard ride. Both cars, therefore, are completely new from the ground up!

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The XP-300 is exactly what its name implies. It is an experimental project with 335-horsepower performance in a car that is complete in every detail of riding and driving comfort. More than that, it is a mobile laboratory in which

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The "Inside Story"... (Cont')

GM engineers will try their most forward-looking ideas. As Mr. Chayne puts it, "These cars are really studies in 'results'. When we reach a conclusion that a certain result is good, we'll -pass it along to our production engineers to find a way it can be built into production cars. If we decide another result is not desirable it will quickly be replaced in the car with another 'try.' Both of the cars are going to lead lives of constant change. For this reason, what is seen in them today may be entirely different thirty days from now—and almost certainly will be quite different six months from now."

That's the "inside story" of the Buick XP-300.

To understand further what each of the major experimental features of the XP-300 may mean to the car of tomorrow, it's important to look beneath the glamorous aspects of this "dream car" and see why the XP-300 is made the way it is.

THE "INSIDE STORY" OF XP-300 PERFORMANCE

The XP-300's power plant is an experiment to see what can be done if today's limitations as to fuels, cost and availability of materials were removed.

The V-8 supercharged engine, designed specifically for the car by Buick engineers, weighs only 550 pounds, yet it develops 335 horsepower. Despite this tremendous power, the engine is as smooth and tractable as any of today's passenger car engines and has proportionately high power at low speeds. It must be remembered that engineers are primarily interested in what an engine does at the speeds at which cars are normally driven. Abnormally high powers are only of experimental importance. They are a by-product of top performance.

The cylinder head and crankcase of the XP-300's 90-degree V-type engine are made of aluminum. The exhaust valves are sodium-cooled. The engine is supercharged by a blower of the type developed by GM engineers for Diesel engines.

When operating at power outputs for ordinary driving, the engine operates on ordinary premium fuel. However, when a full power burst is wanted, merely depressing the accelerator past mid-position opens a second carburetor which feeds methyl alcohol (methanol) into the combustion chambers to supply the full power boost.

Power is transmitted to the rear wheels through a special Buick Dynaflow transmission which is driven at slightly less than engine speed in order to fit the characteristics

of a production torque converter to those of the XP-300's special engine.

DRIVING AND RIDING COMFORT

The steering wheel and seat of the XP-300 are an experiment in improving driving and riding comfort, particularly for a car capable of high speeds.

The steering wheel is adjustable in or out along the shaft, allowing driver to set it to the most comfortable position for him.

The seats can be individually raised or lowered, as well as moved forward or back by a push button hydraulic mechanism. Another interesting feature of the seats is an adjustable contour seat back. This permits the shape of the seat back to be readily changed to suit different drivers—in fact this adjustment may be carried out while the car is in motion should the driver or passenger feel that a change would be desirable.

Other experiments in the "comfort" category include such features as built-in hydraulic jacks, operated from the instrument panel, which permit lifting the car for tire change before leaving the seat. A novel arrangement allows Riviera-type back window to be lowered while the top is in position. The top may be folded and stowed in a compartment behind the seat. Windshield glass wraps all way round to eliminate wind noise; occupants can talk at normal voice level when the car is doing 95 miles an hour.

When the throttle is kicked open to pass another car, the windshield wiper steps up to twice normal speed for extra splash protection. The wiper blades are fitted with small plastic vanes which ensure that the wind from forward motion of the car "blows" the blades against the glass.

STYLING INNOVATIONS

The XP-300's super-streamlined contour, sleek as a jet plane, is an experiment in functional styling. It is a lighter car that maintains its safety factor by being lower to the ground. Mounted on 116-inch wheelbase, the XP-300 has an over-all length of 192.5 inches, and stands only 39.1 inches high at cowl. Over-all height is 53.4 inches, ground clearance, 6.6 inches, and width 80 inches.

The hood, which opens from the rear in reverse alligator fashion, slopes downward toward the front to allow for exceptional visibility in such a low-seated car. The hood is raised and lowered hydraulically by instrument panel control.

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The "Inside Story"... (Cont')

A massive front bumper gives protection and contains a long center opening to admit air to the radiator. Headlights and parking lights are suspended in open grillwork to permit additional air to reach the radiator.

The long louvered chrome panels along the side of the car are functional, as well as a distinctive appearance feature. The louvers ahead of the door opening, as well as those in the front third of the door, serve to permit air to escape from the engine compartment. The louvers at the rear of the door open into the driving compartment and are fitted with adjustable dampers so the driver or passenger may control the amount of air flowing through the compartment.

A tapered chrome fin extending down the center of the rear deck conceals hinges which permit the luggage compartment to be opened from either side. The rear has long sweeping taper, ending in a circle similar to rear end of jet engine. This circle houses a Sealed Beam floodlight unit serving as backup light.

An automatically extending radio antenna rises out of the rear "fin." Two round bombs in center area of the rear bumper are exhaust outlets.

The two fuel tanks, one for methyl alcohol and the other for premium-grade gasoline, are set behind the front seat.

XP-300 CONSTRUCTION

The XP-300's construction is an experiment in the use of lighter metals* and of new welding techniques.

Basically it is a steel structure, with a skin of aluminum. Body panels are of heat-treated aluminum, keeping the weight of the car to a minimum.

Body and frame structure are welded into one solid unit.

When the doors are closed, hydraulically operated steel bars slide into position, like the bolts on the side of a vault, making the door a structural part of the body and frame assembly.

The chassis frame is chrome molybdenum steel box-type, designed for maximum rigidity. The rear end floats on coil

springs, but the front end rides on highly experimental torsion-spring construction.

NEW TYPE BRAKES

The XP-300's brakes are an experiment in developing braking power capable of insuring safe, fast stops from high speeds.

Extra-wide brake drums provide room for double sets of brake shoes cooled by forced air. The front brakes are on the wheels, the rear brakes are mounted on differential.

Front brakes not only have special air passages, but front drums have radial fins to pump air past working surface of drum. Rear brakes have conventional cooling fins on the drums.

Drums are steel with centrifugally cast iron liners to provide long-wearing surface.

NOVEL INSTRUMENT BOARD AND PEDESTAL

Best proof of the "experimental" nature of the XP-300 is its instrument setup. For in addition to the normal car instruments, XP-300 has added ones to give precise performance information for scientific check during operation.

A combination speedometer-tachometer shows engine revolutions per minute as well as miles per hour. This is mounted over the steering column directly in front of driver. Other instruments are arranged across a shallow board and on a floor pedestal between seats.

The clock is a combined clock, stop watch, and elapsed-time stop watch. The manifold pressure gauge, when used in conjunction with tachometer, allows driver to determine approximate horsepower engine is delivering on road. Fuel gauge shows amount of fuel in gas tank but, at press of button, tells amount of alcohol in other tank. Engine oil level instrument, similarly, will show oil level in transmission. Other instruments include water temperature and battery gauge.

Radio controls, light switch and Dynaflow selector lever are located on floor pedestal. All instruments are round-faced aircraft type for easy reading and equipped with "black light" for night use.

The above is taken from a pamphlet from Jeff Watkin's collection.

The *GATEWAY GAZETTE* is a monthly newsletter, free to paid members of the St. Louis Gateway Chapter of the Buick Club of America. Articles, technical information, For Sale and Want Ads, photos, restoration sagas and coming events are welcomed, but must be submitted by the first Monday of the month to assure inclusion in the next issue.

Our membership year runs from May 1 to April 30. Membership is renewable on May 1. Members joining between January 1 and April 30 are paid up through the next April. Dues are \$15 per year for the local chapter. Contact Pete Nathan, Treasurer. See address below. Current dues for the national club are \$50 per year, payable to: Buick Club of America, P.O. Box 360775, Columbus, OH 43236-0775.

The Gateway Chapter meets monthly on the THIRD MONDAY of the month. Meetings begin at 7:30 PM and guests are welcome to attend. We meet at various restaurants around St. Louis and most members and guests try to arrive by 6:30 or earlier to have dinner before the meeting.

For more information, our local mailing addresses are as follows:

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