

Driver's Seat



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About SGCCC

The **South Georgia Classic Car Club** was founded in April, 1984 as a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the restoration, preservation, and enjoyment of special interest automobiles.

The Driver's Seat is the official publication of the **SGCCC**. It is printed, published, and distributed during the last week of each month to all club members. All information contained herein is not necessarily the opinion or the position of club members, its officers, and/or advertisers.

To submit content for inclusion in the newsletter, please e-mail the editor, editor@sgccc.org or mail to **SGCCC Newsletter**, 4017 N Oak St Ext, Valdosta, GA 31605. All other correspondence should be sent to, **SGCCC**, P.O. Box 403, Valdosta, GA 31603, or e-mail to: president@sgccc.org

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David Boyd

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Madonna Terry

1955 Daytona 500

After developing a reputation for performance and horsepower in the mid 1930's and early 1940's, Buick began to promote Dynaflow transmissions and a soft ride as main selling features after World War II from 1946-1954, Buick's performance on the race track suffered mightily. But that all changed one day in 1955.

J.C. Van Landingham, the Buick dealer in Deland, FL teamed up with friend Bob Fish, an after-market carburetor manufacturer in Daytona Beach and sponsored a 1955 Century in the '55 Daytona Beach race.

Van Landingham supplied the car and Fish supplied the garage along with mechanics. The two decided on a local driver and picked a good one: Glenn "Fireball" Roberts, who was then on his way to a fine, though tragically abbreviated career as a NASCAR driver. The trouble was, until the night before the race, the Buick wasn't ready. Ray Fox, who later worked for NASCAR as an engine tech inspector, and who in 1955 was employed by Bob Fish as an engine builder explained:

"Bob Fish had decided that if he was going to be a major sponsor of the Century, if would also be nice if he could put a Fish carburetor under the hood. Bill France, the head of NASCAR didn't agree." The rules clearly stated carburetors had to be listed for the specific make and model of the car being entered, and France said "no." Fish kept asking. France kept saying "no way."

The standoff continued until the night before the race. Fox said Fish finally realized he couldn't change NASCAR's rules or Bill France's mind so he had his mechanics "pull the car into his garage so he could blueprint the engine."

Blueprint a race engine the night before an important race? Said Fox: "We pulled the car into the shop at 8 p.m. and tore it down. The body had earlier been modified with roll bars and safety equipment, and the rules permitted some chassis stiffening. That had all been done in Fish's shop." But, because of Fish's running battle with Bill France over the carburetor, "the engine had not been touched after it left the Buick assembly line."

The next morning Fish and his mechanics towed the car down to the beach so Fireball Roberts could try it out. The car had never been in a race

before, and Roberts had never before run practice laps with it.

A Chrysler 300 (with 331 cu. in./300 HP "Hemi"—Editor) driven by Tim Flock qualified for the pole and was heavily favored to win. In fact, just about everyone thought this was going to be "Chrysler's year."

Fireball qualified fourth in the field. Ray Fox smiled as he recalled what happened next. "After the green flag dropped and the cars blasted through the first turn, Roberts proceeded to blow the entire field away with his Century and won the race going away." According to contemporary accounts of the race, the Buick led every lap.

Two hours after the race, the Buick's engine was completely disassembled in Fish's shop and the parts laid out on tables. NASCAR officials checked everything taking several hours in the process. Ray Fox doesn't like to talk much about what came next; "It was almost over" said Fox. "The inspectors had checked everything and nothing was wrong. It was all going just fine. Then all of a sudden one of the spectators in the garage picked up a push rod and asked 'what about this?' There were grinder marks on the end of the push rod."

While the engine was being blueprinted, Red Voght, one of NASCAR's greatest performance mechanics, had worked on the push rods. It was Voght's intent to bring them all to the exact same length. The trouble was, he had used a bench grinder to do it. Ray Fox clearly remembers Red Voght touching the push rods to a grinder and then checking each one with a height gauge, to be sure they were all equal length.

It was not an intent to circumvent the rules, and it was hardly a change that would do anything to increase horsepower. But in rule number 37 on page 30 of the 1955 NASCAR Rule Book, it stated that "no polishing, porting, altering, and/or relieving of motor parts" would be allowed.

The decision as to who would be awarded first place was suddenly thrown into turmoil. It took NASCAR nearly 24 hours to make a final ruling, a ruling that remains controversial to this day. The day after the race, NASCAR Commissioner E.G. "Cannonball" Baker stripped Roberts and Buick of the victory and [continued on page 7]

Minutes

February 4, 2014

Meeting: Convened at 6:45 pm by Club President, Rick Hastings, at Austin's Cattle Company. The Opening Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance were led by Paul Worth and Armed Forces Veterans respectively. There were 30 members in attendance.

Minutes: the January minutes were read by Secretary Bob Raffaele and they were approved by those present.

Treasurer's Report: due to the absence of Treasurer Donna Robertson the report was given by Bob Raffaele and it was approved by those present. For a detailed copy of the report please see a club official.

Club Business: Bill Higgins mentioned that Glen Jarvis would break his perfect attendance record by missing tonight's meeting due to health issues.

Check Lewis, club member and manager of Grassy Pond Recreation area, offered the facility as a possible setting for the Club's upcoming anniversary event in June.

Bill Higgins reported the Club Cruiser had new tires installed along with a general check up. The cruiser's insurance policy was discussed with no action taken till we have some quotes.

Future Events: Madonna reminded everyone to check the club website for area events and flyers.

Logan reported the May 17th Super Cruise-In will definitely be held at the Valdosta Mall, the actual spot not yet decided.

The Club's annual picnic and ride at the Georgia Sheriff's Youth Home will be May 31st. In order to encourage more member participation a motion was passed with Richard Runnalls and Bill Higgins volunteering to man the grill and Janice Lewis offering to coordinate the side-dish and dessert entries. As in past years, the Corvette club, as co-host, will provide drinks.

Terry Burton recounted his efforts in having a D-Day 70th anniversary event and parade take place this June in Lakeland.

Free dinner drawings were won by Jerry Ellis, Logan Birdsong, David Boyd, Bill Wheeler and Bob Barrett.

Meeting: Adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Bob Raffaele, Secretary

President's Report

C. Rick Hastings

Wow, it's hard to believe, but March, 2014 is already here. And we all know what that means--Warm weather. So shine up your ride, head to the cruise-in and car shows and take those occasional Sunday joy rides.

Up-coming activities for club members and guests include our monthly meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 4th at 6pm at Austin's Steak House and our second Saturday of the month cruise-in at Toys-R-Us on March 8th from 3-6 pm. And don't forget about the Azalea Festival Car and Bike show on Sunday, March 9th located at Drexel Park in Valdosta. Another opportunity will be the Old Plow Days Festival and Parade in Ray City on Saturday, March 22nd.

2014, the 30th Anniversary year of our club, promises to be full of various activities that all members can enjoy. So keep your copy of the *Driver's Seat* handy to keep track of everything going on. And, of course, consult our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/sgccc> and our website: SGCCC.org, for on-going updates of club activities, car shows, etc.

Please continue to keep Glenn and Sherry Jarvis in your thoughts and prayers.

Happy trails to you.....



Bulldog Victory Drove Valdostans To Form Car Club

By MICK HENDERSON Times Staff Writer

The South Georgia Classic Car Club may be one of the few such organizations formed as the result of a football game. "We said if the Bulldogs beat Texas in the Cotton Bowl that would be our sign," said Buddy Walker of the decision to start the club made by himself and president Mike Bennett. The 'Dogs won and the club held its first meeting in January of this year [1984] at a local steakhouse.

Comprised of all different types of American automobiles mainly from the 1950s through the 1970s, the club now boasts 80 members, some from as far away as Jacksonville, Fla., Tifton and Adel.

Both 37 years old and friends since their high school days here, Walker said he and Bennett have kept in touch over the years and occasionally would "have lunch together and discuss old cars." Supervisor of the Social Security office here, he said he and Bennett, a local attorney, have always felt a car club could work here. The club has a good representation of Ford Mustangs, Buick Gran Sports, 1955 and 1957 Chevrolets and early model Thunderbirds, he said. There are also GTOs, Corvettes, Chevrolet Impalas and even a 1971 Ford Pantera, which has a European body but Ford engine and transmission. Many of the vehicles are convertibles, including Mustangs, Gran Sports, a Ford Falcon and probably their most unique vehi-

cle, Bennett's 1967 Shelby Mustang convertible. The car, painted Acapulco Blue, was in production until 1970 and is actually a regular Mustang that was sent to racer and mechanic Carroll Shelby's California shop for some custom modifications, Walker said. Once the owner of two 1966 Mustangs, a coupe and a convertible, he said he's currently looking for one of the Shelby models cars himself.

Since their formation, the club has held what's known as a "show and shine" in April and a parade through Lake Park on July 4 and this coming weekend will be putting on a large display at the Valdosta Mall.

Some of the more notable vehicles to be there include a 1960 Chevrolet Impala, a 1963 "split window" Corvette, two 1964 Z-II Camaros, a 1963 1/2 Ford drag car and a 1956 Lincoln Mark II. There will be two prototype 1970 Gran Sports that were displayed by Buick in different auto shows around the country, he said. "We're

hoping that this show will expose us to more people. We hope to have a quality show."

Some members have also participated in car shows around the Southeast, including one coming up soon Perry, Fla., and in the recent Albany Pecan Festival. The club meetings, which take place every two months, primarily serve as a source of information for members, Walker said. They have a special speaker for each meeting that provides some broad type of technical information to members.

To join the club, "ownership of a car is not necessary but enthusiasm is," he said, with the dues of \$15 a year or \$10 for a half-year. "We're here to foster an interest in specific cars," he said with the eventual hope that the club will break off into different groupings involving particular makes or models.

(reprinted from *The Valdosta Daily Times*, Sunday, October 14, 1984)



Times Staff Photo By Rick Rendon

Larry Kolb, Buddy Walker, Richard Lasseter



Membership Application

We want to get the most up to date information on all members. Registration form and club dues must be returned prior to the March meeting for the up-to-date information to be included in the roster. Bring dues and registration form to any meeting or mail to:

SGCCC
P.O. Box 403
Valdosta, GA 31603-0403

Last Name

First Name

Spouse's Name

Address

City

State Zip

Home Phone

His Occupation

Her Occupation

His birthday

Her Birthday

Anniversary

Email Address

Children's Names

Classic or Special Interest Vehicles you own

Club dues are \$30 per year for a family membership.

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at Austin's Cattle Company, 2101 West Hill Avenue, Valdosta, GA. Eating starts at 6:00 pm and the meeting starts at 6:45

March 2014

- 1 - Bainbridge Cruisers Cruise Dairy Queen, Bainbridge, GA Info: Lee West 229-246-4694
- 1 - Tallahassee Cruise-In Sonic, 5814 North Monroe Street 5:30pm until
- 1 - Albany Cruise-In Location: San Joe's in Leesburg 5pm start time
- 2 - Tallahassee Street Rodders Museum Cruise Antique Car Museum, 6800 Mahan Dr 1-5pm <http://www.tally-streetrodders.com>
- 2 - Webster Swap Meet Sumter County Fairgrounds, Bushnell, FL 8am-2pm info: 800-438-8559 www.floridaswapmeets.com
- 4 - SGCCC Monthly Business Meeting Austin's Cattle Company 2101 West Hill Avenue Valdosta, GA eat at 6:00, meet at 7:00
- 6 - Live Oak Cruise, Huddle House (Hwy 129 & I-10), Live Oak, FL 6-9pm info: Ralph Towner 386-752-4725
- 8 - Valdosta Cruise-In at Toys-R-Us parking lot, Valdosta, GA 1200 N St Augustine Rd (I-75 exit 18) 3-6pm
- 8 - Tallahassee What-A-Burger Cruise Ford & Chevy Clubs 1101 Thomasville Road, 5:30-8:30pm info: Reuben Plachy 850-894-5815
- 12 - Tallahassee What-A-Burger Cruise 1101 Thomasville Road, info: Joe Clark 850-385-3959 or Steve Curvey 750-383-0651
- 15 - Thomasville Pecan Region Car Club Cruise Dairy Queen, 14375 Hwy 19S, 6:30pm until info: Steve Gordon 229-226-2266
- 15 - Monticello Cruise-In at Rare Door Restaurant North Cherry St, Monticello, FL 5pm until info: 850-997-0607
- 15 - Albany Artesian City Car Club Cruise-In Mellow Mushroom, 2825 Nottingham Way 5pm until info: Wendell Hill 229-435-2560
- 15 - Perry Cruise-In 221 N. Jefferson St. Perry, GA 6-9 p.m. Call Bob Taylor, 672-0848
- 21 - Lake City Hardee's West Cruise info: Ralph Towner 386-752-4725
- 22 - Tallahassee What-A-Burger Cruise 1101 Thomasville Rd, info: <http://www.tally-streetrodders.com>

Call the contact person before leaving for an out of town cruise to be sure it has not been moved or cancelled.
See the SGCCC web site (www.sgccc.org) for more info and flyers on these events.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 Woodrow McLeod	13	14 Lynn Nelson	15 Chuck Lewis
16 Lois Gehring	17	18	19	20 George & Ann Peterson	21	22
23 Allan & Joan Dear	24	25 Maria Birdsong	26	27 Bill Higgins	28	29
30 Richard Runnalls						

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[continued from page 2] declared second-place finisher Tim Flock and his Chrysler 300 the official winners.

Carl Kiekhaefer, multi-millionaire owner of the newly established Mercury Marine Outboard Company, had just debuted that brand new 1955 Chrysler 300 with the full intention to win Daytona that year, and many NASCAR fans of the day strongly believed that the top officials at Daytona destined Kiekhaefer's 300 to win with driver Tim Flock at the wheel. It's interesting to note that Flock himself had been disqualified at Daytona a year earlier. To this day, many NASCAR old-timers and historians believe that Fireball Roberts was cheated out of winning the race and that he was the real winner.



P.O. Box 403 - Valdosta, GA 31603-0403

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, **March 4, 2014**

Eat @ 6:00

Meet @ 6:45

Austin's Cattle Company

2101 West Hill Avenue

Cruise:

March 8, 2014

Toys-R-Us parking lot

Off Exit 18 on St Augustine Rd.

3:00pm until 6:00pm



Graphics Arts Department at Wiregrass Georgia Technical College

Cover - The '55 Chrysler 300 as raced by Tim Flock in Daytona. It was owned and debuted by Mercury Outboard magnate Carl Kiekhaefer. This was a clean press photo of the car before it was modified with such things as a "debris screen" in front of its grille, as was common on the early dirt and sand tracks.

Editor's Comments

It is hard to believe that it is already March! A sixth of this year has already elapsed, and there is much remaining to get done. Spring is just around the corner, and we are beginning to see cars with a hint of yellow—almost as if they were painted with metal flake—thanks to the pollination of the pine trees.

This is the 30th Anniversary of the founding of the club, and we can be proud of a club that has stayed in existence and continues to function well for such a long time. I have included in this edition a reprint of an article that ran in the Valdosta Daily Times in October of 1984. Thanks to Lrry Kolb for providing this article from his scrapbook.

Thanks to Richard Lassiter for providing the article about the controversy surrounding the 1955 Daytona 500. There have been many good races at Daytona in the last 60 years, and that one was one of them.

Keep up with scheduled club events by watching the web-

site and checking the club's Facebook page.

Be sure to fill out the membership application and renew your membership by the March club meeting. We will be updating the mailing list for 2014 soon, and you want to be sure to be included on it.

We are planning on having more articles about the history of the club in the newsletter this year. And I am always looking for all kinds of articles to include in the *Driver's Seat*. If you have an article you would like to provide you may email it to me, or provide me with a type-written copy.

Happy Cruising!

David Boyd, editor

