



# WILDCAT EXPRESS

November/December 1999  
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Affiliate Chapter of the Buick GS Club of America-625 Pine Point Circle, Valdosta, GA 31602 (912) 244-0577



## The Director's View by Tom Jacot

Another year is upon us and I hope it's going to be happy and prosperous for all of you. I look forward to the challenge of being a director again and the many tasks and activities ahead for all of us. Have no doubt, your club directors are doing the very best they can to bring to you the activities, technical knowledge, and camaraderie that you all enjoy. We all need to pull together as a club. Many of you will be called upon in the upcoming year for support in one way or another. Don't wait for someone to call you . . . VOLUNTEER!! Just call one of the directors (listed inside) and find out what YOU can do. The club needs your involvement and advice if we are to grow and become more united as a group dedicated to the preservation and advancement of Buick performance and the Southern California Gran Sports as a whole

Some of the upcoming events that will be worth attending are the Big 3 Swap Meet held at Qual-Comm Stadium in San Diego on February 26 and 27. Let's all meet at Coco's Restaurant Saturday and Sunday Mornings at 6:00 a.m., eat breakfast together the caravan over to the stadium. Bring your friends and get them interested in joining our club. There will be a short club meeting at the swap meet. See the flyer in this issue for more information on this day of auto parts heaven. See you there!!!

I want to extend a warm welcome to all of our new members and look forward to meeting you personally.

If you wondered what happened to our Web site, it's now back on line thanks to Jon Keao's efforts.

Tom

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Big 3 Flyer

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GRAN SPORTS

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## WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST CLUB MEMBERS

I forgot to include this important information in our last newsletter. For that I'd like to (1) apologize and (2) introduce our newest members dating all the way back to October of last year. Sorry for the omission, folks.

**Joey Heberle** from Garden Grove (Still shopping for his Buick)

**Tom Cook** from Upland ('70 GS455 & a 1940 Model 56-S Super)

**Dave McClelland** from Glendale ('70 GS455 convertible)

**Len Bentley** from Saugus ('67 GS400 & a 455-equipped '72 Skylark)

**Rick Collins** from Orange ('71 GS455 "GSX look-alike")

**Duane Ylhainen** from Escondido ('67 California GS & a '87 LeSabre)

**Clark Lyons** from Redlands ('65 Skylark)

**Gary Jacobson** from Eagle Rock (455-equipped '68 Sportwagon, '69 GS400 & a '68 LeSabre Custom 400)

The club has a lot to offer and I'm sure these folks do, too. If you long-time members run across any of them at our events, introduce yourselves and make them feel welcome. You know how to recognize them, don't you? They're the ones with the new-looking club T-shirts.

## BUICKS AT BRISTOL 2000

By Dan Gerber

For those of you who can't make it to the GSCA Nationals (and those who can), here's another exciting all-Buick event: "Buicks at Bristol". The following is a condensed version of an E-mail posted by Jim Haas, the event organizer:

*The Buicks at Bristol 2000 event is set for Sept. 21-23, 2000, Thursday through Saturday, plus Sunday (the 24th) as the rain day. Mark your calendars now. We plan to expand our Fastest Doorcar Shootout to 8 cars. Kenny Duttweiler and Lawrence Conley both have indicated that they will return for this event. If it can't run a 6 second number, it won't be in the hunt.*

*(Signed)*

*Jim Haas*

*BUICK528@aol.com*

## MANUALS

By Dan Gerber

The following information (compliments of Mike Shea, a member of the Buick Performance e-group) may prove to be very valuable to those of you looking for factory manuals for your Buick.

*Date: Mon, 17 Jan 2000 17:03:40 -0800*

*From: Mike Shea <bigirish@mindspring.com>*

*To: buickperformance@egroups.com*

*Buicklanders:*

*With all the talk lately about interchange and year specific applications, would manuals help? Sam Egan at Automotive Information Clearing House has all original factory manuals for any vehicle you can think of. These are not repos... They are reasonably priced and cover the range from chassis to color chips, to owners and accessory manuals. Also all the interchange manuals you could ask for. Sam is a nice guy and very knowledgeable on a wide variety of topics. You can reach him at 619-447-7200.*



*Events  
Calendar*

### FEBRUARY

**6-San Diego** Car Show and Swap Meet-Qualcomm Stadium-858 484-9342

**13-Long Beach** Hot Rod Hi Performance Parts Exchange-Veterans Stadium-800 762-9785

**26/27-SAN DIEGO 34TH BIG 3 AUTO PARTS EXCHANGE-QUALCOMM STADIUM 858 484-9342 MEET AT COCO'S SATURDAY AND SUNDAY AT 6 AM, EAT BREAKFAST AND CARAVAN OVER TO THE STADIUM. SPACES WX20—WX22**

### MARCH

**5-Pomona** Swap Meet and Car Show-Fairplex-714 538-7091

**12-Long Beach** Hot Rod Hi Performance Parts Exchange-Veterans Stadium-800 762-9785

**19-San Diego** Car Show and Swap Meet-Qualcomm Stadium-858 484-9342

### APRIL

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Goodbye Pomona

by Bruce Kent

In an agreement made between Fairplex (who owns Pomona Raceway) and LaVerne City Council the Street Legal events held at the Fairplex will be eliminated in 2001. This is an effort to minimize noise and traffic associated with the racing venues that are held at the Fairplex. This will reduce the racing days from the current approximately 36 days to 15 next year. Residents of LaVerne have for a long time complained about the noise generated from the drag racing events.

Financially, this is a good decision for Fairplex. They want to protect the big events and ironically the noisy ones. It is my opinion that the Street Legal events are probably the second least profitable, drag racing events, behind the Jr. Dragsters. Logically the decision makes no sense. If you have been to a Street Legal event they are very strict about exhaust noise as Oliver can attest to. His car averaged 101 decibels where 100 is the limit. As far as traffic is concerned cars arriving early are brought into the parking lot off of the street. Cars leave at a trickle and have no impact on traffic.

What puzzles the logical side of me is that this city has two major east/west thoroughfares that create more traffic than the Street Legal events ever could. They have two railroad lines going right through the backyards of the neighborhoods that complain. The Metrolink generates 90 peak decibels as it goes past. LaVerne currently is having a Freeway built through the middle of their town. But again Fairplex made the correct economical decision. Simple math tells me if you can park 20,000 cars a 5 bucks a pop that's 100 grand a day. Which event would you want to keep?

If you are a member of NHRA I would recommend that you do as I am. Write a letter stating that you are a paying member of NHRA. Express how important the Street Legal events are to you and that you expect them to make every effort to resolve the situation quickly. Better yet develop another track within a reasonable distance.

If you feel even more ambitious write letters to the LaVerne city hall, the local newspapers, etc. stating that you don't agree with LaVerne's decision and that the Street Legal events should be allowed to continue, at least until another facility is available. Explain how it benefits both the young and the old by providing a facility where drag racing can be done legally and safely.

As far as new tracks are concerned I made some

phone calls.

Norton Air Force Base. Jim Partridge who use to be in charge of the Street Legal events stated that he was within 1 month of operation when the group who could make the decision pulled the plug. As I understood Jim to say that either the mayor of San Bernardino or a city council member who was in favor of the event at the facility was going to look into the matter to see if he could get it back on track.

### Rialto Airport.

I spoke to a person at the airport who was a spokesperson for the project. He stated that there are two proposals on the table for the development of a facility. One being a basic drag strip and one a more elaborate motorplex for different racing venues. He said that the city had appointed a sub-committee to review the proposals and expected the sub-committee to make a recommendation within the next two months. If the simpler of the two facilities were built it could be completed by the end of the year.

### March Air Force Base.

This project got as far as a noise study. Then the person who was trying to promote the track hasn't been heard from.

According to Jim Partridge NHRA is reviewing a number of sites for a new track.

## 2000 GS NATIONALS

You've made your hotel reservations for the GS Nationals, haven't you? If not, you're going to find that the more popular hotels are already booked solid. Refer back to the November/December, 1999 "Wildcat Express" for a comprehensive list of hotels in the Bowling Green, KY area. The national GSCA club members have an even larger list of accommodations in the latest GSX-TRA at their disposal, too. The bottom line is, **make your reservations now...** even if you're only thinking about going. After all, you can always cancel them later.

This year's event runs from Tuesday, June 27<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, July 1<sup>st</sup>. Stay over Saturday for the best airfares. In case you need a break from Buicks, there's plenty of 'tourist-y' stuff to do, too. If you have any questions about accommodations, you may also call Tom Jacot, our new director, at (714) 539-7599.

## Mufflers

by Bruce Kent

I recently had the opportunity to learn more about mufflers than I ever wanted to know so I thought I would pass it along to anyone who may be interested. I'm was experimenting with some different rear suspension components which interfered with the existing mufflers that I was using. So off they came and by this time they should have found a new home under Chris Lee's car. Because I race at Pomona and the cars have to meet the 100 average decibel rule the mufflers needed to be quiet, as were my last ones, and needed to flow well, as did my last ones, but needed to be in a smaller package. Also I would need to run the system to the rear bumper as did the last system. So two areas will be addressed here, the mufflers and the exhaust system. So here we go.

Some of you members who have visited Pomona may have seen an orange 69 Camaro whose license plate reads "COZY 69". Cozy is actually her last name and not some sexual preference although it is up to the individual to interpret this as they wish. Anyone who has heard this car would have to admit that it has the nicest exhaust sounds of any car there. So I asked around (as far as Chris Lee) and found out that she was using "Spin Tech" mufflers. I thumbed through the National Dragster and found an add for the company which, by chance, is located in Riverside. A quick phone call was made and I struck up a conversation with a gentleman named Dave.

Dave patiently explained the different methods of sound control. Some of the terms were of foreign nature but I tried to keep up. He also provided me with some printed material to read which explained the different muffler technologies.

Traditional mufflers control sound in two ways: friction and absorption. Examples of friction mufflers are Flowmasters or any "Turbo" type muffler and examples of absorption type mufflers would be the straight through types with some type of sound absorbing material inside. A third type would be an electronic muffler, which he stated were very expensive, heavy and weren't designed for performance use. The fourth type is based upon the second law of Thermodynamics, or Entropy, which is the organization of the system. The Spin Tech muffler organizes the sound and heat energy. I got lost here and my eyes glazed over.

Spin Tech mufflers utilize a patented spin sound trap to retain and quickly randomize vibration wave front energy into heat energy. Exhaust gases enter the muffler and are directed into "spin sound traps" where they create vortices. Vent holes are placed in areas where the case wall and sound traps form a venturi. As the gases flow over the vent holes the reduced pressure extracts gas out of the trap. The incoming gases keep the vortex in motion.

What this all means is that the Spin Tech muffler gives you flow rates close to a straight through "absorption" muffler but is quieter and doesn't have the potential backpressure problems of the friction muffler. The Spin Tech muffler actually gets quieter as the rpms rise.

They claim that their mufflers lose less than 1 percent of horsepower over open exhaust. Their mufflers have become quite popular in Outlaw and some of the Nascar racing. They are just starting to make inroads into drag racing.

Next on the agenda was the exhaust system. Spin Tech recommended Chino Valley Muffler, which has installed many of their mufflers. I discussed my needs with one of the owners named Tom. We decided to maximize the system by installing a synchronized system or simply put an "X" pipe. This further reduces noise and allows the exhaust to flow as freely as possible. These are mounted between the collector and the mufflers. They use a thin walled stainless steel tubing which will last longer than the aluminize tubing and is lighter. If you don't want the expense of the "X" pipe then an "H" pipe would be the next best system to install. If noise were a consideration then I would recommend one of the two. The added benefit is that it increases mid range torque. They recommended a 3-1/2 diameter system because of the power level. Because I plan on running a class at BG this year I had to opt for a 3 1/2" to the muffler and 3" tailpipes. It is my opinion that these mufflers and exhaust system will be come very popular in the next year. At the Jan. 8 Pomona event over 20 cars weren't allowed to run because of excess noise. One of these cars was Oliver's'. We took his car to Scotty's Mufflers in San Bernardino to have an "X" pipe and a set of 3-1/2 inch diameter Spin Tech mufflers installed. A system like this dumping at the rear axle will cost you about \$600. To the rear bumper will probably cost another \$250. If you already have a mandrel bent system to the rear bumper you may be able to salvage it. It isn't cheap but it may well be the best system available at this time if noise is an issue.

As far as performance goes I can't tell you exactly how much better but I did have to increase jet size by two numbers. More fuel is more horsepower.

## Early Musclicar Memories

by Gordon Hanson

Growing up as a youngster in rural northeast Iowa, life tended to be pretty simplistic and often, not very exciting. This was manifested in the cars my parents had at the time—a '58 Chevy Delray 2-door sedan with a six and manual transmission, and a '64 Impala 283 with a Powerglide. Any solid, dependable Chevy with good cold starting capabilities was generally the type of car most of the folks had back then.

Roger and Myrtle Ellickson and their son Bob were always among our closest family friends, Roger and my mother having been high school classmates. Bob was a few years older than my brother and I, so I guess we always looked to him for automotive knowledge and insight. The Ellicksons lived in Decorah and, as far as I can remember, always drove Buicks. I remember one car in particular they had—a 1955 Buick Super—four portholes in the front fenders, black and white two-tone with red leather interior. It wasn't new, but it was a really classy car at the time.

One day in the summer of 1965, the Ellicksons called us and said we should come downtown and see Bob's new Buick. We had to finish some farm chores but, with those out of the way, we jumped in the old Delray and headed for town. Upon arriving at their house, what was parked in the driveway made my brother and me drool—it was a brand new Burgundy Mist Skylark Gran Sport with gorgeous white bucket seat interior, console, whitewalls, chrome road wheels, big 401 nailhead engine and Super Turbine 300 automatic transmission. It had those nice crisp, clean lines that all the GM intermediates had that year—the car was beautiful!

After all of us ogled over the car for several minutes, Bob asked us if we wanted to go for a ride—like we were going to say no, right? So Bob, my brother, his friend Gary Arneson, and I got in the Gran Sport and cruised out of town. I had been reading all the automotive publications for some time—Motor Trend, Car & Driver, Hot Rod,

etc., and knew all the particulars of most of the musclecars—but had never actually ridden in one. I was in for a treat!

The Gran Sport was solid and tight, and Bob was a capable driver, so I felt safe at the speeds I knew we were going to shortly attain. We pulled out onto Highway 52, headed south, and Bob got into the throttle. With all the butterflies of the Carter AFB in a vertical position, the little Skylark was makin' hay—and not the kind we raised on the farm either. After the shift to high, I remember sitting in the right side of the back seat, watching the speedometer needle headed east and being buried. We slowed, turned off onto a dirt driveway, backed out onto the highway and Bob nailed the accelerator hard this time. Even with the smooth power delivery of the two speed automatic and four of us in the car, the torquey nailhead put more heat in those Uniroyal Laredos than a big pot of beans at a chili cookoff. We headed back the way we had come and farther, and even climbing a substantial upgrade, we were still pulling over 115 mph. Heading back to the house (with my jaw still in my lap) I told Bob "God, this thing hauls!" He just looked in the rear view mirror and gave his quiet chuckle. He knew his young friend, the impressionable kid from the farm, had been impressed.

So, what's this little story really about? Looking back some nearly thirty-five years later, I think it's about the simple, carefree lifestyle we all once had, family unity, close family friends, admiring and respecting someone older than you who treated you with kindness. It's about loving the American automobile; more specifically for me, the advent of the musclecar and the impression it made on me when I was just a youngster, of reading about them and craving to have one when you knew all the while there way no way in hell you could ever afford one back then. This story is about getting an E-ticket ride without the presence of Six Flags, Knott's or Disneyland; it's the realization that Chevrolets (and I certainly love those, too) aren't the only good things to come out of General Motors; it's the ignition of a flame, which most people have let die, that we want to keep and preserve our musclecars and, most importantly, that we love our Buicks. And isn't that why we're in this club?

## RESTORATION TIPS

By Dan Gerber

**STEREO SYSTEM:** Recently, while sifting through my Buick Performance Group e-mail, I found out about an individual who builds what appears to be a really nice stereo cassette package for '70-'72 GS/Skylarks. His name is Greg Setter, and he builds it around a modified, new Pioneer KEH-2929 AM/FM/Cassette. I say it "appears" to be a nice set-up, because I've only seen pictures of it on the Internet. He sells the stereo, a rechromed Buick bezel with a new wood grain appliqué, and the installation wiring for \$325.00. It installs from the front of the dash, just like the stock radio. If it looks as good as the pictures (see the example elsewhere in this issue), it's a good deal.

Greg is ready to put together a package for '68-'69 models, too. All he needs is for someone to send him a straight bezel so he can get started on it. If you're interested in either package, you may contact Greg at 795 Kainz Dr., Hiawatha, IA, 52233, (319) 294-1996.

**FRONT BUMPER STRIP:** Those of you who own a '72 GS/Skylark know how difficult it is to find a front "bumper guard" (the rubber strip that's mounted across the leading edge of the bumper) in good condition. If you're lucky enough to find a '72 model at Pick Your Part, the front bumper guard is probably pretty well beat up. The usual Buick part suppliers, like Year One for instance, do not offer them in their catalogs, either.

Well, it's Mike Carmody Antique Car Service & Parts (6400 Myers Lake Rd., Rockford, MI, 49341) to the rescue. I purchased one of his bumper guard kits for my Skylark last year after I had my bumpers chromed. Included in the package was mounting hardware and three rubber strips vulcanized to sturdy metal backings, just like the stock unit. With only minor trimming to length, I was able to do a professional looking installation in less than an hour. I can't vouch for its durability, since I haven't run into anything... yet, but it sure looks like it's as good as original equipment. If you're interested, contact Mike at (616) 874-7164. You may want to do it soon, because only a limited number of guards were produced.

(Continued from page 2)

**2-Long Beach** Hot Rod Hi Performance Parts Exchange-Veterans Stadium-800 762-9785

**16-Pomona** Swap Meet and Car Show-Fairplex-714 538-7091

**23-Long Beach** Hot Rod Hi Performance Parts Exchange-Veterans Stadium-800 762-9785

**23-San Diego** Car Show and Swap Meet-Qualcomm Stadium-858 484-9342

### MAY

**14-Long Beach** Hot Rod Hi Performance Parts Exchange-Veterans Stadium-800 762-9785

**21-San Diego** Car Show and Swap Meet-Qualcomm Stadium-858 484-9342

### JUNE

**4-Pomona** Swap Meet and Car Show-Fairplex-714 538-7091

**11-Long Beach** Hot Rod Hi Performance Parts Exchange-Veterans Stadium-800 762-9785

### JULY

**9-Long Beach** Hot Rod Hi Performance Parts Exchange-Veterans Stadium-800 762-9785

**16-Pomona** Swap Meet and Car Show-Fairplex-714 538-7091

**29/30-Pomona** GoodGuys 5th West Coast Hot Rod Happenin' (pre '72) 925 838-9876



### FOR SALE:

TA Performance Roller Rocker Arms for 400, 430 & 455, 1.55 ratio, "low miles", excellent condition - \$350.00

Kenne-Bell Hi-Volume/Hi-Pressure oil pump for 400, 430 & 455 (# KB18203), new in box - \$30.00

Call **Dan Gerber** at (714) 220-1189 anytime or (562) 982-8026 on weekdays.

'77 Buick Skyhawk V-6, 4-speed, Ex Kenne-Bell record holder, very consistent bracket car. Runs 13.80 in 1/4. \$2500 obo

Auburn posi unit for a 12-bolt in excellent shape 4 series 30 spline. \$200

Call **Chris Lee** at (909) 946-5595



## The Assistant Director's Corner

by Chris Lee

Well I hope everyone made it through the new year unscathed! I know myself, I am looking forward to the new year and new millennium. As most of you know, we have a new director, Tom Jacot, (or is he an old new director?) Well anyway, maybe we can spark some new interest in our club. I think that right now Buicks are as popular as they have ever been with lots of magazine coverage recently. It seems any non-Chevy cars are cool and the Buicks are still reasonably priced. My brother just picked up a nice '70 GS 455 at a used car lot for \$4000.00. I don't think you'll find any LS 6 Chevelles on a mom and pop used car lot any more! I think that's pretty cheap for a car you can get in and drive anywhere.

I would also like to see more of our members cars up and running. I think we all have had our share of repairing and updating our cars in '99 and I am as guilty as anybody. What started out as some simple head work turned out to be a major engine rebuild, not what I had planned, but things happen. All things considered, I am very happy with the results! I wont bore every-body with all the details, but here's the basic recipe,

76 455 block .038 overbore, cylinder heads were done by Performance Machine in Pomona. They did what they call a street port and a good valve job, they're fairly new to the Buick cylinder heads. I think Bruce Kent has helped guide them as to what areas to work on for the most power. They also did the balancing and boring on my block and I have had no problems with any work they did. As for a cam, I used Bruce Kent's old hydraulic maxi 4 from Kenne-Bell also Kenne-Bell headers and intake. I also wanted to try an electric water pump from Mazere which works fine but I would not recommend it for all but the most extreme applications. If you forget to turn it on or a wire comes loose, you'll overheat in a matter of seconds! You really have to pay attention. I think a belt driven pump is just fine and less worry. The compression ratio is about 11.5 to 1, 4500 stall converter, 4:10 gear ratio, 2½ exhaust soon to be 3 inch, th400 with manual valve body. T/

A Orange headgaskets I think they're .040 inch thick. Net results are 11.50 at 116 mph at Pomona Raceway. The car still has its full interior and added 6 point chromoly roll bar. Items left are 3 inch mandrel bent exhaust, porting the wildcat manifold (it's bone stock) a stage 2 hood scoop and maybe a dominator Carb. I think that would put the car in the very low 11s.

My second under-estimation of the '99 year was I saw a 65 GS in the auto trader for \$2500 so I called the guy it was an numbers matching all original 80,000 mile car but the guy said it was kind of apart. So I hooked up the trailer and headed to Burbank to check it out. Well, he was right, it was apart but as I looked at it I thought I can put this baby together and be cruising the malt shop in 3 weeks even though my girlfriend Allison didn't think so. But what does she know! Well evidently more than me. After bar-gaining the guy down to \$1300, I loaded it on the trailer, then came the boxes out of the guys garage, box after box after box. I filled my ¾ ton truck bed completely full and then some. We filled the trunk of the car with boxes, the interior of the car with boxes, and then the cab of our ride home with parts. I think I lost some on the 210 freeway, but after really looking the car over I thought I'd better do it right, so I sent it to the paint shop. First they told me 3 weeks max. Yeah, right! Nine months later I got it back, but it really came out nice. Then I started putting some of the chrome back on but when you put 34 year old chrome on new paint it just doesn't look right. Even though the chrome wasn't that bad, it needed to be redone, so off to the chrome shop-bumpers, grill, bezels, molding, door handles and so on. Then the engine machine work, pistons, heads, transmission rebuild, tires, brakes, weather strips, carpet and lots of labor. So it's a year later and I still can't drive it, but I am hoping for sometime in June to have it going. Maybe for the Dear Park show. When finished, it will be a nice car and one I can drive anywhere. I really would like to go to some more car shows, but with an electric water pump on my '70, I can't drive it very far (get it!)

Being a little late with my article I can include some Pomona Raceway results from 01/08/00. First, Bruce Kent's car ran very good, also Phil Erickson ran some 12.70s, Sam Davis running his usual 11s. My brother Tim's car ran 13.58 which I was very impressed with. This car is a bone stock 455 with 112,000 miles on it. We just bolted on a set of slicks, and Oliver's twin blower. The car ran good but got ejected for being too loud 104dbs and mine ran 11.50. We saved a pit spot for Dave Benisek's Apollo, but it wasn't to be for this outing.

In closing, let's get those Buicks up and running, washed and waxed and ready to go!

## POLITICALLY INCORRECT RESTORATIONS #5 STEREO SYSTEM

By Dan Gerber

A convertible, like my '72 Skylark, presents the stereo installer with additional challenges compared to a hardtop or sedan. The convertible body is equipped with extra sheet metal braces to regain the stiffness that's lost with the absence of a metal roof. Also, there's no package tray available to install the rear speakers. There isn't any room in the rear side panels, either, since those areas are designed to store the folding mechanism when the top is down. The following are the steps I took to overcome these challenges when I up-graded from the original AM radio.

Starting with the rear speakers, I installed two stock-size (6 x 9") speakers in the factory locations in the top well behind the rear seat. This was fairly easy to figure out since the single stock speaker was in place when I got the car. All I had to do was remove the rear seat, replace the stock speaker, find the other factory bracket, cut through the well fabric and install the second one. When I routed the wires I allowed them to loop out from under the carpet at the lower right front corner of the rear seat bottom, and installed male and female RCA jacks at that location. When the top is down the rear speaker wires can be disconnected and hooked up to a boom box arrangement. I never did actually hook up a boom box, though. I found that traveling a 50-70 mph with the top down on a crowded freeway resulted in so much road, wind and traffic noise that rear speakers couldn't be heard clearly.

The front speakers, though, were more difficult. The areas behind the kick panels were full of sheet metal bracing. Also, if I tried to space the speakers out (i.e., raised surface mount) so the cones wouldn't extend so far behind the kick panels, the left one would interfere with the emergency brake. Part of the solution came from Custom Autosound [808 W. Vermont Av., Anaheim, CA (714) 535-1091]. They carry a set-up consisting of a pair of small speakers (tweeters?) that bolt in the stock

single speaker location at the top center of the dash.

This still wasn't enough, though. The rear speakers provide decent bass range sounds (when the top was up) and the small front speakers fill in the treble range. There just wasn't anything to provide the mid-range when the top was up or mid and bass-range notes when the top was down. So, I had to do something that shouldn't be done to "classic" cars: cut a five-inch hole in each door panel (and inner skin sheet metal) for additional front speakers. The holes were cut near the lower front corner of each door, just forward and low enough to clear the window mechanism. The idea was to stay far away from the corner of the door as possible so as to prevent weakening it.



Now for a decent AM-FM/stereo cassette: I purchased the Custom Autosound model "RADCAM-USA-04" model for \$269.00 (1993 dollars). Custom Autosound doesn't offer an installation kit dedicated to Buicks. So, it was necessary for me to give them my stock plastic bezel and radio so they could piece together a "kit". I also had to make a minor modification to the stock bezel at the tuner shaft hole to make it all fit. Why didn't I buy one of their CD players so I can enjoy 1990's technology, you ask? Well, with all the wind noise in this old sled (even with the top up) higher fidelity than what a cassette offers is a waste of money.

The end result of my efforts is a moderately priced system that cranks out good sounds, looks pretty good (although not factory stock), and required only minimum permanent modifications to the car. Heck, I even kept the metal pieces I removed from behind the door panels in case it's ever necessary for me to weld them back in. (See "Restoration Tips" for more info.)