

PAC MEMBER CAR STORY

Pat & Carol Fricke - 1940 Buick Special

The story of my car started way before I went to see a car in Flasher, North Dakota. I had restored a 1956 Chevrolet Model 3100 pickup several years before. My good friend, Ed Movchan, had been encouraging me to consider building a street rod for some time but I had resisted as I knew how much time it would take to build a car I would be satisfied with and be proud to drive. I could tell I was weakening when I started describing what kind of street rod I would like. It would have to be a car with plenty of space for my wife and me and another couple, be equipped with all the modern conveniences we are used to, and be able to go down the road.



An employee at my office, Frank Kraft, told me about a car that was his grandfather's and was available. He recalled being pulled through the snow behind the car in the winter time when he was a small boy. The car had just sat idle for many years. In July of 2002 I went to Flasher to see the 1940 Buick Special four-door and found that it was all there and intact. It took quite some time to decide to buy the car and find some shop space. My friend was also looking at a car project so we decided to go together and rented a shop. On July 1, 2004 we brought the car to our shop and my project was started.



My project started off slowly; disassembling the car, finding the body shop, and planning the outcome of my efforts. I had decided on a 1996 Cadillac Fleetwood Brougham would be used for the drivetrain as the wheelbase (121½ inches) was the same as the Buick Special. I retired September 1, 2005 so I worked on my project five days a week, every week, for the next six years. The donor Cadillac was acquired and brought to the shop in December 2005. I selected Dale Speckman, owner of Dale's Auto Restoration, to do the welding and body work. The top was chopped 2½ inches on May 3, 2006. The frame was narrowed, engine remounted, body work underway, doors and windows reworked from being chopped, chrome parts replated, frame and chassis parts powder coated. The body was painted by October 2009 and the car was taken to my shop for completion.



Back at my shop, I had to install the windows, body trim, grill, wire harness including all the electrical components, wheels, and exhaust system. The last major component was the interior. I selected Stitches of Mapleton, ND to do the upholstery. We drove the Buick to Mapleton on September 21, 2010 and went there again November 5 to see the progress. My wife, Carol, helped design the upholstery and pick the materials. On January 14, 2011 we picked up the Buick and brought it home for the last time. The Buick has power seats, power windows, seat belts, AM/FM radio, cruise control, and air conditioning.



My first car show was the Cabin Fever show on February 5, 2011 at Riverwood RV in Mandan. Since that first show, my Buick has been in many North Dakota shows. We drove more than 5,000 miles that first year attending NDSRA shows as well as Pioneer Auto Club and other non affiliated events. The Buick has received many awards and recognition from numerous shows.



Carol and I truly enjoy driving the 1940 Buick Special four-door street rod. We have logged more than 15,000 miles so far and plan to put on many more.