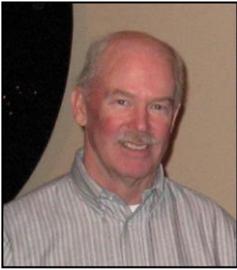


## *Averting Disasters*

By Eric Anderson



The story of the '53 Buick Special begins several years ago when an employee of ours mentioned they had a Buick street rod. Not much more was said for a few years when one day he came to me and said they wanted to sell it because his wife had cancer.

I asked about the particulars because I wasn't much into 1950's cars. About all he knew was that it had a 455-cubic-inch motor and his wife had put it in storage seven years before. She wanted a reasonable price and I was in a position to help the family so we struck a deal and it was delivered to my business shop.

At this point, the history started to unfold. The couple's son had been in prison in Arizona and on his release his mother bought the car for him. He wound his way back to Iowa and worked in the area for a couple years before being sent back to prison for more infractions. His mother then took the car back and stored it in a mini storage for seven years under lock and key.

I got the car cleaned up and started my own investigation as I rebuilt the carb, tranny, brakes and got the Buick running. After we had owned the car a couple months, the Great Plains Street Rodders club had a tour to Speedway Motors in Lincoln, Nebraska. We decided that would be a good shake down cruise to see what we had. On the way home, I noticed a hum and vibration when decelerating. Back at the shop everything checked out and all fluids looked good so we drove the big Buford on several other trips that summer.

During the winter of 2008, I decided to change the rear gearing. When we went to pull the differential apart, we discovered the spider pins had come loose, and they fell out when we pulled the axles! How close to a disaster can you come? I pulled an axle from a '75 Pontiac wagon and have been happily touring ever since.

Over the last year I have been able to learn the car was built and painted in 1969 in Tucson, Arizona. The upholstery was done in Nogales, Mexico. The builder used a '70's Pontiac to get the 455, TH 350, steering column and rear axle. The front suspension is courtesy of a '72 Monte Carlo. Wheels are early Crager SS.

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Even though the paint was 40 years old I decided to leave it as is because of the unique pinstriping over the entire car. The striping is classic '60's and is signed by the striper with a stylized "scorpion '69". Just too cool to mess with.

I still need to replace some window channel and weatherstripping. The grille on this old beast is the focal point for many. It looks like a smiling whale, which, I guess, pretty much describes our maroon ride.

"When better cars are built, Buick will build them".