



Antique Expression

Gulf Coast Region AACA, Houston, Texas

A Cadillac Story



By Federico Pohls

My infatuation and obsession with Cadillacs, mostly convertibles, started around 1976. Eighteen years earlier, the Mexican government had issued a decree prohibiting the importation of cars manufactured abroad. Every motor vehicle sold in Mexico had to be assembled in Mexico, using a certain minimum percentage of parts made in Mexico. The result was that most makes left the country, leaving only Ford, Chevrolet, Dodge, VAM (The Mexican version of AMC), Renault, Datsun and Volkswagen, with only two or three models each, and a very reduced availability of optional equipment. Gone were most automatic transmissions, air conditioning, power windows, leather upholstery, etc.

Convertibles also disappeared, along with powerful engines (in the midst of the horsepower war that was raging in the United States

at that time). So, during my childhood, it was extremely rare to see luxury cars, since only the very privileged, those closest to political power, were able to obtain one of the very few extraordinary import permits granted, but diplomatic missions enjoyed a franchise that allowed them to import two cars per year. So many embassies purchased cars on special order for well-connected people.

That is how the Embassy of Spain in Mexico ordered a brand new and very luxurious triple black 1965 Cadillac Eldorado Convertible that was delivered in Laredo by the export division of the factory itself, apparently without the intervention of any dealership either in Mexico or the U. S. They must certainly must have done this on behalf of some rich fellow, since I don't believe the Spanish Ambassador could have had any interest in driving around Mexico City in a Cadillac convertible, even less so in the midst of Franco's regime.

Ten years later, a lawyer who looked a lot like Detective Cannon from the TV show

(Continued n page 2)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	Page
New Officers	2
Lots of Birthdays!	3
Valentine RSVP	5
Autorama Revisited	7
Out and About	10

(Cover story -Continued from p. 1)

of the same name, took the aforementioned Cadillac, already very run down, to be repaired/restored at my dad's Chevrolet dealership, and the first time I remember having seen it was sitting in the back lot, half disassembled, covered with tarps, and it caught my attention because it was so big and because I had never seen anything like it. By then I had only been to Texas a couple of times with my parents and there I had seen Cadillacs and other cars that were not available in Mexico which I found fascinating, but I had never seen one up close, let alone a convertible.

Months passed (something that at 8 years of age seems like centuries) and the reconstruction of the car did not progress. Cannon must have most likely not been happy because one day my dad said he had threatened him with a lawsuit and to calm him down he had had to buy the Cadillac from him, sell him a brand new Caprice (at cost) that had been in the showroom for a few weeks because its color scheme was not very attractive in those disco days of the seventies (it was black with a red interior) but Cannon liked it and he took it. He also demanded that my dad sell him his 1934 Ford (which he sold back to him about three months later), and then my dad gave the order that the Cadillac be reassembled immediately, no matter what. I remember the innumerable trips in the parts van, all over Mexico City to visit all kinds of chrome, electrical, upholstery, etc. shops, where they had taken the car's parts for repair.

When almost everything was finally back, the engine was missing, which had been sent for rebuilding to a large machine shop, where an uncle, my mother's brother, worked in accounting and I remember calling him over and over again to ask when the darned engine would be ready.

When they finally brought it back, installed it, and started it up, it shook like it was going to break apart. Once they disassembled it to see what was going on, they found that the block had been damaged while honing the cylinders and to try to hide the problem they installed one piston that was larger than the other seven.

My father, fuming, applied the philosophy of "great remedies for great ills" and taking advantage of the fact that what was prohibited was the importation of automobiles, not spare parts, he ordered a brand new engine from the Cadillac factory in Detroit, which had the terrible luck of arriving at customs just when the devaluation of 12.50 to 23 pesos per dollar took place, with which the price of the happy motor doubled from one day to the next. It seemed like the universe was conspiring to make my dad hate the poor Cadillac more and more.

As the car began to take shape again, my fascination grew because I realized all the wonders it had: power windows, automatic air conditioning, power antenna, electro-hydraulic top, leather upholstery... in short, everything no contemporary Mexican car had, not even the Ford LTD,

(Continued on pg. 4)

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REFRESHMENTS

March meeting



**Robert Wheelless
& Keri Johnson**

Bill & Victoria Seward

Thank you!

★HAPPY★ BIRTHDAY!

Let's Hit the Road!!



January

John Matejka	1/7
Roy Boyd	1/9
Tina Fernandez	1/10
Nancy Smith	1/12
Lynda Wall	1/16
Ted Hiesser	1/17
Duane Medley	1/23
Dean Forbes	1/23
Lynn Cawley	1/23
Paul Byrd	1/28
Micky Bohne	1/29

February

Robert Smits	2/6
Robert McLellan	2/7
Theresa Bartlett	2/10
Mary Lou Boggus	2/16
Caroline Calistrat	2/16
Albert Ramos	2/16
Cheryl McGee	2/17
Sergio Fernandez	2/17
Irene Kizer	2/22
Dena Doerfler	2/23
Lyn Morris	2/24
Rollin Hargrove	2/26
Stan Ericksen	2/27
Debra Amos	2/28



Don't forget our
Valentines Day Lunch
February 11th

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



Still Wanted!
A club historian: person willing
to look into the rearview mirror.

February

Bill & Barbara J. Wahlberg	2/10	72 super!!!!
Jim & Cheryl McGee	2/14	35 noteworthy
Roy & Mary Boyd	2/19/	52 huge

Average this month=53 years! Prize winning anniversaries!

In my recollection, our club has not had a Jan. anniversary
and February is a cold month for weddings too, I guess.

Bring a girlfriend to the Valentines Lunch.

FLASH about Dates

If you do not see your birthday or
anniversary date in the correct month,
please alert me. Sometimes people
choose not to give it, and I don't have it,
but no one is perfect, I could have
missed it or typed incorrectly. If you
were shy and want to release it now, it
is never too late.

Evelyn

Cover car (continued from p. 2)

which was the most luxurious thing on the market in those years, and which I hated because I had Chevrolet tattooed on my chest, a feeling my father did not share because his heart had stayed with Ford, since he had sold them from 1955 to 1968, the year they decided to return to live in Mexico City after living 13 years in Poza Rica, Veracruz (an oil town in the Gulf Coast replete with a refinery downtown), having to "settle" for a Chevrolet dealership, as there were no new dealerships available from Ford. It wasn't until the Caprice came along in 1976 with its frills and luxuries that my dad stopped longing for the years when he was selling Fords..

I remember the hours I spent at the dealership workshop inspecting, scrutinizing and studying the Cadillac, closely following the progress of the reconstruction work. When the painter finally applied that metallic turquoise green color, when they installed the white vinyl top with the plexiglas rear window, which a janitor with too much initiative decided to wash with powder detergent leaving it all scratched, and then tried to repair with lacquer thinner, leaving it similar to a slab of dry ice through which you could not see a thing, and the top vinyl was rendered permanently sticky, to the point it had to be replaced completely, contributing even more to my dad's hatred.

Finally, one day he relented, and told me the following Saturday he would take me for a ride in a convertible. Needless to say, I didn't sleep all week and when Saturday finally arrived, I am sure that even before dawn I must have already been jumping on my parents' bed so that we could finally go for that drive.

We arrived at the dealership, and I had the great pleasure of putting the top down and installing the boot with its metal snaps while they washed and polished the car, leaving it sparkling for the big event. I remember we went to see a friend of my dad, and on the way back we passed through a tunnel. The glow of the fluorescent lights reflecting off the chrome on the dashboard is still etched in my mind. It was a magical experience for me. I was hooked.

Unfortunately, my dad never

forgot how much he hated the car and immediately put it up for sale as soon as it was ready. I don't know how long it took, but I remember that by 1978 the car was sold, and I never saw it again, leaving a hole in my young heart the size of a 1965 Cadillac...

That was when I started harassing my dad to buy a Cadillac convertible again. Morning, day and night, all that occupied my attention was the overwhelming need to have a Cadillac convertible. It must have been a short time before my dad developed a natural immunity that prevented him from hearing when I mentioned the words "Cadillac convertible." Poor man.

Years passed and at the beginning of 1981 there was a party at an aunt's house. I imagine it must have been the wedding of one of my cousins. I went with my parents and there was my aunt's neighbor, the President of the Antique Automobile Club, and owner (among many others) of a spectacular 1941 Cadillac convertible, as well as an antique car lot that I visited on my bicycle every so often, mesmerized by the Cadillac convertibles he sometimes had for sale, which my dad refused to buy.

At that party he told me that he had heard about a Cadillac convertible that they were selling in the outskirts of town for 20 thousand pesos, which happened to be exactly the amount that I had saved from my allowances and would finally allow me to become the happy owner of a Cadillac convertible that I could buy myself as a 13th birthday present, which would give me time to restore it during Middle School in order to arrive in High School driving a spectacular Cadillac convertible, red like a fire engine and shiny as a candy apple, which would surely allow me to become the most sought-after bachelor in the universe, and the most beautiful girl at the nearby Catholic girl's school to be my girlfriend.

The Valet at Baby'O in Acapulco would run to receive my glorious carriage and just for arriving in such a spectacular way, I was going to have the best dance-floor-side table without having to pay cover charge plus a complimentary bottle of champagne. And everyone who passed by the best nightclubs in the country would know that I was there with my gorgeous girlfriend and my fantastic friends just by seeing the most beautiful car in the galaxy parked outside, at the very front, of course.

(Continued on page 6)



GCR AACA Valentine's Day Celebration Saturday, February 11, 2023

Head on out to the country with your loved one and your old one!

THE CAFÉ AT BROOKWOOD

1752 FM 1489
Brookshire, Texas 77423
281-375-2400

11:30 "CAR SHOW" UP
12:00 LUNCH IS SERVED

Directions: **Take I-10 West to FM 1489 Exit; careful to look for sign; go left about 2 miles. It will be on the right.**

Listed below are **3 options for lunch. I must have your RSVP and food choices by February 2, 2023.**

- 1. Lemon Chicken:** Lightly breaded chicken breast with lemon butter sauce, sautéed vegetables, & roasted garlic mashed potatoes.
- 2. Sautéed Gulf Shrimp** with Jalapeño Cheddar Grits, grilled Andouille sausage, basil butter sauce & grape tomatoes.
- 3. Rosemary Grilled Ribeye Steak** with Oven Roasted Asparagus and Horseradish Potatoes .

Side salad choices: 1) green dinner salad: Ranch or Balsamic vinaigrette dressing
2) Mesibov salad, house special dressing with sugar roasted pecans and julienned apples

Dessert choices: 1) Lemon Meringue Pie 2) Chocolate Lava Bundt Cake

Use the back for additional names and food selections, including guests.

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Number members attending: _____ X \$20 each = _____
Number guests attending: _____ X \$26 each = _____ TOTAL: _____

If selecting steak, the chef would like to know the way you want it rare (R), medium (M) or (W) (well done.) Write it next to the selection line.

Name	Entree Choice #	Salad (#1 or #2)	Dessert (#1 or #2)
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Send checks payable to GCR AACA to arrive NO LATER THAN FEB 4, 2023, to be included.

Send form and check to Ev Timmins, 2120 Lundy Ln., Friendswood, TX 77546

Any questions?? E-mail: evtimmins@aol.com or call 281-797-6788

(Cover story continued from page 4)

That was my plan, and I was certain it would come true. I imagined how I was going to install a spectacular stereo system with huge speakers in the trunk which would be heard three blocks away playing metal-framed mixtape cassettes recorded by the best DJs. Life was going to be wonderful.

The car turned out to be a 1955 Series 62, not a '65 like the one "I had lost" in 1978, and I didn't know what a 1955 Cadillac looked like. And there was no internet or Google to ask. But my dad had a collection of National Geographic magazines that went back to 1956 and contained Cadillac ads. And, as it happens, the 1956 Cadillac looks a lot like the 1955. I remember how shocked I was when I first saw those big chrome fangs (I know: they're Dagmars, but in my mind they were fangs) sticking out of the big chrome grille.



Even today, 40 years later, I could reproduce from memory those ads that I studied and scrutinized for hours: the red car at the Racquet Club in Palm Springs. The green one at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The cream one at the Greenbrier. All ultra-glamorous scenes of arrivals and departures to and from magnificent social events showing handsome guys in tuxedos opening the door for their gorgeous companions to get in, wearing the most exquisite dresses from the most desirable designers and department stores of the era: Galanos, Bergdorf Goodman, Arpels jewels... A fantasy world that would be mine as soon as I managed to buy and restore my new Cadillac convertible...

I was going to be Pedro Infante rescuing Silvia Pinal on the road to Cuernavaca, as in "El Inocente", or conquering Miroslava Stern as in "Escuela de Vagabundos," both (1950s) films starring (in my opinion) the Cadillac convertibles the heroes drove...

But one proposes, God disposes, and the devil arrives and decomposes.

After the immense happiness that it gave me to pick up my brand new 1955 Cadillac (That's not true: it wasn't brand new. It was abandoned and in a sad state), time-passed, and the paperwork didn't appear. We eventually found out that the car had been seized by an acquaintance of the owner of the used car lot it was in, but he hadn't followed up on the lawsuit and its ownership had not been awarded yet, so he had no papers. That didn't stop me, however, from driving it a few meters inside the dealership's workshop and spending hours sitting in it, fixing a few things here and there, and imagining my trips to Acapulco and Cuernavaca with the top down and the wind blowing in the hair I still had...

That's how a year went by and one time when we were vacationing on South Padre Island, towards the end of the trip, my dad told me that someone had showed up at the dealership to buy a new 1982 Celebrity and had traded in a black, four door 1959 Cadillac. And my dad's friend, who worked with him, the one we had visited in the '65 that Saturday many years before, was going to pick us up at the airport in the Cadillac.

I had never seen a 1959 Cadillac up close, and the drive home was quite an event. We quickly dubbed it "the Batmobile" and that was the first car my parents allowed me to drive on my own to a friend's house who lived about 10 minutes away, when I finally got my driver's permit. I drove it to Middle School once and it always caused a sensation. I drove several cousins to their weddings until one time we went to have a drink between the church and the banquet, a tradition that a cousin had begun to ensure the bride and groom arrived when all the guests were already present allowing them to make a grand entrance, but on that occasion we lost track of time and we arrived at the wedding about two hours late, when everyone was already having dinner and my uncle (the father of the bride) had driven three times from the church to the banquet hall and had even gone to look for us at the Police Station. Needless to say, when we arrived, he was pretty furious. And it didn't help at all that on the way to my uncle's house for the afterparty we had overtaken everyone on the expressway at very high speed carrying what was left of the wedding cake, with white ribbons and bows flying... That was the last time I drove a cousin to their wedding...

(Continued from pg. 6)

In theory, I should have been satisfied with my Cadillac, but it wasn't a convertible and I continued to grill my poor father... Until one day it occurred to me to ask my dad to track down the '65 Eldorado and buy it again. After much insistence, I managed to get him to give me the information of the person who had bought it in 1978. I called him and he told me that he had sold it to a lady who used it to drive to her weekend home in Cuernavaca. And he gave me her phone number. I called her and asked if she would be willing to sell it. She said that she would consider it and agreed to go to the dealership one day. My dad negotiated with her a trade for a used but recent car, and they closed the deal. And one afternoon when I returned from High School (which I attended driving a Citation X-11 that I destroyed in less than two years and less than 30 thousand miles, thanks to the fact that I drove like a madman, crashing it several times), I found the Cadillac parked in front of the house. I could hardly contain my immense joy. I must have spent the whole afternoon driving around the neighborhood with the top down and visiting all my friends and the girls I liked. I was finally going to be able to fulfill my dreams of traveling to Acapulco and Cuernavaca in a Cadillac convertible.

But that wouldn't be either, because in the 6 years it was away, it had been treated very badly and it broke down all the time. It simply wasn't reliable enough to go that far. I only drove to Cuernavaca twice and I never got to drive to Acapulco. Both times we went to the most popular nightclub in town, and no one cared. I didn't get a complimentary dance-floor side table or Champagne. But we had a lot of fun..

One of those times, when we arrived at the nightclub, we ran into a friend of the cousin of the owner of the house where we were staying. He was drunk out of his mind and he was driving my friend's uncle's car, because my friend's cousin had crashed and he didn't have insurance so his friend had agreed to make it look like he had crashed into him so that his insurance would pay for the repair, but that meant damaging his own car so while both cars were being repaired, my friend's cousin let his friend drive his parents' car who were vacationing in Spain.

We entered the place and as soon as we had taken possession of our table and ordered the first bottle, the Maître D' told us there was a phone call for my friend's cousin in the office. (This was before cellphones, but my friend's cousins lived in Cuernavaca and were very frequent clients, so they knew them well and treated them like family). We went to the office, and it turned out the cousin's friend had smashed the car against a wall and it was no longer drivable. And it had to be hidden before the police arrived. We took off in my

(Continued on pg. 9)

AUTORAMA REVISITED

Typical Thanksgiving traditions include family and friends, food, football, and holiday shopping. If you are a car person and you live in the greater Houston area, the Houston Autorama is an added bonus.

The Gulf Coast Region AACA, once again, set up for the weekend at the George R. Brown Convention Center to share with the public what our club is all about. Thousands of spectators came by the secured area where club member's cars were parked, hundreds of conversations were had regarding the cars we had on display, and a few – by invitation only – were allowed inside the ropes for an up close and personal tour of our group.

On display this year we had the Johnston's Ford Model A sedan, John and Mike's Cadillac, Ron's Lincoln Continental, Albert's Cord Westchester, and Stephen's Packard. Each car did well in judging and received a trophy from their class.

Of special note, one of this year's show "celebrities" guests – Bad Chad, toured and recorded the show before the doors were opened to the public and gave a glimpse of what the show looks like from the view of the spectator. A portion of one of his videos shows him walking around the GCRAACA booth and talking about the cars we had on display. He was so impressed with the cars we had on display, that he came back over once the show was opened so that he and I could discuss particulars of the cars. For those that do not know, Chad and his wife live in Nova Scotia where they film the processes of customizing vehicles without high dollar tools or exotic materials. Regular posting onto YouTube and other social media platforms has garnered him wide recognition. If you are interested, you can find the videos of his Autorama walkthrough on YouTube.

Thanks to all of the club members that allowed the display of their car for the weekend, along with club members that came up to the show to spend time in the club booth. Sharing the cars, the stories, and the club with others is what the club is all about and what we, as members, should do on a regular basis.

Ashley Griffin

Want a Great Venue to Show Your Car??

Recently invitations were sent to people who had inquired about or even attended the annual

Keels & Wheels Concours d'Elegans.

If you want your car to be show-cased, check out the website (Keels-Wheels.com) and submit your application. It's the only show in the US with both cars and boats. DATES: May 6-7. Or, feel free to contact Evelyn Timmins at 281-797-6788.

Down the Road

Underlined items are club (GCR AACA) sponsored activities.

Feb. 11, 2023 Annual **Valentine Lunch** at Brookwood Community Café. 12 noon lunch served. See form, pg. 5.

Feb. 4 Absolute deadline for Valentine RSVP at Brookwood.

Feb. 25 Deadline for contributions to the Mar.-April AE issue.

Mar. 13 Meeting will be at Tracy Gee Center beginning at 7:30 with board meeting at 6 PM.

Public Car Outings.....

The items below have not been checked as to their current availability . You might call in advance to confirm or check Showplace Classics.

Sunday, 8-12 Prince's Hamburgers, near Sharpstown Golf. Kicking tires with friends.

Friday evenings Pearland Antique & Classic Auto Show (PACA) Cruise Night-parking lot behind Freddy's Burgers, FM 518 & Pearland Pkway. 6 PM

Saturday evenings cruise in at Chick-Fil-A in Home Depot's parking lot, 5 PM, Hwy 146 and FM 2094 in Kemah

3rd Sat of the month: Tailpipes & Tacos-Lupe's Tortillas, 703 Pkway Katy

Last **Sat. morning of the month:** Coffee, Cars, and Books from 8 - 10 AM in Barnes & Noble parking lot on Bay Area Blvd.

Last **Sat. morning of the month:** Coffee and pastries at Gateway Classic Cars, 71 Esplanade Blvd., Houston, 77060

The Antique Automobile Club of America

Is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, restoration and maintenance of automobiles and automotive history.

It is the country's oldest and largest automotive historical society.

Gulf Coast Region Meetings
Tracy Gee Center
3599 West Center Dr.,
Houston, TX 77042

Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m.
2nd Monday of each month,
Except for Feb., July & Dec.

The Antique Expression

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I think I found that Cadillac that Federico wanted on the internet.



(Continued from pg. 9)

Cadillac (which had been christened "Hermenegildo" for it was as long as its name) and we found my friend's uncle's car turned into a decal on a stone wall. The engine wouldn't start, and the wheels were locked by the crumpled fenders. But my friend knew some girls who lived two blocks away and had a large backyard where it could be hidden. Well, it was Hermenegildo's turn to pull the crashed car with the wheels dragging and after a rum-and-coke at the girls' house, we returned to the nightclub with them...

Another fun adventure was one night when we were driving down a popular avenue in Mexico City and at a traffic light a souped-up VW Rabbit pulled up next to us; the loud intake growl from the twin Weber carbs made it clear he was going to peel away as soon as the light turned green. I asked those who were sitting on top of the boot to hold on tight and as soon as the green light came on, Hermenegildo took off like a rocket thanks to its dual-ratio torque converter and beat the Rabbit... But the police pulled us over. On the way to the station, we ran into some friends who were celebrating their anniversary and they came along with us. They took photos with the policemen while they sang and danced while I went in to plead my case. As soon as we arrived and the clerk asked me for my license and registration, he recognized my last name and asked me if I was a relative of I don't remember who, who had been his classmate at school and apparently they were still friends. Then he saw the registration and said he didn't think it was possible for me to drag race on that avenue in a 1965 Cadillac convertible. He then told me that, if I paid the fine right then and there, he would grant me a 50% discount, and since I was a relative of his friend, he would grant me an extra 25%, so in the end it was quite inexpensive and it all boiled down to a funny anecdote, although the policemen must have not liked it that much. ...

Anyway... Hermenegildo became my daily driver during the last few semesters of college, and he had to endure all kinds of drunken parties and escapades, and when I left to live in Miami, he stayed at my parents' house. He now lives in a warehouse in Houston, waiting to be restored or at least run again.

In Miami I bought another Cadillac convertible, a 1970 DeVille, which served as my daily driver for several years, while I lived in South Beach, so it also accompanied me to all kinds of parties and fun events. I brought that car on a trailer to McAllen and it stayed there for about 10 years until I went to pick it up and imported it to Mexico, where it stayed for another few years. It now also lives in Houston with Hermenegildo.

Federico Pohls

A note from the Editor:

Federico gave me this story some months ago, when I actually thought I could whip out another AE. I appreciated the speed with which he got it to me, but things and events got in the way. I was also debating how to present this epic. Do I go with the whole long 5 pages, or split it into segments for use over a few months. Maybe that would entice you all to clamor for the AE! Well, I so enjoyed reading it, I could not withhold it from you. Also, some members who said they would send me something, did not, and so here is the whole epistle of Federico and his Cadillac life thus far. Maybe some day we can meet Hermenegildo in person. Or, maybe even have a ride in it.

Sounds exciting!!

Hasta luego!

Evelyn



Around and About

Federico's Folly or "Caddy Fever"

'65 Cadillac Fleetwood Eldorado Convertible (1978)



'55 Cadillac Series 62 Convertible (1981)



1959 Cadillac Fleetwood Series 62 6-window Sedan (1982)



Hemi Hideaway



'65 Cadillac Fleetwood Eldorado Convertible (1991)

