



*Established 1996*

# Cruise paper



*Cruising the 'Naki in the StarChief at Americarna*

**April-May 2014**

[www.americanclassiccars.org.nz](http://www.americanclassiccars.org.nz)

# Russell's Ramblings

Hi there folks, I just want to say up front that I make no apologies for featuring my Pontiac StarChief on the front cover of this issue. The image was taken by the official Americarna photographer, and it was such a glorious shot featuring Mt. Taranaki in the background, that I couldn't help myself and had to share it with you.

You will find an article further on in the magazine all about Americarna 2014, and what a great time we had there, despite our misgivings regarding the event beforehand. However, one notable change to Americarna that I personally found a little disconcerting was the proliferation of the late model brigade (2005 on Mustang/Camaro/Corvette etc.) at the event.

It was noted during Americarna that the owners of these vehicles were far more interested in who had the latest Roushe/Saleen/whatever Mustang mods, or which Camaro was a ZL1 or who had the Transformer version lift up doors, than the celebration of the American classic culture. They hung out, parked, and drove together throughout the 4 days, with seemingly little interest in the classics around them.

There were a couple of these late model pretenders who couldn't quite make up their minds which group they belonged in, so had a foot in each camp. Take a look at this late model Corvette called 789, which had a '57 Chev front, something '58 in the middle (although I wasn't sure what), and a '59 Impala rear end and make up your own mind, along with the aforementioned Camaro.



Ciao 4 now. regards Russell ☺

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# FUNNY FARM



## The Female Demerit System

*In the world of romance, one single rule applies: Make the woman happy. Do something she likes and you get points. Do something she dislikes and points are subtracted. You don't get any points for doing something she expects. Sorry, that's the way the game is played. Here is a guide to the point system:*

### **SIMPLE DUTIES**

- You make the bed (+1)
- You make the bed, but forget the decorative pillow (0)
- You throw the bedspread over rumpled sheets (-1)
- You go out to buy her what she wants (+5) in the rain (+8)
- But return with Beer (-5)
- You check out a suspicious noise at night (+1)
- You check out a suspicious noise, and it is nothing (0)
- You check out a suspicious noise and it is something (+5)
- You pummel it with iron rod (+10)
- It's her pet (-20)

### **SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS**

- You stay by her side the entire party (0)
- You stay by her side for a while, then leave to chat with an old school friend (-2)
- Named Tina (-10)
- Tina is a dancer (-20)
- Tina has silicone implants (-80)

### **HER BIRTHDAY**

- You take her out to dinner (+2)
- You take her out to dinner and it's not a sports bar (+3)
- Okay, it's a sports bar (-2)
- And it's all-you-can-eat night (-3)
- It's a sports bar, it's all-you-can-eat night, your face is painted the colours of your favourite team (-10)

### **A NIGHT OUT**

- You take her to a movie (+1)
- You take her to a movie she likes (+3)
- You take her to a movie you hate (+6)
- You take her to a movie you like (-2)
- It's called 'Death Cop' (-3)
- You lied and said it was a foreign film about orphans (-15)

### **YOUR PHYSIQUE**

- You develop a noticeable potbelly (-15)
- You develop a noticeable potbelly and exercise to get rid of it (+10)
- You develop a noticeable potbelly and resort to baggy jeans and baggy Hawaiian shirts (-30)
- You say, "It doesn't matter, you have one too." (-8000)

### **THE BIG QUESTION**

- She asks, "Do I look fat?" (-5) (Yes, you lose points no matter what)
- You hesitate in responding (-10)
- You reply, "Where?" (-35)
- Any other response (-20)

### **COMMUNICATION**

- When she wants to talk about a problem, you listen, displaying what looks like a concerned expression (0)
- You listen, for over 30 minutes (+50)
- You listen for more than 30 minutes without looking at the TV (+500)
- She realizes this is because you have fallen asleep (-4000)



## Galaxy of Cars – February 2

The Galaxy of cars is one of those car events definitely worth a look. Held now at the Western Springs Speedway it is run by the New Lynn Lyons Club and is a well established charitable event that has supported a number of worthwhile organisations over the years including the Starship Hospital, the Christchurch Earthquake appeal and the Cystic Fibrosis Association. The weather on the first Sunday in February was perfect for a car exhibition with many clubs making the most of the day with displays of all types of vehicles from classic American, classic English and everything in between. The first to turn up were as usual those selling old car parts and bric a brac and they were hard at it before many of the display vehicles were even on site.

As a club we had arranged to meet in Motions Road and by 9.00am we had 14 cars which was a good number to display. We moved off in convoy through to the Speedway to take up our allotted spot on the centre field of the raceway jostling along with other car clubs all eager to grab their space. With our new tent and facilities it takes no time to set up and we had a well presented display of cars and a good club presence in quick order.

It was interesting to see the variety of vintage and veteran cars that appear on a day like this and the variety of clubs there are out there supporting all these makes and models. Cars in clubs such as Minis, Jags, Austins, Jowetts, Hillmans, Studebakers, Dodge and Mustangs just to name a few were present in numbers with dedicated members all under tents to keep out the sun which was getting pretty hot as the day wore on. We all took the opportunity to have a good look around at the vast collection of cars that were present and grab a hot dog on a stick and a bucket of chips to ward off the hunger pangs.

A number of us grabbed the tram from Motat and travel the mile or so across to the new Aviation Display Museum which featured a Skyhawk plus an old flying boat and a number of other interesting vintage aircraft.

It all turned out to be a great day of cars of all types and great weather into the bargain.



## The NZ Classic & Concours Car Show - February 9th

The 41<sup>st</sup> Ellerslie Intermarque Concours & Classic Car Show was on display on Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup> February at the Ellerslie race course with picture perfect weather making for a great day of classic cars. With around 70 car clubs involved and the theme being "back to the future" almost 700 cars spanning over a hundred years as well as the latest from prestige and performance marques were there. One highlight was the car famous for travelling through time, the gull wing De Lorean, a copy of the one that took Michael J Fox (as Marty McFly) "back to the future" in several movies of that name.

The MG Car Club launched the first Intermarque Concours d'Elegance at the sunken gardens in Cornwall Park in December 1972. Then as now, the event was an inter-club affair and MG became the first winner of the Inter-Club Challenge Shield. Honours also went to Alvis, Studebaker, Jowett, Riley and Citroen Car Clubs. Until 1981 MG and Jaguar dominated the Cornwall Park event then Porsche took the Shield and moved the rapidly growing show to Ellerslie.

This annual event at Ellerslie is modelled on similar events overseas such as the famous Pebble Beach Concours in California. Maybe a bit off that mark but it is intended as New Zealand's celebration of classic and marque cars with competitions based on presentation, appearance, originality and excellence. While it attracts predominately English and European marques there are still a good number of American cars in attendance. The motorkhana was worth a look with drivers' showing skills that would put boy racers and their burnouts to shame with reverse flicks, hand brake turns and more. Not only Mini's and MG's here, but a good few Camaros and Firebirds going through the paces and round the chicanes.

A very enjoyable day in the sunshine.



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## Cruising the 'Naki – Americarna style

After a gap of four years, we decided to give the Taranaki Americarna event another try, with some trepidation. Having previously attended three Americarna's, we were a little concerned that it might be more same old, same old, but this was far from the case with a new destination and a couple of different twists.

There didn't seem to be quite the American presence on arrival at New Plymouth, with very few cars seen about cruising, and not many shops participating in the window dress up as in the past. Our motel car park which previously was chock full of Yankee iron, only had four cars in attendance, so it seemed that perhaps it might turn into a bit of a fizzer. Club members Dave and Catherine were there with their Corvette, Lloyd and Anne with their daily driver (another story one day) along with John and Viv who turned up on Day 2 with their '57 BelAir Hardtop.

On arrival at the racecourse for the first day's cruise, the concern was soon dispelled as the parking area filled up with all manner of US vehicles. It did appear that the content of the entrant's vehicles had changed quite a lot since the earlier events (which seemed to be more in the 1950-70's vehicles), whereas now there are hoards of late model Mustangs, Camaros, and Corvettes. In it's heyday the event attracted around 700 cars if my memory serves me correctly, but the local paper stated around 400 cruised to the first event, Whangamomona.

Day 1 – Whangamomona. Everyone we spoke to said that the Forgotten Highway road was pretty windey, and they sure were right, with three saddles to cross before hitting the town. But it was a beautiful drive with stunning scenery along the way, and the welcome put on by the community was amazing. The short main street was soon filled up with about 20 cars, and the rest of us were herded off to the motor camp and rugby grounds a short distance away, with a shuttle service consisting of the local school van and a trailer with haybales towed by a quad bike.

Entertainment consisted of some sheep herded by dogs, sheep shearing, horse rides, wood chopping, and a vintage army tank that rumbled up the street firing blank rounds that were heard at the rugby grounds half a kilometre away. After a couple of hours here, cars were able to make their own way back to New Plymouth. One unlucky entrant crashed his Mustang into the back of a van at one of the many railway crossings, by not seeing the hidden queue, although fortunately no one was injured.



Day 2 – Waitara & Inglewood. Thursday was a late start, with departure from the racecourse at midday. On arrival at Waitara, all the cars were parked throughout the main shopping street, which was different to previous years where we were at the local school some distance away. This turned the visit into more of a festival event with people and cars mingling more freely, and had a really great atmosphere.

All entrants were given a bottle of water and some fruit each from a tent set up on the street, which was a nice gesture on the part of the town. There were bands, food stalls, craft tables, and an amazing and funny street performer who juggled knives and fire sticks from an 8 foot high monocycle, to help while away the time. Everyone departed from the town mid-afternoon, heading out to Inglewood via the Tarata Tunnel, which is single lane and was hand dug in 1904. We decided that we would give the Inglewood part of the day a miss, as the cars were to be parked in the town for about four hours, until 8pm.



Day 3 – Stratford & Hawera. A mid-morning departure allowed a small sleep in before heading off to Stratford, to park up in the main street. Once again the town had outdone itself with red, white and blue decorations, and the locals were out in force admiring all the American tin. After a couple of hours, the air was once again filled with the sound of V8's, with the convoy heading off to Hawera.

The town of Hawera was enthusiastic as usual to host Americarna, with stalls outside a lot of the shops, sausage sizzles, and live rock and roll music wired the length of the main street. Once again only a short stay of a couple of hours, which went very quickly, before the cars went off to the TSB Stadium to watch the gymCARna event. This involved completing a course around haybales, by turning into a bay, then backing into another, before completing a fast loop and stopping on a line. Much tyre smoke and fuel usage ensued, with some competitors getting quite serious about the event. Highlights were a T bucket that lost it on the last corner and just about took out a marshal, and a vintage Durant that leaned over so far that it was in great danger of tipping over. The driver was a bit harsh on the old girl, a number of us thought!



Heading back from Hawera after a week of brilliant sunshine, we hit a rather heavy rainstorm, which lasted all the way back to New Plymouth. Luckily it was all over by the Friday evening mainstreet cruise, but the temperatures were considerably cooler, and most people were dressed in jeans and jackets.

Day 4 – New Plymouth main street festival. This was a major departure from previous Americarnas that had a country fair day at the racecourse and charged the public to attend. The main street was closed off and completely parked up with American cars, which made for a colourful setting. There was entertainment, stalls, trade stands, bouncy castles, and the public flocked in huge numbers to enjoy the atmosphere. So much so that the council had a ball issuing parking tickets to a lot of the public, much to the event promoter, John Rae's annoyance. He has also announced that it will be his last event, due primarily to the cost pressures involved, is handing over the running to a trust and does not anticipate being involved. Sad to see someone with his huge enthusiasm give away a project like this though.

We didn't stay for the Saturday night gala event, instead heading for home after a great week touring the 'Naki, taking in the glorious scenery, wonderful weather, and really enjoying the enthusiasm of entrants and locals.

Russell & Cindy Wilson

## The Bobby Darin "Dream Car"

The 1960 DiDia 150 was an iconic luxury, custom-designed handmade car also known as the "Dream Car" forever associated with its second owner, singer Bobby Darin. Andrew Di Dia, a clothing designer, who Bobby Darin had met whilst on tour in Detroit in 1957, designed the car. Darin told Di Dia at the time that he would purchase the car if he ever "hit it big". For seven years, from 1953 to 1960, the DiDia 150 was hand-built by four workers, at a cost of \$93,647.29 but sold to Darin in 1961 at a cost of over \$150,000 (1.5 million today). At the time the car was listed by the Guinness Book of Records as the most expensive 'custom-made' car in the world. The body was hand-formed by Ron Clark and constructed by Bob Kaiser from Clark Kaiser Customs.



Its metallic red paint was made with 30 coats of ground diamonds for sparkle. Built in Detroit, Michigan, clothing designer Andrew 'Andy' Di Dia designed this "unrestrained and unconventional" automobile, and only one example was ever built.

The car has a V8 engine, rear-wheel drive, and the body and chassis is hand-formed from 064 aluminium, with a 125-inch wheelbase alloy tube frame. The design included the first backseat-mounted radio speakers and hidden windshield wipers, that started themselves when it rained. Other features include retractable headlamps, rear indicators that swivel as the car turns, 'floating' bumpers and a trunk that was hinged from the driver's side. Each of the four bucket seats has their own thermostatically controlled air conditioning, individual cigarette lighters and ashtrays, as well as a radio speaker. The original engine was a Cadillac V8, but was later replaced by a 427 high-performance engine by Ford, when it was taken on the show circuit.



Darin drove his wife, Sandra Dee, in the car to the 34th Academy Awards in 1961. When Bobby drove the car to the Academy Awards, Andrew Di Dia and Steve Blauner followed behind him in a limousine. The car had two fans and a switch that you had to turn on. Bobby didn't realize this, so it heated up. All the magazines said the car caught fire but it didn't. Di Dia toured the car around the country, when Darin wasn't using it for public appearances.

After publicity and film use, Darin donated his "Dream Car" to the St Louis Museum of Transportation in 1970 where it remains today.

## KARAKA VINTAGE DAY - March 28th

The Karaka Historical Society, along with the Vintage Engine Restorers Auckland, hosted the Karaka Vintage Day last Sunday, which is their opportunity to showcase the machinery used to shape New Zealand during the last century. It was also an opportunity for our club to revisit this event and enjoy all things rural. It is not really a classic American car day or even a car day for any of the many other classics that were on display, but it is still a fascinating show to visit, holding great interest for any mechanical enthusiast.

It is not only cars of course that make the day at Karaka. There is also the strong contingent of stationary engines with their dedicated club members. Old pumping engines thumping away along with a host of most unusual contraptions hissing and heaving away on the grass. A dedicated bunch indeed, nursing their lovingly restored engines as they spluttered and coughed into life, chugging away nonstop. There were also antique motor mowers, and wartime vehicles including an operating tank that crawled around the park, along with a huge display of vintage tractors and bulldozers, some very old, some well restored and others waiting for attention.

As well as engines and equipment, historical buffs had the opportunity to view a Tiger Moth aeroplane flyover and a trio of Harvards putting on a superb show including a pretend "dogfight" overhead along with accompanying gunfire and lots of action.

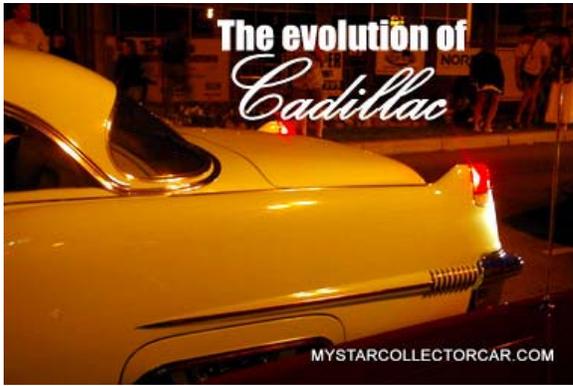
The Vintage Day event, which started in 2000, attracts a large number of people from around the country and while it displays, as the name suggests "vintage" pieces, it attracts many post war cars and quite a bit of Americana. Our own club was particularly well represented this time with 19 cars on show, something of a recent record. The squeeze for space at previous events has led to the opening of a new adjoining field that certainly spread things out a bit.

The day turned out hot and clear in the morning, but by midday the promised clouds had appeared with a few showers starting to make their presence felt. There was still time however for the procession of vehicles around the park, which was a sight to see.

This is a superb show, well run, with tons to see and do and with lots of live action. If you missed it this year be sure to catch it next time around.



## THE EVOLUTION OF THE CADILLAC AS A BORN-AGAIN STREET MONSTER



Elvis loved his Cadillacs. Unprincipled and slightly sleazy Mary Lou of rock and roller Ronnie Hawkins fame loved Caddys enough to charm the keys to a Cadillac out of one of her love-struck admirers.

The late, great Roger Miller measured success and fame by Cadillac ownership with his song 'Kansas City Star'.

The Cadillac was long viewed as the automotive benchmark for the American ideal of success-

before the European and Japanese high-end upscale car invasion. Even successful pimps liked the giant Caddy models of the 60s and 70s- at least in movies.

But the largest demographic of Cadillac owners was an older successful owner who wanted a large comfortable car. The Caddys of yesteryear were comfortable land barges that floated down a freeway all day at any chosen speed.



They were armchair comfort automobiles for a discriminating mature owner.

A Cadillac typically possessed the largest cubic inch engine that Detroit had to offer-but it was not a ¼ mile car—at least not in a Caddy.

Hot-rodders were well aware of the possibilities that a Caddy heart transplant provided in a stripped-down street rod where power to weight ratios were a dramatically different animal- a street animal back in the day.



The Cadillac was born in 1902 and gained strength in 1909, when the brand was absorbed by General Motors. The immediate philosophy was a high- end luxury vehicle and Cadillac has always been true to that rule of thumb.



It got larger and larger over the years until it reached its iconic pinnacle of style in 1959 with its large-finned Coupe de Ville and convertible models.



The Cadillac philosophy began to change in the late 20th Century as it morphed into a performance car designed to compete with the upper end European brands in speed and all around raciness.

Cadillac added truck-like models and sport utilities to their stable and

suddenly the Caddy was not your grandfather's ride.

A test by pro drivers Tommy Kendall and Johnny O'Connell involved all three 2011 Cadillac CTS-V models (coupe, wagon and sedan) on the Sebring (Florida) test track. The boys roasted these Caddys on the track and concluded that the coupe and wagons could take four people up to 185 mph if you had to make time on a summer vacation trip.

Definitely not your grand-daddy's Caddy, but the latest phase in the evolution of the legendary Cadillac.

Jim Sutherland

Many other car stories at - <http://www.mystarcollectorcar.com/>



New Zealand

# RODDER

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# Hot Dates for April-May

## April

- 3 Yank Tank Thursday, Botany Town Centre from 6pm
- 5 NZHRA Club Champs, Fram Autolite Dragway, Meremere
- 6 Auckland All Ford Day, Smales Farm Office Park, Takapuna
- 6 Nostalgia Drags, Fram Autolite Dragway, Meremere
- 6 NZ Petrolhead breakfast at Bellagio, Plunket Avenue, Manukau from 7.30am
- 6 Westies Café breakfast, 7 Totara Avenue, New Lynn, 9-11am
- 13 ACCC Day out at MOTAT. Meet Gate D at Stadium Road (road leading to Speedway) at 9:30am sharp. Departure not until 3pm for safety reasons**
- 13 Wild West Sundays breakfast, The Hanger, 104 Central Park Drive from 10am
- 14 Renegade R&C burger run, Cranks Rest, 10 Mercari Way, Albany from 6.30pm
- 15 Burger Fuel Henderson, Corner Te Pai Place & Lincoln Road from 6pm
- 18-21 American Muscle Car Show, Te Pai Netball Centre, Henderson
- 19 American Muscle Car Show Swap Meet, Te Pai Netball Centre, Henderson
- 20 Mid West Street Rods' breakfast, BP Northern Motorway from 8.30am to 10.30am
- 25 Renegade R&C ANZAC day show, Cranks Bar, 15 Mercari Way, Albany 12pm
- 27 Sponsors & Crew Fun Day, Fram Autolite Dragway, Meremere.
- 27 Caffeine & Classics, Smales Farm, Northcote Road, Takapuna, 10am to 1pm
- 30 Burger Fuel gathering, 652 Great South Road, Shop K, Manukau from 7pm

## May

- 4 NZ Petrolhead breakfast at Bellagio, Plunket Avenue, Manukau from 7.30am
- 4 Westies Café breakfast, 7 Totara Avenue, New Lynn, 9-11am
- 4 GM Enthusiasts Club Classic & Rod Day Out, Clevedon School 10am to 2pm
- 10 Fram Autolite Dragway Prizegiving, Pukekohe Hot Rod Club, Franklin Road
- 11 Waiuku Steel n Wheels, Waiuku, South Auckland
- 11 Wild West Sundays breakfast, The Hanger, 104 Central Park Drive from 10am
- 18 or 25 ACCC exclusive run to Gibbs Farm sculpture park at Kaipara, including private opening of the rarely seen car sheds, which house prototypes of Gibbs aquatic vehicles. Bring own picnic and chairs. Meeting details TBA.**
- To be confirmed**
- 18 Mid West Street Rods' breakfast, BP Northern Motorway from 8.30am to 10.30am
- 18 Hamilton Swap Meet, Classics Museum, 11 Railside Place, Frankton from 7am
- 28 Burger Fuel gathering, 2/957 Great South Road, Manukau from 7.00pm
- 31 Caffeine & Classics, Smales Farm, Northcote Road, Takapuna, 10am to 1pm



Should an ACCC event need to be cancelled, deferred or the venue changed due to unforeseen circumstances or inclement weather, an email will be sent the day before the scheduled event. Please check your emails prior to departure.



Refer to the latest issues of NZ Petrolhead & NZ Rodder for more information on dates and times, or for a subscription phone Sara on 263 5305.

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