



# Reatta

Division

**Buick Club of America**

**Newsletter**



Volume 10, Issue 3

Spring Edition

March 2007

## One and Only Right-Hand Drive Reatta

*By Jim Finn*

Linda and I were fortunate to be able to travel to New Zealand last fall to meet Cliff and Doreen Humphries, the proud owners of the only right-hand drive Reatta in existence. Cliff and Doreen have been Buick lovers for some time. They wanted a more modern car for daily use, as their only other two cars are a kit-built Heron and a 1937 Buick coupe.

The Reatta fit perfectly into their plans. They decided they wanted a 1991 claret red convertible with a tan interior. They found Toni Hunt in Florida and he had the perfect car for sale. The deal was made and the Humphries found a good deal on shipping. It turns out the low price was because there are almost no containers going from Miami to Auckland, which caused a long delay in getting the car to New Zealand.

After a little "financial enticement" the car was transported to New York, to Valencia, Spain, to Sydney, Australia and finally to Auckland, New Zealand. The whole shipping process took 6 months. It would take another 9 months to convert the car, as New Zealand law requires all cars 20 years of age or newer to be right-hand drive.

Converting cars from left to right-hand drive is pretty common in New Zealand, but in searching for a converter they found most of the advertised shops were more into production jobs and wanted very high prices to do a "one off" type conversion.

A friend referred them to Cliff Everson who had done over 400 conversions; including armor plating New Zealand army vehicles for overseas use. Cliff is a true craftsman who can figure out how to do most anything; then do the work and do it right.

During the process of changing the car Cliff needed some additional parts so as to make some of the changes. The Humphries were referred to me and I was able to supply the needed items. To begin, the seats, console and doors were removed. The engine and transmission were also removed, so as to be able to replace the rack and pinion steering sector with one that was set up for the right; I think this came from a Toyota Cavalier. The heater box and controls which are normally on the right side had to  
*(continued on page 5)*



## Director's Column

By Domenick Clemente

Spring has finally arrived! Although we lost an extra hour of sleep with daylight savings time it feels great to have gained an extra hour before sunset. As you drive around you now see people washing, waxing and doing all kinds of work on their cars. The auto discount store circulars, delivered with the Sunday newspaper, feature all kinds of cleaning/car care products instead of the anti-freeze, gas de-icer and scrappers on sale only a few weeks ago.

Yes time is flying by and soon many of us will be preparing our Reattas for the 2007 BCA National meet in Bellevue, Washington. Since the meet is



on the West Coast some of our East Coast members including myself, will be flying in rather than driving. Although I will miss some members that won't be making the trip, I'm really looking forward to meeting some of our West Coast members and to appreciate their cars.

Enough rambling on; it's time to get down to business since I have a few issues for Reatta Division members to consider and act on.

Jim Finn and I have enjoyed our time as assistant director and director; but now it's time to move on and give someone else the opportunity to serve. Bill Parks and George Madsen have agreed to be placed on the ballot. Please vote and give them your support. I have known both of them for many years, and in my opinion both Bill and George are very knowledgeable, capable leaders and have very much to offer. Of course Jim and I, as our predecessors before us, will be available to help in every

way we can for a smooth transition.

Very soon in the new issue of the Buick Bugle, nominees for the BCA Board of Directors will be stating their positions trying to secure your vote. Our very own Barney Eaton will be running for one of the board positions. Barney, who is also a BCA Reatta Technical Advisor, previously served on the board but was very narrowly voted off last year. By having Barney on the board it gives us more of a voice with the BCA; he is our eyes and ears. Please make sure to send in your ballot. Barney has always been there for the Reatta Division now it's our turn to be there for him.

This will be the third year we will be presenting the prestigious "Bob Peterson" award. The very first recipient was Nancy Eaton, followed by Bob Neumann last year. The officers and advisory board have chosen the recipients for the past two years and this year we would like to encourage the membership to provide some input. If you would like to nominate someone for the award please send me the reasons why to [reatta\\_div@msn.com](mailto:reatta_div@msn.com) (please note there is an \_ between reatta and div). If you recommend someone keep in mind what the award signifies, "Presented to Perpetuate the Memory of Robert E. Peterson. A Charter Member and Co-Founder who Dedicated his Talents and Knowledge to Make our Reatta Division a Reality, Thank you for Following his Example".

Jim Finn tells me that this year the Reatta Division Rendezvous will be on Friday, followed by the Reatta Division annual meeting. This will leave Saturday open for the show and awards banquet. The annual meeting is open to all.

For those members interested in attending, the Niagara Frontier Chapter is hosting the Great Lakes Regional to be held August 9 – 12, 2007. The show will be hosted at the Holiday Inn, 100 Whitehaven Road, Grand Island, New York 14072. The

*(continued on page 3)*

## Secretary's Ramblings

By Ed Farnell

My sincere apologies if I offended anyone by stamping "past due" on your last newsletter. Keeping membership current is one of my most daunting tasks and the quarterly newsletter is my best way to alert members if their membership is about to expire. At any one time almost one third of our members are past due on their dues. I continue to send newsletters for approximately six months to members with lapsed membership, hoping that those members have just overlooked sending in their dues and do not wish to be dropped from the rolls.

Unfortunately, with our very low annual dues, we can only afford to send a couple of newsletters after a membership has expired. In order to continue Reatta Division benefits, you must also keep your BCA membership current.

Your newsletter label reflects both your Reatta Division and BCA numbers and expiration dates. Beginning with this issue, I will stamp either "renewal due" or "last issue" instead of "past due." If renewal due applies to your BCA membership, I will note that on the label. I will also continue to highlight your mailing label if membership is due, or about to expire. I hope this will help remind everyone of their membership status. Again, I apologize if the "past due" wording offended any of our members as that was certainly not my intent.

I send out renewal confirmation letters within a few days of receiving a renewal. If you do not receive a letter shortly after sending in your dues, please email or call me so we can fix the problem. I get very embarrassed when I drop a member only to find out that they mailed in a renewal. On those rare occasions, the problem could be that I did not receive your renewal, or I fail to properly record it. Either way, I would like to get it corrected as soon as possible.

I enjoy serving as your secretary/treasurer and hope that you all continue to renew your memberships. As always, if there is anything that your officers can do for you, please contact one of us.

Finally, if anyone has something about Reattas that could be shared through our newsletter, I am sure that Nancy Eaton would love to hear from you.

## Vote for Barney Eaton for BCA Board Member



## Director's Column (cont'd from page 2)

chapter sent me registration forms with all the pertinent information. If you would like a registration package, send a self addressed, size 10, post-marked envelope to:

Domenick Clemente  
44 Bloomingdale Road  
Levittown, NY 11756.

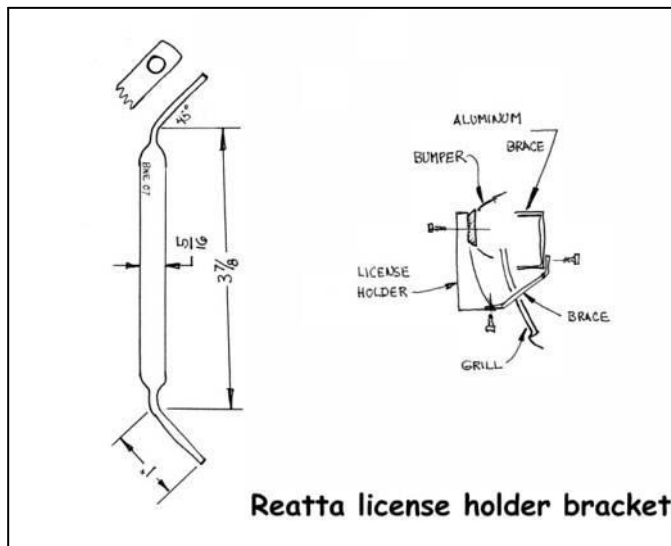
I'm really looking forward to seeing old friends and meeting new West Coast members. Get those BCA meet applications in and don't forget "Volunteer to Judge".

## Technical Update

By Barney Eaton, BCA Technical Advisor 1988-1991 Reatta; ex-BCA Board Member

My first thought was to write a how-to on rebuilding your antenna, but remembered that it is already online.

For you new members, and for old members with memories like mine, [www.reatta.org](http://www.reatta.org) is the official Reatta web page. [www.reatta.net](http://www.reatta.net) is maintained by Tom Jenkins. I don't think Tom presently owns



a Reatta, but he has been very helpful in providing a web site with much information. The antenna and headlight rebuild information are on Tom's web page. One note; the antenna mast replacement part number in the article is no longer available; ask your GM dealer for part # 22039349 (\$24.40) or part # 22038195 (\$28.40), either will work.

A commonly asked question is, "Where can I get a front license holder?" The original Reatta part has been out of production for some time. They occasionally show up on Ebay, but are often missing the support brackets, and can be expensive. There are a couple of "similar" parts still available from GM: Riviera part # 25556786 (\$27.93) and Grand AM part # 22551295 (\$21.65) are still around.

Above is a sketch of an original support bracket. Here are instructions for making your own: Start with 5/16" tubing; 3/8" will also work. A scrap of brake or fuel line works fine. The ends are flattened and bent as shown. Drill a 1/4 " di-

ameter hole in each flattened end. You will need two braces. If you are using the Riviera or Grand AM license holder, you may need to adjust the dimensions slightly. You WILL need to modify the top contour of the license holder to have the same curve as the front bumper strip.

The top of the license holder screws into the front bumper strip. If your Reatta ever had a front license plate, you will find two holes already in the center of the bumper strip. If you are using one of the substitute license holders, you may want to measure the spread of the existing holes and drill holes in the holder rather than drill two more holes in your Reatta. The brace goes through the grill opening and attaches on the aluminum support that runs behind the bumper. There are already two holes in this support (9 inches between them); you should locate these first and that will give you an idea of any changes you will need to make in the bracket length.

Also, the Riviera part does not have holes in the bottom for the support bracket to attach. I don't know about the Grand AM part. You will need to drill two holes in this plastic part.

With a little effort, you can make a license holder that looks much like the original.

If you tackle any of these projects and have problems, call me. For those with project disabilities, I also rebuild antennas and headlight motors.

## Reatta Items For Sale

We recently received word from Rick Kaiser, archivist at the RE Olds Transportation Museum in Lansing, Michigan, that the museum has several Reatta-related items for sale.

Rick doesn't have a specific list for Reattas, but with three file cabinets full of photos and documents (copies only for sale) he said to email him and he will be glad to try to fulfill any requests for information. [arkaiser@ameritech.net](mailto:arkaiser@ameritech.net)

## Right-Hand Drive Reatta in New Zealand *(cont'd from page 1)*

By Jim Finn

be removed so a hole could be cut and a plate could be made for the steering column to go through the firewall.

Everything on the inside of the car below the windshield was removed and new braces for the steering column had to be made, as well as supports for a jack shaft to go across to operate the brake system. The master cylinder and booster had to remain on the left under the hood as the power steering pump on the engine was blocking the area above the new steering column.

The A/C system was removed and the heater box and blower motor repositioned. The original dash board had to be pretty much scrapped and a new one built using the original tan part of the dash that holds all the instruments, radio and heater controls. The front half of the dash had to be completely remade in a reverse of the original and a new glove compartment had to be fabricated to be on the left side along with the air outlet ducts.

The wiring harness behind the dash of a Reatta is about 2 inches thick but this wasn't too much of a problem. Normally the engine computer and the body computer are mounted on the right, and Cliff was able to keep them on that side. The heater programmer and some other modules had to be moved to the left but these were a small percentage of the total wiring.

The windshield wipers had to be reconfigured and reversed so as to completely wipe the right side of the windshield instead of the left. Next, the dash was reinstalled and a new face plate for around the instrument panel cluster, radio and heater controls had to be fabricated. A different radio was used as the New Zealand station frequencies are different from those in the U.S.

The car was finally finished and on the very day it was delivered Cliff had a slight accident backing it into his parking space and slightly damaged the rear bumper and tail light; this is how Linda and I got to travel to New Zealand.

The shipping on a bumper and a tail light was so expensive, we bought airplane tickets instead and delivered those parts as part of our baggage, making a vacation of a lifetime out of it. Cliff and Doreen met us at the Auckland airport and we then spent the next several days with them. We took their 1937 Buick coupe, with jump seats in the rear, and traveled north to where the Pacific Ocean meets the Tasman Sea.

New Zealand is made up of a North and a South Island. Like many people we thought we could see most of it during the two weeks we were there. That is not possible, so we stayed on the North Island as it was just getting into their summer and the weather was nice and warm. The Humphries stayed with us for a few days and we then spent the rest of the time enjoying the area on our own.



New Zealand uses the dollar for their monetary system and they also speak English so that made it easy. The only problem I had was the first time I rode with Cliff. I was really nervous as he was driving on the "wrong" side of the road. We had to be careful crossing streets as we would always tend to look the wrong way for oncoming traffic.

Our vacation was terrific and I cannot say enough about the hospitality and friendliness of the Kiwis, their beautiful country and particularly Cliff and Doreen Humphries.

# ReattaWear

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**#1 Cap Sunburst Logo \$12.50**

Adjustable Strap. Color Choice: Burgundy, Red, Hunter Green, Black, White, or Tan.

**#2 Cap Script Logo \$12.50**

Adjustable Strap. Color Choice: Burgundy, Red, Hunter Green, Black, White, or Tan.

Logo in Red, White, or Black.

**#3 Ladies Visor Script Logo \$12.50**

Adjustable Strap. Color Choice: Aqua, Red, Dandelion, Burgundy, or White.

Logo in Red, White, or Black

**#4 Golf Shirt Sunburst Logo \$26.00**

Color Choice: Red, Green, White, Black, Blue, or Burgundy. Sizes M, L, XL, XXL

**#5 Golf Shirt Script Logo \$26.00**

Color Choice: Red, Green, White, Black, Blue, or Burgundy. Sizes M, L, XL, XXL

**#6 Ladies Scoop Neck Shirt \$20.00**

Color Choice: Black, Orange Sherbet, Pink, or White.

Script Logo in Red, White, Tan, or Black. Sizes: S, M, L, XL

**#7 Reatta License Plate \$30.00**

Black with Silver Lettering.

Please send orders to:  
Carole Madsen  
14560 South Oakley Avenue  
Orland Park, IL 60462  
caroleorlandpark@aol.com

**#8 Name Tag \$6.00**

Magnetic Clip; permanent name tag in blue w/white lettering (discounted price includes shipping).

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## Reatta Marketplace - Cars and Parts For Sale

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**Parts** You name it, I should have it. John 810-730-9230

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**Parts** Large inventory. Reasonable prices. Jim jfinn@cpinternet.com

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**1990 Convertible** White w/ burgundy interior. New top. New tires. Florida car; no rust. Excellent body and interior. 81,568 miles. \$10,950. John Childe 1swright1@charter.net

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**1991 Coupe** Polo green w/tan interior. Less than 7,000 miles. All options. sobbiebue51@msn.com

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**1990 Convertible** White w/blue interior, white top. 50,000 miles. Pristine condition. Must sell, \$10,000. John 401-560-0140

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**1990 Coupe** Black w/tan interior. 71,000 miles. Sunroof, 16-way seat. Excellent condition. \$6,500. OBO. Bob Smale 610-327-1086

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**1990 Coupe** Silver w/gray interior. 100,000 miles. Jamie 610-476-7086

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## From the Assistant Director

By Jim Finn

This year's annual Reatta Rendezvous will be on Friday at noon for lunch. Because of the traffic in the metropolitan area around the host hotel in the Seattle area, it would be impossible to have a "tour". And since Thursday evening is taken for one of the BCA events, I thought it would be nice to just get together for a catered box lunch in one of the nearby parks.

All Reatta Division members and guests are invited, whether or not you are able to bring your Reatta. The cost will be \$11.00 per person. Please send the number of people and a check to: Ed Farnell, Secretary/Treasurer  
440 Langford Road  
Blythewood, SC 29016



Also because of the busy schedule on Saturday, when we normally would have our annual meeting, this year we will have the annual meeting in conjunction with the Reatta Rendezvous. All members are welcome to attend with or without the box lunch.

I would like to thank Bill Parks and George Madsen for offering to be the new director and assistant director of the Reatta Division. I know they will do an excellent job of promoting the Reatta Division. I have met Bill several times and he is very enthusiastic. George is a good friend of mine and I have told him I will work with him if he needs help setting up the future Rendezvous.

I would also like to remind everyone to be sure to vote for Barney Eaton in his attempt to regain his position on the board of directors of the BCA. I know last election I was one of those who forgot to send in my ballot and as a result this contributed to him losing the election.

Barney is very dedicated to the BCA and the Reatta Division and it is nice to have someone on the board who appreciates Reattas as well as all Buicks.

## Reatta Division

### Buick Club of America Officers & Key Division Positions

**Director:** *Domenick Clemente*

44 Bloomingdale Road  
Levittown, NY 11756  
631-543-3892  
reatta\_div@msn.com

**Assistant Director:** *Jim Finn*

2503 Becks Road  
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218-628-2690  
jfinn@cpinternet.com

**Secretary/Treasurer:** *Ed Farnell*

440 Langford Road  
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803-754-6922  
reattaclub@aol.com

**Newsletter Editor:** *Nancy Eaton*

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Georgetown, TX 78628  
512-869-5114  
reatta@texas.net

**Reatta Logo Wear Coordinator:** *Carole Madsen*

14560 South Oakley Avenue  
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708-349-8878  
caroleorlandpark@aol.com

**Web Site Address:**

<http://www.reatta.org>

**Web Road Master:**

*Roberta Vasilow*  
BUICKRACER@comcast.net

**BCA Technical Advisors—1988-1991 Reattas**

*Barney Eaton*  
20111 Deerfield Drive  
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barney@texas.net

*Art Kaufman*  
806 Brookside Lane  
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650-583-8966  
artsauto7@cs.com

**REATA DIVISION**  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Ed Farnell  
440 Langford Road  
Blythewood, SC 29016

## **Membership and Division Information**

Reatta Division membership dues are \$10.00 per year. Membership is for a twelve month period.

Please note that a pink highlighter mark on the RDiv number on your mailing list means that your Reatta Division dues are due or overdue. In order to continue receiving the Reatta Division newsletter, your RDiv membership status needs to be current.

Please make checks payable to: Reatta Division, BCA.

Send all dues payments and address changes (please write your RDiv# on your check) to:  
Secretary/Treasurer, Ed Farnell, 440 Langford Road, Blythewood, SC 29016.

All Reatta Division members are required to be members of the national organization, the Buick Club of America, of which we are an authorized division. Please note that a blue highlighter mark on the BCA number on your mailing label means that you are not a current member of the Buick Club of America. BCA dues are due or overdue or you never became a member of the BCA, in which case a BCA membership form is enclosed. In order to continue receiving the Reatta Division newsletter, your BCA membership status needs to be current. The national organization can be contacted as follows: Buick Club of America, P O Box 360775, Columbus, OH 43236 or by email at [bcaoffice@buickclub.org](mailto:bcaoffice@buickclub.org)

Please send classified ads and newsletter submissions to:

Newsletter Editor, Nancy Eaton, 20111 Deerfield Drive, Georgetown, TX 78628 email [reacta@texas.net](mailto:reacta@texas.net)

Reatta Division meeting dates: We normally meet once a year at the BCA National Meet.