

About Us...

In the mid-fifties Baldwin Park High School was no doubt just like hundreds, no make that thousands, of other high schools around the U.S. There were music clubs, service clubs, athletic clubs and clubs for just about every special interest on every high school campus.

I suppose Baldwin Park was typical in the fact that it had several car clubs too: The Deckers, the Nerfers, the Ratchets, the Wambombies the Loafers and the CAL- RODS, just to name a few.



The CAL-RODS Car Club was started in 1954 by Don Scurti (a Junior in 1954) on the advice of Clyde Gorsuch so the boys would "have something to do". Mr. Gorsuch had talked to Scurti for almost a year until they finally decided to form a club to teach the boys how to work on their cars and to learn what makes them run.

With Gorsuch as an advisor, Don Scurti and the boys sat down to work out a constitution and set goals for themselves. These fellas were ambitious and they were not going to wait around for someone to give them a recreation center because that was not going to happen, so they started scouting around for a clubhouse. Pete Peterson owned the service station at the corner of Merced and Garvey and he told the boys they could use the old barn at the back of his property if they fixed it up.

Well that was all these boys needed to hear, so for a while they laid down their mechanics tools and picked up some carpenters tools and started to build. One early fundraiser was a paper drive. They gathered over 15 tons of newspapers and made something over \$600.00 and that was a pretty good start. With donated materials from some huge housing tracts being built, scrap materials wherever they could find them, and some supplies they got at cost from local hardware stores, they built themselves a clubhouse. Nothing fancy, but a place that was theirs.

Although guided by their advisor, Mr. Gorsuch, all of the work and planning was done by the boys themselves. The success of their toils really helped gain the respect of the parents and they do admit they did have some help and support from the girls, the CAL-RODETTES. With a record player in the new club house and a stack of records all the boys admitted it was nice to have the girls (CAL-RODETTES) around to dance with or just to sip a Coke with.





In 1955 the club was honored by the City of Hope for their work in gathering \$1,000.00 in donations. This effort earned Cal-Rods a 2nd place trophy in the City of Hope's annual drive.

Members of the early years were Don Scurti, President, Skip Jillson Vice-President, Louis Nipping, Secretary, Duayne Morrow, Treasurer, Jigger Horton, Sergeant-at-Arms, & Roger Killam, Paul De Gelia, Mike Whelan, Bart Griffith, Gerald Jenkins, Delmus Jenkins, Bob Morgan, Jim Rhodes, Kenny Weeks, Clyde Vandegrift, Don O'Dell, Bob Kosbad, Glen Voyles. Paul Bontempo, Merced Medina, Edward Medina, Veri Tarno, Gil Loop, Bruce Usher, George Strock, Bill Prisk, Jack Ferguson, Dennis Usher, Fred Wade, Dick Kosbad, Jim Kitley, Dick Church, Tony Romearo, Jim Higgins & Tom Flenniken, who became President of the club in 1957.



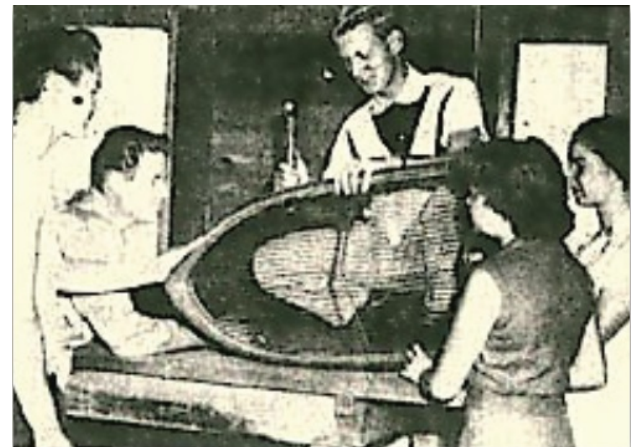
CAL-RODETTES were: Sharyn Whelan, President, Marilyn Bartlett, Vice-President, Bette Shilling, Secretary, Jerry Compton, Treasurer, Clair DiLazzaro, Sergeant-at-Arms, Faye Wirtz, Secretary of Activities, Roxie Pevehouse, Bobbie Griffith, Diane Compton, Paula Jillson, Darlene Brown, Ceciel Weeks, Ann Hoy, Jackie Harlon, Jane Kirshner, Ray Lynne Lambert, Patty Willis and Bobbie Stem.

As of 7-3-14, Don Scurti, Jack Ferguson, Roger Killiam, Bill Prisk, Jim Kitley, & Sharon(Whelan) Davis, are active Cal-Rods Members.

The club flourished for about 10 years then it faded, but it did not die; no there were no more meetings in the barn, in fact the barn had been gone for years. But it lived on just the same... It lived on, if only in the hearts and dreams of those schoolmates that fondly remembered, sometime with a twinkle in their eye, every time they saw a hot rod or old car from their now fading youth.



Some of the old classmates who had rekindled the urge to relive their youth had gotten back into hot rods and "things vintage". Maybe it was the fact some of us never had the money to get (or finish) their dream car in high school, but whatever the reason, more and more old chums from high school are back into "old cars" and are having a ball. One person, Vic Cunnyingham, from the class of 1960, was definitely back into the old car hobby and loving it. Today the "street rod" hobby consists of hundreds of your local fellow enthusiasts building hot rods and restoring old cars and driving to "cruises". They are called cruises but that's clearly a misnomer. Driving your car to a parking lot preferably to a food establishment and talking better describes what we do. But who wants to call it a "park and talk"? So it is called cruising!



While cruising to many of these events it was amazing just how many old Baldwin Park High School classmates there were coming out of the woodwork, as they say. After a while it was only a matter of time until we organized ourselves. At one very large car show in Pleasanton California in 1997 there were 17 classmates from B.P.H.S. - 400 miles from our alma mater - all gathered together to enjoy our common interest cars.

The Cunnynghams, Vic and his wife Wanda (also a B.P.H.S. classmate 1962) started thinking about having everyone who was back into hot rods from their old school over for a party. But when the list was started they were truly amazed at how many names there were. There was no way they would all fit in the back yard!

Of all the car clubs at B.P.H.S. high school, one name, the CAL-RODS really stood out as a perfect name for a club, especially the way everyone from school had moved around. A majority are still in California so of all the club names the CAL-RODS was still perfect. With just a little bit of checking it was discovered the original President, Don Scurti was still around. So Vic took a trip back to Baldwin Park to Bob's Auto Parts to finally meet Don who owned this auto parts store for 40 years.

In meeting Don and his lovely wife Pat (Willis), the Scurtis were shocked and pleased to hear of our intentions of starting up the CAL-RODS Car Club again. Pat had been an officer in the CAL-RODETTES way back when. The Scurtis thought it sounded like a wonderful idea & to count them in! In fact Don still had the original aluminum plaque. Pulling it from its resting place on a post where it had been for almost 40 years, he suggested "maybe we can make duplicates of these again".

Well we set up a meeting at the local Thursday cruise and we had the first meeting. Present at that meeting were Vic Cunyngham, Don Scurti, Ferrell Morgan, Joe McCaron, Jim Smiles, Steve Jiminez, Ken Campbell and Steve Gibbs. It was at this meeting Don Scurti told all of us some of the history of the club and that once a year the club had a picnic at San Dimas Park. Well that was perfect! San Dimas Park is still nice, so it was decided the CAL-RODS would have a car show and picnic on the first Sunday in May that year.

The word about the picnic and car show spread fast. It was soon evident this was a Baldwin Park High School Reunion & Car Show. The weather that morning wasn't so good; kind of drizzly in the morning but there were 250 people and 38 cars in the show.



That was 1998 and we considered the picnic a success but the club still did not really take off. It wasn't until January of 1999 when we had a meeting at Shakey's Pizza (at their Tuesday night cruise) we really had what you could consider the first meeting of the re-formed club. That first meeting 26 people attended. An election was held and the following officers were elected: Vic Cunyngham, President, Don Scurti, Vice-President, Beverly Campbell, Secretary, and Ken Campbell, Treasurer. It was decided we would be a formalized club, meetings once a month; no car required to join; and not restricted to just B.P.H.S. attendees.

The 2nd Annual B.P.H.S. Reunion Picnic & Cal-Rods Car Show was held on May 3, 1999. Around 450 people & 50 cars were in attendance. The picnic has been held on the first Sunday of May every year since. We have attendance of approximately 800+ and 125+ street rods annually.

The Cal-Rods of the San Gabriel Valley, our trademarked name, currently has 150 families & 61 individuals for a total of 218 total members. Meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month at the Finish Line Sports Grill in Pomona. We have members from all walks of life and on average, 120 members attend our monthly meetings. We usually feature a guest speaker from the racing community to share their history and interests with the club.

Many organized events are held during the year. These include both the guys and the ladies. Friends of Cal-Rods are also included by invitation. The purpose of the events is to have fun with all who attend as well as raising funds for many charities throughout the year. The events include our annual old-fashioned picnic, poker runs, a car show charity benefit, Christmas Toy Drives, several 1 to 3 day fun runs and a beautiful Christmas holiday dinner-dance. We also attend many local car shows as a club and often exceed 80 Cal-Rods participants in a group.

The Cal-Rods and Cal-Rodettes, as many of the ladies are known, own many fine cars. The variety runs from stock restorations to traditional street rods, pro-street, and full on race cars. But the main thrust is still nice people enjoying the other club members, with the cars being the common bond!

Written by:
Vic Cunyngham, Past President
Cal-Rods Car Club

