



Cadillac & LaSalle Club

Potomac Region

Caddie Chronicle

September 2008

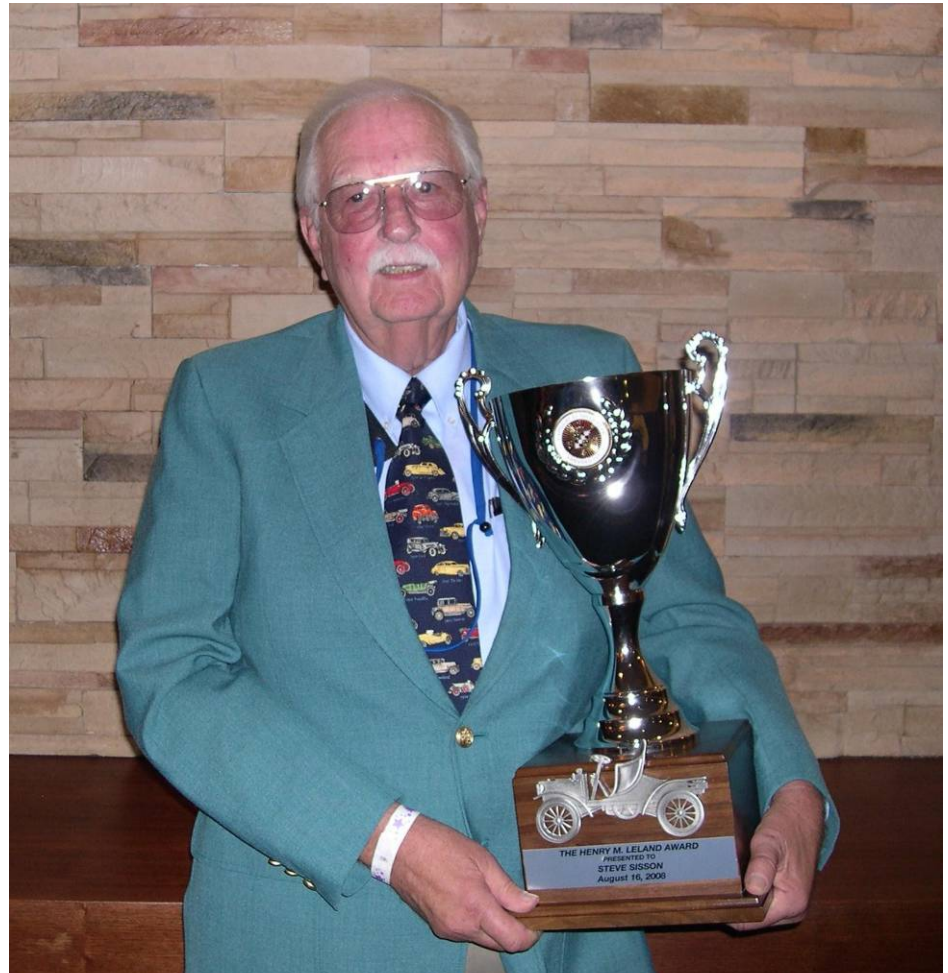


STEVEN SISSON WINS HENRY M. LELAND AWARD BY VINCE TALIANO

Steven Sisson, who co-founded the Potomac Region in 1969 with Ron VanGelderens, is the 2008 recipient of the CLC's most prestigious award, the Henry M. Leland Award. The Leland Award is presented to an outstanding CLC member who has performed acts of great merit. Steven has been performing acts of great merit for the CLC since 1969.

It all started in the summer of 1968 when Steven and his brother Richard answered a classified ad in *The Washington Post* for Cadillac parts being disposed of by the widow of a collector who had several 1938-40 era senior Cadillacs. After being led to the parts stash in the basement, they met Ron VanGelderens who was rummaging through the parts. They soon learned that Ron owned a small fleet of some 4 or 5 collector Cadillacs and he recently moved to McLean, Virginia from Chicago. They invited Ron to their Dad's

nearby home to see Steven's '46 convertible. Talking there, they were amazed to learn that Ron had come from a very active CLC Region in Chicago and he had already become distressed to learn that there was no active local Region in the Washington, DC area. A few months later, Ron called Steven and asked if he could come up with a mailing list of interested Cadillac fanciers in the area. Ron wanted to explore the idea of forming a local region. Steven said yes because he was a member of the local AACA Region and CHVA Region and knew a lot of people. He came up with some 20-25 names and forwarded them on to Ron. Then Ron and his wife Sherie did the mailings and invited the people of Steven's list to their home for a meeting.



Steven Sisson
2008 CLC Henry M. Leland Award Winner
Photo by Vince Taliano



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The first meeting took place in January 1969 with some 15-20 potential members in attendance and was featured in *The Self-Starter* (see photos below courtesy of Chris Cummings). Ron led the meeting and announced that he wanted to get a local Region started. In October 1969, the first Cadillac & LaSalle meet was held at Turkey Run Park in McLean, Virginia with 12 classics in attendance. About a month or so later, another get together was held at his home and **after some discussion, it was decided that the Region would be called "Potomac" and Steven Sisson would be its first Director.** The first order of business was to apply to the National Club for provisional status and to get a good mailing list organized. These things were done and the Potomac Region was off and running.



L to R Standing - Martha Jane Kennedy, Fred Westenberger, Earl Broyles, Juan Aranda, C. P. Johnson, Robert Schilling and Ralph Perkins

L to R Kneeling - Zane Griner, Ellwood Brown, Steven Sisson and Richard Sisson



L to R Standing - George Teebay, Sue Teebay, Mike Smith, Sandy Smith, Cari Davis, Aiken Davis, Glen Cole, Pat Cole, Bryce Frey and Nancy Frey

L to R Kneeling - Ron VanGelderren and Sherie VanGelderren

Steven directed the infant organization from 1969–1976. It was very loose in a number of ways in the early days, including not even requiring dues for the first couple of years. The hat was passed around at the various get-togethers and this brought in enough money to buy paper supplies and pay for postage. Steven more or less ran the club from his office on 15th Street, while also serving as its newsletter writer/editor. Different people came up with ideas for gatherings, meetings and so forth. Eventually dues were put in effect when it became necessary to buy trophies to give out at the national sanctioned shows.

From the beginning, the Potomac Region kept growing. In the early years of the 1970s, its members included a number of members who remain active today. Besides the DC area enthusiasts, Cadillac and LaSalle owners from Pennsylvania and New Jersey made the journey south to attend Potomac Region events during the mid '70s.



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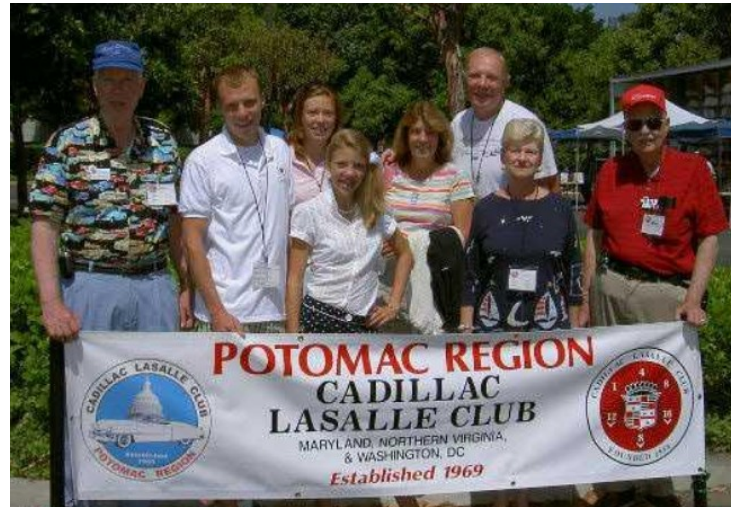
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By then, Steven who was the CLC's Eastern Vice President of Regions, felt that there was a need for a CLC Region in Pennsylvania, because, "we have a large number of members residing there, but no Region for them to be involved with." Steve published an open letter to CLC members residing in Pennsylvania in the February 1975 *The Self-Starter*, promising that if there was interest in a CLC Region in Pennsylvania, "The New York, Potomac, and New England Region people will assist you in getting started and I assure you I will give you all of the guidelines necessary." **From this appeal came the Valley Forge Region which has not only flourished but has become one of the most active Regions in the CLC and host of the club's 50th Anniversary Party, the 2008 CLC Grand National.**



California Dreaming
The Denchfields and Sissons at the
2006 CLC Grand National
Photo courtesy of Steven Sisson

For a time during the '80s and the early '90s when the Potomac Region became less active and questions were raised about its continued viability, it was the Valley Forge Region -- which had begun with an enthusiasm sparked by the Potomac Region -- that provided welcome support to its neighbor to the south. Several Valley Forge Region members joined the Potomac Region when it was trying to build its membership back up, and a considerable number of cars with Pennsylvania and New Jersey license plates continued to regularly attend the Potomac Region's meets and shows.

The Potomac Region survived until its recent resurgence in 2003, due in part to Steven's efforts over the years as well as to the support and generosity of Daniel Jobe and Capitol Cadillac. Since 2003, Steven developed the club's initial website, participated in the design of the Region's logo and served as Activities Director, liaison with the Central VA Region and newsletter columnist for the Region's nationally recognized *Caddie Chronicle* newsletter.

In addition, he has continued to attend numerous national CLC and AACA events across the country including the three most recent Grand Nationals held in California, Georgia and New Jersey, respectively. His account of the numerous events has been a featured column in the *Caddie Chronicle* and his story on the 2006 Charlotte Auto Fair Spring Meet was also featured in *Hemmings Classic Car*.

Steven truly exemplifies the best that the hobby and the CLC have to offer and has been an ambassador of the club since the late 1960s. **And to celebrate his 40-year involvement with the CLC, he is serving as co-chair of its 2009 National Driving Tour, the first ever national CLC event hosted by the Potomac Region! Congratulations Steven!**