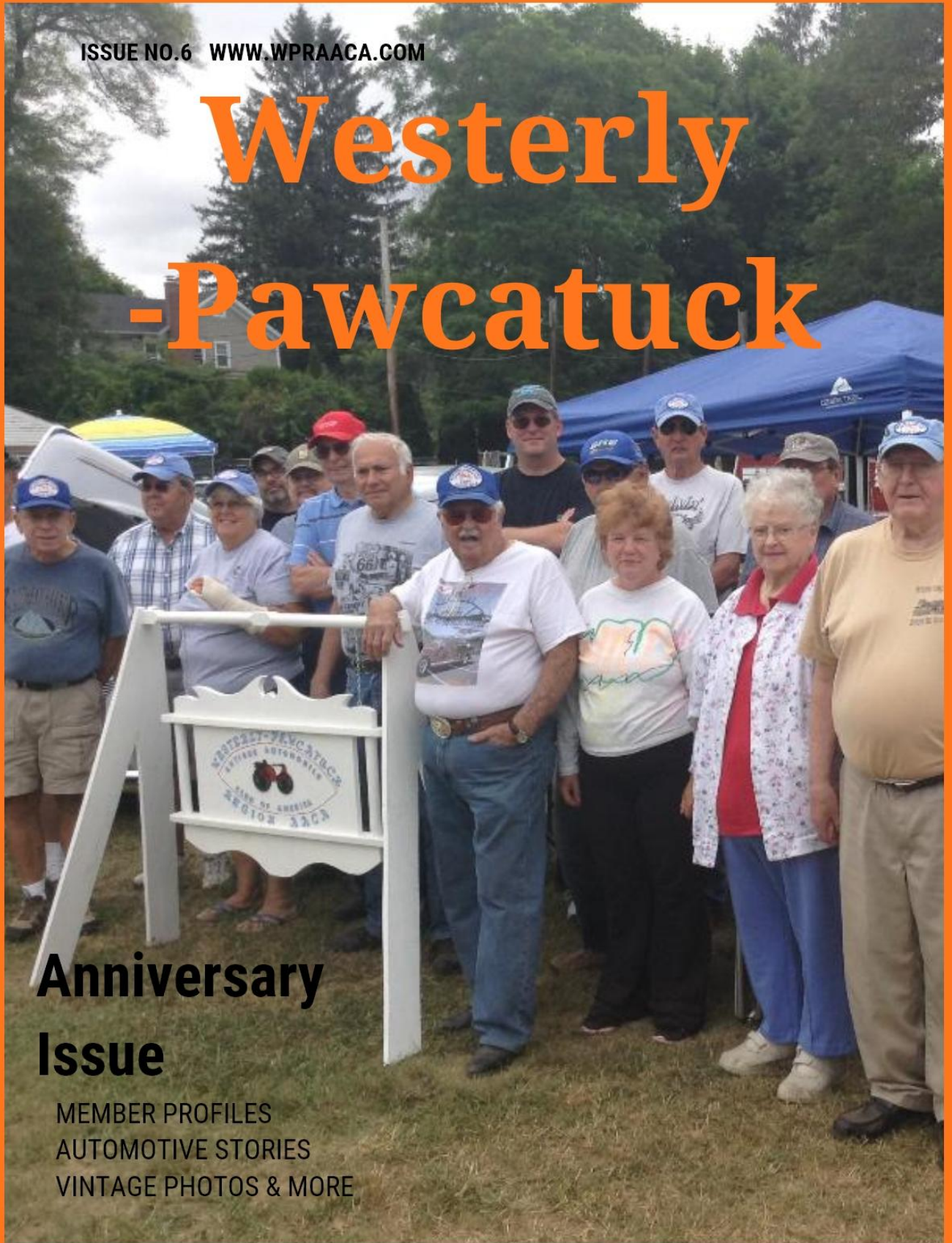


ISSUE NO.6 WWW.WPRAACA.COM

# Westerly -Pawcatuck



## Anniversary Issue

MEMBER PROFILES  
AUTOMOTIVE STORIES  
VINTAGE PHOTOS & MORE



# A Word from our President



The automobile has been part of American life and culture for over 120 years. It was the driving force ( no pun intended) which brought the industrial revolution storming into the 20th century. Mobility gave Americans unprecedented freedom and prosperity. For the first time people were free to explore beyond their local environment, commerce exploded and the inherent greatness of our country was realized like never before.

Initially car design and engineering were strictly functional producing a conveyance device to bring us from one place to another. By the 1920s that was changing when safety, reliability, performance and style were incorporated into the auto maker's list of requirements. By the 1930s style was in full bloom and some of the most beautiful rolling works of art were created. The automobile became so much more than just a mode of conveyance, it symbolized freedom, prosperity, success and our way of life.

Small wonder that the postwar baby boomer generation, our generation, would have a particular fondness for the things that influenced our formative years, especially cars. Although the war took its toll and many, many vehicles were scrapped for the war effort many survived and the appreciation of their historic significance spawned the formation of antique car clubs throughout the country. Ours is one of those clubs founded by members who shared a passion for enjoying and preserving the significance of all things automotive.

The Westerly Pawcatuck Region of the Antique Automobile Club of America was founded in February 1966 by 16 charter members. The formation and chartering of the club resulted largely through the efforts of one man, Malcolm Stinson, who is the sole remaining charter member still on our club roster. We are all indebted to Malcolm for the

foresight, persistence and fortitude he's contributed to making the club viable for more than 53 years.

As you would expect, the club has seen many changes over the years. The meeting place has changed a numbers of times, starting in member's homes, moving to fire houses in Westerly and North Stonington and currently to the Senior center in Westerly. The number of members has also fluctuated from a low of single digits to our current roster of 46 member families. In the early years model T's and model A's were much more predominant. The '50s and '60s cars were obviously pretty new and not so well represented as they are today. As we do today, the club attended many cruise nights, car shows, tours, and sponsored several car shows in the 1980's. Our most famous member was Sergio Franchi, a singer and entertainer, who appeared on Broadway and in the movies and who owned several Packards. Even though Sergio was the most famous member, we still have several members who are still on our roster and have contributed significantly to the club for many years. We owe them our gratitude: Bob and Cindy Allin, Bob and Nancy Burdick, Merrill and Margaret Moone, Phil and Sally Panciera, Malcolm Stinson and Jim and Peggy Varas. Thank you all!

This booklet is a "point in time" effort to chronicle the club as it is today, to profile the members and their cars, for you to peruse and enjoy, to look back and reminisce. It is also an effort to say "thank you" to all our current members for keeping the club fun, enjoyable and keeping the flame for the old car hobby lit for those who follow.

Cheers!

Bob DeGoursey



# **Club History**

The recollections of Malcolm Stinson,  
founding club member



## **History of Our Club: Recollections of Malcolm J. Stinson Jr.**

When I have been back to visit on a few occasions, I have been asked as to how this club came to be. I have also heard stories that I have no idea where or how they got started. So, I have written this letter to explain exactly how the club came to be.

In the early '60's, my friend Donald Gouvin had an old (1910, I think) Oldsmobile coupe. Donald asked me to go with him to a show that the Rolling Rhodies was having. Being a mechanic and service manager of Mystic Studebaker at the time, I was very interested in antique cars. Over the next few years I had been to many car shows in the area and at Hershey. I restored a 1928 Reo Wolverine coupe and started showing this car at local shows,, In the process I got to know many friends that also had antique cars. There were so many in the Westerly, Pawcatuck, Mystic, etc. area that I started talking to them about starting our own chapter of the AACA.

Several meetings were held in the basement family room of my home on South Anguilla Road in Wequetequock. I had written to the AACA for all that was needed to become one of their regions. We selected the name of Westerly-Pawcatuck region because we were from both Connecticut and Rhode Island. At the time we were 18 strong.

### **The charter members are:**

Malcolm J. Stintson Jr.	Gene Bzek
Eugene Sisson	Leroy P. Bailey
Donald Gouvin	John Drew
Joseph Romanella	Henry Barber
George Champlin	James Wydler
William Harrington	Fred Barber
N. Morgan Startwell	Edward DiCesare Sr.
David P. Smith	P. Stanley Barber
Robert E. Crandall	Robert P. Bankel

On February 10, 1967, I sent out a letter to all charter members asking if they would like to have a plaque with all of the charter members' names on it along with the main top plaque to read:

The Westerly-Pawcatuck Region of the Antique Automobile Club of America, Originated October, 1965 by Malcolm J. Stinson Jr. and received its charter in February, 1966.

A copy of the letter is enclosed and when Phil came to visit last January I showed him the original letter.

***(a copy of the original letter is on the next page)***

## Antique Automobile Club of America



WESTERLY-PAWCATUCK REGION  
M. J. Stinson, Jr., Director  
R.F.D. No. Two  
Westerly, Rhode Island 02891

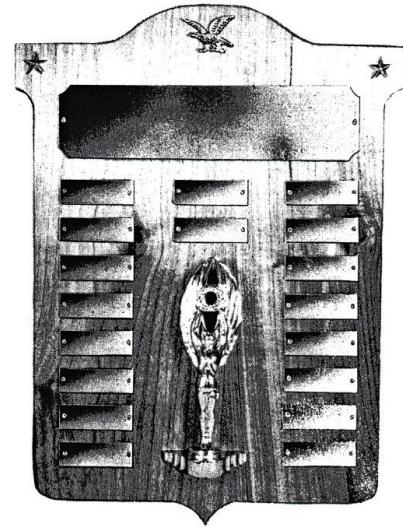
February 10, 1967

Dear Charter Member;

I have talked to a number of the charter members of this club and we have agreed to purchase a plaque. This plaque would have all the names of the charter members, date of origin and original officers.

If everyone is in agreement with this it will cost each charter member \$3.00. It will have to be a unanimous decision, because if not it cannot be purchased for this amount.

This plaque as pictured at right is 16"x20" made of walnut, with brass plates. The retail price of this plaque is \$90.00 but at this time Emblem & Badge is offering a 2/3 discount leaving a cost of \$30.00. This plus the cost of the lettering averages out approximately \$3.00 per person.



If it is in agreement **this** is what I had planned to put on the top of the plaque:

THE WESTERLY-PAWCATUCK REGION of the ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF AMERICA originated October 1965 by Malcolm J. Stinson, Jr. and received its charter February 1966

If you are in agreement with this would you please send your check as soon as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Sincerely,

Malcolm J. Stinson, Jr.

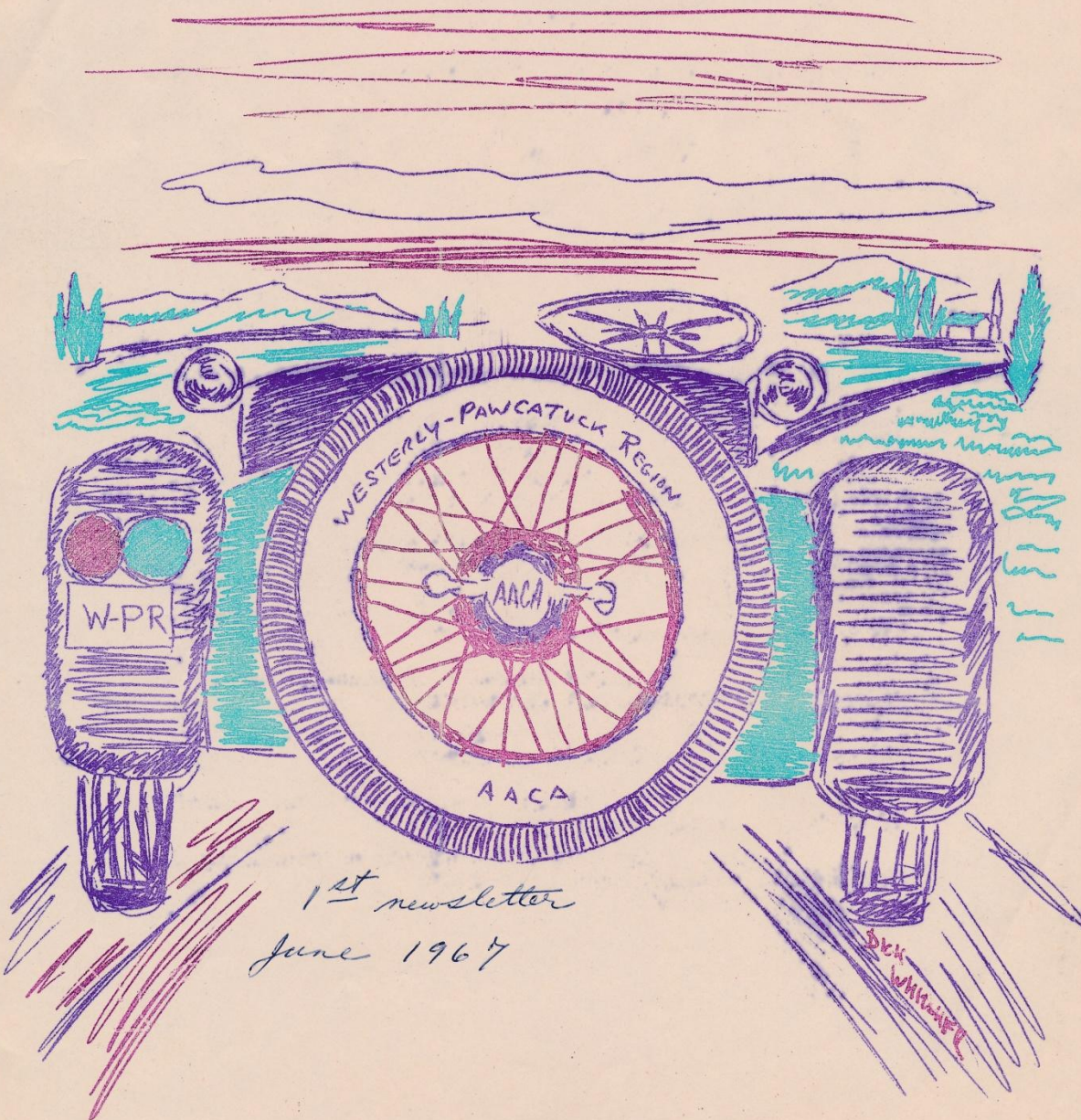


Malcolm Stinson Jr.

WESTERLY-PAWCATUCK REGION of A.A.C.A.  
MALCOLM J. STINSON JR. DTR.  
R.F.D. #2, WESTERLY,  
RHODE ISLAND 02891

# THE WHEEL

THE PUBLICATION OF THE WESTERLY-PAWCATUCK REGION OF A.A.C.A.



1<sup>st</sup> newsletter  
June 1967

Don Williams



SECRETARYS REPORT

May 10, 1967

The regular meeting of the Westerly-Pawcatuck region of the A.A.C.A. was held at the new quarters in the Dunns Corners Community House. The meeting was called to order at 8:15 P.M., by Malcolm Stinson, Director, with seventeen members present.

The secretarys report of the last meeting was read and approved.

The treasurers report was read and approved. It showed a balance of \$ 269.17, plus dues from six members present.

Roy Bailey introduced Maurice Browning, a new applicant for membership. Gene Bozek made the motion to accept Maurices application and Henry Barber seconded it.

Under old business a discussion was held about the idea of a printing press to print newsletters etc. George Champlin said he would check to see if the one he could have gotten was still available. Mrs Evelyn Barber made the motion to give him a check to but it. Mrs Morris seconded it.

A discussion was held by the director concerning our upcoming second annual show, some open weekends and suggestions for tours.

A few comments were made about the pictures and write-ups that have been appearing in the Westerly Sun over the past few weeks.

New Business - Mr. Stinson asked if anyone would care to volunteer to be the editor of the newsletter. Mrs. Sara Morris has offered to do it for as long as they are living here, or until someone else will do it. She said she would welcome any help or suggestions.

A letter was read requesting our presence this coming Memorial Day, May 30, from the Ledyard J. G. 's for cars in their parade. The director asked for as many cars as possible since this is a paid parade and he as promised at least five cars.

The director reminded all of the upcoming Webster-Knight Meet Sunday, May 21 and "Classiques Unlimited" in Montville on May 28. It was also announced that Gene Bozek has won a trophy for his car in the Loyalty Day parade on May 7, in Norwich. There was a lot of comment about the weather, etc., but all had a lot of fun.

It was decided to try buying refreshments from now on. Evelyn Barber has offered to be chairman for this department.

Having no further business, the director has some movies for tonight. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 P. M.

Respectfully Submitted  
Eugene L. Sisson, Secy.



TREASURERS REPORT  
May 10, 1967

Balance brought forward	\$ 269.17
Dues paid by:	
Henry Barber	3.00
Stanley Barber	3.00
Helen Barber	3.00
Eugene Sisson	3.00
Maurice Browning	3.00
	<u>5.00</u>
Total	284.17
Paid out to Evelyn Barber for Stamps	<u>5.00</u>
Balance	279.17

Respectfully Submitted  
Roy Bailey, Treas.

WIVES CORNER

We would like to invite all the wives to submit recepies and/or household hints to feature each month. Anyone with a favorite recepie she would like to share please send it to Mrs. James C. Morris 66 South Broad Street Pawcatuck, Connecticut 02981 or to the club and we will see that it appears in the Newsletter.

RHUBARB PIE

One 8 or 9 inch unbaked pie shell

2 $\frac{1}{2}$  cups rhubarb  
1 $\frac{1}{2}$  cups sugar  
2 eggs  
2 Tablespoons water  
3 large saltine crackers

Crush crackers fine and combine with sugar, eggs, and water. Add rhubarb and mix well. Pour into unbaked shell and bake 1 hour in slow oven.

Mrs. James C. Morris

FOR SALE

Any member wishing to put an antique car, parts, or clothing in the Newsletter, free of charge, please send complete description to me or the club and we will see that it appears.

FOR SALE: 1939 Plymouth Sedan - good restorable condition  
\$100.00

Contact Roy Bailey



PERSONALITY PROFILE

Each month the Newsletter will feature a Personality Profile on one of its members. This months feature is on Malcolm Stinson, Club Director.

HOW THE RED REO CAME TO BE.

In October of 1961 I was invited to go to the A.A.C.A. Auto Show in Hershey, Penn., by Donald Gouvin. We had a wonderful trip with lovely weather. I saw for the first time over 1000 antique cars in one place.

I was so enthused with all this that I set out to find one for myself. I found some nice cars but the price was way out of my reach.

Then I decided that the only way was to restore one.

In September of 1962 I was able to buy a 1928 Wolverine coupe (by Reo). I completely stripped the car with help from Betty, Don, Dad and others. After many months I had the running gear done and started on the body, replaced some wood work and repaired a few places in the tin work.

Finally the car was ready for the road and my first trip was to the Narraganset Auto Fair. Everything was going fine until we came back in from the parade. I got right in the gate to the field and as Dick Whitaker said: "Mal Stinson and his rare 1928 Reo Wolverine," she stopped. I was pushed out of the way and began to check it out. Don and I found the coil to be bad. The only thing in the system that I did not change and it had to go then. Luckily, Don had a spare coil so I put it on, turned her over and away we went. It turned out to be a good day after all and since, we have enjoyed the antiques, the antiquers, and events.

Malcolm "Butch" Stinson.



The director would like to extend a large vote of thanks to the members who took part in the Memorial Day parade in Ledyard. Those members participating were Gene Bozek and wife, Don Gouvin and sons, George Champlin and wife, Ed DeCesare and family, Jim Wydler and Sons, Roy Bailey and son, Henry Barber and wife, Mal Stinson and family and James Barstow.

After the Ledyard parade several members went to the Exeter Firehouse for some excellent clam chowder and fritters. "All you can eat for 1 dollar". Afterward they took part in the Memorial day parade in Hope Valley. Seems that Donald Gouvin almost ran out of gas in the Hope Valley parade. After leaning down the carburetor he managed to make it through, but it was tough and go for a while. Good thing you didn't use a match to check the gas tank, Donald.

The Westerly Parade was also a big success thanks to the participation of Henry Barber, Joe Morrane, Don Gouvin, Jim Barstow and Mal Stinson, Jr.

The Devils Hopyard Picnic tour was very enjoyable to those who attended - Don Gouvin and family, Mal Stinson, Jr. and family and James Wydler and sons. I was very disappointed to see that more members weren't coming along. I'm sure you all would have enjoyed it. It was a beautiful day a beautiful ride and after a hearty cookout the three families played a rather interesting ball game.

#### EVENTS BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING

1. June 11 - South Shore Trading Bee
2. June 18 - Newport Morot Car Festival
3. June 25 - A.A.C.A. Spring Meet, Niagra Falls, New York  
June 25 - Barrington, Bristol, Hoffenreffer Museum and Picnic.
4. July 4 - Parades
5. July 9, - Tour in the Lantern Hill Area



## **Interviews:**

Four of our senior members share their recollections about the club and their own involvement in the automotive hobby.





**Jim Varas Interview, May 30, 2018**  
**Long time member of Westerly Pawcatuck Region AAACA**



**Jim joined the club in 1994.** He was about 56 years old at that time. Jim recalls that the first meeting he attended consisted of about 10 people. The names he can remember are:

Phil Panciera (the president)  
Mr. Colson  
Scott Riding (the treasurer)  
Harold and Anne Miner  
Bob Burdick  
John Drew  
Bud Franco  
Horace Durfee

John Parker  
Bob Allin  
Carl Nagy  
Bud Franco  
Charlie Robinson  
Merrill Moone  
Paul and June Murphy

Jim heard about the club from an ad he saw in the local newspaper. At the time that Jim joined he estimates that there were 18 members in the club. The club president was Phil Panciera (1994). Jim soon found himself on the nominating committee for new club leadership. His fellow committee members were Harold Miner and Bob Burdick. Bob Burdick was nominated and elected as president and Jim was elected as vice president. They both served for several years (1995-1998).<sup>1</sup>

The club seemed to get a new burst of energy when Bob Burdick took over command. Many new members, destined to become longtime club supporters, came in during this era. Jim recalls that Harold L. , Jim Patterson, and Jim Rondeau all signed up at this time. The most people at a meeting during this period were 43 members. Although most people were older there were some younger people in their 30's such as Harold Miner and several others. The men and women owned all sorts of cars including up to six model-T's at one time. There were also a couple of model-A owners.

At the time that Jim joined the meetings were held at the North Stonington firehouse. Previously the meetings were held at the Grange Hall that is near the fairgrounds. Even earlier meetings took place at the homes of various members. Jim recalls hearing about a meeting that was held at the home of club member Sergio Franchi, the famous tenor and movie star. He lived on a 240 acre estate in Stonington, Connecticut. As other members told the story, Sergio had a beautiful home and very nice furniture including a white couch. He very graciously served wine to his fellow members. Unfortunately someone spilled that red wine on the white couch! That must have been a meeting to remember. Sergio passed away in 1989 at the early age of 64. Jim never met him.

By the time 1997 rolled around Jim was president of Westerly-Pawcatuck. A primary feature of Jim's four years as president was road trips. He remembers traveling to a show in Bennington, VT in a 1934 Ford pickup truck. Most cars that made the trek with him were antiques. About 20-25 people attended, only a few in modern cars. The route to Bennington was all back roads. This path was intentional; although slower, people were not left behind because they had slower cars.

Trips, such as one to Stowe, VT, often involved two days of travel. The group would stay over at Ludlow on the first day and complete the trip on the second. They would attend the auction and show and then return home in a single day.

Jim says that the club's relationship with the AACA back then was a very good one. They were always very accommodating of us. Part of the reason we joined the AACA had to do with Mr. Malone, a member who was in the car business and was a member of the AACA. He helped

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<sup>1</sup> Successive club presidents were Varas, Stedman, and Parker.

guide us towards the association. Our membership in the AACA led to many journeys, beginning in 1996, to the annual fall meet in Hershey, PA. Jim remembers earlier days when he used to go with Bob Burdick and John Drew. Back then everything was on grass and the fields were often a muddy quagmire. He welcomed the paved lots that we now set our tents upon.



**AACA Certificate of Charter for the Westerly-Pawcatuck Region, granted on February 5, 1966**  
This and other important club documents are stored at Jim's home.

Hosting car shows often involved difficult planning. At one point the club was approached by a company called R. E. Parts. They met with Phil, Bob, and Jim. The company wanted our club to help them host a Seafood Fest at the Westerly Airport. It was suggested that the show be held inside a hanger. All attended a meeting at the airport where the woman in charge of public relations for the airport failed to show up. Jim judged the hangers inappropriate for the show. The men then went out to investigate the adjacent grassed area. At this time they were

approached by airport security who informed them that the show was not going to happen. That ended the proposed car show.

Another negotiation for a show began when Jim Romanella was approached in 2000 by a doctor who wanted the club to host a show on a peninsula in Avondale. Jim suggested a more suitable alternative, Avondale Farm. The club committee, in meeting with the doctor, explained to him what would be needed in logistics to pull off a successful show. They had to produce 75-100 cars and have adequate space for them and for people who attended the show. They also had to obtain permits and portable toilets. At this point the doctor balked and decided not to support a car show. It seems he was only interested in a private show for his own interest.

By 1994 many of the big shows such as Highland Orchard were no longer running. The trend turned to cruises which attracted fewer people but were easier to organize.

Jim relates that by the time he relinquished the presidency in 2001 the club was in good shape. He feels that he helped move things along and attract more valuable members such as Tom Link. Tom had sent Jim a letter of inquiry about the club. Tom was already part of an AACA regional club in Westchester County in New York. Since Tom was in the process of moving to Rhode Island he was looking for a new club to join. Jim told Tom about an upcoming cruise at the Westerly Newport Creamery where Tom could meet club members and decide if he wanted to join the group. The rest is history.

When asked about where Jim sees the present club going in the future he lamented the introduction of newer cars which tend to go faster and may leave behind older cars in a caravan. People seem to be looking for faster cars and as a result the collecting of very old cars is neglected. Jim was reminded of a recent club memo on just this topic. We now have a stated policy regarding caravanning which stresses that the leader must be aware of and accommodating to slower cars. Hopefully this will encourage more members to participate in long trips.



**Bob Burdick Interview, June 1, 2018**  
**Long time member of Westerly Pawcatuck Region AAACA**



The interview of Bob Burdick took place at his dining room table where he was surrounded by numerous club documents. He was in the process of organizing these before and during our visit. Bob showed us numerous newsletters from decades ago. Most of them had black and white photographs of club members and events that the club organized. Anyone with even a passing interest in our club history could easily be entertained for hours by these windows to the past.

We quickly moved to the topic of bylaws. Did we have any official bylaws? "Yes we do" was the quick response by Mr. Burdick. We have both AACA bylaws and our own bylaws. And he was quick to suggest an addition to them. Bob has been adamant about documenting our current policy of honoring those who have 25 years of continuous membership with lifetime status. We presently have six individuals who qualify for that distinction.

Bob first joined our club back in the 1970's. "Uncle Horace" brought him in. That is Horace Drufee. Bob remembers those first meetings he attended. One of the first he attended was at the Dunn's Corners School which is now the Dunn's Corners Fire Station. That was likely in 1976. The club was 10 years old at that time. After '76 many of the meetings were held in the homes of various members. As many as 25-30 people would fill all available seats during those

intimate get-togethers. Bob was a member during the time when Sergio Franchi was also part of the WPRAACA. He first met Sergio at Uncle Horace's place. Sergio had a 1929 Packard Roadster that was painted powder blue. Bob recalls seeing it on display at Foxwoods Casino. Sergio's wife is still with us. She often has concerts at her home.

Bob recalls that the club held car shows before becoming a touring club. Unfortunately the club could not get enough help to run the shows so in the 1980's members decided to become a cruising club. A group of members would take off every month during the car show season. They would follow all the back roads to their destination and have a great time. The pace was slow enough for all kinds of cars to participate.

We asked Bob to explain how our association with the AACA came about. It seems that there was originally a club in Mystic, Connecticut. Our present club was an offshoot of that one. They applied for membership in the AACA and were accepted two months after filing the paperwork. At that time the WPRAACA and the Connecticut Valley club were the only AACA regions in Connecticut. We were, and still are, the only region in Rhode Island. Bob continued "We are both a Region and a Chapter" since our territory spans two different states. In the past many of our members were from the Warwick and Providence areas in Rhode Island. Today our membership is mostly limited to Southern Rhode Island and South Eastern Connecticut. Bob speculated that folks are less inclined to travel a distance to attend a meeting.

Years ago many of the members went to national events. Morris Brown won AACA Junior and Senior awards for his Cadillac. Henry Barber was another old car nut who frequently attended distant events. His wife became the first female president of the Westerly-Pawcatuck. Another active member was Fred Crandall. He owned a junk yard on Klondike road in Charlestown. Bob expressed his regret that we no longer send groups of people to large AACA national events to show their cars. He said that we now tend to go to the same select group of closer shows and rarely make changes.

Road trips in the old days were fun and sometimes they even got a little out of hand. Bob remembers visiting the home of the owner of the New Hampshire Speedway where they were able to observe a very large collection of antique vehicles. One of our guys got drunk on gin and tonics and ended up falling into a bathtub. Things got even more raucous after that.

John Drew, Nancy and Bob Burdick, and Nancy's girlfriend once went to an auction in Atlantic City. They ate in Saybrook at the Griswold Inn on the way back. John was doing lots of martinis at the inn, so many that eventually he announced "I can't feel my legs". Folks then ordered him coffee with brandy. Eventually Bob asked a waiter to help him out to the kitchen from whence he was placed in a Suburban and taken home to North Stonington. John was retired and he knew how to have fun. He also always had nice cars! By the way, by the time Bob had got John home he had sobered up pretty well!

According to Jim Varas the 90's was characterized by a low point in membership numbers. Although there were several likely contributing factors, Bob thinks that one was a dispute between Peter Pitcher and John Drew. John promised to sell a car to Paul Murray. Instead he

sold it to Peter Pitcher. The fallout was that Peter Pitcher and 15 of his friends all left the club en masse. Shortly after this incident Bob Burdick became president and people began to return to the club. The meeting place was moved to the North Stonington Grange and later to the Fire Department and after many years it was finally settled in at the North Stonington Senior Center.

Bob thinks that the late '80's were a high point in club activity. The club put on a number of car shows. The first ones were at The Circus Field at Dunn's Corners where the Subaru dealer is now. There were also shows at Davis Standard, a machine shop in North Stonington. They also held car shows at Highland Orchard. That was the end of car shows put on by our club. Another nice show they attended was the one held in Preston, Connecticut. Bob also recalls a fun show held at Harkness Memorial Park in Waterford, CT. At that one some kid was seen sliding off of the fender of a moving '35 Ford phaeton. Folks attended flea markets together too. We used to go as groups to Southbury, Norton (MA), Rocky Hill, Belltown, and Norwich. That happens less often today.

The 1990's saw the last show at Highland Orchards at the intersection of routes 2 and 49 in North Stonington (near the KOA). These shows were often attended by the likes of Dick Whittaker, a man who seemed to know something about every car he saw. He actually had intentions of opening a museum some day. Then there were Donald Gouvin (he had an Olds with a rounded glass rear window) and Morris Browning, a couple more outstanding members at this time. They and others all contributed to a lively experience.

When asked Bob confirmed that we did have the Sunshine Committee and the Gas Lighters back in the days. We also always had a newsletter. He thinks the name Classy Chassis may have originated from a contest they held. He thinks that his own daughter may have come up with the name.

When asked about the future of our car club Bob thinks that many of the young adults of today seem to be less interested in charitable organizations like the Grange, Knights of Columbus, and others. This reduction in community participation seems to be chipping away at similar social groups such as car clubs like ours. It is difficult to attract young people and they of course are our only hope for the future. Bob believes that one way to attract young people is to find a young person and let him drive your car. That's how he learned to drive a model T. When John Drew was getting up in age Bob chauffeured him around for some 5 years.



**Merrill Moone Interview, November 21, 2018**  
**Long time member of Westerly Pawcatuck Region AAACA**



Merrill is a man who has lived with automobiles all his life. His memory of new and old cars goes back to at least 1950 or 1951 when he was a mere child of 5. He cannot explain why he has such vivid memories of so long ago; but, he sure is able to provide us with some interesting stories.

One of Merrill's earliest memories goes back to when his dad owned a Studebaker dealership in Coventry, RI. The original building stands to this day even though the high school that was across the street was torn down many years ago. Merrill's home was right next door to the showroom. When Moone's Motor Sales vacated that building there was a smaller building out back, called the shed, that was full of old obsolete parts. They were all disposed of. Merrill believes they would be very valuable today if they had been saved.

Merrill's dad moved the dealership to a new building in West Warwick, RI in 1947. One of the photos of the business shows a new Studebaker convertible parked out front.



**Brand new Studebaker outside Moone's Motor Sales in West Warwick**

In 1949 or 1950 the business transitioned from Studebakers to Dodges and Plymouths. Merrill recalls that back in 1950 his dad bought a 1922 Dodge from a dealer in Beacon, NY. The Dodge



**Merrill with his dad, age 5, in 1922 Dodge**

was used to advertise the dealership. Dad used that Dodge touring car in parades and as an attention getter at the dealership. Attached to the wheels were cardboard signs that said "The Dodge Lasts Forever". The 1922 Dodge that Merrill first saw when he was 5 years old eventually became his and he owns it to this day! Merrill even remembers the day he was taken down to the train station in Artich (business section of West Warwick) to witness a delivery of new 1950 or so Studebakers being unloaded from a boxcar. Merrill was no more than 4 or 5 years old at the time. The new cars came with some nice perks for the dealer, a set of model Studebakers that any child would love to have. Merrill had fun zooming those cars all over the floors of the dealership garage until one of them was run over. He was a bit more cautious after that.

In 1956 Buick replaced Dodge-Plymouth, which didn't work out so well when the '57-'58 recession came along.

Fortunately, franchises for a couple of unknown foreign cars called Volvo and Simca had been acquired and Buicks were given up with the foreign cars being moved to a small building in East Greenwich where overhead dropped and sales increased substantially, so the facilities were expanded. By the time he was a teenager Merrill was spending a lot of time at the garage.

By 1973 Merrill had moved to Richmond, then moving to his present home on Lewiston Avenue, also in Richmond in 1980, just before which time he joined WPRAACA. In December, 1983, he acquired his 1941 Buick from his friend Bobby Lopez. He was with Bobby when Bob bought the car from the original owner for \$250 in circa 1964



**New Volvo dealership in East Greenwich, RI**

when they were both in high school. Merrill began taking

the Buick to various car shows around the area. Merrill became very involved in club activities. One of his favorite memories is of a bunch of the guys driving their old cars to a meet in 1985 at Bennington, VT. He knows that John Drew was in the group and he thinks that Paul Murphy, Bill Harrington and Phil Panciera may also have come along.

Merrill was club president for one or two years. He recalls a show that they put on at Highland Orchards. It was the last time that the site was available to the club. Since Merrill was the president it was his honor to award the President's Trophy to the car that he thought best deserved it. This was not a best of show or peoples' choice award. It was entirely up to the President to choose. Merrill was most impressed by a 1928 Hudson four door sedan. It was driven onto the field by a bunch of young farmer types (bib overalls, etc.) who were out to have a good time. They had recently pulled the old Hudson out of a barn where it had sat idle for years. They worked on it until they could get the engine going and make the car go and stop. That was the extent of their 'restoration'. This car attracted more attention from the crowd, and Merrill, than any of the other nicely finished antiques. When Merrill announced the award the owners of the old jalopy went wild and started blowing their horns like crazy. They had a good day and so did everyone else.

Merrill has stacks of car show plaques that were produced by our club. Each plaque has on it a photograph of the owner's car. Merrill has some for his Buick and Dodge. He also has some for Phil's Studebakers, the Model T which Bob Burdick has now, and a 1927 yellow Cadillac that was owned by Ed Jacobowitz. Ed was from a Connecticut town somewhere north of Stonington. Ed had lots of interesting cars in his barn and in a nearby field. Merrill can't remember much more about Ed but he is pretty sure that Bob Burdick will remember him.

While discussing the activities that the club put on Merrill suddenly remembered that one of the first members that he met was Phil Panciera. Merrill may have met Phil in reference to Merrill's law practice. Phil is most likely the person who first introduced Merrill to the WPRAACA.

Another person Merrill recalls is Paul Murphy of Groton. Paul and his wife were very active in the club. As it happened Paul's wife was a retired airplane pilot. Merrill remembers one car meet where Paul arranged for a guy to show his vintage airplane at one of our meets and he gave plane rides to the participants. He landed right on the same field where the cars were displayed. The airplane was an old 1952 job that had a radial engine. This all took place on a farm on route 49.

Merrill remembers club events at the Miner's cider mill. The Miner family members were part of the club and they often hosted events at their farm. Mr. Miner had a couple of Sterns-Knight automobiles that he kept in a very nice garage. When the club held an event at the farm the Miners put on a wonderful picnic that always included some great clam chowder.

One of the most interesting tours he remembers was to the site of a heavy machinery and garbage collection business in Canterbury, CT. Sally Panciera knew Mr. Yaworski who was the owner of the business. His excavation business was started back in 1935 with a new Ford dump truck. The unique thing about this business was that Mr. Yaworski never disposed of any of his vehicles when they became obsolete. The very best of the ancient machinery was kept in a museum on the premises of the business. This museum was not open to the general public but Sally arranged for the WPRAACA to visit and enjoy the vehicles on display. Almost all of the trucks were Ford and Macks, the preferred brands of Mr. Yaworsk. Some items were in sheds, some in fields, and one building close to the dog track was filled with nothing but Fords and Macks parked end to end. Merrill has many photos of the very impressive machinery found in this location.

When Merrill was active in the club it first met in the North Stonington Grange, then the fire station, and finally at the senior center on Route 2. Merrill recalls that most members drove their old cars to meetings. At one point a bridge that led to the meeting place washed out and as a result Merrill began going to fewer meetings. Only about 12-15 people regularly attended meetings at the time. Merrill lost interest because most of what was discussed at meetings involved food, eating out, and cooking. This was not what Merrill expected from a car club so he stopped attending meetings on a regular basis. Also, his cars became unreliable and unable to participate in meets and tours.

Now that he's retired, Merrill has cars running again and is enthusiastic. He thinks that the club has a good outlook for the future as long as it sticks with the basics. By the basics he means that activities should be mostly car-related rather than focused on where to eat and what to cook for a pot luck supper. As long as old cars are the primary focus of activities and speaker presentations he will be energized and happy to participate. He does not believe that we should be overly concerned about the increase of the average age of our members. New members will come around as soon as they get to the point in life where they have the free time and are no longer focused on their children and home. Enthusiastic new members are always waiting in the wing. They just have to mature a little before they can feel free to participate in a club as dynamic as ours.



**Phil Panciera Interview, January 10, 2019**  
**Long time member of Westerly Pawcatuck Region AAACA**



Phil Panciera did not start out as an old car hobbyist. He began by repairing cars at the age of 14. He worked as a mechanic in his dad's dealership that was located on Granite Street in Westerly. Cars were a means to an end rather than a hobby at that time. In 1939 Phil's dad was asked to take on the Studebaker Dealership. It is significant that this was a Studebaker dealership because it helped Phil develop a lifelong appreciation for Studebaker cars. By the time Phil was 17 he had taken his second position as a mechanic at a nearby Ford dealership, John Ahr Ford, on Main Street in Westerly where he worked until he entered the army. His dad also relocated to Main Street when he moved his Studebaker dealership there along the Pawcatuck River. That business remained under his dad's care until his untimely death in 1955, only 5 years after opening at the new location. Phil was discharged from the army in 1957 at which point he returned to Westerly.

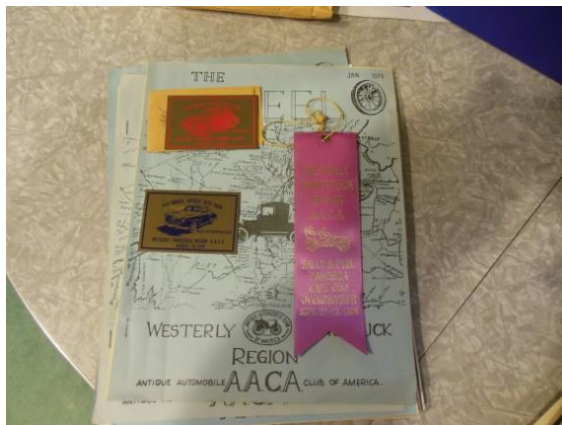
The time spent working for his dad gave Phil a deep appreciation for Studebakers. He recalls one car in particular, a brand new 1951 Starlight coupe. It was a leftover that Phil had his eye

on. He was all prepared to buy it himself when it finally went to a regular customer. Phil had missed his chance. Luckily the same customer returned a few years later when he traded the car in for a new Studebaker Land Cruiser. Now it was Phil's chance! He purchased the now slightly used '51 Studebaker Starlight coupe and held on to it. That car was cherished by Phil until only recently when he sold it a mere 3 years ago. The lucky man who bought that car drove it all the way home to Massachusetts without a single problem. Phil's current 'old car' is a 1966 Mustang that his wife Sally can drive much more easily than the Studebaker which did not have power steering.



**Former site of Phil's dad's Studebaker dealership at 179 Main Street in Westerly**

Phil's introduction to the Westerly-Pawcatuck Region AACA (WPRAACA) was around the late '60's when a customer of his dad's suggested that Phil get interested in antique cars. That customer was the well-known John Drew. John also invited Phil to join the WPRAACA. One thing led to another and Phil soon found himself building a dune buggy out of a Corvair. The



**Event plaques, ribbon, and 1979 newsletter**

entire car was created in his basement with the help of his father-in-law who lived next door. Now Phil was getting into the swing of the old car hobby. He says that when he joined the WPRAACA there were about 20-25 members plus spouses. The women were very involved in the 5-year old club. They insisted on helping with events and planning. That tradition continues to this day. After being a member for only 2 months Phil accepted an invitation to be the vice president of the club. Phil was already busy at this time since he was chief engineer with the Misquamicut Fire Department.



**(Note: He served in that position for 61 years and on August 8, 2017 a bronze plaque was attached to the side of "202". It reads "2017 Custom Ferrara Pumper dedicated to 60 Year Life Member PHIL PANCIERA, Chief Engineer". )**

Later in the 1970's Phil became president of the club, a position he held for 11 years. Phil wasn't the only one in his family to serve the WPRAACA. His wife Sally was elected secretary twice during this same time. She also wrote the Classy Chassis newsletter (her position at Harris Graphics was convenient when it came to running off new editions, color photographs and all). She even stood in for the absent president (Phil was in Arizona) at a meeting once when the then vice president Tom Link deferred to her temporarily filling the position.

Phil has fond memories of going to Hershey each year. He started going in 1966 or so. After joining the WPRAACA he went each year with other club members. The original club booth was in the name of John Drew. The club used



that lot and the one next to it. The location of the club site changed frequently; one year it would be in Yellow and the next it might be in the Blue field. Phil remembers that they usually took two trucks, 2 men in each vehicle. They stayed at a different place each year. Phil specialized in selling signs, especially some nice porcelain ones. I asked if he got these from his dad's business. He said no. Phil would go to Hershey one year and buy up a bunch of signs. The next year he would come back with the same signs (except some he kept for himself) and resell them. He always made lots of purchases at Hershey. Phil also remembers all the mud in the fields and the rain that sometimes created puddles that reached up to your ankles.

Back in the 1970's and '80's the club members would meet in a variety of places, often the homes (or garages) of other club members. He remembers having meetings at Merrill Moone's home garage (I'm told it is a fascinating place ...I have to do a field trip there someday). One time a meeting that was held at Phil's house consisted of about 40 people all crammed into his garage!

According to Phil the club hosted a number of car shows throughout the years. One annual event that was held before Phil joined was the Davis Standard weekend show. There was also a show at the Congregational Church of Pawcatuck that occurred on three separate years. That one was open to all antique cars, original or modified.

Highland Orchard was the site of many annual shows in the late 1970's and 1980's. It usually took place in July for about 5 years running. Highland Orchard is a campground just off Route 95 in North Stonington, CT. Phil had special dash plaques made for participants of each car show. Each year the plaque would feature a car that was owned by the current club president.

Road trips, the long distance kind, also figured highly in early club activities. One of Phil's favorites was a 1999 trip to Paris, Maine. The crew visited the Bahre Collection, a private old car museum that was located near a race track. The museum owner would take all of the cars out of the building and bring them outside for club members to enjoy. As many as 10 people would make the long journey. Some names that Phil recalls are Burdick, Wilson, and Durfee. This museum later became a public enterprise and began charging an \$8.00 entrance fee. There were other out of state trips too. The two Cape Cod overnights were most fondly remembered by both Phil and his wife Sally. They organized these (see the photo of the event ribbon).

There were local events too. The club once held an event at the home of Ernie and Carol Cormier. It was the year 2001. Ernie owned a machine shop in Providence but he lived in Hope Valley on Locustville Pond. Ernie had some really nice high end cars such as Packards, Cadillacs, and Pierce Arrows.

The Highland Orchards, North Stonington Car Show was one event I asked Phil about. I had noticed in an old scrapbook a photo of what looked like Bonnie and Clyde posing with machine guns next to a shot-up Ford sedan. Bodies covered with sheets can be seen on the ground. Phil said that the people in the photo were actors he had seen at an earlier car show. He hired them to ride onto the field and be ambushed by other folks, also in old cars, playing the part of local police. It was quite a scene that got everyone's attention!

One accomplishment that Phil is happy with is the Gaslighters program. He began this and it is still active today. Tom Link and his crew, Bob DeGoursey and Dave Calabrese, are carrying on in splendid form.



Spare bulbs in special holder, tire gauges, window washer, drop light, and Packard mirror; a truly eclectic collection from a long ago motoring age

What does Phil do these days? He is the custodian of an amazing collection of model cars, wreckers, and various really neat automotive artifacts. Have you ever seen a station attendant's windshield washer? How about a 1920's tire gauge with a leather pouch or a Packard mirror that mounts on the spare tire? Phil's collection room is a time capsule that holds many items that remind him of his automotive hobby and his career. It's the kind of room that most men create so they can have a place to be calm and reflective about a past well lived. Recently Phil and Sally sold off many of the models and toys but you would not notice if you had not visited before. There are still many neat collectibles filling the room.



**A diorama built by Phil. Take special note of the billboard that features the 1951 Studebaker.**

How does Phil feel about the current state of the WPRAACA? He likes all the activity he sees. He is especially encouraged by "all the full chairs" at the meetings. Phil says that this is a good thing; lots of activity bodes well for a healthy future. I asked what he thought about the lack of young people in our club or in the old car hobby in general. He doesn't see this as a great problem since it has always been that way to a certain extent. These days many young people are working hard to support their families and they don't have as much time as we retired folks to dedicate to the old car hobby. He still does notice a number of them at shows with cars that they restore and dote over. That is a good sign for the future!



The site of Phil's dad's original dealership on Granite Street in Westerly. It appears that the building was undergoing some restoration at the time this Google image was taken.

# **Selected Photos from Our Past:**

These photos of people and their cars show club members through the decades.







**Richard Sisson and his 1931 Pontiac**



**Donald Gouvin with his 1920 Oldsmobile**





**Harold Miner with his 1933 Graham at Dorr Farm, VT**



**Sally Panciera (left) and June Murphy (right)**



**Bradley Air Museum in South Windsor, CT**



**Bonnie & Clyde reenactment at Highland Orchards  
Car Show, circa 1985**





**Mimi and John Stolgitis, 1911 Schacht-Touring, N. Stonington Parade**



**Bob and Robbie Sundman, 1910 Model T Ford-Touring,  
Parade, North Stonington Village**



**Horace and Irene Duffy, 1914 Ford, Bennington, VT, 1987**



**Joworski's Haul of Fame Truck Museum, Plainfield, CT**





**Phil Panciera's 1950 Studebaker**



**Masons Island Road. Ron Hewlett's 1937 Packard 115-C**



**Jim Varas in his Ford Phaeton, Stowe, 2003**



**Maurice Browning's 1910 Cadillac**





**Valhalla Motel, Arlington, VT, 1990's**



**Groton, CT Parade, July 4, 2005**





**North Stonington Fair, circa 2015**



**Norm and Judy Lagerstrom, Door Farm, VT, circa 2010**





## **Member Pages:**

Current club members were asked to tell us a little about their old car(s).

This section features their stories and photos of their neat antique automobiles.



## Bart Bartholomew: 1938 Plymouth Rumble Seat Convertible, P-6



My car is in 'driver' condition. I put approximately 1,500 miles on it every year. It is not a museum piece. The single best improvement I have made on it is radial tires.

My uncle, Edward Bartholomew, purchased the Plymouth as a used car in 1939. He traded in his 1935 Ford convertible towards payment on the Plymouth. I took possession of the car in 1965. I removed it from under the barn in New York State where it had been sitting for a number of years. I brought the car home and spent 6 months on paint and mechanical work.

I used the car very little over the years until I joined the WPRAACA in about 2005. The best times I have ever had with the car were during club activities, particularly the weekend trips to Manchester, VT and Rhinebeck, NY. I also enjoyed our wonderful trips to Hershey, PA and the annual Calabrese Picnic, both memorable experiences.



## Dave Calabrese: 1960 Buick LeSabre Convertible



My car was acquired in April of 2014. It had an actual mileage of 157,000 miles. The current mileage is 180,000 miles.

This model has a 364 Buick Nailhead V8 with a 2 barrel carburetor. Included options are power steering, power brakes, power windows, power seat, and power top.

The vehicle was an original California car sold to Riviera Hotel in 1993 and then raffled. The color was changed from black to red. The person who won the car in the raffle had the car restored and the engine rebuilt. The vehicle was later refreshed by a dealer and sold to me in 2014.

The improvements include a new top, rebuilt power brakes, added wire wheel and radial tires. I also repaired some poor body work and refurbished the dash, gauges, and the radio. AC was also added.

The vehicle is currently in very good condition. We drive it regularly. Our favorite trips include the Buick 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in Allentown, PA and a road trip to Lake Placid, NY.

## Patricia Calabrese: 1959 Chevrolet Apache Pickup



My car was purchased in 2004 and the restoration was completed in 2008. The vehicle was built to be a daily driver with a modern drive train including a Chevy 305 CID V8 w/ Tuned Port Injection, 700R4 Automatic Transmission, Firebird Positraction Rear and Monte Carlo Independent Front Suspension w/4 wheel Power disc brakes. Features include power windows, seats, and steering. It also has upgraded gauges, and satellite radio.

I enjoy driving the car around town for shopping and picking up flowers. Dave has taken it to Syracuse for the Street Rod Nationals.





## Ken and Camille Carr: 1941 Buick Roadmaster



When I retired from teaching I decided to get myself a retirement gift. (I didn't really fully retire ... I worked two other jobs during the next 11 years). I always had my heart set on owning an antique car. I fulfilled this dream once many years ago but that car was long gone.

This time I was going to get a car that ran well and could be driven with or without restoration. I found what I wanted in Connecticut. It was a 1941 Buick Roadmaster four door sedan. The body style is called the trunk back due to the way the trunk area sticks out. The Auto Trader ad of Sept, 2002 read:

*"1941 Buick Roadmaster, 4 dr. sedan, 8 cyl, Twin carbs, 100% orig & complete. Factory paint & interior. Runs & drives very good. Solid need some cosmetics. Nice chrome, stainless. Drive home at hwy. speed. \$5,700 OBO."*





I made the trip to Cromwell, CT to check the car out. The description was pretty accurate. The car was under a cover in the yard while the garage housed a 1930's Packard. It seems the seller had one car too many.

Unfortunately when the seller drove the car for our road test he had a lot of trouble putting it in first without shaking everything up. I suspected some sort of major clutch trouble so I declined the purchase. A week later I got a call from the owner. He wanted me to look at the car again at a new price of only \$4,500. This time I went with my wife and I drove the Buick during the test drive. I was able to easily shift in first by just giving it a bit more gas. The deal was sealed when my wife who rode in the back seat said the ride was smooth enough for her. I put down a deposit and a week later my dad went with me to pick the car up.





## Andy Clapham: 1960 Chevy Corvette



The above photo is of my early 1960 Corvette that was manufactured in October 1959. The car has been in the family for some time; I bought it from my brother in 1985. He had some customization done to it in the early years to turn it into a sort of “hot rod”. When I got the car I started on many years of restoration as time and funds would allow. Most of the original parts were kept by my brother. My friends and I have been to many car shows and other events with the car over the years. A couple of years ago I sent the car to The Bow Tie Shop in Massachusetts and had a nearly total restoration done.

We also have other collector cars: a 1968 Impala that has always been in the family and is all original, a 1979 MGB that I bought in 1984 that is all original and in perfect condition, and a 1989 2 door Chevy S-10 Blazer with 34,000 original miles on it. I am the original owner. The Blazer has never been out in the winter and is in perfect original condition.

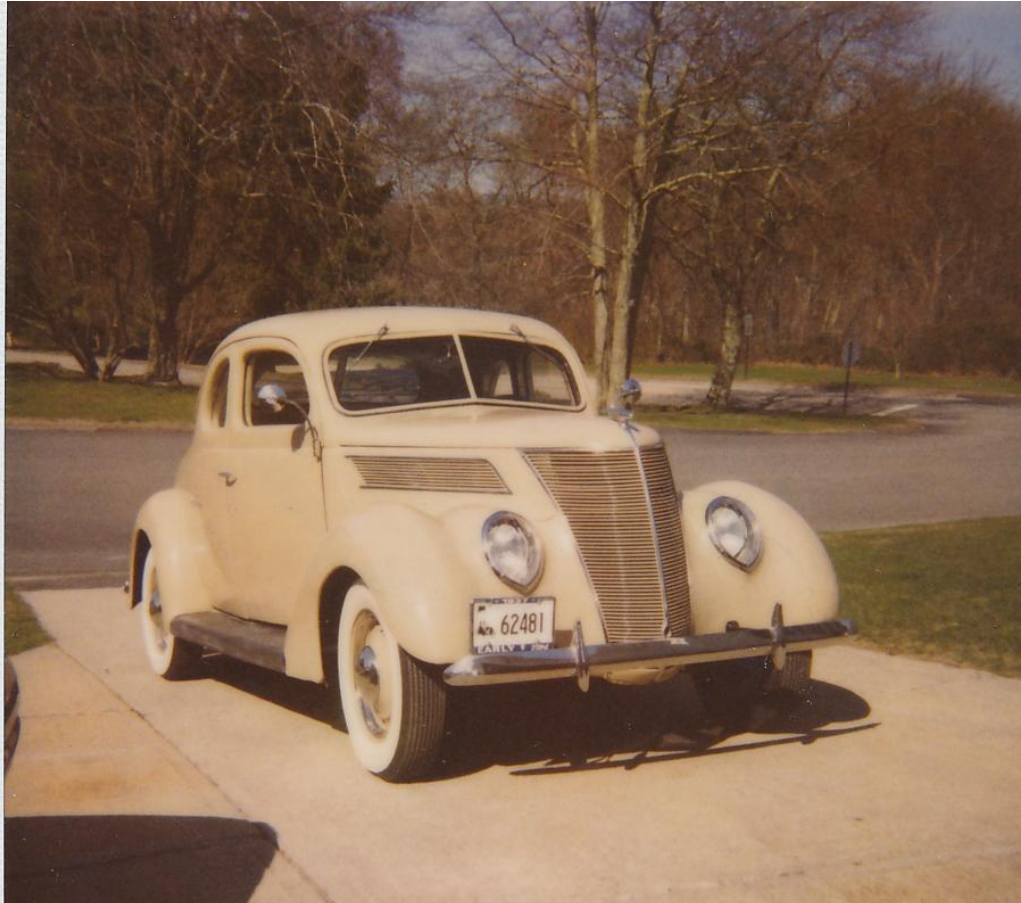
These cars and the Corvette have added to our fun-filled years of taking them to cars shows, cruises and other events.

I used to have a 1951 Dodge which I sold to Tom Link's friend many years ago when they came to this area from New York State. I mention this because I used to bring it to the car shows sponsored by the club during its founding year of 1966 and beyond. They used to have the event each summer at the carnival field on Langworthy Road in Dunn's Corners. The photos below show the 1979 MGB and the 1968 Impala.





## George and Barbara Coon: 1937 Ford Coupe



We acquired our car on October 22, 2004 in Saranac, New York. The car had been parked at the edge of the woods for over 20 years. The baffles in the frame were bent and broken. They were taken out and fixed. The engine was no good. It was exchanged for a 100 H.P. unit. The car has a five speed transmission and an eight inch rear end. We take it on trips as far away as Rhinebeck, New York and Vermont State. Barbara wrote a poem about the car:

### **The Antique Car**

A pair of antiques in an antique car  
Cruising along having fun so far.  
Hi there, hello there  
From the antique car  
You wish you were where we are  
just cruising along in the antique car.

Barbara also wrote a story about our car. It was posted on the club blog site. It is copied below:

“----- Lost in the woods at Saranac Lake, New York until George found me. Hoisted me up on a tow truck and took me to my new home in Connecticut.

Oh my - he stripped me down, overhauled me, oiled and greased my parts while putting me back together. I looked so darn good I received several trophies at the car shows.

I had fun flirting with other cars and owners. My master has given me lots of loving care. I might be old but my rings and bearings still work and all my joints are well greased. My surface is well dusted and polished to a brilliant shine.

Actually I'm in better shape than Barb and George! I might be old at the age of 81 but still traveling along the highways and byways.

Signed, Old '37”





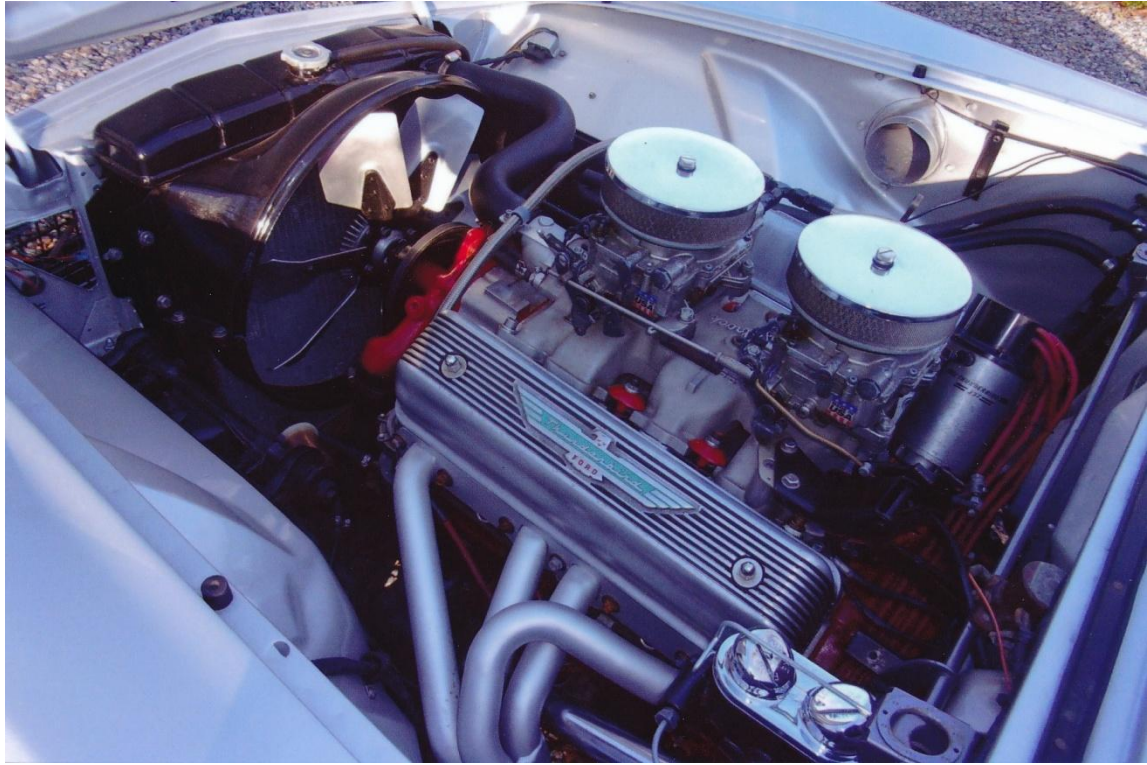
## Frank and Joyce Curtis: 1957 Ford Thunderbird



The car was purchased in 1964. At that time a used Thunderbird could be found anywhere. We went on our honeymoon in the car and climbed Mount Washington while touring several New England states.

The T-Bird was our daily driver until a growing family required a larger vehicle. Somehow we always found a way to keep the Thunderbird.

Today the car is in excellent condition. It has a new engine (436 HP Y-Block V8), transmission (5-speed overdrive), paint, chrome, and interior. We still enjoy our car as much as ever by going to shows and club events.





## Bob and Laura DeGoursey: 1937 Packard 115-C Coupe



The car was purchased in 2002 in New Britain, CT. The coupe received a complete off frame nut and bolt restoration. I installed Fatman front IFS, Currie 9" Ford read end, Chevy 350 Ramjet engine and TREMEC 5-speed transmission.

The vehicle was completely rewired and new dash gauges were installed. All the work was done at home with the exception of the front clip welding and final painting. It runs great. The only thing I should have done different is to make the exhaust quieter.



## Bob and Laura DeGoursey: 1966 Chevy Bel Air Wagon



The car was purchased in 2010 in Maine.

I converted the front brakes to power assisted discs. I also installed an electronic ignition. New springs and shocks in the rear sorted out the suspension.

The car is largely in original condition and it is fun to drive. I have driven it to many out-of-state car shows.

## Dennis DeGrave: 1929 Ford Model A Six-Wheel Roadster



This 1929 Model A Ford, Six-Wheel Roadster is an early production unit built at Ford's River Rouge facility in Michigan. As an early 1929 model it has many 1928 features. That was due to Ford's policy to use up left over parts from the previous production year. Such 1928 features on this car include: fluted headlight lenses, a manual windshield wiper blade, and a red steering wheel. The car was originally sold and driven in Pennsylvania for several decades.

The car later sold to a gentleman in the Pittsburg area who brought it to California where it spent approximately 25 years in the Los Angeles area. In 2013 this gentleman willed the car to his nephew in Cumberland, RI. The new owner transported the car to his RI home. I bought the car in late 2013. The car was in need of work and so I performed rear differential, electrical, engine, radiator, and complete brake work before presenting it to my 88-year old father-in-law as a birthday gift. He drove the car lovingly until his passing in 2018. The car is now driven by me and my son. I have promised the car to my granddaughter on her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. When she drives her car it will be over 100 years old and she will sit in the seat and hold the steering wheel as did three generations before her.



## Dennis DeGrave: 1940 Studebaker Champion



This 1940 Studebaker business coupe rolled off the assembly line in South Bend, Indiana on August 15, 1939. She was the 538<sup>th</sup> car built and the 112<sup>th</sup> Business Coupe completed for Studebaker's 1940 model year. This car was built with several options to include: a radio, rear bumper guards, 'Hill Holder' brake system, and the 'Climitizer' under seat heater/ventilation system. It was delivered to a Studebaker dealership in the upper Midwest where the dealer installed a dash clock, dual windshield wipers and a right-side taillight. The coupe spent approximately 40 years in the Minnesota area. Over the next two decades the car was purchased by two different couples in Pennsylvania. Both couples enjoyed it for cruising and car shows. In the 1990's the car was painted and a minor restoration was accomplished.

I purchased the coupe in 2015 and brought it to RI where extensive restoration was accomplished. Major work included: new steering components, front and rear suspension work, and all new brake components. Also done were the rebuild or replacement of electrical components, carburetor and engine work, and a complete electrical system rewire.

The car was entered into the 2016 International Studebaker Meet, prewar division. In a field of 9 cars it was awarded first place with a score of 386 points out of a possible 400. The car is driven locally and taken to various cruise nights and car shows in the area.



## Norman and Judy Lagerstrom: 1931 Ford Model A



We purchased a 1931 Model A pickup truck from Paul McKinnie in Weirs Beach, New Hampshire about 50 years ago. At first he didn't want to sell the truck to us. Being young at the time he thought we were going to make a hot rod out of his truck. After convincing him that we would eventually restore the truck we were able to purchase it.

We came prepared to bring it home with only a tow bar. We had no plates or insurance but we managed to tow her back to Rhode Island (Oh, the good old days).

In 1977 we moved from Pawtucket to Westerly. We loaded her up with a chair tied to the top on the rear. What a sight! We looked like the Clampetts from the Beverly Hillbillies coming to town. The neighbors didn't know what to make of us.

A few years ago we did a complete restoration and the truck is now our pride and joy.

## John Leite: 1957 Ford Fairlane Club Victoria



We all know the responsibility of classic car ownership but do not realize that we are actually preserving, for others in the future, the opportunity to enjoy the same classic we own.

I purchased my '57 one year ago on May 18, 2018. The car was manufactured in Long Beach, CA. It was purchased by a press reporter in Long Beach and used daily while gathering the news. The press reporter sticker is still on the windshield. The second owner who purchased the car from garage storage completed what we call a partial restoration. It drives and rides better than my everyday Mercedes. I hate those low profile tires on today's automobiles. They provide hard driving over bumps but they improve mileage. I made some small improvements on the car so as to give me confidence on short and overnight trips. The 1957 came with radio, heater, clock, and AC which I believe was installed later by a West coast dealer. All systems work, which is unusual with classics.

Ford, in later years, decided to put a metal identification plate on the driver side door jam. The data, verified by the AACA library, indicates the following:

Plate Text	Interpretation
C7LM100220	C-engine 292 cu – 8 cyl – 212 HP; 7-2 <sup>nd</sup> digit of model yr.; L-assembly point, Long Beach; M-body style; 100220-production no. (numbering started with 100001
63BVEK275-2766	63B-model – Fairlane Club Victoria; VE-Exterior color, V-Flame Red, E-Colonial White; K-trim (inside) – gray velour – white vinyl; 27J-production date-Sept 27 <sup>th</sup> ; 2766-production sequence

Please don't hesitate to ask me to show you this ID plate anytime you see me with the car. I hope to see you all on the road. I have a bucket list to see new places and events of interest before I get too old to drive.

Happy and safe motoring always!

John Leite and Murphy (my Dachshund)



## Tom Link: 1948 Plymouth Special Deluxe



I have owned this car for 25 years. It was purchased in Virginia in 1994. It was in very good condition and included a standard transmission with overdrive and dual exhausts. I have made improvements over the years.

The best trip I took with it was along the Lincoln Highway from Port Jervis, New York to the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum in Auburn, Indiana. We then continued north to Detroit and into east Canada through Toronto and on to Thousand Island, New York. We continued from there to the Syracuse Nationals and then back to Rhode Island. That was a 2,000 mile trip without a single hiccup. I bought the car with 48,00 miles on the odometer. It now reads 123,000 miles. I enjoyed every mile.

I also enjoy my annual trip to Rhinebeck. Driving this car is a blast to the good times of the past. A good car cruise, a good Plymouth, a good cigar; what could be better?

## Gerry Lynn: 1964 Buick Riviera



I acquired my car on eBay in the year 2000 (I don't recommend this method). The car was a daily driver (2/5). The only upgrade I performed was to replace the radio. In the past I actually replaced the seat upholstery on another car myself (and that did not work out well).

This car has a 340 cu. in., 320 H.P. engine (Buick called it the 465 Torque), power steering, brakes, windows, seats, and power vent windows. It also has a tilt steering wheel and A/C.

I'm not a big fan of full-sized Detroit cars out of the '60's; but, this one always jumped out at me. The low roof, vertical sides, and the zigzag-shaped overhanging front bumper are what attracted me to the Riviera. This was GM's first 'personal luxury car'. It was GM's answer to Ford's Thunderbird.



## Merrill Moone: 1941 Buick Special



I first saw my '41 Buick when its original owner opened the door of a detached one car garage behind his home on Ten Rod Road in North Kingstown. I was with a friend, Bob Lopez, and his father. The manager/bookkeeper at my father's dealership had learned the car was for sale and knew Bob liked old Buicks so he told Bob about it and we went to look at it. This was in May, 1963 when we were both juniors at East Greenwich High School. It was in near perfect condition and Bob's dad bought it for him for \$250.00.

It was bought new from Paul Bailey's Buick by Edward Chase, who was then chief of police in North Kingstown, for \$880.00. It had the compound carburetor set-up but no radio or clock. It rode on green 16" wheels but Mr. Chase wanted red 15" ones so they were switched by the dealer. Mr. Chase told us he used it to run down speeders, which I'm sure it was quite capable of doing. The car was always meticulously maintained. Neither of the twin ashtrays nor the lighter has ever been used.

Bob continued to keep the car in a pristine state but drove it real hard, as we 17 year olds did then. No cobwebs ever accumulated in the twin dual carbs. I remember some wild rides in that car.



Since the dual carb engine is quite showy Bob used to like riding around with the hood off. It opens from either side and by unlatching both sides two guys can easily take it off or put it back on. This bit of foolishness unwittingly resulted in the car's preservation.



One night Bob was headed north on Post Road in E.G. as another car was coming out of a side street on an angle with high beams on. Bob couldn't see and went to the right of it, striking a utility pole with the right front fender and snapping it off. No-one was hurt but the Buick was badly damaged. It was towed to Bob's parents' house and covered with canvas. Had the hood been on it probably would have been driven through the windshield, which would have probably caused human injury and made the car unrepairable.

Bob started working right after high school. Before too long he got a good job assembling gyroscopes for guided missiles. Bob was really good with his hands - still is. With an income he decided to get the '41 on the road again. He had it towed to Arnold Auto Body where they straightened out the frame and replaced some suspension parts and the right front fender. It was then repainted in the original colors. With the car back from the body shop Bob spent many months obtaining new parts, having chrome re-plated, and having the engine rebuilt. Bob was so good at his job that he was never criticized for bringing Buick parts into the factory and restoring them there! After all this the car received a first place trophy at the 1981 BCA Eastern Meet in Vernon, CT. There is an article about it in the June '83 Buick Bugle with its picture on the back cover.

In December of 1986 Bob told me he was going to sell the Buick. I had always liked the car so he drove it down to my house and I gave him a check. Since then it has spent most of its time sitting in the big garage which I built in 1982. It ran well when I got it. One year it brought up the rear of the WPRAACA tour to Bennington, VT, it being the fastest car, with John Drew's Model T leading the convoy. Nobody went modern. However, every year seemed to take its toll and it finally got to running so poorly that I had to clean the carburetors and replace the manifold gaskets. This helped a bit.

My best use of the car has been for a couple of weddings, one for a friend and one in 1999 for my daughter. After that it got to running worse and worse but over the last year or so I've redone the carbs and manifold so that I can now take it on tours, etc.

One day last fall Bob came down to my house and we took the old Buick out for a spin. I pulled over in front of the Shannock Village post office and took a picture of Bob standing next to it. I handed Bob the keys and he drove it back to my garage with me riding shotgun. Suddenly it was 1963 again!

## Kimberly Leite-Morris: 1964 Buick Skylark



The Buick Skylark was purchased in 1991 from my Dad John Leite. We have kept the Buick pretty much in its original condition with a few exceptions like changing the original tires.

One of the best memories was at the Buick Club of America National Meet in 1998. The engine was not very presentable at that time so it was suggested to detail the engine...yes with cotton swabs. Surprisingly, we received a bronze award in our class. There is a picture of the baby blue Skylark in the Buick Bugle of October, 1998.



## Charlie Nash: 1932 Chevrolet Confederate Deluxe Sedan



I have owned this car for 4 years. The Chevrolet features dual side mounts, synchromesh transmission, and free-wheeling.

Having always wanted an early '30's car, I saw this automobile in Hemmings and couldn't resist. Unfortunately it was in the state of Washington and thus not practical to inspect. However, after speaking with the owner it turns out his family and the car was originally from New York and that I used to work with his brother in the Department of Environmental Conservation! Having therefore established trust with the seller and his description of the car's condition, I had it transported to me here in Connecticut.

Three year later I'm still enthralled with this car. It was an older restoration from the early '80's but after refreshing its many systems and an engine rebuild, she's a great dependable driver. I still carry my AAA card though.



## Michele Nash: 1951 Buick Super Riviera 4Dr Sedan Model 52



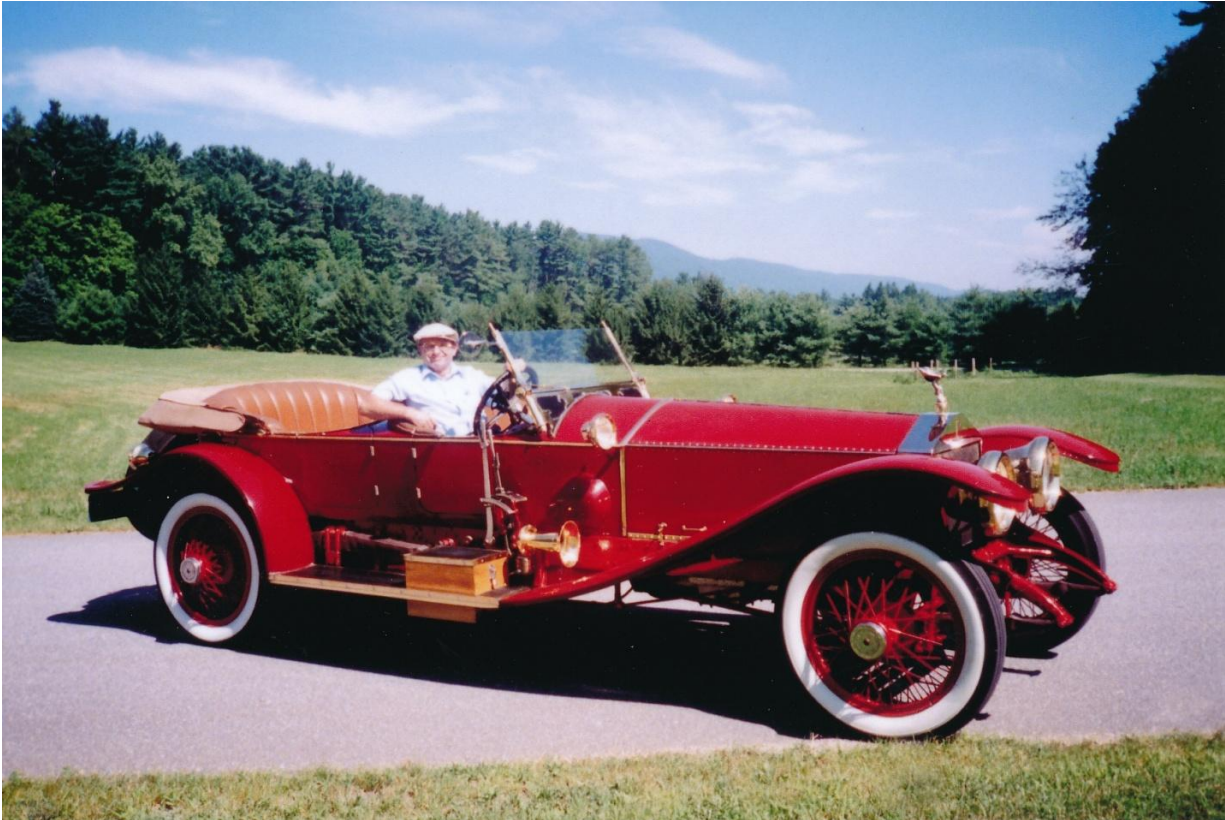
The design of early 1950's cars seem to encapsulate, better than any other time period, the very sentiment of the time of their manufacture. Post war, the designers seemed to want to capture the joyful spirit of looking ahead and happier times.

To me, my 1951 Buick Super reflects this. I cannot look at her without smiling. Her powder blue color, sweeping rounded styling along with her bumper guard chrome grille makes her seem the epitome of a big smiling face :-). Who cannot appreciate the artistic license taken by the designers- in what seems to be a nod to the war(s) finally and joyfully in the past- when they placed a bombsight mascot on the hood, 3 ventiports on each fender, and turn signals inside bumper guard 'bombs.'

Luckily (and thankfully) my husband Charlie has been able to bring the ol' girl "up to speed" (literally and figuratively) and has worked tirelessly for the last 6 months to make her a safe and, we hope, reliable driver for the summer.

**See ya' on the road.....**

# John and Kim Parker: 1921 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost



We have owned our car for 49 years. It was acquired as an incomplete chassis in 1970.

The car needed a complete rebuilding. John built the touring body in the 1978-1980 period.

We have driven the car 189,000 miles since the completion of its restoration.





## Ed and Sue Pasch: 1967 Camaro SS with Turbo 350 Automatic



We have owned our car for 30 years.

In 1989 a running 1972 El Camino was traded for a 1967 Camaro with no engine, no transmission, rusted out trunk, rusted rear quarter panels and front fenders. The interior was a complete mess, with ripped seats, rusted dashboard and no carpeting or headliner. Ed put in a lot of time and effort acquiring and rebuilding an engine and transmission to get the car running. In 1990, after acquiring necessary body parts, the Camaro was taken to Ella T. Grasso Technical School in Groton, CT, where the senior class did all the body work and brought the car back to like new condition. Then off to the paint shop and then a new interior. In 2017 after 27 years of taking the Camaro to car shows, fun runs and just the joy of driving around New England, it was time for a little TLC to fix up a few nicks and dings and a fresh coat of paint. We are looking forward to many more years of fun.

## David and Stefania Peterson: 1940 Ford 2-Door Deluxe Sedan



We have owned our 1940 Ford for 15 years.

It has a modified flathead engine and the transmission is manual, also called a 'three on the tree'.

It also has an open driveshaft in place of the original torque tube. The rear end is from a Mustang and it has dual leaf suspension.

# Roger Read: 1958 Bliss Surrey replica of 1903 Oldsmobile



**Car Make, Model and Year:** Bliss Surrey 1958; replica of 1903 Oldsmobile  
**Years Owned:** purchased March 8, 2019

### **Special Features:**

Body previously restored, Cushman engine removed and found to be frozen. Rebuilt with new rings and reinstalled in body. The car is currently operational with seat back and brass lights remaining to be refurbished.

Pictured when driven locally on Memorial Day 2019 with grandson Luke Petersen.

The Surrey was an American automobile brand, the 1958-1960 product of the EW Bliss Company for Dyer Products in Canton Ohio. It is a replica of the Oldsmobile Curved Dash of 1903. The two-seater Surrey existed in standard and deluxe versions. The length is 8 feet, the width is 5 feet 3 inches, and it has a wheelbase of 68 inches. This one is the Deluxe model and it has a single-cylinder Cushman cast iron 19.4 cin engine, yielding 8 bhp at 3800 rpm. The drive is two forward and one reverse gear. Tires are 26x1.75 bike tires on wood spoke wheels. Steering is by tiller and mechanical braking is on the rear wheels only.



# Roger Read: 1929 Ford, Fordor Leatherback



**Car Make, Model and Year:** Ford, Fordor Leatherback; 1929

**Years Owned:** purchased in 2009

### **Special Features:**

This Fordor Leather Back-Briggs, Black Top, 60B has a travel trunk compartment mounted over the rear bumper for tools and picnic table and setup. The refurbished paint is failing due to improper base coat application.

Colors are: Upper & Lower Body, Andalusite Blue; Belt, Qtr & Sill Molding & Upper Back, Black; Reveals, Andalusite Blue; Stripe, French Gray.

The car is owned by me and my Son in law, who is over six feet in height. Therefore, we have had to remove the padding from the back of the front seat in order to be able to sit and drive the car.

## Tom and Ellen Regan: 200 Chevy Camaro Z28



Although we share this car it is really Ellen's. For most of her life Ellen had never ridden in a convertible. She had no idea what the experience was like. Then one day she had an opportunity to ride in a friend's convertible and that opened a whole new automotive window for her. She loved the car. I began looking for a really nice convertible that we would both like. The 2000 Chevrolet Camaro Z28 that I discovered was owned by a young couple who had a growing family and the Camaro was not a good fit for small children. They were asking a very reasonable price that I was more than willing to pay.

The Camaro Z28 has the Corvette LS1 V8 engine which puts out over 300 HP and accelerates like a bullet. I had very little to do to get the car to like new condition. The top needed replacing and so did the rug due to a leak that had got some mold and surface rust started in the carpet area. The top and back window was professionally replaced with new components that look great. The carpet was removed, cleaned, and dried and then put back in. It looks like new now and all the mold and rust are gone.

The Camaro has the automatic transmission, an option for 2000. If I had ordered the car new for myself I would have gone with the 6-speed manual. But this car was meant for Ellen and an automatic is just what she needed. The paint looks very good with just minor dings (hail damage) and a bit of age. I will be getting a repaint soon.



## Ralph and Anne Roark: 1961 Jeep CJ5



When we bought it the Jeep was in pieces as a teenager wanted to customize it. We used my father and mother's inheritance money, Christmas and birthday money to buy parts and rebuild the jeep.

It was purchased to drive in the North Stonington Memorial Day Parade, show at the North Stonington Fair and to get ice cream.

It was a complete frame off restoration and took 12 years. Our favorite activity with this car is driving it in the Memorial Day Parade.



**Some pictures of the Body when Purchased**



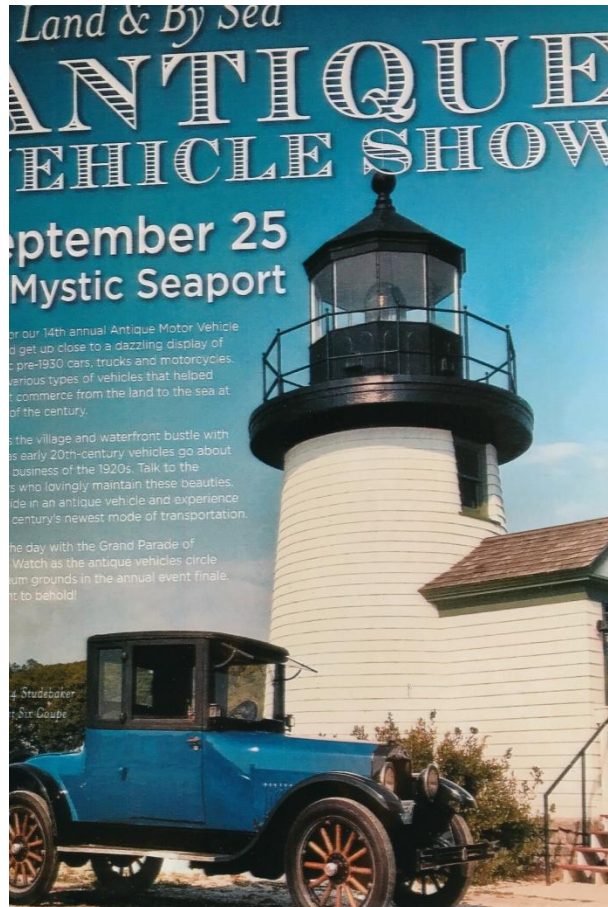
**Some pictures After the Body was sand blasted, welded, and primed**



**And then painted**



# Vickie VanHorn: 1924 Studebaker Coupe



My husband Jack was employed as a maintenance foreman at a large mill. His employer and very close friend purchased our 1924 Studebaker from a friend in Groton Long Point, CT in 1981. This friend had acquired the car from an uncle who lived in Indiana, who was the original owner. So, the car had not been driven much previous to our acquiring it.

So Jack was on the payroll when he was restoring the Studebaker for his boss/friend in 1987. Jack took the car off of its frame and repaired and painted it. The engine was also stripped and painted. As a bonus, in late 1992 Jack was given the Studebaker. I feel blessed to be able to keep the Studebaker on the road with help from my brother Butch and my friend Dennis. The paint is showing signs of needing to be redone after 37 years. And I have leather to replace the door panels and seat covers. But, for a 95 year old car I'm lucky to be able to keep it on the road. Finding parts is a challenge but with help I've been able to keep it running. I am trying to keep it original. Jack and I were able to drive the Studebaker to Mystic Seaport for their first By Land and Sea day in 1997 in which cars prior to 1929 were able to spend the day on the Seaport



grounds. We were able to enjoy this special day every year until 2010 when our special Studebaker was a poster car for the Seaport.

Then Jack got lung cancer and so I didn't take the car out for a couple of years. With encouragement from family and friends I have been able to bring the Studebaker out of storage. I have always enjoyed riding and driving Our 1924 Studebaker because it has no radio and you get to just enjoy the slow ride on a nice day.





## Jim Varas: 1950 Mercury, 1949 Ford, and 1931 Model A Roadster



All of my cars were already restored when I bought them. They may have required a little detailing at the time of their acquisition. The 1950 Mercury is a good example of that.

The Mercury was in need of new upholstery when we took ownership of it. We arranged to have the upholstery completely replaced the first year that we had the car. The workmanship was terrific and we had essentially a new interior.



Unfortunately moths invaded the car during our second year of ownership. We attempted to have the interior repaired but the new dye lots did not match what we had at all. We decided to keep it as is rather than make any changes.

The Mercury is pictured above and the 1949 Ford is seen to the left. These and the Model A are dependable cars that we frequently drive near and far.



## George and Silvia Wingblade: 1983 Porsche 911



My good friend was a fine judge of automobiles. He owned a 1983 Porsche 911SC Cabriolet. I admired the car and let it be known that if it ever came up for sale I wanted to be first in line to buy it. Many years later the owner was ready for a change and I was able to finalize the deal for the especially nice deep blue Cabriolet. That was about 15 years ago and the 911 is still going strong. Although I understand the workings of this car well I prefer to let an expert tend to any required maintenance and repairs. It happens that I know a mechanic who apprenticed at the Porsche factory in Stuttgart. That mechanic even makes house calls and does almost all the work right in my garage.

The Porsche is a dream to drive and it provides plenty of relaxation. It has a 6 cylinder horizontally-opposed air-cooled engine. The rear engine bay is clean and roomy. I have removed the factory AC. This provided a little more elbow room under the hood and created a noticeable increase in horsepower. Although the transmission has five forward speeds I rarely ever shift beyond third. The engine requires that you be travelling well in excess of 80 mph before shifting to high gear. Although I have not exceeded 80, I am fully confident the car will easily reach 140 mph. For everyday driving there are even two small jump seats in the rear, just the right size for our grandchildren.