

Vol. 29, No. 2

Ragtops & Rumbleseats

Feb 2022



• A Jalopy Memory in our Archive

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1966

**On Staten Island,
1967's going to be an In year
at your Quality Buick dealer's.**



ROBBINS REEF BUICK OPEL Inc.

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IN
BUICK
'67

See the Buick and Opel October 8th & 9th

AT THE GRANT PLAZA AUTO SHOW

Hylan Boulevard, Staten Island

Vintage Advertising

1967 Buicks (and Opels) were being previewed on Staten Island in October of 1966 courtesy of Robbins Reef Buick, as noted in this local ad from the Advance. The location was "The Grant Plaza Auto Show" on Hylan Boulevard. If we recall correctly, Grant Plaza was relatively new then, home to W.T Grant department store. That eventually became Hylan Plaza and is now re-developed as The Boulevard.

We tried to get our Time Machine dialed in to Grant Plaza for that date, but had no luck. Instead, we traveled back to Robbins Reef Buick for a few looks across time, which you can see on the back page of this issue.

In This Issue

SIRAACA donates toys for the holidays

Meeting places through the years

2022 show dates are confirmed

What kind of jalopy has four legs and five wheels? Check the SIRAACA Archive for more

The SIRAACA Time Machine follows the lighthouse to Robbins Reef Buick

Trivia Question: The German automaker Opel, owned by GM from 1921 through 2017 and now owned by Stellantis, manufactures what English sister marque auto?

Answer: Vauxhall. Like most other pioneering automakers that began making something else, Vauxhall was founded in 1857 as a pump and marine engine builder.

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Minutes of the 552nd Meeting

November 2, 2021

1. The 552nd meeting of The Staten Island Region AACA was called to order at 7:30 on November 2 at Pro Sho Sound. After reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and offering a moment of silence, the minutes of the 551st meeting were accepted as read.

2. Members recapped and provided feedback on our judging efforts at the giant car show in Linden. It was very disorganized and not an easy day to manage, and Kevin Keenan let the organizers know what needs to change in order for us to continue helping them. All of these factors will also come into play if we decide to help the organizers of Hot Rods & Harleys, who visited us before the meeting to inquire about our help.

3. Many members made their way to Hershey for one or more days, spending time walking the car corral, shopping the flea market, or attending the show on Saturday. The size of the event was noticeably smaller than what's normal, but we are not in normal times.

4. The New Dorp Lane Show was held and seemed to run fairly smoothly despite the uncertainty leading up to the event. Several members were on hand displaying their cars, and all cars on hand received a participation award.

5. Our Holiday Party is scheduled for Sunday, December 12, from 2-6 at The RoadHouse. It's open to all members who participated in and helped at our events this year, along with their spouses. Please remember that we donate toys that day to the Richard Gardner Memorial Toy Drive, so we ask all to bring a new, unwrapped toy to the party.

6. Phil Boffa gave an updated treasury report, showing all in order.

7. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45. The 50/50 collected \$35. Bruce Campbell won \$18. Paul Arena was the winner of the \$25 Thanksgiving Gift Card.

Respectfully submitted (3rd reprint),
Tony DiAngelo, Secretary



Help for the Holidays

Once again, our club and its members donated toys to the Richard Gardner Memorial Toy Drive ahead of the holidays, in an effort to help sick and under-privileged children in our area. Toys were brought to our annual holiday party, where the family of Richard Gardner met us to collect them. 2021 marked their 27th year in visiting hospitals, day care centers, housing facilities, and children of those in our Armed Forces. To learn more about the charity and their mission, visit them online at rgtoydrive.org.

A Meeting Place History

The Staten Island Region has held more than 550 monthly meetings, starting with the very first one at Skipper's Rest in Great Kills harbor in late 1974. Since then, a good number of places played host to our club. By September of 1975, we moved to Demyan's Hofbrau on Van Duzer St. In June of 1978 we relocated to the Lancaster Lounge on No. Railroad near Midland Ave, Next up was Valentine's Restaurant on Richmond Road for November, 1980, followed by a single meeting in January 1982 at Northfield Bank on Victory Boulevard. The 85th meeting moved to The King's Inn on McLean Avenue in February, 1982. We stayed there through their name change to Evergreen, then moved to The Inn by the Wayside in August of 1984. Next up was Lee's Tavern starting in February, 1988, Armani's starting in April, 1992, and The Manor House in November 1994. From there, we went to Scott's Armory Inn in August of 1998, the Carriage House at Fort Wadsworth in February, 1999, and Ralph's Pizza on Post Avenue in August, 1999. On May 10, 2000 meetings were moved to an unnamed spot at 14 Bush Avenue in Mariners Harbor. Since then we've also met at IHOP, The Manor House again, the Staff House at Seaview, the Courthouse in Richmondtown and now at the ProShow warehouse. While we consider what the future meeting place might be, we are welcomed guests at ProSho, and are looking at ways to present media there to enhance our monthly gatherings.

Save the Date

We have confirmed all of our show dates for 2022. The Spring Dust-Off will be held on April 24, with a rain date of May 1. The fall show will be held on September 18, with a rain date of September 25. In advance of our new flyer for the Dust-Off going out, this graphic was posted online to let our followers know that we're less than three months away from getting together again.



Raffle Revision?

There is a strong consideration to change our raffle ticket equation for this year. Recent tradition was to offer a book of eight tickets for \$5.00, which was derived from the original idea of a single ticket costing \$1.00, giving three "free" for the extra money. We then scrapped the single ticket option, so the minimum entry to play now is \$5.00. We also know that filling out 8 tickets per book and more when buying extra books, is a burden. Considering that the odds of winning are typically no worse than 1 in 3,000 (that's how many books we order each year), we want to now offer one ticket for \$5.00, or five for \$20.00 (one free if you buy four). The odds don't change much, it remains a \$5.00 minimum to play, and we might drive more to drop \$20.00. Many at the last meeting agree. Feedback welcome.

From the President

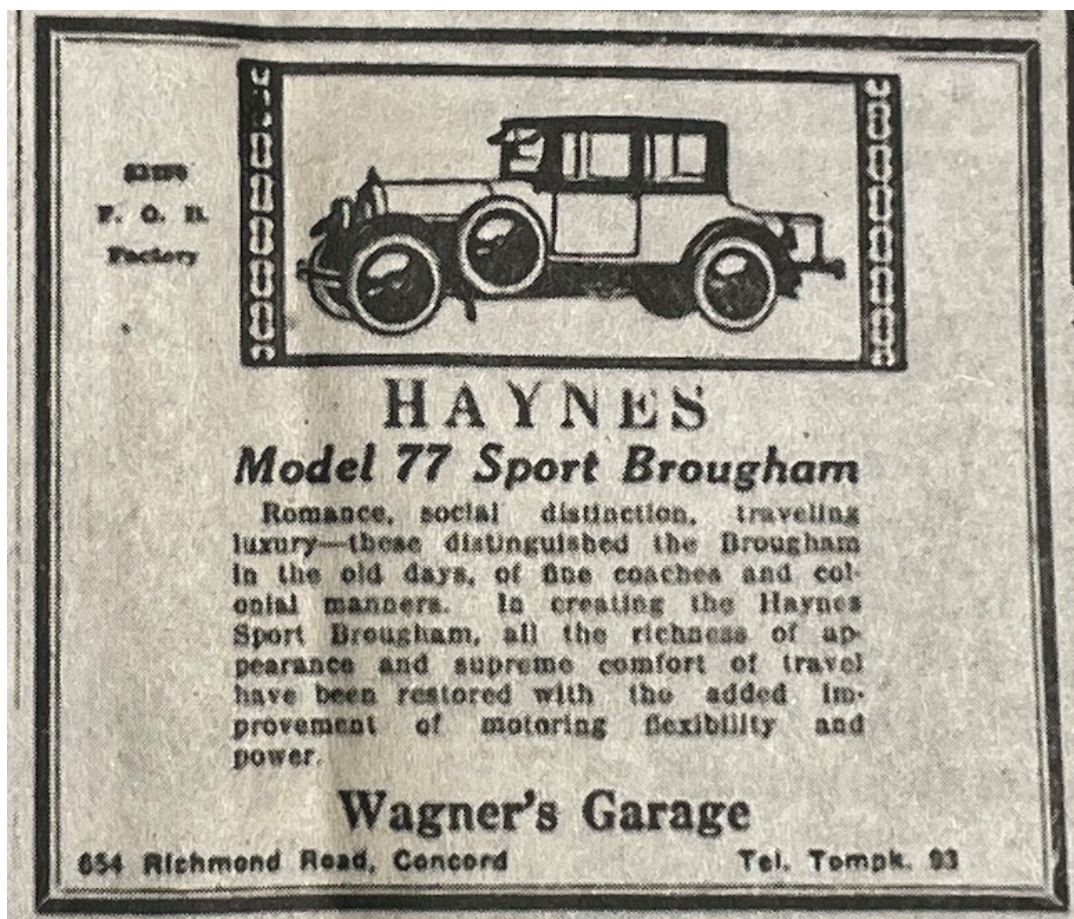
I had the opportunity to recently dig through a large collection of paperwork about our Region, dating back to its founding in 1974. Among other things I found was a running list of members who have come and (mostly) gone. I noted the ones who are still members today, some for quite a long time. The longest active membership belongs to Paul Arena, who joined in September, 1976. Next up is Kevin Keenan (July '81), Phil Boffa (October '81), and Tony DiAngelo (July, '82). Yours truly is next (January, '90) followed by Andrew Napoli (January '92) and Mike Signorile (July '93). Many thanks to all of them for their dedication and friendship for 30 years and more. I'll share more about our club's history at meetings and in our newsletter as we continue charting our course forward, hopefully ensuring newer members also get to celebrate major milestones in the years to come. In the meantime, we are less than three months away from our Spring Dust-Off, with planning underway to ensure we host another successful event. The raffle car hunt has been turned up a notch as well. Keep sending us leads on suitable candidates for this year's car. -Paul Jr.

- NEXT MEETING - February 1

Our February meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 1 at 6:30 PM, to be held at Pro Sho Sound's warehouse at 4401 Arthur Kill Road. Thank you to Frank Provenzano and son Frank Jr. for providing the space. Food will be served.

New Album on Our Facebook Page

Hopefully all of our members who are Facebook users are following our club page. A new photo album was recently started there that expands upon our SIRAACA Time Machine newsletter column. The album, titled "Staten Island's Automotive History", allows us the space to include more vintage photos and advertisements like those featured in our newsletter each month. Each image is accompanied by a written description that forms a narrative thread across the related photos. To date, it covers Schick's Garage, Wagner's Garage, Richmond Garage, Furlong's Automotive Service, and a timeline of Nash Four Corners - Kieran & Wickert - Richmond Rambler.



One of the added items in our Facebook album is this 1923 ad from the Advance for a Haynes auto available at Wagner's Garage (before Chrysler was founded in 1925).



From the SIRAACA Archive

When Jalopy the Tortoise made her final return to the Staten Island Zoo in September 1983, she did so in non-jalopy fashion. She rode along in Dominic Coppotelli's 1933 Chevy produce truck, behind Paul Arena's 1928 Ford Model A. Joining Paul was Boro President Anthony Gaeta and Chase Manhattan Bank officer Joseph Vincent.

Known for being strapped to a five-wheel dolly in her later years, she had just finished radiation therapy in Arizona for a recurring tumor, and spent the last few months of her life at the zoo before passing away that December.

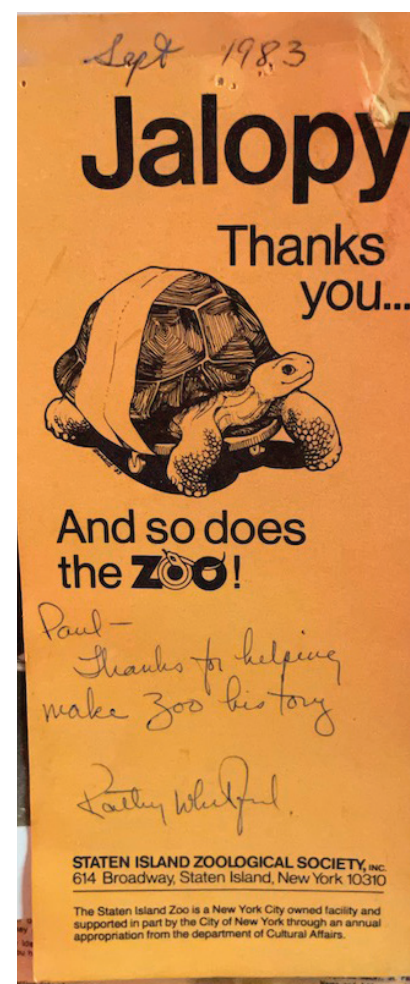
We believe that Cappotelli was of the same restaurant family known on Staten Island for places like Tavern on the Green. Who knows what became of that truck?

Paul's Model A featured a body by Briggs, in a style known as a blind-back. There were no rear quarter windows, and the top material covered the entire roof and back down to the belt line.

The SIRAACA Archive is a treasure trove of old photos, articles and artifacts that represent our club's history dating back to our founding in 1974. These are not centrally collected, but in the hands of the many members past and present. If you have something from the past that you'd like to share here, let us know.



Boro President Anthony Gaeta rides shotgun in Paul Arena's 1928 Model A to lead a procession welcoming Jalopy the Tortoise back to the SI Zoo. Media coverage included an article in *Old Cars Weekly*. Paul still has Jalopy's thank you note. (Photos courtesy of Paul Arena)





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The SIRAACA Time Machine

Many of you will recall that lighthouse at the corner of Bay & Hannah, the focal point of what was the used car lot of Buick dealer Robbins Reef. Here are two looks at the site, from across Bay Street circa 1940 (top) and from alongside Hannah Street in 1953. A calculation from the 1972 phone book ad below gives us a business start date of 1937.



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 USED CARS: 45 Hannah (Cor Bay St)
 SERVICE DEPT: 11 Victory Blvd.



(pics courtesy of NYC Dept. of Records and S.I. Historical Society.)

We recall the lighthouse outliving Robbins Reef, but it too has not withstood the test of time. That corner has been completely redeveloped, lowered to street level, and is now home to a BP gas station. The 1940 Buick with side-mounts and whitewalls to the right of the lighthouse door in the top photo is fairly new in this pic-



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