

Vol. 30, No. 2

Ragtops & Rumbleseats

Feb 2023




• **2023 SIRAACA Show Dates**

Your very own Love Bug.

At a special, low \$2499*, it's a sweetheart of a deal.



Now you can own your very own
Love Bug, from Volkswagen.
The Love Bug comes in two romantic
colors. Red hot red. And luscious lime green.
It has lovely racing type wheels.
And cute black trim.
But at only \$2499*, we can't afford
to be too generous.

 So if you want one, you'd better
hurry. A love like this won't
last forever.

The Love Bug
Limited Edition

© Volkswagen of America, 1974. *Love Bug East Coast F.O.E., Suggested Retail Price (West Coast Slightly Higher). Local Taxes and Any Other Dealer Charges, if Any, Additional.

Vintage Advertising

Valentine's Day, 1974. What do you buy your loved one? Volkswagen hoped you picked up one of their limited edition Love Bugs. In reality, the model was conceived to promote sales during a VW slump in the United States. To distinguish these models, chrome parts were painted black and they rode on Lemmerz GT sport wheels. Two colors were advertised, called "red hot red" and "luscious lime green". These were officially Karmann colors Phoenix Red and Ravenna Green ("Phoenixrot" and "Ravennagrün" for you Germanophiles).

Ten Love Bugs were supplied to each dealership in the US. The \$2499 price tag was \$150 less than a standard Beetle, and \$50 cheaper than a Chevy Vega or Ford Pinto.

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A Model T arrives on Staten Island

Another bird in the SIRAACA Garage

The SIRAACA Time Machine connects the Cornells to Cadillac

Did you know? Herbie the Love Bug wore number 53 in tribute to baseball player Don Drysdale.

Trivia Question: Wilhelm Karmann GmbH in Germany, well-known for building the VW Karmann Ghia and other VW convertibles, also built what Ford 3-door hatchback in the 1980's?

Sierra, from 1985-89.

Answer: Karmann hand-built the Merkur XR4Ti, a U.S. version of the European Ford

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SIRAACA Who's Who

EDITOR -

Paul Arena, Jr.

parena2@verizon.net

PRESIDENT -

Paul Arena, Jr.

parena2@verizon.net

VICE PRESIDENT -

Artie Guarnieri

artie.guarnieri@verizon.net

SECRETARY -

Tony DiAngelo - badbird70@aol

TREASURER -

Phil Boffa - phil.boffa@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY - (currently unfilled)

who@where.com

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS -

Rocco Pompa

WEBMASTER - siraaca@yahoo.com

Frank Nathanson

www.siraaca.aaca.com



Minutes of the 563rd Meeting to Follow in March 2023

1. The 562nd meeting was the last official monthly meeting, held in November, 2022. The minutes from that meeting have been published more than once. The 563rd meeting will be held on February 7, 2023. Minutes of that meeting will follow in the March newsletter.

2. Until then, enjoy these old photos from Staten Island's past, and try to identify the vehicles in them. Answers found under the SIRAACA Garage feature.

Respectfully submitted,
Tony DiAngelo, Secretary



Corner of Canal and Bay Streets, 1938. Bus is a circa 1934 ACF, which is short for American Car and Foundry. (courtesy of Classic Staten Island)



Garage on Arthur Kill Road near Richmond Town, taken in 1941. Brand new car knocks the old one out of the garage. (courtesy NYC Municipal Archives)

Dates Confirmed For 2023 Shows

We've gotten our show dates confirmed this year. The Spring Dust-Off will be on Sunday, April 23, with a rain date the following Sunday on April 30. The Fall Show will be on Sunday, September 17, with a rain date the following Sunday, September 24. This reminder was posted to our Facebook page last week, and we'll have flyers made up in short order.



Local Dues Collection

Members are reminded to bring \$20 for their local dues, which will be collected at the February meeting. Hopefully, all of you have already renewed your National membership.



'26 Model T Coming Our Way?

Our club was recently contacted by Ray Ocello, a Staten Islander who had just bought his first antique car. It's a 1926 Ford Model T Fordor Sedan. Not having any experience with the process of registering such a car, let alone any skill in driving one, he sought our help. Fortunately, we have more than one Model T guy to do so, and we connected him with Don Bosco and Tony Ventrice. Don got him set up, and has also given him a few driving lessons. Hopefully, he's catching on and we'll have him join our club, where he can "park " his T in the SIRAACA Garage.



(photo by Don Bosco)

South Jersey AACA Swap Meet

For those of us that are looking for an early spring event, the SJRAACA is holding their 51st Annual Swap Meet & Car Corral on Sunday, March 26 at the Salem County Fairgrounds, 735 Harding Highway (Near Exit 2 on the NJ Turnpike). Even though it is limited to automotive items only, they had over 350 vendors last year. It runs from 8am-3pm, and is held rain or shine. More information is available by calling Chuck Gibson on 609-221-5435 or writing him an email via gibsonorgntnr@aol.com.

From the President

We have been fortunate that Old Man Winter has so far been kind to us, and our local prognosticator Staten Island Chuck predicts an early Spring. Hopefully, our groundhog is right and Old Man Winter continues to enjoy his long nap. In the meantime, we prepare for Spring and our 16th Annual Dust-Off. This year's show will be on April 23. Our first order of business is finding this year's raffle car. Our search has been ongoing for the last two months or so, with plenty of candidates being surfaced online by our members. In a good number of instances, the ads (particularly on Facebook Marketplace) are bogus. We're not sure if they are true scams, but I'd caution anyone shopping there to be diligent. Several members have gone out to look at cars, and most were overpriced or in poor condition. The right car is still out there, so keep those leads coming. While we like convertibles, t-top cars and certain coupes are just as appealing. Foreign cars could work too, so look beyond Camaro and Mustang.

Let's hope the snow shovels stay in the shed, the snow blowers stay idle, and we're out with our cars soon again. - Paul Jr.

- NEXT MEETING - February 7

Our February meeting takes place on Tuesday, February 7th at new location **Nucci's Restaurant** at 4842 Arthur Kill Road (near the foot of the Outerbridge). The club will buy pizza and soda, and members have the option of buying their own food separately.

Raffle Car Hunt Continues

Many of you know Chris Haynes, who runs the New Dorp High School Show each year. He alerted Artie Guarnieri of a 1975 Corvette that's come up for sale following the passing of its owner. Artie and Rocky took a ride over to see if it would make a good raffle car. Unfortunately, it needs a good amount of work to get it into raffle shape, considering the asking price of \$7,000. It had traces of black flames on the hood, definitely needs a new battery and perhaps a replacement seal on the rear window. We'll think it over. In the meantime, Artie tried a little American Pickers action but came up empty. She is selling a rolling toolbox filled with tools.



(photo by Artie Guarnieri)



Inside the SIRAACA Garage

The SIRAACA Garage could be mistaken for an aviary these days, considering the number of birds that are roosting inside. Add to that flock the latest one to land there. This is Bob Columbia's 1966 Ford Thunderbird (by my count, the fourth active T-Bird in our Garage, not to mention a lone Firebird in there).

The '66 T-Birds were the last of the fourth generation cars that debuted in 1964. For '66, a whole new front was featured. This included a flatter hood, new egg crate style grille with a wide Thunderbird emblem and a single bumper. A new taillight design stretched the entire width of the rear. Under that new hood was the standard 390 V-8. A 428 V-8 was optional, good for a 345 hp rating.

Early builds of the '66 had the carried-over Cruise-O-Matic MX transmission. Later builds and all 428's have the newer C6 3 speed auto.

Ford sold more than 69,000 T-Birds for 1966. Bob's is one of 13,389 hardtop coupes. It's painted in the well-known Wimbledon White, one of 25 colors available on Thunderbird that year.

The SIRAACA Garage is home to all of our members' cars, past and present. Has your car been featured yet? Make sure you get the details to Paul Jr. if you want to share your car with us all.



"America's Personal Luxury Car" was offered in four body styles in 1966. Along with a convertible, there were three others. Bob's T-Bird is a conventional Hardtop, which had a painted roof and rear quarter window. There were also Town Hardtops and Town Landaus. The Town Hardtop also had a painted roof, but blind quarters, which can be seen in the 1966 Thunderbird brochure page below. The Town Landau added a vinyl roof and landau bars on the blind quarter. The Town Landau was the best seller that year. (photo by Bob Columbia).



Mystery Car Answers

Top photo shows a 1935 Oldsmobile. Bottom photo is a 1941 Plymouth in the garage, with a Model A Ford relegated to the elements.



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The SIRAACA Time Machine

We've hurred our Time Machine back to 1911 or so to see noted Staten Island photographer Alice Austen about to capture on film the Cornell boys playing around on this new 1911 Cadillac. There is a very strong chance that the boys are of the same family that founded the Cornell Motor Car Co., selling Cadillacs from 438 (Port) Richmond Avenue (see December 2020 newsletter -Ed.). After lingering with Alice and the boys, we went further back to around 1900 and visited the W.W. Cornell bicycle shop at 113 Richmond Terrace. The 1912 Staten Island directory is where we see the apparent change in Cornell's business from bikes to cars. That edition has a listing for Cornell Motor Car Co. at 438 (Port) Richmond Avenue. Today, the dealership address is a Clean Rite laundromat, while the Terrace address falls where the St. George Ferry parking lots now stand. A 1940 listing for Mrs. W.W. Cornell is at 186 Maine Avenue at the corner of Virginia Place, near Westerleigh Park. Coincidentally, Alice Austen's mother's name was Alice Cornell Austen, but there doesn't appear to be a relationship with this Cornell family.



(photos from SI Historical Society).



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