

Vol. 30, No. 4

Ragtops &

Rumbleseats

Apr 2023



• Spring Dust-Off is April 23

Vintage Advertising

We doubt the mid-sixties sports car crowd bought into this 1966 Cadillac ad touting its sportiness in cornering or steering. Cadillac's smooth, luxurious ride was clearly favored by a different buyer. Yet 1966 was Caddy's best sales and production year to date totaling 196,675 cars. Maybe it worked?

Cadillac offered 12 models across three series in 1966: Calais, DeVille and Fleetwood. Fleetwood included the sub-series Eldorado, Sixty Special and Seventy-Five. The best seller was the DeVille four door hardtop, with a factory price of \$5,581. Only 2,250 Eldorados, all convertibles, were built, costing \$6,631.

We like the use of an antique car in an ad that is now also for an antique car, even if we can't positively identify what it is.

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THEY DON'T BUILD SPORTS CARS LIKE THEY USED TO. As soon as you find an opportunity, drive a 1966 Cadillac! You'll learn that Cadillac's superbly balanced suspension corners better than many a diminutive two-seater. And you'll marvel at how quickly, smoothly and easily Cadillac's considerable size is handled by its exclusive variable ratio power steering. Don't let its reputation for quiet luxury lead you to believe a Cadillac isn't exciting to drive. Sports cars, you'll find, have come a long, long way!

Standard of the World  Cadillac

Cadillac Motor Car Division • General Motors Corporation



Did you know? In 1966, a collection of Firemist paint colors that included Cobalt Blue, Crystal, Tropic Green, Florentine Gold and Ember were standard on Eldorado yet optional on other models at extra cost.

Trivia Question: Chrysler stopped offering convertibles following the 1970 model year, and didn't reintroduce one until 1982. Name the last two from '70 and first from '82."

Answer: 1970 convertibles from Chrysler were the "300" or the Newport. 1982 saw the LeBaron convertible join the K-Car ranks.

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Minutes of the 564th Meeting

March 7, 2023

1. The 564th meeting of the Staten Island Region AACA was called to order at 7:20 on March 7 at Nucci's. After reciting the Pledge of allegiance and offering a moment of silence, there were no previous month's minutes to read.
2. We have a raffle car. We will give away a 2002 Pontiac Firebird at this year's fall show. Tickets remain \$5.00 each, or five for \$20. All members are asked to sell at least \$60 worth, and raffle tickets were distributed to all in attendance. The raffle car was advertised on Facebook, and the team of Bob Ferone, Mike Signorile and Artie Guarnieri took a ride out near Montclair, NJ to see and ultimately buy the car. It has some clearcoat wear that we will have repaired ahead of its debut at our Dust-Off. Thanks to that team for making the deal.
3. There were preliminary discussion for what will be required for our Dust-Off, both leading up to and on the day of the show. A full walk-through of our responsibilities will be given at the April meeting.
4. Two special awards specific to this year's show include the Class of '73 for an outstanding vehicle from that year, as well as a Buick 120 Award for any outstanding Buick in honor of Buick Motor Co.'s 120th anniversary. The rest will include the usual Decade Awards, plus ones for outstanding Ford, MoPar, GM, Cadillac, Corvette, Foreign, Truck, Orphan, Custom, Survivor and Future Collectible. Two Best in Shows, pre and post war, complete the set.
5. Mike Gorgia is working with various city agencies to display vehicles from their collections. This could include Transit, Sanitation, FDNY and NYPD. It seems like DCAS doesn't want to send the Imperial phaeton parade car.
6. New member Paul Konz was introduced and welcomed. Paul owns a 1968 Chevelle.
7. Pat Colabella told the full story of his GTO as a follow-up to its mention in our newsletter. Artie Guarnieri spoke of his visit to a Matchbox museum.
8. Phil Boffa gave an updated treasury report, with all in order.
9. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40. The 50/50 collected \$60. Pat Colabella won \$30.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Arena, President

Visiting a Private Collection

We had the fortune of a recent invitation to view one Staten Islander's collection of cars. They are housed in a commercial building he purchased some time ago in nearby Sayreville, after he slowly let tenants go before converting it into his personal showroom and restoration shop. The general focus of his collection is 1980's and 1990's sports cars, usually convertibles, with a sprinkling of earlier muscle and some older cars as well. They include a practically new 1995 Corvette with 625 original miles, featuring a Greenwood aero package and targa top. Other cars included a 1964 Porsche, 2002 Camaro convertible, and two Ferraris - a 348 and a Daytona. In our opinion, the jewel of the collection is a 1968 Camaro RS convertible, featuring a 327 with a four speed and factory air. It is meticulously restored for competition at the Camaro Nationals, to be held this summer at the Classic Auto Mall in Morgantown, PA on July 13-15.



1975 Corvette with four-speed, factory AC and both soft and hard tops. Behind it is a 1968 Camaro RS finished in Sequoia Green. (photo by Paul Jr.)



Vincent Arena chose the 1964 Cheetah as his favorite. (photo by Paul Jr.)

The owner also let the teens in attendance pick a car that they wanted to start and rev. Paul Jr.'s son Vincent chose the Chevy-powered 1964 Cheetah, originally conceived as a challenge to the Shelby Cobra. With wide open exhaust, it was clearly the loudest car on hand. The experience left quite an impression on Vincent, who had never before started a car, let alone one that required a lot of pumping and then enough gas to get it to idle without stalling. Perhaps we'll be able to arrange a date for our club to visit as a group. Too bad it's not located on the island, as it would make a great meeting place for us.

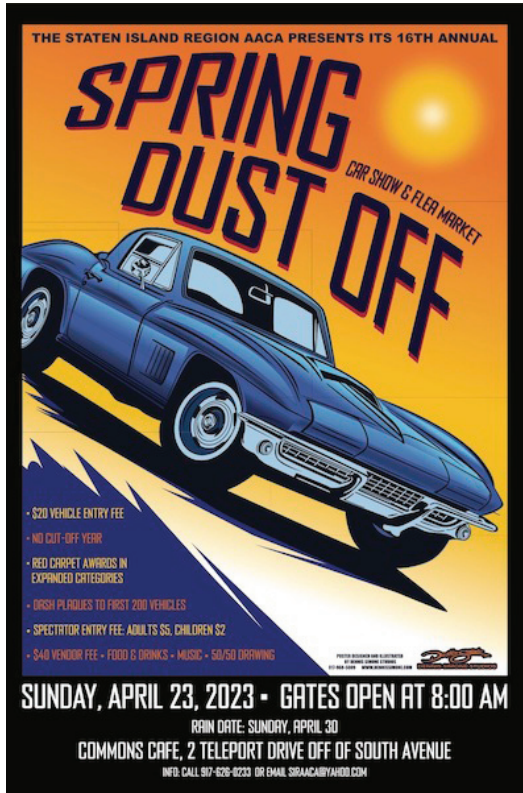
2023 Hot Rods & Harleys Show

Once again our club will assist the organizers of Rahway's Hot Rods & Harleys show in return for a raffle car appearance and donation of \$1,000. The effort will require enough members to form several judging teams as well as some to sell raffle tickets. The show is being held on Saturday, May 13, rain or shine. We'll get final details on arrival times and show logistics at our May meeting, but in the meantime we are hoping for your commitment to help. Last year we sold \$1,235 at a show with limited attendance due to questionable weather. Good weather could mean \$2,000 in sales on top of the donation, so we should take advantage of this.

AACA Spring Meet Deadline

The deadline to register a vehicle for the upcoming AACA Spring National Meet in Gettysburg is May 1. The event is being held at the Wyndham Gettysburg from May 17 through May 20 (the show is on Saturday, May 20). Remember that the AACA National meets have a Driver Participation Class for vehicles that are at least 25 years old and not restored to compete in the national class system.

From the President



It's car show time again. As our new poster notes, our 16th Annual Spring Dust-Off will be held on April 23. As such, the upcoming meeting will cover all that's required to ensure we're ready to go. Please make every effort to attend. In the meantime, the weather's starting to cooperate and Sunday mornings at the beach are beginning again. Typically our members gather at the curb closest to the water. Bring along a chair and join them. - Paul Jr.

- NEXT MEETING - April 4

Our April meeting takes place on Tuesday, April 4th 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.

16th Annual Dust-Off Dash Plaque

This year's Dust-Off dash plaque features the 1967 Pontiac Firebird 400 owned by member Mike DiPilato.



Each of our magnetic dash plaques feature a car owned by one of our members, and we continue to work through the roster based on how long each has been a member (as best as we can tell). In not necessarily the correct order, we believe the remaining members yet to have a vehicle on a plaque include Andy Barcellona, Mike Gorgia, Bob Johnson, Dennis Dell'Angelo, Joe D'Amore, Anthony Faulisi, Tom LaGuidice, Al Yarusinsky, Pat Colabella, Dom Taibbi, Ray Ocello and Paul Konz. Apologies if we missed someone here. We will walk through a new roster at an upcoming meeting and chart out the next few plaques. Plaques are given to the first 200 show vehicles at each show. In the fall, we order more to give to our trophy donors a well. Members also receive a plaque after each show.



Inside the SIRAACA Garage

At the corner of the SIRAACA Garage and the SIRAACA Archive is this photo of former member Ken Haase's 1934 Plymouth Deluxe Model PE two door sedan. Ken now lives in Florida but heard about our interest in the club's history and sent us a few old pictures of his Plymouth.

Plymouth was riding high in 1934. It featured a larger 201 cu. in. engine good for 77 horsepower and sharp styling cues such as a hood with both louvers and opening vent doors. Production that year surpassed the previous record set in 1933, and featured the one-millionth Plymouth built. Plymouth reached that mark in just six years. It took Ford twelve years to do so, and Chevrolet nine.

Plymouth built 58,535 Deluxe two-door sedans, selling each for \$610 when new. Only the four door sedan outsold them, at almost twice the production totals. Bumpers were still optional that year (\$22), along with many other choices including dual Klaxon external month horns (\$9) and chrome wheel trim rings (set of five for \$6.75). Ken's Plymouth had them all.

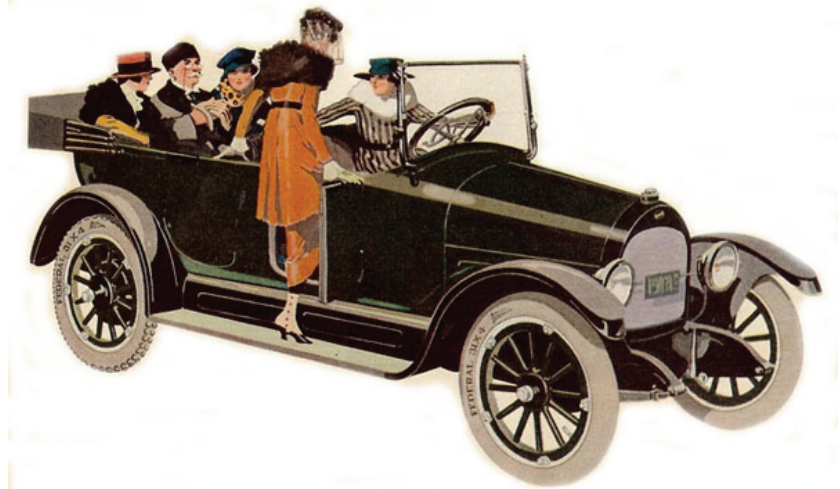
The SIRAACA Garage is home to all of our members' cars, past and present. Has your car been featured yet? Make sure you get the details to Paul Jr. if you want to share your car with us all.



The one-millionth Plymouth was built in 1934 and sold to the same woman who bought the very first Plymouth ever sold, in 1928. (photo courtesy of Ken Haase).

Upcoming Events

Tell your friends, load up your car and head out to one of these events:



- 41st Annual Spring Englishtown, Raceway Park - April 14-16
- SIRAACA 16th Annual Spring Dust-Off, Commons Cafe - April 23
- NJRAACA 70th Annual Car Show, East Hanover, NJ - May 7
- 20th Annual Hot Rods & Harleys Show, Rahway, NJ - May 13
- AACA Eastern National Spring Meet, Gettysburg, PA - May 17-20
- New Dorp High School Car Show - June 4
- Buick Club All Makes Car Show, Wall Township, NJ - July 15





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The SIRAACA Time Machine

Travel date set to December 13, 1962 and the SIRAACA Time Machine pulled up to Staten Island Small Cars, our local Volkswagen dealer located at 1855 Hylan Boulevard for a look at not only plenty of Beetles but a row of new American cars as well. They include a 1962 Buick Special, a 1963 Pontiac Tempest, a Volvo, Chevrolet and Buick Riviera. The ad below is from 1965.



(photos by Herbert Flamm courtesy of Staten Island Historical Society)

Our guess is this dealership was around until 1975, when Acella Chrysler Plymouth first appears on registries at that address. Today it's Staten Island Buick GMC. The land was undeveloped in 1940.



This ad is 6 years late.

For 6 years, this car has mystified millions. People have called it an Alfa Romeo, a Ferrari. You may have seen one on the road and wondered what it was. Buce yourself ...

It's a Volkswagen. Our Karmann Ghia. (We didn't mind its being called Brand X but we can't have people calling it by somebody else's name. The time has come to speak up!)

Most auto bodies are designed for assembly lines. One stamping per part. That's a fender. That's a door. That's a hood. The Ghia stopped us on the first think.

Designed by Ghia of Turin, Italy, its lines are too sculptured for mass production. The fender curve alone is two parts, welded and handshaped. You can't stop and do this in a plant that's busy turning out 100,000 other cars.

Karmann, Europe's leading custom coach-maker, built the body. An assembly line can make 3 ordinary cars in the time they need for one Ghia. (That's the handwork.) You can't even find the seams. One lady said it looked as if it had been carved out of soap.

But underneath the Ghia's all business. Its lower center of gravity holds bumpy barreltop roads at 100 and right angle turns like a sportscar.

You've got VW's rear engine traction in snow, mud and sand. Air-cooling. (No water to freeze up or boil over.) 40,000 mile time, and 22 miles to the gallon. Regular gas; regular driving.

The Ghia also has the VW independent 4-wheel torsion bar suspension. When one hits a bump, it keeps it all to itself. Service? Simple. This is no temporary spring dome. VW parts fit—any car get them anywhere.

Inside, you'll find adjustable bucket seats, a rear window defroster, 3 position door-locks, even a soundproofed interior.

How much? The coupe, \$2295; convertible, \$2495 ... Heater, electric clock and all. White walls optional.

Sorry, can't do a thing about doormen who think it's a \$5000 car—and expect bigger tips.

But nothing's ever quite perfect, is it?

STATEN ISLAND SMALL CARS 
S.I.'s Only Authorized Volkswagen Dealer
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Any make, model,
year and condition.
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