

Vol. 33, No. 1

Ragtops & Rumbleseats

Jan 2026



• **Happy New Year to All!**

1971 Jeep.

(4-WHEEL DRIVE)



Vintage Advertising

Snowy weather as of late has us sharing this Jeepster Commando page out of the 1971 Jeep ales brochure. For those of you who were still kids playing with toys at that time, you might have had the Tonka version (*I did - ed.*).

This was real basic stuff from Jeep - a standard 134 CID four cylinder and an equally standard three speed floor shift. The manual was only synchronized in second and third gear in this setup. If you opted for the 225 CID V-6, you more than doubled the output to 160 hp and could get yourself a Turbo Hydramatic or a 4 speed manual.

1971 was the last year of this dated design, with AMC reportedly making just 7,903 total units. The new '72 models shortened Jeepster to Jeep.

In This Issue

Holiday Party wraps up the year

The SIRAACA Garage looks to its past for this member and his car

The SIRAACA Time Machine catches up with E. M. Honig's Pontiac operations in Tottenville and New Dorp.

Did you know? The Jeepster Commando came in three models, including an open body roadster, a steel top pick-up and a steel top station wagon.

Trivia Question: What type of early automobile were produced by the likes of Holsman, International Harvester, Schacht, and Sears?

Answer: These are some of the more popular brands of "big wheelers", which were buggy type autos that resembled horse carriages equipped with an engine.

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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 -

Bob Ferone - rferone@gmail.com

WEBMASTER - siraaca@yahoo.com

Frank Nathanson

www.siraaca.aaca.com



Minutes of the 591st Meeting

November 6, 2025 (Reprinted)

1. The 591st meeting of the Staten Island Region AACA was called to order at 7:12 pm on November 6 at The Square on Annadale. After reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and offering a moment of silence, the minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as read.
2. Bruce Campbell recapped the recent show at St. Stan's in Sayreville. Artie Guarnieri reported on the great turnout for Lifestyles' Trunk or Treat event.
3. Phil Boffa and Kevin Keenan recapped the raffle car appearance at Mt. Loretto's Fall Festival. We took in \$800. The car will hibernate in a tent in New Jersey this winter with \$2,585 in sales already banked before the new year.
4. The Holiday Party will be held on Sunday, December 14 at La Strada, from 2:00-6:00 pm. An RSVP sheet was passed around.
5. The club and our members made their annual toy donation at the meeting, with the folks from the Richard Gardner Memorial Toy Drive stopping by to accept them and offer their thanks once again.
6. A recent inventory of our archive revealed a number of missing dash plaques / magnets. If any of them match up to your personal collection, the club would appreciate if you can provide a photo of it. See the November newsletter for the missing years.
7. The 2026 Spring Dust-Off dash plaque magnet will feature one of Pat Colabella's cars, likely a GTO.
8. Mike Signorile represented the club at a charity breakfast for the Staten Island Giving Circle, and presented them with a \$500 donation from us. A grant will match that three times over.
9. Phil Boffa presented a treasury report, with all in order as we near the end of the calendar year.
10. There will be a push for some club outings in the coming months to help pass the winter.
11. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm. The 50/50 collected \$75 and Phil won \$38. Ray Ocello won the second drawing for a \$25 Thanksgiving gift card.

Respectfully submitted,
Tony DiAngelo, Secretary

Holiday Party

Once again, members and guests gathered at La Strada for a holiday party to celebrate another year together. Following a dinner of appetizers, salad, pasta and a main course, winners for door prizes were pulled, giving them choices among gift cards, scratch-off lottery tickets, a collectible cookie jar or a portable battery charger. Next up was the 50/50, which was more so a 25/25/25/25 as all money was given out as prizes. In what may be a new tradition, or just as likely a "one-and-done", Paul Jr. led all the attendees in a special rendition of the "12 Days of Christmas". Each gift was changed to an automotive theme, and groups of two or three were assigned one to sing on their turns. Starting with an '89 IROC-Z, they included 2 T-3 headlights, 3 speed transmission, 4 barrel carb, 5 beauty rings, 6 spark plugs sparking, 7 tail pipes piping, 8 pistons popping, 9 engines revving, 10 gears grinding, 11 fan belts spinning and 12 cylinders firing. Jerry Esposito and guest were the clear all-stars with their passionate singing, and somehow we made it through in just one take. Paul then reiterated his thanks for all of our members and the time and effort they put in to make this a happy and successful group that enjoys themselves while helping others.

Ideas for America's 250th?



On July 4, 2026, America will officially celebrate its 250th birthday, but celebrations will be taking place all year long to commemorate the occasion. We should begin thinking about how to incorporate this theme throughout our upcoming season, be it at the Dust-Off, the Fall Show or something special in-between. What do our members think?

Local Dues for January

Now that you sent in your AACA National dues for renewing your membership for 2026, we can collect the local dues of \$20 starting at our January meeting. We will submit our 2026 roster to the AACA for verification of national standing early in the year, so please make every effort to take care of this.

Targeting 2026 Show Dates

Looking at the 2026 calendar, these are the suggested dates for our Spring Dust-Off and Fall Show. We will ask these to be confirmed by the folks at the Commons Cafe. For now, please pencil these in as tentative. Dust-Off: April 26 / Rain Date May 3. Fall Show: September 13 / Rain Date September 20. We hope to lock these in as soon as possible.

The Hot Rods and Harleys event in Rahway is set for Saturday, May 9. More known dates will be shared as they become available.

All Eyes on Arizona in January

Arizona will once again be the focus of the collector car hobby in January as all of the major auction houses will hold sales there. Most have their consigned lots online for preview. Of course, it seems like the majority of excitement is on multi-million dollar European supercars from Ferrari, Porsche, Mercedes and others. What kind of American cars will draw attention, and big money to boot? We're going to watch a few examples to gauge the health of the market. Bonham's has a 1957 Eldorado Biarritz convertible (one of just 68 known to the CLC) presented in frame-off rotisserie condition. Barrett-Jackson will have four different 1986-87 Buick Grand Nationals cross the block. RM Sotheby's is offering a 1974 Pontiac Trans-Am SD-455, a 1947 Chrysler Town & Country convertible and a 1929 Duesenberg.

If you can't wait for the Arizona action, turn your eyes south where Mecum kicks off the year in Kissimmee, Florida starting on January 6. They are running sales for thirteen days! Something for everyone, and too much to choose from. Visit any of the auction house websites for a full view of the cars they are offering and dream about what a pocketful of cash could buy you.

From the Editor

You might recall the last time I wrote you as the editor, back in November. In that column, I pointed out that I'd like to do away with the full page JC Taylor ad and use that page for something new. I suggested a few options, such as a photo gallery, a reprint section from the AACNA National team, or something else. Please come with your ideas to the January meeting, so we can get the ball rolling with changes for the February edition. No matter what we decide, I remind you that I need your help in providing me with ideas and content for the newsletter. The SIRAACA Garage and the SIRAACA Archive are always open for submissions. Tales about your adventures out and about with your cars are all worth sharing. Also, recall that we will also highlight how we "decorate" the SIRAACA Garage with the automobilia that we collect (license plates, oil cans, signs, diecast cars and trucks, old toys, etc.) I'm here to help us share good things among our members, and I look forward to doing so again this year. I hope all of you had a wonderful holiday and all the best for 2026! - Paul Jr.



- NEXT MEETING - January 6

Our next monthly meeting is Tuesday, January 6. The meeting is held at The Square on Annadale, and that is confirmed by text in the days leading up to the meeting.

The start time is usually around 7:00PM. The club will provide pizza and soda, and members can purchase additional or alternate items on their own.

Spotting More Cars from Your Couch

Most old TV shows will typically have outdoor scenes, providing car spotting opportunities. Some shows are better than others, and some hit the jackpot based on the particular episode. Such is the case with an episode of Adam-12 from 1972 entitled "Who Won?" (S.4 Ep.22). In it, Officers Reed and Malloy work to get local car clubs to move street racing to a drag strip, and it features plenty of period muscle cars and hot rods. One scene (picture below) features the Plymouth Adam-12 car roll up on a Limelight Green 1970 Road Runner lined up against an orange and black 1972 El Camino. Behind them are a 1956 Chevy wagon and a 1965 GTO. Other scenes feature Reed working on his 1954 Ford, and then racing a 1968 Camaro at the dragstrip. The acting might be a bit corny in retrospect, but the cars are definitely cool.



Adam-12 went through a number of police cars during its run, starting with a 1967 Belvedere in the pilot episode. They ran with various Plymouths through 1971, and then switched to AMC Matadors until the show ended in 1973. (photo by Paul Jr.)

Inside the SIRAACA Garage

Any good car collection deserves some iconic Tri-Five Chevrolets, and the SIRAACA Garage can count this 1956 Bel-Air among its own. This is former member Bob Kramek and his Nassau Blue/India Ivory two door. The photo is from one of our shows at the Petrides School, where we parked our members cars in the quadrangle in a separate display from the show field. Bob moved from Lighthouse Hill to Middletown in 1988, and passed away in 2012 at the age of 89.

The '56 model design showed some changes from the '55, starting with a facelift. Gone was the smaller grille opening in favor of a full-width one that incorporated large parking lamps. New side trim allowed for the rear and top color to extend within a spear past the front wheels. These changes are easily seen on Bob's car.

We don't recall what was under the hood of this one, but buyers had a choice of a 235 CID straight six or a 265 CID V-8, with multiple power output options, topping out at 225 hp with dual quads (a \$304 option).

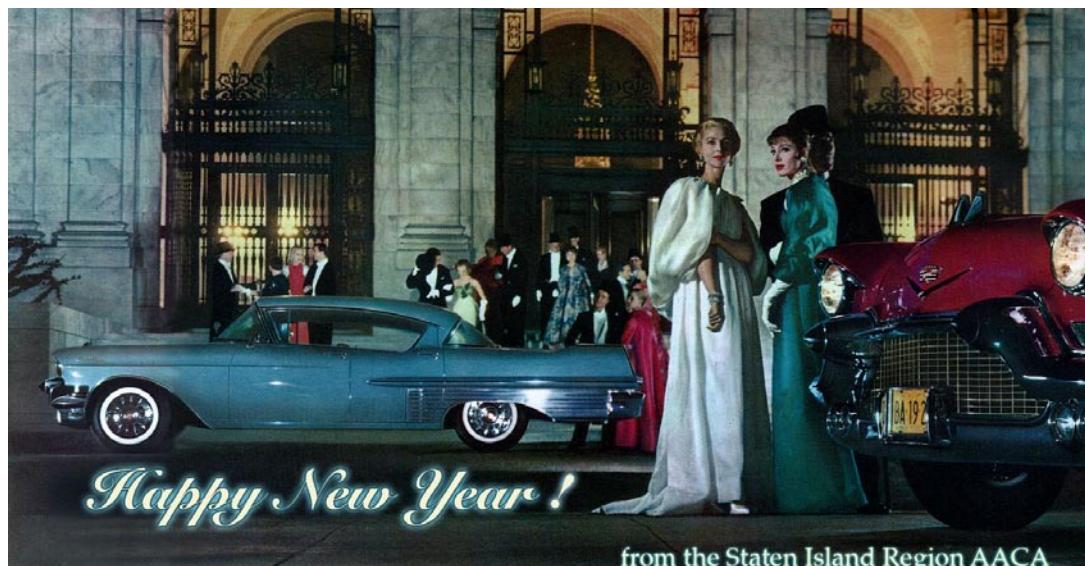
Bob's Chevy was one of two cars featured on our 1998 dash plaque, which is likely the year of this photo.

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.

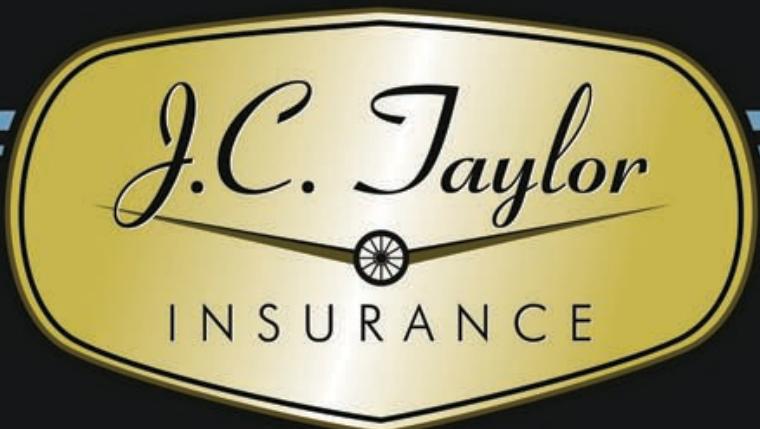


Across three series in 1956 (150, 210 and Bel Air), Chevrolet made a grand total of 1,623,376 automobiles. Bel Air models accounted for almost 43% of that total, yet the most uncommon of any '56 Chevy is a Bel Air series model - the Nomad - with 8,103 built. The only other model across all lines that had less than 10,000 built was the Series 150 2-door sedan delivery, at 9,445 units. With twenty models in all, there was and still is a 1956 Chevrolet for all types of tastes. (photo from the SIRAACA Archive)

All the Best for 2026



Ragtops & Rumbleseats wishes the members of SIRAACA all the best for a happy, healthy and prosperous new year.



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The SIRAACA Time Machine

In our March 2024 newsletter we visited two Pontiac showrooms operated by E.M. Honig, one on Amboy Road in Tottenville and his newer one on Hylan that would later become Star Pontiac. We travel back to Tottenville, 1940 for a look at his repair facility at 23 Bentley Street (both buildings are still there today). Then we jump ahead to 1950 for two views of his newer Hylan showroom. A sharp eye will spot a station wagon in the showroom at the right, which might have looked just like this one in their sales brochure:



Top photo courtesy of NYC Municipal Archives. Bottom photos attributed to Biles Studio.



For those of you who are waiting to see if your guesses from last month's Time Machine trip are correct, we had a 1954 Chevrolet Bel Air broadside with a 1950 Chrysler up on the lift. Until we travel back through time again, let's all enjoy our trip into the new year, with best wishes to you!



Note: This monthly feature began in 2020 as temporary filler for missing content due to government lockdowns in response to Covid. It's turned into a regular feature still going strong through 2025 and we hope that you are enjoying these trips back in time. Feel free to send in your comments, requests or additional information.



farbetterprinting
ON-DEMAND PRINT CENTER

43 Hillel Place
Brooklyn, NY 11210
Tel 718.859.3137
Fax 718.421.4761
sales@farbetterprinting.com
www.printingservicebrooklyn.com

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