

Vol. 33, No. 5

Ragtops & Rumbleseats

May 2026



- **19th Annual Spring Dust-Off**
- **2005 Mustang Deluxe Coupe Raffle**

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· LIFE ·

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Confidence

Wonderful driving simplicity of the Baker and Rauch & Lang Electric inspires utmost confidence on the part of the occupants at all times.

The mother finds comfort in knowing that the safety and pleasure of her little ones are enhanced because of this driving simplicity—this independence from mechanical obtrusion and confusion.

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Confidence all 'round—in the knowledge that your Baker and Rauch & Lang represents the best, and that it insures the utmost in safety.

The Baker R. & L. Company
Cleveland, Ohio

See our latest models at the New York Show, Dec. 31—Jan. 8

*Baker
Electrics*

*Rauch & Lang
Electrics*
"The Social Necessity"

Vintage Advertising

We are a big fan of Mother's Day here, so our vintage ad this month from LIFE magazine shows a mom and her kids in their 1916 Baker Electric. Wondering where the steering wheel is? There isn't one, as these cars were steered using a tiller. The relative ease of operating these electrics was likely one of the draws for women at the time - clean, quiet, refined motoring befitting of the fairer sex. The ad reads "the Mother finds comfort in knowing that the safety and pleasure of her little ones are enhanced because of this driving simplicity..."

Baker Electric merged with Rauch & Lang in 1915 to deal with falling sales and pressure from the competition. 1916 would be the final year for the Baker nameplate.

In This Issue

Spring Dust-Off Recap

Next up - Hot Rods & Harleys

Jerry Esposito in "My First Car"

The SIRAACA Garage smokes out a ghost

The SIRAACA Time Machine guesses where this Model T came from

Trivia Question: Cadillac produced the "last" American convertible in 1976. What car resurrected the American convertible in 1982?

Answer: The Chrysler LeBaron. Lee Iacocca's gamble was the first Chrysler convertible since 1970.

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Minutes of the 595th Meeting

April 7, 2026

1. The 594th meeting of the Staten Island Region AACA was called to order at 7:12 pm on March 10 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. Our Spring Dust-Off is set for April 26. Members walked through the day's schedule and logistics, and all are asked to be on site by 6:30 to help set up. Please wear your red Show Staff shirts.
3. The raffle car has returned to Staten Island after hibernating in New Jersey. Thanks to Kevin Keenan for keeping it warm and dry.
4. Raffle tickets are available to sell and were handed out. We ask that every member sell at least \$60 worth. At 5 for \$20, that's just three sales.
5. We need members who are able to help us as judges and raffle salespeople at Hot Rods & Harleys in Rahway on May 10. A list of available members was started and will be finalized at the May meeting.
6. The Food Truck festival is scheduled for June 12-14 and we plan to hold a show there on Saturday the 13th. More details to follow.
7. The storage fees for the grinding truck are now \$130 per month and we are actively seeking alternatives to lower or remove that expense. All ideas are welcome.
8. The AACA Grand National Meet will be held in late August in Allentown. Members planning to register their cars should do so, as there is a 500 vehicle limit.
9. A list of members yet to have their car featured on a dash plaque was put together in advance of the drafting this year's fall design.
10. Bob Ferone spoke about his newly acquired Cadillac Brougham d'Elegance.
11. Phil Boffa presented a treasury report, and all is in order heading into the Dust-Off.
12. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm. The 50/50 collected \$80 and Paul Cama won \$40.

Respectfully submitted,
Tony DiAngelo, Secretary

19th Annual Spring Dust-Off, Take Two

A rainy forecast for April 26th had us postpone this year's Dust-Off to May 3. While the new date was dry, colder temps and windy conditions conspired to soften attendance. Even so, we had 234 show cars on the field and many first time winners drive up for one of 26 special awards. We celebrated the Spirit of '76 and the 100th Anniversary of Buick, and promoted our upcoming America 250 Show in June.

The "Parade of Champions", as some like to call it, brought the following winners to the table for their trophies: Decade Awards - 1930 Ford Model A Coupe, 1949 Ford, 1966 Chevrolet Chevelle, 1969 Ford Mustang Mach 1, 1978 Cadillac Eldorado, 1986 Ford Mustang Coupe, 1990 Nissan 240 SX, 1992 Cadillac Fleetwood, 2001 Ford Mustang Cobra convertible, 2016 Lamborghini Aventador Pirelli Edition, and 2022 Ferrari F8. In addition, Outstanding Awards were presented: Future Collectible - 2012 Ford Mustang Boss 302, Survivor - 1982 Mercedes 380SL, Orphan - 1949 Studebaker Champion, Foreign Car - 1970 Porsche 914, Truck - 1953 GMC, Custom - 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air, GM - 1962 Cadillac, Ford - 1956 Continental Mark II, MoPar - 1969 Plymouth Roadrunner, Corvette - 1961 Chevrolet Corvette, and Cadillac - 1984 Eldorado Biarritz.

The Class of '76 Award went to Mark DiPilato Jr.'s 1976 Corvette (below) and the 100 Years of Pontiac Award was given to a 1968 GTO (bottom right).



Two beautiful ragtops: a 1941 Plymouth and a 1982 Mercedes (Photos by Paul Jr. and Mark DiPilato)



From the Editor

This issue is running late as you can tell, so you'll likely see the June newsletter close behind this one. That does depend in some part on having good things to write about. Hopefully, our weather gets back on track, allowing us to be out and about with our cars, creating more stories to share. That includes Sunday's at the beach, and the upcoming shows on May 31 and June 6. However, some things are not dependent on the weather, like our new "My First Car" column, The SIRAACA Garage, and even the SIRAACA Time Machine. Thanks to all who have contributed to those, and encouragement to those who have been thinking about doing so. Please send me your submissions!

For those of you with a nose for detail and a penchant for accuracy, we admit that the Award of Excellence seen below is a year old. We asked the AACA for help in finding the new ones back in March, but our question seems to have fallen on deaf ears (or is it "blind eyes" in the case where the question was written, not spoken?) Hopefully we get a reply - Paul Jr.



- NEXT MEETING - May 5

Our next monthly meeting is Tuesday, May 5. 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.

Helping Hands

There is nothing like an extra set of hands when help is needed. Vincent Arena offered up his help recently to remove the bumpers of the family's 1948 Dodge. They were destined for rechroming, with the goal of having them back on the car in time so his dad Paul could drive him and his date to his Senior Prom on June 1. His helping hands will be even more important when its time to put them back on. Paul opted to use Super Chrome in Asbury Park, NJ.



Sometimes it's not hard getting under the car, but sure is heck hard to get back up. Having a 17-year old helper solves that with little effort. (photo by Paul Jr.)

Inside the SIRAACA Garage

Holy smokes! We remind you that The SIRAACA Garage has plenty of ghosts within its wall, and this is one is Bruce Campbell's 1966 Pontiac GTO.

The photo was taken on Oakdale Street on July 4, 1976. Bruce recalls no better way to celebrate the Bicentennial than with a burnout, and open headers, a four speed and slicks made for a thunderous sound on par with all of the M-80's and blockbusters exploding that day.

Bruce "wasn't much for making them look good back then, only running good." Note the missing headlight surround trim, and the "urban camouflage" color combination. The rear wheels, not seen here for obvious reasons, did not match the front ones.

Bruce was drifting before they coined the word and made it a sport. He got plenty of tickets in that car - perhaps Don Bosco's dad nailed him more than once.

Bruce swapped the motor and tranny out of this into a much nicer looking roller but cracked the block, and that was that..

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.



For street racers and gearheads, Bicentennial burnouts were the preferred means of celebrating American independence in 1976. Bruce made sure he did his part. (photo cour-

Upcoming Events

Pack your car, grab some friends, and head out to these upcoming events in our area.



- Greenwich Concours d'Elegance, Connecticut - May 30-31
- 1st Annual Cars Care Car & Jeep Show, South Beach - May 31
- Food Truck Festival, Mount Loretto - June 5, 6, 7
- SIRAACA America 250 Car Show, Mount Loretto - June 6
- Summer Round Up, All American Ford, Old Bridge - June 14
- Wednesday Cruise Night, Wendy's, 2720 Hylan Boulevard
- Wednesday Cruise Night, Paradise Island, 225 Ellis Street
- Saturday Nights at Home Depot, 1090 US 9 South, Old Bridge

My First (and Only) Car - 1965 Chevrolet Impala

(Editor's note: Jerry Esposito shares tales of his 1965 Chevrolet Impala in this continuing series)

I was about 20 years old and like most young men my age, I was eager to buy a car. Like most men my age, the problem was lack of money. Looking around at different dealerships, most cars were a bit over the top of my funds. Near my home in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, there was Benson Chevrolet on 16th Avenue and 86th Street. They had a nice selection of cars in their showroom and I went with my father looking for a deal. Naturally, money was a factor, so I looked at a 1965 Corvair, which had a sticker of about \$1,300. This looked like a possibility and I spoke to my father, but we decided to hold off a bit and talk more about it. I agreed to wait.

Benson had a large storage lot and one day I went there to look at their new deliveries. That's where I first saw the 1965 Impala, and that is when I made up my mind. Of course, the price of the Impala, even in basic form, was about \$3,100. No AC, a 283 V-8, but I wanted a big engine and air-conditioning, bringing the price up considerably. I waited some more. I was locked in on an Impala, and I hounded my parents to help me financially. I finally bought one at Park Slope Chevrolet on 4th Avenue. No AC, but a 327 with 250 hp, for \$3,100. I paid my parents back slowly, thanking them for helping me out.



The Vietnam War was raging and I knew I was getting drafted so I enlisted and my father took care of the car while I served. When I returned home, I took a job with NYC's Transit Authority. With no seniority, I worked many midnight shifts up in the Bronx, but I had a key to the yard and was able to safely park there. One night, they lock had been changed. I parked on the street, and sure enough, the car was stolen. About six days later, my friend was driving on the Grand Central and saw what looked like my car abandoned on the side of the road. Sure enough, it was mine - stone dead, ignition wires cut, and filled with peanut shells and plastic cups. My trunk lock was popped, my tools were stolen, and one front fender was banged up. I called the police, they verified my ownership, and I had it trucked back to Park Slope Chevy for repairs.

Amazingly it has been 61 years that I have enjoyed my Chevy, and every time I take it out for a ride, I'm 20 years old again. It's my time machine, turning heads and getting plenty of "thumbs up".

The SIRAACA Time Machine

Cruising Staten Island's past in The SIRAACA Time Machine has its difficulties. One is the change of street names and addresses over the years, making our landing spots difficult to pinpoint from time to time. Take for example, Hylan Boulevard. In the early 20th century, it was known primarily as Southfield Boulevard along the east shore, while its northern segment was called Pennsylvania Avenue. In 1923, Southfield Boulevard was renamed Hylan Boulevard, in honor of NYC Mayor John Hylan. Yet even then, Southfield or Hylan didn't run all the way down to Tottenville. In areas like Great Kills, it's seen on maps as South Side Boulevard. That is why George Rachmiel and his 1925 Model T was advertising the family hardware store, named for its location. For nearly a century, George and his son Jay served the Great Kills area with local hardware needs. It closed in 2024 and is now a cannabis dispensary. Jay recently shared the info with Bruce Campbell, who helped us land this photo.



Photo (photo courtesy of Jay Rachmiel)

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE DIRECTORY 1921-22 49

Tel. 1101 Tottenville
" 1150 "

SALESROOM
Amboy Road & Main St.

Ford
THE UNIVERSAL CAR

GEO. W. CARFOOT
Prop'r

SERVICE STATION
21 Bently St.

TOTTENVILLE GARAGE
TOTTENVILLE, S. I., N. Y.

Until we possibly learn more from Jay, let's assume his dad's Ford came out of the Tottenville Garage located on Amboy Road & Main Street, as noted in this directory listing from a few years earlier. We likely caught a glimpse of the "Bently" Street service station location around 1940, when it was E. M. Honig's Authorized Pontiac Service Station (see our January, 2026 newsletter). We also think that proprietor George W. Carfoot was born to have a hand (and foot) in the automobile business.

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.

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