



Gateway Buick Club 40th Anniversary Edition



Director's Letter;

40th Anniversary
July 8th, 2018

Greetings,

Welcome to a special edition of the GAZETTE dedicated to our 40th Anniversary.

Our 40th Anniversary celebration may have been one of our best club events ever. In total 61 members and guests were present, including past members and even three new members who came by to check us out. Three Charter members were present; Bob Huff, Jim Hall and Jeff Watkins, with Jim Hall and Jeff Watkins receiving Lifetime Membership awards for their continued service to the club. **SPECIAL THANKS** to Kristina Richards, Ted Becker and everyone who helped with the Club History display, to Gene Bossaller for manning the grill and to the Boney Goat Band for providing their mellow tunes. **AND MOST OF ALL**; thanks to everyone who came to the event, drove their Buicks, shared their memories and brought their tasty treats. Again, Thank You...!!!

I'm sure when Bob Louden opened the first meeting of the St. Louis Gateway Chapter on the evening of March 9, 1978, his only concern was on how well that evening would go. Little did he know that he was starting a legacy that would last for over forty years. With that we thank Bob, and the charter members; Bob Louden Jr., Dave Louden, Warren and Pat Peter, Fred Zahn, Jeff Watkins, Jim Hall, Ray Fellenstein, Bob and Kevin Huff, Joel Haffner, Willard Coplin, Fred and Laura Weber, David and Laurie Weber for giving us the beginnings of a club we continue to celebrate today.

Through the years we have grown from our humble beginnings of meeting in member's homes and have grown to be more than a social club. We have hosted Regional and National Buick events and have supported numerous charities that include: Shriners Hospital for Children, annual food drives, annual Toys for Tots and Snow-Cone sales with proceeds donated to the National Children's Cancer Society.

Thanks to all of you, our 40th Anniversary celebration truly was a major success and proof that this club is alive and going strong. Let's continue to work together and have fun, as we move forward to our next historic milestone.

All for now...

Enjoy!

Chet

From the Editor:

This special issue of the Gazette is in honor of the 40th anniversary of our Gateway Buick Club. Within this issue are events from the past and present. The anniversary picnic held on July 8 at Love Park was a wonderful gathering of members, old and new. There are lots of pictures of the members and a very impressive lineup of Buicks belonging to our members.

We are fortunate as a club to have retained 2 original and continuous charter members. The member profiles in this issue feature both Jim Hall and Jeff Watkins who have been through it all. Additionally, Bob Huff was an original member who we get to see from time to time. His member profile is also included in this issue.

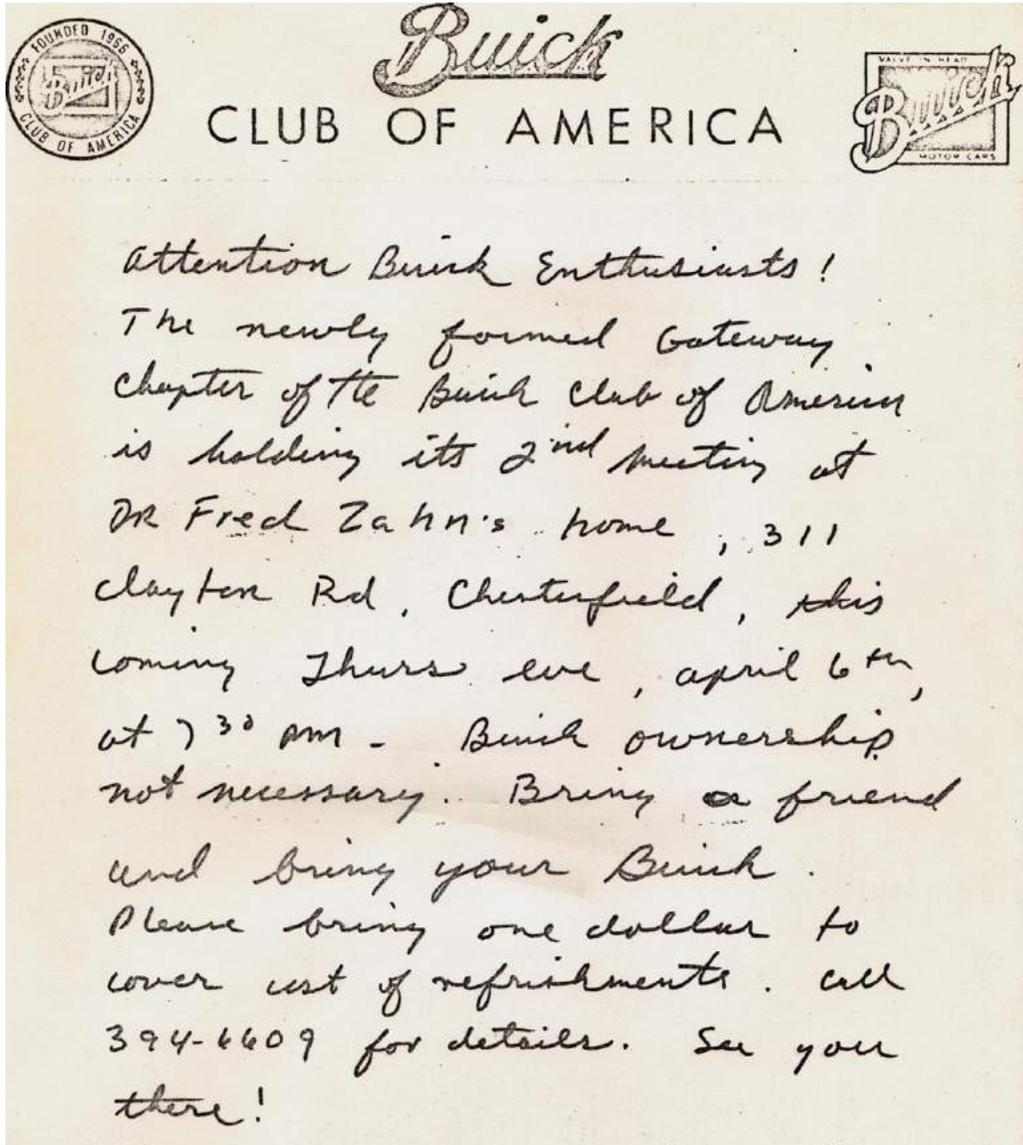
I hope you enjoy this issue and inspire you to continually making the club even better in the future.

Jed Becker



Cheers to 40 Years!!

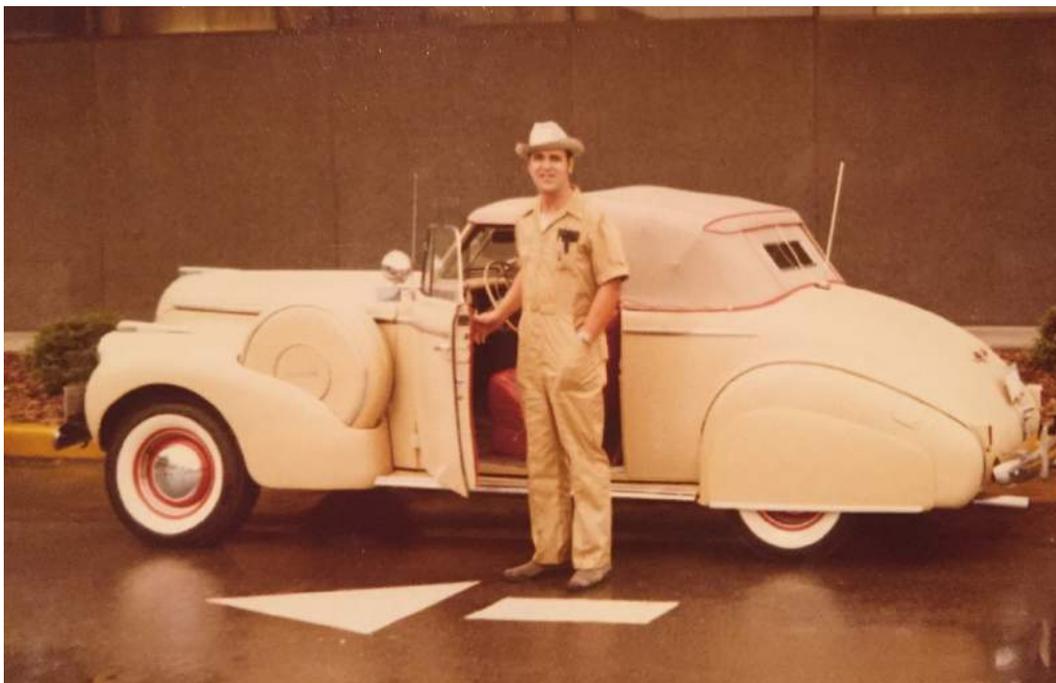
Where it all began



In celebrating the 35th anniversary of the club, we look at an announcement talking about the second meeting back on April 6th, 1978. Thanks to Jeff Watkins for this! It is typed below since *it's not the easiest to read*.

“Attention Buick Enthusiasts! The newly formed Gateway Chapter of the Buick Club of America is holding its 2nd meeting at Dr. Fred Zahn’s home, 311 Clayton Rd. Chesterfield, this coming Thurs. eve, April 6th, at 7:30 p.m. – Buick ownership not necessary. Bring a friend and bring your Buick. Please bring one dollar to cover cost of refreshments. Call 394-6609 for details. See you there!”

Here are a couple of additional photos provided by Kevin Huff taken around 1979 of Bob Lowden with his 40 century convertible coupe. Bob was the primary driving force in the formation of the Gateway Buick Club and its first director. The photo with Bob was taken at the Minneapolis-St. Paul BCA national meet, while the other was taken outside a repair shop in Hannibal Missouri on the way up there. Fred Zahn's 48 Roadmaster convertible had some mechanical trouble and they stopped off along the way to get it fixed... Dr. Zahn hosted club meetings at his house regularly in the early days.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT – JIM HALL

By Monica Ledwon

As the Gateway Chapter Buick Club nears its 40th anniversary year, together in Buick camaraderie, this month's spotlight features Jim Hall, a founding member. Jim attended the first meeting held at Mallory Buick on Natural Bridge and Goodfellow in 1978 along with Bob Loudon, Bob Huff and Jeff Watkins.



Jim was born and raised the early part of his life in South St. Louis before his family moved north to a new home in Berkeley. He graduated from Berkeley High School and then in 1963 did a stint in the US Army stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado. After returning, Jim met his wife Doris through the gentle persuasion of a neighbor “fixing him up” with their daughter. The marriage is now nearing the 50 year mark. Doris and Jim have two daughters and two grandchildren.

Jim's first old car was a 1929 Buick bought in 1960. Living in an apartment during its restoration, parts that Jim was working on were stored under the bed. Jim custom remade many of the wooden parts on this model such as wheel spokes and roof framing that were rotted with age.

Jim and Doris moved into a newly built house in St. Charles in 1972 with the architectural plans being drawn up by Doris' father. There, Jim expanded his fleet of classics throughout the years to include a '54 Special, '69 LeSabre (Jim's favorite in which he replaced the transmission all by himself), '69 Electra convertible (sadly totaled in a crash just around in the neighborhood), '73 LeSabre and '72 Boattail Riviera. Jim needed lots of lead additive back in the day. Paring down his collection in recent time, Jim's daily driver today is his mother-in-law's '99 Century, with mileage at 109K and still a roadworthy product of GM.

Jim worked for 40 years at GM spending many years at the old St. Louis plant on Natural Bridge. He was on the Corvette, Corvair lines and was the last person to leave the factory when it shut down production and closed its doors. At that time, the plant gave Jim his personal work toolbox engraved with “Chevrolet”-- tools included as a keepsake. He treasures his bypass punch. Moving on to GM Wentzville, Jim worked in the Company Store. Here he was the supply man to see when a worker needed a specific tool such as a flashlight, hammer or forklift. Jim would then keep inventory and log the cost of the tool similar to a cashier. He remembers one request for a robotic welder, and when he looked the price up, it was one million dollars!

Jim's hobbies include model car collecting from every decade up in to the 50's. He once caused a commotion at one of our club meetings by bringing in his Tucker models to show. Jim never held any offices in our club, just enjoyed the company of fellow Buick nuts and their restoration adventures. Jim is an original, like the BCA logo on his hat he is never with-

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT – JEFF WATKINS

By Monica Ledwon

In celebration of the Gateway Chapter's 40th anniversary, this month's Member Spotlight focuses on another founding member, Jeff Watkins. Known as the club's archivist, Jeff recently was presented with the Honorary Charter Member Award at the July picnic in Love Park.



Jeff grew up in the Webster Groves area and went to Webster Groves High School. Staying single, he now lives in the Carondelet area of St. Louis. Jeff was always interested in cars as far back as he can remember. He remembers identifying models of the 50's while making road trips with his family and became quite the expert. Building models as a youngster honed his interest in automotive styling.

Jeff was a bit too young for Vietnam Era military duty. So he worked most often as a stock delivery truck driver for various companies staying the longest at the renowned Frame Factory business.

His first old Buick was a 1960 Electra. Since then he has owned about ten different Buick models including two '63 Invicta station wagons and a '67 Skylark. His favorites were a '59 Invicta and '59 Electra. Jeff's current motor pool consists of a classic '66 Lesabre 2dr HT and a 2001 Lesabre Ltd 4dr as a daily driver. For additional fun he once owned a 1965 Checker cab.

In the past, Jeff held the office of Director from 1990 to 1994. He organized the '93 Regional at the North Lindbergh Holiday Inn and was at the helm in helping the club host the '97 National at the old Henry the VIII hotel.

Being the club archivist for forty years, Jeff has preserved and collected all newsletter publications. He has total recall of any events or happenings in our history. Along with this, Jeff collects sales brochures and literature from all models as well as Buicks. He once astonished me with a pristine brochure for a 1999 Avalon in 2008. I had just purchased the car for a daily driver to reduce mileage on my '89 Lincoln Mark VII and '85 Buick Regal.

Jeff is retired now, hanging out at his house, going to swap meets and shows. He told me that, in the past, he has always been intent on keeping the club together and feels the same today. Jeff is looking forward to our 2020 Regional for a new event to be archived into our history.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT – BOB HUFF

By Monica Ledwon

This month's Member Spotlight features Bob Huff, who has an amazing history with the Gateway Chapter as a Founding Member.



Bob grew up in southern Missouri in the town of Gideon. He graduated high school there and then moved with his parents to south St. Louis. Bob joined the Navy and spent four years in this part of military service. After his stint and back home, a fellow Navy buddy suggested Bob go on a blind date. Bob really didn't want to go. His blind date, Vi, also felt likewise. But as history is told, Vi and Bob have been married for 50 plus years. They have one son, Kevin.

Bob developed his interest in classic cars through his son Kevin's attraction to show cars in the Forest Park Easter Concourse de Elegance. As a youngster, Kevin's magnetism to the "Old Timees" as well as Hot Wheels drew Bob along into the hobby.

Bob worked throughout his life in the printing business. He first joined Concordia Publishing House, a Lutheran organization, and worked there twenty years till its closure. Moving on to Christian Board of Publications, Bob was approached several times by the shop foreman to look at an old car in his parents' barn. Bob finally gave in and found his first classic, a 1950 Nash 2dr covered in dirt and debris. After a good scrubbing, the Nash was found to be in great original condition. Bob went on to buy his first classic Buick, a 1948 Super convertible, and drove it everywhere around South County. His first body off restoration project was a 1940 Buick Special convertible. He entered the '40 into a local show hosted by Placke Buick on Kingshighway and won Best of Show. Bob's favorite car was found at a Hershey Swap Meet and Show. It was love at first sight when he saw a trailer pull up hauling a 1959 Le Sabre convertible all original with a "For Sale" sign on its window. Within ten minutes a deal was made that included transporting the car to St. Louis.

Bob retells the inception of the Gateway Chapter Buick Club took place at a car show on the Six Flags parking lot in 1978 where any old car was admitted to the park for free. With all the old Buicks grouped together, Bob Huff met Bob Louden and the club was born. Early on, meetings were held at members' homes until the official Mallory Buick meeting where Bob Louden was declared the first Director, Bob Huff the first Assistant Director and his lovely wife, Vi, the first Secretary. With Bob's printing business background, he also filled the editor position and published the initial issues of the Gateway Gazette.

Bob always says his old car hobby was a pressure relief valve from the stresses involved in the printing business. Finishing his printing career at Beaumont Graphics, he expanded his horizons by selling parts. A young mechanic who helped him on his '48 was a parts scavenger and gave Bob his entire inventory when moving. Bob further increased his inventory by buying new old stock parts from local dealers. He recalls that he cleaned out about fifteen Buick dealerships back in the day! Bob says he always buys cheap and sells reasonably and today is doing business on eBay.

One of Bob's most memorable Buick Club meets was the 2003 100 Year Anniversary of Buick up in Flint, Michigan. There, he was astonished to see 1800 Buicks gathered together to enjoy an event hosted by the Buick Motor Division. Bob said Buick spent "a ton of money" on this show that included music by Huey Lewis and the News, professional fireworks and a deluxe hospitality tent that went all out on catered food and refreshments.

Bob has been retired now for twenty-four years and still goes to swap meets and shows but at a leisurely pace. His son, Kevin, is a chip off the old block and keeps many of Bob's overflow collectible cars (about 40) at his Columbia, Illinois homestead that has several barns on the property. Today, Bob has an eight-car garage on his south county home that houses his current classics ('58 Buick wagon, '53 Packard Caribbean, '58 Eldorado Convertible, '61 Dodge Convertible, '57 Eldorado Brougham with stainless steel roof) as well as Kevin's cars. Bob's daily drivers sit outside as he is well aware of the pecking order when it comes to garage space for old cars!

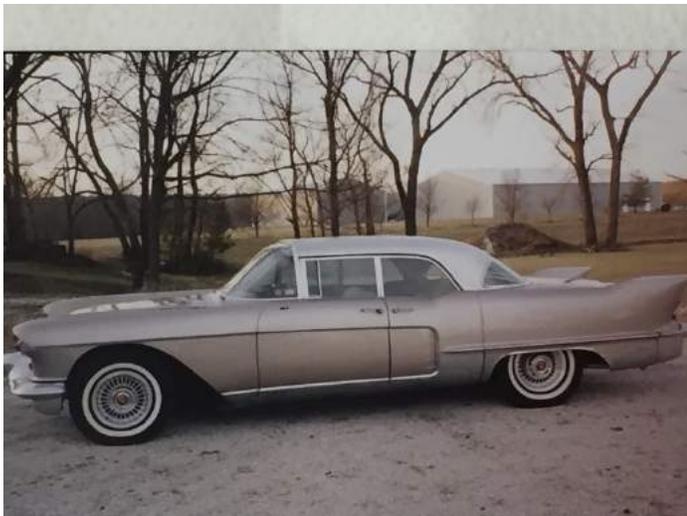
A Few of Bob's cars through the years



Bob and a right hand drive Bentley



1959 LeSabre Convertible



1957 Stainless Steel top Cadillac
Brougham



1949 Buick Roadmaster Riviera



Fortieth Anniversary
1978 - 2018

Jim Hall

Charter Member
Lifetime Member



Fortieth Anniversary
1978 - 2018

Jeff Watkins

Charter Member
Lifetime Member



Jim and Jeff receiving their plaques in honor of their years of service to the club.

Listing of attendees at the 40th Anniversary picnic:

Registered Guest included:

Chet and Jeanne Palumbo
Ted and Mary Becker
Bill and Ginny Landers
Gene Bossaller and Barb Knudsen
Aaron and Rhonda Ford
John, Kitty, Anna, and Sabina Lasinski
Monica Ledwon and John Regnier
Maggi Wester
Bob Huff (Charter Member)
Bill Henson
Kristina Richards and Candace
Mark Kistner and Sheree Yeager
Steve Dodson and Sherrie
Mile Saputo and the Boney Goat Band
Adam and Atena Martin
Bob and Barb Brasses
Jeff Watkins (Charter Member)
Richard and Vera Self
Mike and Teresa Self
Grace Self
Damien Flaherty
Bob and Barb Windal
Dave and Louise Smith
Pat Bulfin
John and Angie Midkiff
Pat and Nancy Pinkston
Al Tornabeni
Scott Keller
Mike Marx
Steve Hunter
Cathy Sorbello and Pat Froeckuan
Jim and Doris Hall (Charter Member)
Geoff and Angela Lockett
David Stukenbroeker

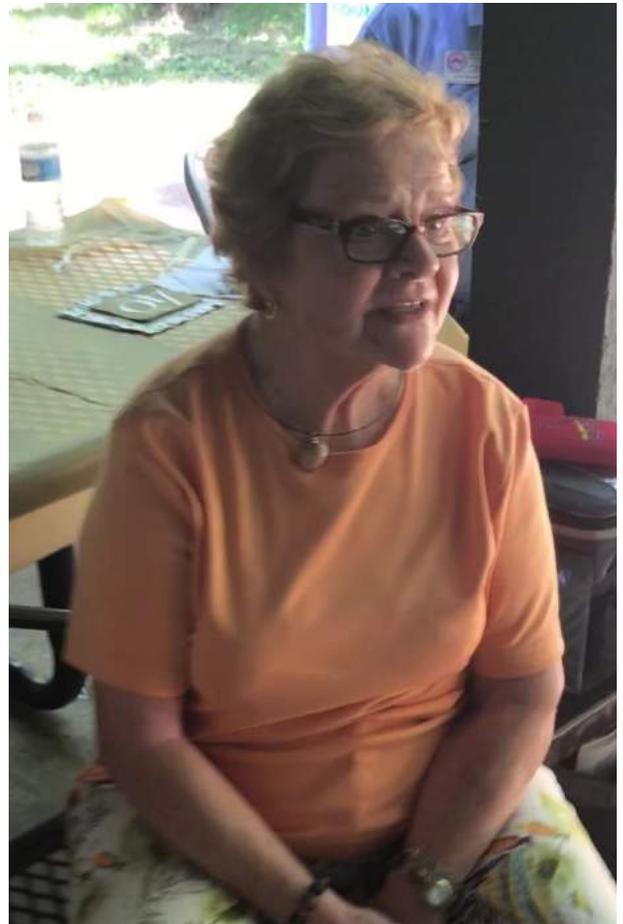
Pictures at the picnic











Grillmaster & Entertainment



A special shout out to our Grillmaster, Gene Bossaller, who did all the grilling over a hot fire on a hot day. Thank you so much, Gene!!



Thank you to Mike Saputo and the Boney Goat Band for repeating last years musical entertainment with their form of modified Bluegrass.

Directors—Past and Present



In Chronological Order: (L to R) Jeff Watkins, Steve Dodson, Bill Landers, Bob Brasses, John Lasinski, Kristina Richards and Chet Palumbo

Current Board of Directors



(L to R) Bill Landers (at Large Director), Bob Brasses (Secretary), Kristina Richards (Past Director), Ted Becker (Gazette Editor), John Midkiff (Ass't Director) and Chet Palumbo (Director)

Not in the picture: Pete Nathan (Treasurer), Dave Smith (at Large Director) and Richard Self (at Large Director)



Buicks of the Gateway Club





