

# Member Spotlight

## Andrew Haberern

*By Monica Ledwon*

This month's Gazette features a very new member, Andrew Haberern, who just joined this year. Andrew enjoys the best of both worlds in his 1956 Buick Special, having both the classic body styling of the mid-fifties with the drivability and safety of a modern-day Buick.

Andrew grew up in the quaint eastern town of Manchester, Connecticut just outside the state capital of Hartford. Manchester's motto is "City of Village Charm". Andrew graduated from Manchester High School in '84 but did not enroll in college right away. He spent several years learning the carpentry trade of cabinet making and continues to build with these skills doing side home renovation projects, even in his own home. After enrolling in Eastern Connecticut State University, Andrew attained a degree in Public Policy and Government with a minor in Economics. During this time, he met his future wife, Karen, who was attending another neighboring university.



Throughout his younger years, Andrew's best friend, Peter, drew him into the car show circuit every weekend. Peter and his dad were heavily into T-birds of the mid-sixties and formed Andrew's interest in automobiles. He tells of hanging car posters all over his bedroom wall and watching America Graffiti a thousand times. Going to one particular show, a 50's Revival in New Jersey, Andrew saw the sweeping automobile designs of the fifties and became immersed in that era of car culture. Though his daily commuter cars were early seventies Mustangs, Andrew set it in his mind that one day he would own a 1950's vintage set of wheels.

After his college graduation, the recession of the 90's made employment scarce. So, Andrew moved to Oklahoma for three years and took a consumer finance job. As Karen finished her Masters and PHD degrees, Andrew easily found work in the banking industry wherever she was going to school. Ending up in St. Louis, she achieved a professorship in teaching GIS (Geographic Information Systems for scientific research) at Washington University.

Moving here to STL in 1998, Andrew and Karen bought an original 1908 duplex in Tower Grove South and have lived there for 22 years. Andrew's skills in carpentry were well used in renovating the antique duplex into one large home. As he settled in to a job at Co-Bank, a

member of the Farm Credit System that provides financial services for agribusinesses, Andrew began thinking about his goal of owning a classic car from the fabulous fifties. He felt he finally had time and a place to fulfill his dream.

Bolstered by Karen’s approval, he began a local website search and saw a picture that jumped out at him, the 1956 Buick Special 2dr hardtop in a crystal sky blue and white two-tone paint color. Found at a classic car dealer, Andrew knew this was the one. The Special’s origin was from Casper, Wyoming. There already had been a three-year restoration on the car but it included some unique elements. A front clip from a 1980 Le Sabre had been welded on to the frame giving the car the modern conveniences of power steering and power brakes. A 350 Oldsmobile Rocket V-8 had been dropped into the engine compartment giving the car superb power plus the safe performance features that Andrew was seeking. Before working remotely, Andrew had driven the car often to his job as a daily driver. He then joined the national BCA and found the Gateway Chapter via an online search and introduced his new old car to club at the July picnic in Love Park.



Sitting pretty on the showroom floor. Who couldn't love that car???



Changed out the “smoothie” wheels for the more traditional original version using 1957 Roadmaster wheel covers.

Andrew and Karen enjoy their city lifestyle together with their Buick. And the Gateway Chapter is pleased to make their acquaintance in car club camaraderie.