

Member Spotlight

Greg Key

By Ted Becker

This month's Gazette features long time member, Greg Key. We see Greg almost every year when he fires up his 1965 Riviera for the Easter Show. Greg's story is all about St Louis and a life built on determination.



GREG AND THE RIV AT THAT COLD COLD 2008 EASTER SHOW

Born and raised in North St Louis County, he was fortunate to have met the love of his life in Jr High School. There was this really cute girl named Angie Bisesi who caught his eye and he was hooked from first sight. They moved on to Rosary High School, which has now been renamed Trinity. As their teenage mutual fascination grew, Greg visited Angie at her house from time to time. One day, Greg was talking to Angie's dad, Steve Bisesi.

Greg told Steve that he really like cars and had a particular desire to own a Mustang. As their conversation progressed, Steve showed Greg a pile of blankets in his garage with an unknown car under this covering. "OK", asked Greg, "what is it?". No answer! Greg begged to see it but Steve would not relent. Over the next year or so, this scenario was repeated several times. Total frustration for Greg.

One fine day when Greg was about 16, the day arrived for the unveiling. Under that heap of blankets was a black 1965 Buick Riviera with those unique clamshell headlights. "Oh Wow", thought Greg "Now that is cool!" Steve had bought the car in 1972 for his wife "Micki" to use as a daily driver. When he tired of the car, rather than selling it, he had put it in the garage under all those blankets and sheets. When Steve offered a chance to help him clean it up and get it ready for a revival from its long slumber, Greg jumped on the opportunity. After several

days of effort, it was ready for the long-awaited chance to enjoy a cruise. Steve behind the wheel and Greg in the shotgun seat, it was absolute heaven. This event was oft repeated until Steve finally let Greg take the wheel.

They began to go to local car shows and Steve met up with some of the Gateway Buick club guys and decided to join up, with Greg joining as well. They became active members and regularly attended meetings and events.

Greg and Angie were married at the age of 22 and began their life together. They moved to South St Louis County where they have lived continuously. Along the way, their marriage produced 2 boys, who Grandpa Steve absolutely adored. He took the boys to car shows and regular cruises in the Riviera.



Shortly before his marriage, Greg took a job with Union Electric, which is now Ameren. As the saying goes, “Ya gotta start somewhere”, he began as a janitor at the Portage Des Sioux power plant. He showed enthusiasm and

promise to the management and was selected to go into the Machinist Apprentice program. After 9 years as a Machinist, Greg was promoted into various management positions. He now serves as a Purchasing Agent in the natural gas division of Ameren.

Greg’s beloved father in law, Steve, passed away in 2002. Though still retaining the title, Greg’s mother in law told him that he could have the car for his use. Over the years, he has performed several upgrades for safety and reliability. As he received the car, it had one of those problematic Rochester 4-barrel carburetors. Starting the big 401 engine with that carburetor was always a challenge. Pump the gas 3 times to squirt some gas into the cylinders and set the choke, then crank. Repeat twice if it does not start. If the third time is not a charm, a fourth will only result in flooding. Should that happen, let it sit for 15 minutes and start over. One fine

day, Greg was out with the family driving around and stopped at Ted Drewes for some refreshment. In his haste to get the family back home, he made the fatal mistake of a 4th attempt. Anxious to get back home, he only made matters worse. OK, AAA to the rescue. When he got home, he got his car catalogs out and ordered an Edelbrock carburetor with an electric choke. He has never had an issue since. He also upgraded the air conditioning system to R134 and installed radial tires. A dual master cylinder and disc brakes now completes his upgrade to a car that he and the family can enjoy about 1000 miles a year. Greg and Angie still make those trips to Ted Drewes on a regular basis with their 2 two grandsons.

His other passion with powered equipment is boats. Boats have always been a part of his life and are an equal passion as it is with cars. He started a part time web-based business in 2005 selling boat accessories. The business has ebbed and flowed with the economy and the pandemic. Undeterred, he continues on with this hobby/business when he is not enjoying his Buick.

Though unable to join us at the Heartland Regional, we look forward to seeing Greg again at the 2021 Easter Show.