

# Member Spotlight

## Jeanne Palumbo

*By Monica Ledwon*

This month's Gazette features Jeanne Palumbo, the pleasant and petite partner of our club's President, Chet Palumbo. Born Jeanne Harlow, though not related to the famous Hollywood star, she has the same energetic verve to have a career, make a home, raise children, and keep up with Chet's many car adventures.



JEANNE WITH CHET AT THE HOLLIDAY PARTY

Jeanne was born in Hastings, Nebraska a town of 22,000 which is a good size for the Cornhusker state's wide-open spaces and known for the inventor of Kool-Aid by Edwin Perkins, in 1927. She lived all her formative years there and graduated from the town's only high school, Hastings High. Jeanne went on to enroll in the Dental Assistant Program at a nearby newly opened Central Community College. Attaining an Associate Degree, she worked a total of thirty-six years in this field from the frontlines of patient teeth cleanings to administrative duties in offices.

The stars aligned in Jeanne's life during college.

Way back east in Ohio, a guy running a bit wild, captured the attention of a Lincoln, Nebraska relative-- Chet's Uncle Clive. He convinced his nephew, to get to the new Hastings community college and seek an education in data processing. Karma prevailed after Clive's thoughtful suggestion and Jeanne met Chet.

In Jeanne's family life, cars were simply to get from point A to Point B. There never was any automobile worship or restoration. Jeanne didn't even have to bother with fueling up a gas tank as her dad did that for her. So, going on her first date with Chet to a car show was a totally new experience. Chet picked her up in the future classic, a '57 Chevy. Seeing all the automobile enthusiasts and their shiny cars, listening to all the car talk was a culture that impressed Jeanne.

As they dated, Jeanne became more aware of preserving and keeping a car in good condition. She noticed Chet's Chevy had worn front seat upholstery. During spring break one year when Chet was back in Ohio, Jeanne enlisted the help of a girlfriend for an interior upgrade and

patched the front seats with flower power printed material. But her sewing project left Chet less than impressed when he returned!

Chet and Jeanne married in 1968 and started their journeys down the road by transferring to different cities for Chet's work. First Bridgeton, Missouri where Jeanne became familiar with the smells and art of body work. Chet used their home's one car garage to utilize his skills in painting cars for friends. And, she was more drawn into this group of people who loved cars by accompanying Chet to the track for small sports car races where he put his MG Sprite through its paces.

As job transfers came about, Jeanne and Chet had two children, a boy Jeno (named after the frozen Italian pizza rolls, a staple in the Palumbo household) and a girl, Dena. Then during the 90's, they lived in Charlotte, NC and Atlanta, Ga with daily drivers always setting outside to accommodate Chet's hobby cars.

In 2000, while in Georgia, Chet found a '37 Buick Special Coupe, a solid classic that needed some work, in North Carolina. He had a friend there who drove the car down to Atlanta for him. Jeanne says this Buick became a keepsake and has stayed with them ever since. Buicks were also the daily drivers of choice in the Palumbo family especially Park Avenue models.

Becoming weary of the corporate life, Chet decided to take up a new opportunity that a friend offered him at Old Dog Street Rods in Maryland Heights, Mo. Moving back to the St. Louis locale was perfect for Jeanne to hang out more often with her offspring and their offspring. And, working in the Old Dog administrative office there, Chet met Pete Nathan who with his finesse talked Chet into joining the Gateway Chapter Buick Club.

In 2003 Jeanne and Chet moved into her dream house and his dream garage in New Melle. Now after retiring from her 36-year career, Jeanne is always around to lend Chet a hand by holding parts, lining up doors, scurrying around for tools and giving him moral support. Then, she began to join in on the Gateway Chapter's club camaraderie. Chet and Jeanne loyally attended out of town Buick shows and Jeanne has helped the club out frequently selling raffle tickets and helping with registrations at our own local shows.

Talented sewing and quilting is Jeanne's main hobby. She belongs to a church quilting group that together makes 1000 baby quilts a year. A specialty quilt of her own creation was one for her grandson Ryan who is very sports oriented. She gathered pieces of team shirt jerseys and diligently pieced them together to make him a quilt for his high school graduation. Kyle, Kate and Jake make up the rest of her clan of teenage grandkids.



Jeanne’s other pastimes include a book club group and Bible ministry. And, we too, appreciate her being another valued “car girl” in the Gateway Chapter Buick Club!