

# *Member Spotlight*

## *Jimmy Gehm*

*By Monica Ledwon*

This month's Member Spotlight features a hidden "gem" in our club, Jimmy Gehm. He often cannot make meeting nights but shares a vibrant enthusiasm for Buicks. Jimmy enjoys driving his red 1972 Skylark convertible for casual, fun times such as ice cream store runs never fearing of any spills on the white interior.

Jimmy comes from a long line of North Countians (residents of North County). His parents as well as he and his two brothers were born, raised and educated there. All graduated from Jennings High School.

Jimmy's dad owned a Mobil Gas Station in Jennings. So, his first exposure to auto mechanics came at a young age. He was a floor sweeper, gas pumper, oil changer and general all-around gopher retrieving customers' cars and then returning them after repairs.



Sometimes, customers abandoned their bedraggled cars on his father's lot. So, having three boys all needing transportation, his dad and brothers would then cobble together a homeless vehicle for transportation. Jimmy took an old Belvedere, VW and Cutlass through their final paces while in high school and college.

Throughout high school and in college, Jimmy was magnetized to sports—baseball, basketball and football. For the first years of college he hopscotched around the country obtaining sports scholarships from various colleges since he was more than eligible in skills. He ended his academic path with a degree in Education and started a thirty-year career in Physical Education grades K-12. More than 20 years were spent in the Parkway School District.

Jimmy briefly met his-wife-to-be, Rachel, in what was formerly known as the Fern Ridge Elementary School. Later, he reconnected with her at a golfing event and found love on the greens. The Gehm family then grew to three with daughter Olivia, now fourteen.

His first foray into a project car was refurbishing a 1967 Mustang fastback. It was not really his dream car but a very cool ride nonetheless. He worked a couple of years on it rebuilding the engine and having it painted. One day a man drove by with a trailer who had previously been scoping that Mustang out in the driveway. He stopped and asked Jimmy if he might want to sell the Ford. Jimmy said his wife agreed to this sale as Olivia was soon to be making her appearance and getting a car seat in the rear area of a Mustang fastback would be a challenge. So, they bid farewell to the Mustang.

Jimmy's interest then turned to the 68-72 A body muscle cars of Chevelles, Cutlasses, and Buicks. He loved that sleek body style. As he studied the classified ads, he noticed Buick vehicles of this vintage were markedly less expensive. So, he honed in on a 1972 Buick Skylark convertible living in Las Vegas. The motor was running but the paint was heavily oxidized. Jimmy had to replace the convertible top and scrub the white vinyl interior clean. Then he contacted body man extraordinaire, Adam Martin. Adam mentored Jimmy on how to improve the finish with 2000 grit sandpaper and an orbital buffer. The red exterior paint finish improved dramatically!

By happenstance, when pulling into a cruise night held on the parking lot of a south county Steak N Shake, he was told there that he should contact the Gateway Chapter Buick Club. They were holding a show the next day at Dave Sinclair Buick GMC. Jimmy followed through, met Steve Dodson in 2008 and joined up. Bob Windal, John Lasinski and Adam Martin have become his Buick buds ever since. Jimmy says you cannot beat the camaraderie and family vibe of this club. He enjoys connecting with fellow tinkerers and learning mechanical skills.

In 2018, Jimmy retired from teaching at Parkway and picked back up on his longtime side gig of rehabbing and remodeling homes. He loves carpentry work and enjoys the various jobs of home improvement much more on a full-time basis now. Keeping track of Olivia's sports schedule also occupies his free time. Although he often cannot make Monday night meetings, he is a kindred spirit in Buick Motor Cars.