

Member Spotlight

John Midkiff

By Monica Ledwon

This month we feature Buick enthusiast, John Midkiff. He is a soft-spoken man with a scientific mind who cherishes his 1966 GS convertible,

John was born in St. Louis, but his family raised him in several states from California to Iowa to finally settling back in Ferguson, Missouri. He graduated from McCluer North High School.

As a child, John was surrounded by cars, especially Buicks. His dad was a bona fide Buick mechanic along with having the skill to build race cars. John made frequent trips to the race track with his dad to watch the test drives and engine tweaking of these thoroughbred vehicles.

During his teen years, John's interest in Buicks continued. He was sixteen when he attained freedom of the road with his first car-- a white 1967 Special 4dr sedan. It was a sturdy road warrior and racked up many miles in teenage transport.

After high school, John joined the active duty Navy for a six-year stint and then transferred to the Naval Reserves. That became a part time military career for 27 years from which he recently retired as a Chief Petty Officer.

When back in civilian life, he finished a four-year BS degree at UMSL in Biology and set off on a scientific career in chemical analysis and environmental engineering.

Through the years, John worked for several companies in these industries. But when working for Envirodyne Engineers, one of his colleagues suggested a co-worker that might be of interest to him. She had the same biologic mindset as his, along with a love of history and cars. That lady of course was Angie. They have been married for 29 years enjoying John's daughter from a previous marriage and her two children as grandparents.



Buicks were still to follow John. He had a 1978 Regal as a daily driver for several years. But a flame grew within him for the style and sportiness of the mid 60's GS models, especially convertibles. He and Angie had perused ads but made no moves on any car. Fate turned towards them in 2005. When on vacation in Pennsylvania, John decided they should take a detour and look at a likely candidate they had seen online. It was a 1966 gray GS 401 convertible. They test drove it, looked it over, bought it and had it shipped home.

John has appreciated this car as fun driver with occasional displays at shows and autocross races throughout the Midwest. Only cosmetic upgrades such as new convertible top and new interior upholstery were done. Other than that, general maintenance is all this good Buick required.

Taking his GS to a Forest Park Easter show, John encountered the Gateway Chapter Buick Club and joined up. He has since held the office of Secretary and Co-Director. And John is often a contributor of thoughtful suggestions on event planning at club meetings.

As time went on, John felt he'd like to experience a car with a little less body roll than his vintage GS and became interested in Corvettes. So, he also owns a 2007 Z51. He and Angie have taken this sportscar on several Power Tours across the country.

Along with joyriding in his Buick and Vette, John is a history buff that plans every vacation around our country's vast historic sites. He also enjoys participating in any charitable Veteran Affairs activities. And, John always keeps up his connection to the Gateway Chapter Buick Club.



John and his sweet '66 GS at the 40th Anniversary Picnic