

# Member Spotlight

## Tom Roulston

By Monica Ledwon

This month's Gazette features returning club member Tom Roulston, a former member who drifted away but recently rejoined. He was so enthusiastic to be back in the club; he attended the recent non-meeting at Sports Café on July 1<sup>st</sup> with Jim Hall and Dave Smith when the date had been changed to the July 7<sup>th</sup> picnic! The three of them held a very productive meeting themselves rehashing vintage car stories.

Tom was born in DePaul hospital on Kingshighway and was raised in Ferguson. He was Catholic educated K-12 and graduated from St. Thomas Aquinas High School. During high school, he procured a part time job at a machine shop owned by a popular car collector, Jack Mulligan. There he learned how to operate a drill press and lathe and did general clean up while surrounded by some really cool cars.

Tom's interest in old cars was fostered by his father and grandfather, who was one of the very first members of the Horseless Carriage Club. His elders schlepped him along to many a Hershey swap meets as a kid to accumulate parts for family project cars.

After high school, Tom joined the Marine Corp Reservists and did a six-year stint in San Diego. Then, when back in St. Louis on a Halloween night, while hanging out on Loughborough Ave with a Marine buddy, somewhat under the influence at three in the morning, a carload of girls drove by and honked the horn. Then the girls drove by them again. Tom stopped the car to see what they were up to and by that move met his wife of 35 years, Martha. They have two daughters and five grandchildren now.

Attending several St. Louis Community College campuses, Tom took classes in mechanical maintenance. He received a Certificate of Mechanical Maintenance Specialization and has worked for the City of St. Louis Parks Dept for 24 years. Tom takes care of all things mechanical mostly pipe related. He oversees maintenance of the Kiener Plaza and Union Station fountains along with swimming pools and buildings in the surrounding Forest Park areas such as the Jewel Box. Piping is his specialty.



As Tom's dad was a part time wheeler dealer at a used car lot in Pagedale, he found Tom a project car. It was a 1952 Buick Super 4 door. He and his dad got it running and Tom enjoyed the silky-smooth ride of this massive Buick's suspension. Time went on and with the car being stored at the Pagedale lot, it went the way of dicey security and suffered several bouts of vandalism.

Still longing for that car, family life with kids and work life stalled his dream of regaining this beloved Buick model. In the early 2000's, though, Tom's dad came through once again and found him a 1958 Super 4 door at the Lo Sito Brothers body shop. It was a one owner, low miler (53K) that was only started occasionally. Most of its life was spent sitting under a carport so half the paint finish was sun baked and the other half decent original color. So, Martha deferred to the Buick and generously gave up her garage space.

Tom bought a 1958 Buick parts car to join his Super in the garage He's disassembled chunks of it to use as reference points in working on his own. Through the years, Tom has returned to Hershey to gather parts. The engine has been rebuilt by Shreves; transmission rebuild was done by Bill & Dan's Transmission. Currently Tom is working on the rear end adding new coil springs.

Though it's been slow going and the car is not road worthy yet, Tom rejoined the Gateway Chapter to reconnect with all those interested in Buicks. Bob Brasses brought him back in at an Easter Horseless Carriage Club show. Tom really doesn't have any other hobbies but running around with grandkids and working on his Buick with pieces of it spread out in the garage. But he say's "I'm back and I'm looking forward to talking Buick with all our club members"!



Not Tom's car, but this is similar to what he hopes to be the finished product.