

# Gateway Gazette

Monthly Newsletter of the St. Louis Chapter

## BUICK CLUB OF AMERICA

Volume XXIX, No.3 March 2008

### Member Profile – John & Kitty Lasinski

John and Kitty have been married for almost seven years. They have two daughters, Sabina 4, and Anna 2 1/2 months and live in Fenton, Missouri.

John is a mechanical/manufacturing engineer working for Monsanto in the Agricultural



Automation Engineering division. Kitty is an interactive project manager for Master Key Consulting.

Kitty and I are definitely car crazy! When we met, I was building a Lamborghini kit car based on a Pontiac Fiero chassis that I had dropped a Chevy 350 into the back of. I got the car assembled and running. While this car was very different and crazy fast, it was too hard to keep it cool; it kept overheating. Meanwhile, I had found a 1956 Chevy two-door wagon that was in decent shape, and we decided that it would make a good fun cruiser. I sold the kit car sans motor to one of the guys in the local kit car club and dropped that 350 into the '56 wagon. I got a little over anxious one day and took it for a quick spin down the road. I couldn't resist kicking in the 4-barrel to see how she ran. Well that was a dumb idea as the hood was not latched to anything, and it came flying up blocking the windshield. Somehow I managed to keep the car straight and got it stopped, so I could put the bent hood down and get it home.

I began searching eBay and found a replacement hood in a little town in eastern Tennessee named  
(continued on page 3)

**NEXT MEETING – APRIL 3  
FENTON BAR & GRILL, 701 Rudder Road**

## Director's Message

Hi All,

Well, I'm now thawed out from the Easter Show. It was a cold, wintry day to say the least. We had cold, snow and wind! What a fun day. For those brave souls who made it, thanks for taking the time to come. Mike Marx drove his 1930 all the way in from St. Charles.

We had a good time on a marginal day at Steve Dodson's. Several cars had an oil change accomplished. Those that attended had a great time eating and visiting.

Spring is here – time to get the Buicks out! Why not go on our pre-tour to the BCA National show in Flint, Michigan? It will be a good time. Talk to anyone that went on the pre-tour last year, and I'm sure you'll hear it was a wonderful trip.

Happy Buicking,

*Bob*

## Meeting Minutes, March 6, 2008

Location: The March 2008 meeting was held on Thursday, March 6, at Home Town Buffet. Roughly, 25 members and two guests, Gene Bossaller (Olds Club) and Scott Keller (Gateway GS Club) attended.

The Club meeting was facilitated by Bob Brasses, Director.

Minutes from the February 2008 meeting were accepted as printed in the February *Gateway Gazette*.

Pete Nathan gave the Treasurer's Report.

### Past Events

Feb. 17 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Indoor Swap Meet, Cape Girardeau, MO

Mar. 1 Hyman's Tour – Met at 11 am Hooter's Westport

## Upcoming Events

- March 15 Oil Change at Steve Dodson's 9:00
- March 23 Easter Concours d'Elegance Car Show, Forest Park. Need \$15 to Pete by March 6 meeting
- April 6 Waterloo Swap Meet
- April 13 Lunch/dinner trip to Maeystown, IL. Jeff Watkins planning event.
- April 27 Model T Swap Meet, Gateway Int'l Speedway, Madison, IL
- May 3 Sinclair Buick Show
- May 30- Olds Show at Tan-Tar-A Resort,
- June 1 Lake of the Ozarks
- June 7 Bobby's Custard
- June 29 Museum of Transportation Show

## Old Business

Belt buckles sold (2)

Director-at-Large nominations include Paul Meyer, Herb Morris, Jeff Watkins and Steve Dodson

## New Business

Beffa's Car Show, April 26

Wagner Buick Show, September 14

Kunz Plantation and October Meeting, October 4

National Raffle – Bob has tickets, \$3 each

St. Genevieve Wine Tour, October 18

Bill Landers has volunteered for the *Gazette* editor position.

Charity for 2008

Money collected from 2007 for the Shriners will be kept and donated along with 2008 funds.

## Next Regular Meeting:

Thursday, April 3 – Fenton Bar & Grill

Herb Morris won the 50-50 drawing again (\$17) and donated the winnings back to the Club.

John Lasinski, Secretary

## Editor's Note

Thanks to Steve and Sherri Dodson, Bob Brasses, Jeff Watkins, Sharon Morris, Ginny Landers and all who contributed text and/or photos. This issue wouldn't have happened without your help.

## **Member Profile** (continued from page 1)

Oliver Springs. Kitty and I jumped in her Isuzu Trooper (the hood would fit inside), and we made our first road trip together to go get it. After that trip, I realized that I had found a special woman who shared my passion for cars and classic rock. We were married soon after that. I installed the hood, rewired it and got it all primed and ready for cruising. We attended local cruise nights and had lots of fun meeting and hanging out with all the car people.

While the wagon was cool, it was no muscle car, so we went looking for one. We drove out to Fast Lane Classic Cars to look at a Chevelle, but it was already sold. Kitty, being the wonderful wife she is, said, "If we are buying another car, it should be a convertible," as she stood in front of a beautiful bright red Buick GS455 convertible. The salesman asked if we wanted to take it for a drive. We looked at each other and said, "Heck, yes!" Well, we went home that night and did some extensive searching on the Internet about the Buick, and after finding out how rare (they had only made 165) and powerful it was, we ended up going back the next week and buying it.

The car wasn't perfect but the body and paint were incredible. It had a non-original Buick 455 Stage 1 motor with a big loping cam and headers, but was missing the ram air system from under the hood and various other original parts. The interior also needed some work. Luckily, the owner had the original numbers matching motor, and it came with the car! I redid the interior with new covers and door panels, replaced the wood-grain dash decals and located all the ram air parts it needed. Thank goodness for eBay! We drove it with that motor in it for about a year. This included driving it all the way to New Orleans, Louisiana, on Hot Rod Power Tour, while Kitty was four-months pregnant with Sabina. After that trip, we decided to make the car more drivable and original, so I had the original 455 rebuilt, got rid of the headers and put the car back to original condition (except for the Ferrari red paint), including getting the A/C working. We then hit the show circuit and started taking first-place trophies beating out Chevilles and other more popular cars.

While having the original motor rebuilt, I noticed a car sitting in the back of the guy's pole barn and asked what it was? He told me it was a friend's car, but his friend just didn't have the time and wanted to get rid of it. It was a 1966 Pontiac Lemans 4-speed convertible, midnight blue with white interior. The drive train wasn't installed, but it was included, plus a brand new Pontiac 455, all for the low price of \$4000. While we needed another convertible like a hole in the head, I drug Kitty out to look at it. She realized it was definitely a good deal and we bought it. I dropped in the 455 and the 4-speed transmission, cleaned it up, rewired it and sold it for \$9,000, without even starting it.

We then decided a street rod might be fun, since we now had the newborn Sabina and couldn't put the top down on the GS. Once again, I scoured eBay and found a great starter project – a 1947 Chevy in eastern Pennsylvania for \$3,500. It had a mild 350 Chevy crate motor, good body with some mods and no interior. I bought some leather buckets from a junkyard and made some door panels. I also retrofitted the original front suspension with a new Mustang II suspension with disk brakes and power steering. Also, I installed a new modern wire harness.

In the meantime, we attended several GS Nationals in Bowling Green, Kentucky, with the '71 GS convertible, where we could never place for a trophy. However, we had the honor of having our car selected by Dennis Gage of the "My Classic Car" show on the Speed Channel to be a feature car for an upcoming episode. The interview and filming took over an hour and was worth more than any trophy. That was my five minutes of fame (I will be signing autographs at our next meeting).

While at that GS Nationals, we got bit by the Grand National bug watching the drag racing. We decided we needed one of those too! Now, Kitty is very understanding, but she said if we got a Grand National, the '47 had to go. So away it went and I found a 1987 Grand National in Kansas City. I flew to KC on Southwest Airlines. The owner picked me up at the airport and I drove the car home. Man what a fun car! This baby was lightning fast, but was docile enough to  
(continued on page 4)

## **Member Profile** (continued from page 3)

drive around town with the A/C on and cruise control! It even gets good gas mileage, if you keep your foot out of the Turbo, and it's a **BUICK**.

Well, that was great for about a year, until that muscle car bug hit me again. I am now hooked on Buicks and wanted another GS. What I really wanted was a GSX. I couldn't afford a real one, so I set out to find a good candidate for a recreation. After searching and looking at Skylarks, I ran across an outstanding deal on a real 1972 GS455 near Shreveport, Louisiana. It was a numbers matching, highly optioned car that was complete but has some rust rot in the rear quarters and front fenders. I decided what better to make a GSX recreation out of but a real GS455.

I once again convinced my lovely wife and off I went with a trailer to Louisiana to pick up the new project. The car turned out to be even better than I thought with a very strong motor and all the original parts, which the previous owner had taken off when he was drag racing the car. Of course, another car had to go, so the Grand National went up for sale and was eventually bought by fellow club member John Waltz. Herb Morris is now the proud owner of that car, so at least we still get to see it.

I have torn into the '72 disassembling the entire front clip and removing the motor. I opened up the motor, inspected it and found it to be freshly rebuilt as the previous owner stated. I installed new gaskets and repainted it including all the brackets. I have welded in new rear-quarter panels and trunk pans, dropped the transmission and motor in, and I am in the process of getting it ready for paint this spring. I don't know if it will happen, but I would like to have the car on the road again before the end of the cruise season.

We have no plans of ever selling our red 1971 GS455 convertible and want to keep it for a very long time. It's the one car we won't sell! We love to drive it, take it to car shows and cruises. Once the

'72 is done and has seatbelts installed in the back for car seats, we'll be able to take the girls with us cruising too.

We joined the local Club after attending a cruise at Berger Buick, and soon after, I became Secretary. We have enjoyed all of the Club events we've attended so far, and so has Sabina. As most of you know, our daughter Anna was born very shortly after the Holiday Party this year, which we attended even though Kitty was having contractions the whole time. So now, we have two girls to bring to meetings with us – we just hope they both grow up with the same appreciation for cars that we have. We've enjoyed meeting and socializing with everyone in the Club and look forward to being involved with many more events in the future.

Contributed by John Lasinski

## **Illinois River Road South Tour**

Are you beginning to feel like spring is here and you're itchy to get your Buick out and about? I have just the thing for you. We will visit the great cities of Columbia, Valmeyer, Maeystown, Waterloo and Prairie Du Rocher. We will also tour the restored French Fort De Chartes built in 1753 through 1772. Total distance for the tour is approximately 100 miles.

We will meet on Sunday, April 13, 2008, at 9:30 am at South County Shopping Center near the J.C. Penney store on the Lemay Ferry side. Departure time is 10 am. I am still working on a site for lunch, hopefully in Waterloo.

Contributed by Jeff Watkins

## **Anniversaries/Birthdays**

Happy Anniversary and Happy Birthday to those celebrating those dates in March and April. Your editor hopes to have the file of anniversaries and birthdays soon.

## HCCM Easter Show

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. Well anyway, it was cold and snowing. But, we had the company of the hardy members of the Gateway Buick Club! Twelve of the 18 members, who had signed up, managed to make it to the show.

The group began arriving at the meeting point on Wells Drive before 9 am with snow in the air. After the last Buick arrived, a strange looking vehicle called a Mercury (Steve Dodson's Buick had problems and he made a substitution) joined us and we headed towards the show field. Pete Nathan brought the Club's canopy and supplied some plastic to use as sides. Herb Morris supplied a propane heater, so we started off fairly comfortably. Ginny Landers and Barb Brasses both brought some delicacies, which were most appreciated.

Later on, the wind picked up, blew out the heater and threatened to blow the plastic sides away. When it seemed the canopy would be blown away, we gave in and disassembled our refuge from the cold and snow. Turnout other than by our Club was quite low.



Do These Guys Look Cold?

Shortly thereafter, a group headed off for lunch. So, we said goodbye to the Muny lot till next year. Hopefully, it will be a bit nicer then!

Contributed by Bob Brasses



Buicks Lined Up Before Entering  
The Showfield



It Was Great Until The Wind Got Too Strong

## Ladies Luncheon

While the guys huddled around the heater in Steve's garage, the ladies headed for Kimmswick. Everyone enjoyed lunch at the Blue Owl, especially the desserts. After lunch, some time was spent browsing the shops.



See What You Missed By Not Joining Us



Sure Beats Hanging Out In A Cold Garage

## Oil Change

With Easter set for a very early date this year, the oil change was also early. Of course, that meant a cold windy day. However, with the help of Steve's propane heater, plenty of hot coffee, mounds of delicious bagels from St Louis Bread Company, and platters of burgers and brats, the guys survived. Thanks to Dennis McDonough for bringing the bagels and cream cheese. Thanks to Dave Smith for cooking the burgers and brats. Also, thanks to Ed Keil for buying all the food and drink.

Melissa Perucca's "blue fin" got an oil change and a thorough check under the hood as did Herb Morris's latest acquisition, his '87 GN.



Chef In Charge Of Burgers And Brats

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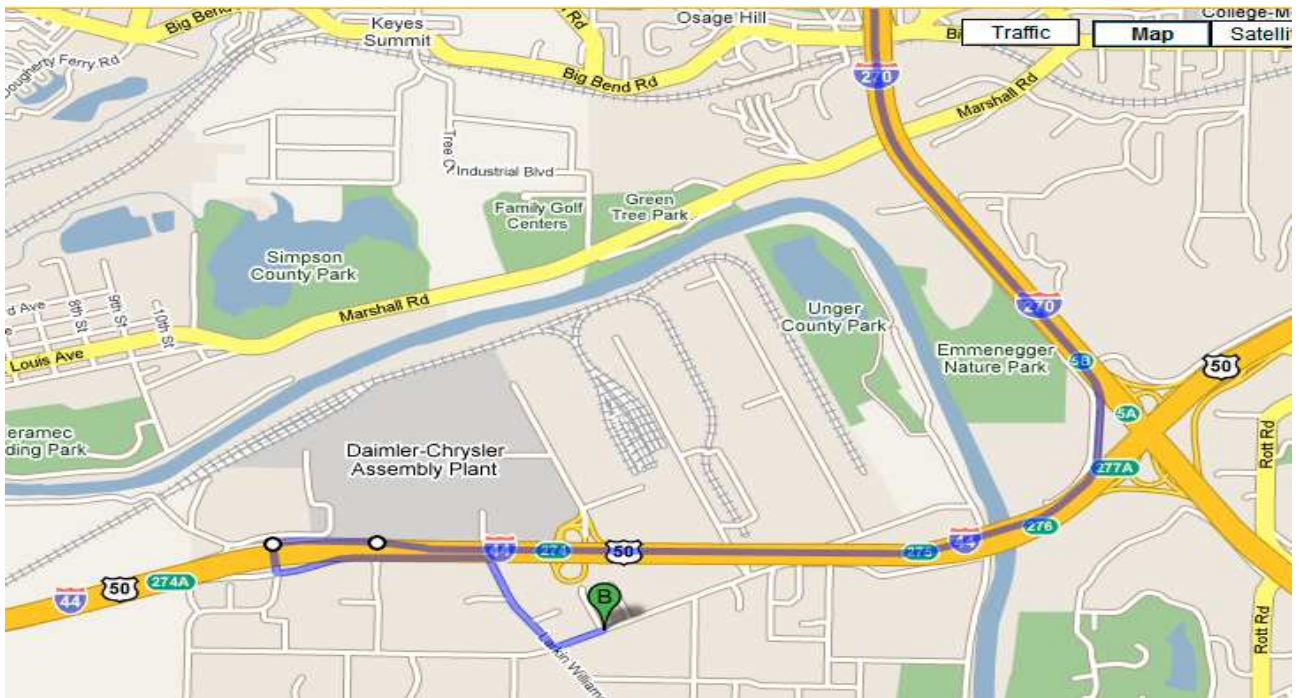
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E-mail: [sdodson1@primary.net](mailto:sdodson1@primary.net)

Office (636) 296-2949

12 Municipal Dr. Suite D  
Arnold, MO 63010

**NEXT MEETING** will be at Fenton Bar & Grill, 701 Rudder Road. Take I-44 west from I-270 and exit onto N. Hwy Drive to Bowles Avenue. Crossover I-44, then left on S. Hwy Drive to Larkin Williams Drive. Turn right on Larkin Williams for 0.3 miles, then left on Rudder Road.



More Oil Change pictures



OK, Whose Car Is Next?



Blue Fin Gets An Oil Change

**ITEMS FOR SALE:**

- 1. Buick car radio original AM/FM, 8-track, plays great, 12 volts - \$30.
- 2. Plymouth car radio (MOPAR) original AM, 6 volts - \$10.
- 3. Mustang car radio AM/FM cassette, plays great - \$15.
- 4. Mustang full-wheel covers, set of 4, 14 inch, good condition - \$20.

Contact Dave Smith, 314-895-3416 (home) or 314-550-5853 (cell)

The *GATEWAY GAZETTE* is a monthly newsletter, free to paid members of the St. Louis Gateway Chapter of the Buick Club of America. Articles, technical information, For Sale and Want Ads, photos, restoration sagas and coming events are welcomed, but must be submitted by the next-to-last Thursday of the month to assure inclusion in the next issue.

Our membership year runs from May 1 to April 30. Membership is renewable on May 1. Members joining between January 1 and April 30 are paid up through the next April. Dues are \$15 per year for the local chapter. Contact Pete Nathan, Treasurer. See address below. Current dues for the national club are \$35 per year, payable to: Buick Club of America, P.O. Box 360775, Columbus, OH 43236-0775.

The Gateway Chapter meets monthly on the **FIRST THURSDAY** of the month. Meetings begin at 7:30 PM and guests are welcome to attend. During the summer months, June through October, we meet at Chuck-A-Burger Drive-in, 9025 St. Charles Rock Road, just west of I-170. During the winter months, November through April, we move indoors at various restaurants around St. Louis.

For more information, our local mailing addresses are as follows:

<b>Director:</b>	Bob Brasses (636) 343-1507	911 Woodway Circle Fenton, MO 63026	bbrasses@earthlink.net
<b>Asst. Director:</b>	Adam Martin (314) 713-1262	1212 Cloverbrook St. Charles, MO 63304	adamm@buickpartsdirectory.com
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Pete Nathan (314) 966-0461	#1 Huntleigh Trails Lane St. Louis, MO 63131	phnauto@aol.com
<b>Secretary:</b>	John Lasinski (636) 225-9850	440 Avalon View Ct. Fenton, MO 63026	jlasinski@yahoo.com
<b>Newsletter Editor:</b>	Bill Landers (314) 921-5015	2564 Shorewood Drive Florissant, MO 63031	walanders@sbcglobal.net

**Web Site:** [www.gatewaybca.org](http://www.gatewaybca.org)

**Webmaster:** Adam Martin

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2564 Shorewood Drive  
Florissant, MO 63031