

# THE WESTERN ROUND-UP



May 2022

Promoting the Preservation & Enjoyment  
of Antique Automobiles Since 1950.



The Holy Grail Garage Tour - See pages 4-6.

# Western PA Region AACA Directors



Debbie Sheetz, *President*  
724-454-8948

John Kuhns, Sr., *Vice President*  
412-554-3321

Mark Jackson, *Treasurer*  
724-961-3563

Mark DeFloria, *Secretary*  
412-558-0417

Flo Myers, *Publicity*  
724-331-7293

Bob Doppelheuer, *Safety*  
724-366-5930

for further information see the 2021 Western PA Region Roster, which is available on the Region's website.

## ..... Membership Information .....

Do you like old cars? We at the Western PA Region of the Antique Automobile Club of America are excited to share our fun and exciting activities, events and resources.

You don't have to own an antique automobile to become a member, However, you must first join our national club, The Antique Automobile Club of America (AACA) before joining our Region. For national membership information and to join online visit: [www.aaca.org](http://www.aaca.org) AACA is the largest and oldest antique automobile club in the world and offers a wide variety of resources, and activities. All national members also receive the beautiful Antique Automobile Magazine.

For Western PA Region AACA new membership information visit [www.westernparegion.org](http://www.westernparegion.org)

New members must attend a Western PA Region monthly meeting to be voted in and welcomed. Our monthly meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month except December and January. We are a Latrobe-based club.

Upon receipt of your membership application, our Membership Chairman will contact you to schedule a convenient monthly meeting for you to attend. Our monthly meetings take place at several venues in the Latrobe and Greensburg, PA area.

To learn more about our club and activities visit our website: [www.westernparegion.org](http://www.westernparegion.org)

Please also feel free to contact any of the directors above with questions about memberships.

## 2022 CALENDAR

**WEDNESDAY, May 18 - WPR May Monthly Meeting**  
7:30 p.m. at the Westmoreland Conservation District (barn) 218 Donohoe Road, Greensburg

**Saturday, June 4 - Tour to Al and Mary's Antique Car & Music Box Collection** - Don't miss this fun tour! Flyers were emailed. Printed flyers are included in the printed Round-Ups. Contact Carl Erb to register now!

**Tuesday, June 21 - WPR JUNE MONTHLY MEETING**  
Note time change. Meeting starts at 7:00 p.m., Location is Specialty Cars Limited, 4728 Route 982, Latrobe, 1.3 miles North of Route 30.

**June 30, July 1, 2 & 3 - Westmoreland Arts & Heritage Festival - WPR Antique Car display on the lower dam breast and information booth.**

**Saturday, July 9, 1:00 p.m. - WPR Tour to Dan's Cars, Pittsburgh**

**Sunday, July 31 - WPR Annual Picnic**  
1:00 p.m., Cooperstown Club, Latrobe

**Sunday, September 4 - WPR AACA Paul P. Bell Memorial Antique Auto, Custom and Street Rod Show**  
9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Legion Keener Park, Latrobe

### Fun Cruises & Events You Won't Want to Miss!

**Monday, May 30, West View Borough Memorial Day Parade, Antique cars are welcome to participate.** Contact Andrew Bensch, [abensch@wvboro.com](mailto:abensch@wvboro.com) or 412-931-2800 ext 114

**Saturday, June 11 - The 4th Annual Cruise for Conservation**  
Benefiting the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association and our natural resources. 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Donohoe Center, Donohoe Road, Greensburg

**Friday, June 17 - Saint Bruno Church Festival - Car Show**  
5:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. 1715 Poplar St. Greensburg, Entry \$7.00

# President's Message



Western PA Region AACA President Debbie Sheetz

Hello Western Region AACA members:

**T**hank you for electing me to the board of directors for the 2022 year. I'll be serving as president. If there is anything you'd like the club to do or plan, please let me know.

Welcome to spring and the hope of sunny driving days ahead. We held the Annual Meeting at the Conservation District barn with a great turnout of members. Prizes and delicious food were enjoyed by all. Also the planning meetings for the annual car show have been going well.

Carl Erb is not disappointing us again this year with a selection of car tours and collections to mavel over! Anyone having any tour they would like to plan, please let Carl know.

Now is the time to dust off our cars and take a drive. People love seeing our antiques drive down the road. Hopefully maybe you'll inspire a young person to get involved in the hobby. See you at the next meeting.....

*Debbie*

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## Western PA Region Presents 2022 Scan Tool Scholarship Award



At Central Westmoreland Career & Technology Center (CWCTC), New Stanton, l-r: Automotive Technology Instructor Mr. Brian Pegg, 2022 Scan Tool Scholarship recipient Gaberial Thompson and Mark Jackson, WPR Scholarship Committee

**Gaberial Thompson** was presented with our region's 2022 Scan Tool Scholarship Award on May 16. He is a graduating Hempfield High School Senior in the Automotive Technology Program at the Central Westmoreland Career and Technology Center (CWCTC), New Stanton. He is currently working with Greensburg Toyota under a co-op program, and planning to

further his education through Toyota University. Upon completing his automotive technology education at CWCTC, Gaberial will be qualified to conduct PA State safety and emission inspections. In the Toyota University program Gabe will earn certifications, which will enable him to work with Toyota hybrids, electric vehicles and the Supra sports car!

# Tour to The Holy Grail Garage

By Carl Erb



A sight to behold - a view from The Holy Grail Garage choir loft in the Borough of East Pittsburgh.

Something every owner of a treasured antique, classic, or exotic car needs to consider is – where am I going to keep this gem that I only drive occasionally? With all types of new storage facilities popping up everywhere, or old buildings being converted into storage facilities, you can find all types of buildings which offer automobile storage. In Western PA, depending on the quality and the location of the building, monthly car storage rates range from as low as \$60/month up to \$100/month and much more. These storage buildings range from new metal pole barn type construction to former gas stations, car repair garages and car dealerships to small and large warehouses, and buildings as large as manufacturing mills. BUT, perhaps the most exclusive, most beautiful, unique and exotic car storage facility and clubhouse anywhere in the country is right here in the Pittsburgh area in a former Slovak Catholic Church now called THE HOLY GRAIL GARAGE. ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doi-G\\_skPdE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doi-G_skPdE))

This heavenly garage is located in the Borough of East Pittsburgh, PA, about 11 miles southeast of the “Point” in downtown Pittsburgh. In its heyday, with a population of around 6,000 people, East Pittsburgh was home to the Westinghouse Corporation, where nearly all its residents were part of the work force numbering 20,000+. Although Westinghouse held over 300 patents and was a many faceted corporation manufacturing anything from train air brakes and huge generators to appliances and lighting fixtures, it is also known as the location of

KDKA, the world’s first radio station. In 1928 Westinghouse Laboratoires in East Pittsburgh also developed a new type of electronic tube, which became known as “television”.

Unfortunately, Westinghouse began moving operations out of East Pittsburgh in 1988, which caused the population to dwindle as reported in the 2010 U.S. Census, to less than 2,000 people. This left many homes, businesses and churches empty. One of these buildings was St. Helen’s Slovak Catholic church, which took 2 years to build from 1929 to 1931. I have not been able to find the year that St. Helens closed its doors. But with no source of revenue, it had now become a financial liability to the Pittsburgh Diocese because it still had to be insured and maintained, or torn down.

When Mike Fanto, owner of Tower Auto Sales in Cheswick, learned of St. Helen’s being up for sale, he decided to explore the possibility of turning it into a car storage and clubhouse facility. The purchase price of the church with rectory and the cost of the cleaning, repairs and remodeling was considerably less than it would have cost to build a new building or to renovate an old building that could store 35 cars. And, that new or renovated building would not come with a nearly 3,000 square ft, two-story, stone building with an office space, a smoking room, a table pool room, a bar, a card room, a complete kitchen, 3 bedrooms with 3 bathrooms and a powder room. The renters have complete 24/7/365 access to the buildings and can use it for parties and meetings or to just “hang out” with



A 1967 Plymouth Belvedere GTX backed by a stained glass window



Original symbols were replaced with classic gasoline logos



Choir loft to coffee bar with rose window



A special corner for a Cobra



Clubhouse pool room (former rectory)



WPR tour participants enjoy the beautiful cars in the basement.



Clubhouse cigar aficionado room (former rectory)

their friends to watch sporting events on one of the 7 or more big screen TVs in various locations in the church and rectory.

For cars to gain access to the main floor, the beautifully carved, massive wooden doors had to be replaced by an overhead garage door, which Mike had custom made to replicate the look of the original ones. To preserve the history of the church, he kept those original doors and mounted them high on the back wall in the chancel where they can be clearly seen above whatever car is parked there. The religious bas-relief

inscription in Latin and the three large religious medallions above the doors had to be chiseled off and were replaced by the sign HOLY GRAIL GARAGE and large letters H G G. Along the walls of the nave below the timbered, vaulted ceiling above the pillars there were circular religious themed paintings which were painted over with American oil company signs. Just below those paintings are flags with logos of car manufacturers. The Church has 3 floors, with about 14 storage spaces on the

*continued on page 6*

# Thinking of You!

**H**ow many times have we asked each other if we've heard from Mary, John, Suzi, Bill, (fictious) etc., because they haven't been seen or haven't been attending meetings. Well, I've heard of a really neat way to let individuals know they are thought of thanks to John Kuhns and his mother. Mrs. Kuhns has not been able to attend group gatherings with friends, sooooo, they sent her a THINKING OF YOU CARD with a nice note attached and a little memento inside. Some of our members might not be able to get out or maybe not feeling well. We may be able to brighten their day with this simple, yet super cool and kind gesture.

If enough individuals volunteer, it would also be a great idea at the time of loss we send a card to the member from the club. So here is where I need help. I would like to gather a few individuals who would like to be a part of the SUNSHINE COMMITTEE. The club would furnish cards and stamps. If you would like to participate, please drop me a note via email: flojo15601@gmail.com or my cell: 724-331-7293.



Thank you,  
*Flo Myers*

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## *Tour to The Holy Grail Garage continued from page 5*

main floor in the nave of the church. Mike keeps the chancel, where the altar once stood, open to allow tenants to pull their cars into that space to take photos of them.

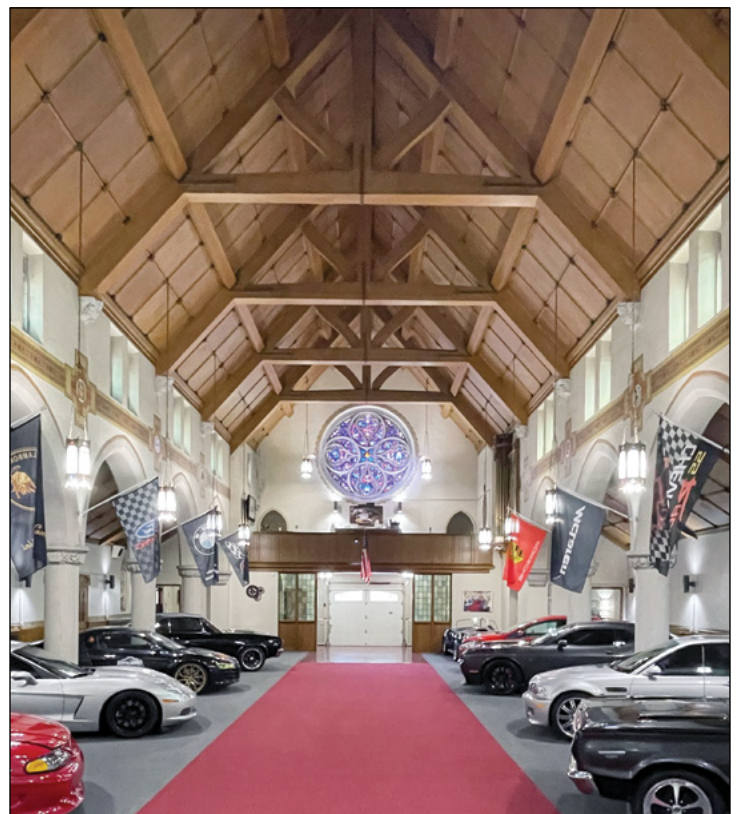
The basement below can store another 30 cars and the smaller sub-basement below that is a garage where the tenants can wash and detail their cars. Each tenant has 24/7/365 access with a personal key code. Both buildings have security cameras everywhere and electrical outlets to plug in battery tenders. In the choir loft just below the huge stained glass rose window is a coffee bar. And in what used to be the baptistry, there is another seating and snack area with a big screen TV.

The de-sanctification of a Catholic Church requires that everything religious must be removed, including the altar, the baptistry, statues, paintings and stained-glass windows. However, when it came to those windows, Mike said that because it would cost too much to replace all those huge custom-made windows, even with plain glass, he would not have made the deal. Fortunately, all the stained glass windows are still there.

When we arrived from our meeting point in Greensburg, Mike greeted us with open arms and during our hour and a half tour we were allowed to explore all parts of the church and rectory and get all our questions answered. Although our tour participants looked carefully at all the beautiful cars in the Church, I think they zeroed in more on the uniqueness and beauty of the Church and how it had been so masterfully

converted to the most beautiful and unique car storage facility anywhere.

Thanks Mark Fanto for saving this beautiful building.



The Holy Grail Garage choir loft and stained glass rose window

# Name That Car

By Mark Jackson

## April's Car



Denny and Becky Blank were the first to correctly identify April's car as a 1964 Buick Riviera. We also heard from Howard Finney and Gary Wiegand.

April's car was a tough one since the 1963 and 1964 Buick Riviera models are nearly identical. Minimal trim and mechanical changes were made for 1964, with the most identifiable features being a raised stylized "R" hood emblem and "R" emblems replacing the Buick crests in the taillight lenses. You cannot see these particular items in this photo. Although there was an element of luck involved in the identification of this car, you have to admit, the first generation Rivieras 1963-1965 were beautifully designed automobiles.

This photo was taken at the 2018 AACA Grand National Meet hosted by our region. The owner proudly displayed a 1964 license plate on the front and his ID plaque also states the year. However, it would've taken a super duper magnifying glass to see those details in this photo.

reference source - Wikipedia

## May's Car



We recently enjoyed the Downtown Irwin Car Cruise. What make and year of car is Jill standing beside? Call 724-832-9074 and leave a message or email [jacksonmark469@gmail.com](mailto:jacksonmark469@gmail.com) with the first correct answer to win a \$20 Sheetz gift card.

## THE WESTERN ROUND-UP

The Western Round-Up is the official publication of the Western Pennsylvania Region of the Antique Automobile Club of America. It is published on a monthly basis with January/February being a combined issue.

Each issue is also posted on the Region's website: [www.westernparegion.org](http://www.westernparegion.org). Members may choose to receive this newsletter by email or a mailed hard copy at an additional cost.

Submission deadlines are the first day of each month for possible publication in that month's edition.

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**Special thanks to:**

**Carl Erb, Flo Myers, Debbie Sheetz, and Barbara Shugars for their time and talent, which helped produce this issue.**



## An Automotive Gem in the Neighborhood

Congratulations to long-time WPR members John Ross Kuhns and John Kuhns, Sr. on the Grand Opening of Specialty Cars Limited's brand new building located on Route 982, Latrobe on May 14, 2022. They have many beautiful antique and classic cars and trucks for sale. We wish you the very best with your new expanded facility!



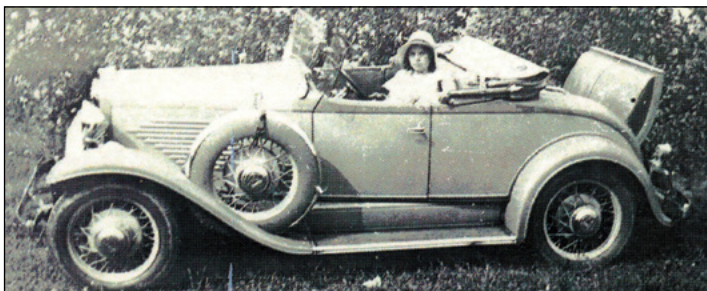
Western Pennsylvania Region  
Antique Automobile Club of America  
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## Members Rally to Help Identify Mystery Car

By Mark Jackson



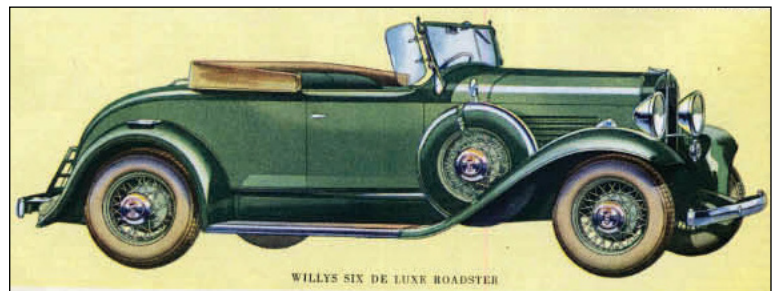
Barbara Shugars' mother behind the wheel of the "Mystery Car"

In the April, 2022 *Western Round-Up* we featured a photo which Barbara Shugars sent in of her mother sitting behind the wheel of a sporty roadster. She asked if any of our members could help identify this car, and the wheels started turning.

Tom Ulishney called in and thought the roadster appeared to be a 1929 Chrysler 75. Dave Sheetz thought the car resembled a Chrysler as well.

Bill Maurer called and said that he initially thought the car was a 1931 or '32 Willys, or perhaps a Willys Knight, but was really perplexed over the vent configuration on the sides of the hood. Bill said that he looked at hundreds of photos, but the hood vents were really throwing him off. (He even lost sleep and three pounds over it!)

Al Terek emailed and thought the hood looked familiar,



Our best guess is a 1931 Willys...(or is it?)

perhaps an Australian or South American version of an American made car.

Gary Wiegand called and said flat out. "The mystery car is a 1931 Willys". I Googled a 1931 Willys and found a photo which looked identical - hood vents and all. It was in the Willys register. [Here's a link to the photo.](#) I also found a 1931 Willys Six De Luxe Roadster ad illustration, which is shown above. It strongly resembles Barbara's mystery car. I sent Al Terek the link to the 1931 photo and he felt that it matched.

So Barbara, there you have it. Our best guess is a 1931 Willys. Although Bill Maurer is still looking into it, and your husband Bob may have been right in thinking this car may have had a combination of parts from different vehicles.