

# Triangle Chapter Newsletter



Car of the Month



June 2020

2020 Issue 6

## News Summary

*(Story summaries here. See the stories in the matching sections below.)*

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2. **The Next Triangle Chapter Events.** Our June 18 meeting has been cancelled.
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## 1. Corona Virus Impacts on AACA and Triangle Events

Our daily activities continue to be impacted by the Covid-19 watch. Here is a summary of the Car show events impacted and those still planned.

### AACA Event Cancellations

- |              |                                                                          |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| June 12-14   | Southeastern Spring National, Hornets Nest Region Charlotte, NC CANCELED |
| June 13      | Region Meet Mountaineer Region Fletcher, NC CANCELED                     |
| June 13      | SE National Meet, Charlotte, NC CANCELED                                 |
| June 18      | Triangle Chapter Monthly Meeting CANCELED                                |
| June 20      | Chapter Meet, Coastal Plains Washington, NC CANCELED                     |
| June 24-27   | Eastern Spring National, White Water Reg. Beckley, WV CANCELED           |
| July 19-24   | Reliability Tour AACA National, Lock Haven/Wellsboro, PA CANCELED        |
| August 8     | Chapter Meet, General Greene Greensboro, NC CANCELED                     |
| August 22    | Region Meet Alamance Burlington, NC <i>New Date</i>                      |
| October 7-10 | Hershey Flea Market and Car Corral. CANCELED. Car Show still on Oct 10.  |

### Other Local Car Show Cancelations

June 20 Wake Forest Car Show (CANCELED)

### AACA Events Still Planned

August 1 Region Meet Zooland Asheboro, NC IPO (Tentative)  
August 12-15 Eastern Divisional Tour Eastern Shore Region Maryland (up to 1995) *New Date*  
August 21-22 Grand Nationals AACA National Allentown, PA  
September 12 Chapter Meet Southeastern Mt. Olive, NC  
September 13-18 Glidden Tour VMCCA Saratoga Springs, NY (1942 & earlier)  
September 19 NC Region Fall Meet Furnitureland Chapter, Spencer, NC  
September 26 Chapter Meet New River Jacksonville, NC  
October 3 NC Region Annual Cruise-in Old Salem Burlington/Colfax, NC  
October 10 Eastern Fall Nationals Car show only, Hershey Region Hershey, PA  
October 19-23 Central Divisional Tour Tulsa Region Tulsa, OK  
October 22-24 Charlotte Autofair Hornets Nest Region Charlotte, NC

### Other Car Events of Interest still planned.

August 28 & 29 The Great Race Overnight Stops  
- August 28 Beckley WV 262 mi. 4 Hr. 13 Min  
- August 29 Mooresville NC 149 mi. 149 mi, 2 Hr 22 Min.  
- <https://www.greatrace.com/route>  
September 26 Cars & Caffeine at Virginia International Raceway  
- Vintage Auto Races  
- Touring Laps on the Raceway in your classic car.  
- Full access to the Race Car Paddock  
- <https://speedtour.net/st/?lib=product&pid=589&cat=11>

## 2. Next Triangle Chapter Events

Our June 18, 2020 meeting has been canceled due to the Governor's Executive order prohibiting large gatherings of people. We normally do not meet in July and August during vacation season. Be sure to watch for further announcements and Emails about our activities. The quarantine extensions may require cancellations.

### EVENT #1

**What:** Cruise-in at Pruitt Heath Retirement Center in Durham

**When:** Thursday June 18, 2020

Time of day: 10:00am to 11:30am

**Where:** Location: Pruitt-Health, 3100 Erwin Road, Durham (down the road from Duke Hospital)

**Number of cars:** Pruitt-Health can readily accommodate 6 to 8 cars; more with advanced notice.

We have six vehicles and would like two more. If you can join us, call Dan Fuccella (919-349-5911 or Denny Oestreich 919-846-8163)

### EVENT #2

**What:** Next Triangle Chapter monthly meeting. Delayed until Fall.

**When:** Thursday evening, September 17, 2020

**Where:** To be determined. With permanent closing of Golden Corral on Glenwood, Ave we will find a new location. See the article below for the committee activity to identify a new location.

**New Times:** We will have new meeting times adjusted to make our meetings end earlier and allow more discussion.

Dinner starts at 5:45 pm.

Meeting at 6:45 pm:

Presentation Setup & Social Time 7:15.

Program 7:30 pm.

Dismiss no later than 8:30 pm

**Program Topic: Building Full Scale Replicas of Horseless Carriages**

The topic of the presentation at the next General Meeting will be Building Full Scale Replicas Of Horseless Carriages. Our presenter, Wilson Fausel, will explain how "When the horseless carriage you love is not available or is out of your price range, you can build it!" Wilson, who recently joined the Triangle Chapter, previously owned a 1951 Pontiac, 1965 GTO, 3 MGAs, and a 1976 AMC Pacer. He currently owns two replica cars, a 1904 Oldsmobile Light Delivery (Pie Wagon) and a 1903 Ajax Electric Runabout. On his wish list is the desire to build a replica of an 1886 Benz Patent Motorwagen. Please make plans to join us for this different slant on the antique automobile hobby.

**Triangle Take A-Par-T Events Still Planned**

Please notify Riley Reiner (919-816-6903) or sign up if you are available to be part of the Team.

- Historic Oakwood Farm Fest - October 3
- Raleigh 5-Points 100 Anniversary Event October 24

## 3. President's Corner

**By Mike Hess**

I hope everyone is still staying safe and well. It looks like some things are starting to open up locally. There was a re-start of Cars and Coffee in Morrisville on June 6. More cars than ever were claimed on their Facebook page. Most everyone did not wear a face mask. Cary-Millpond Village Cars and Coffee plan to re-start June 13. Cary Cars and Coffee at Parkside Town Commons has not announced if they will restart, which would be June 20.

In addition, our Triangle chapter is planning a cruise-in to the Pruitt Health Retirement Center in Durham on June 18. But, I see the state Coronavirus metrics are moving in the wrong direction. It appears there is a second wave. So again, we are faced with uncertainty. The Hershey Region AACA called for a virtual car show on their Facebook page. In 24 hours, there were over 160 postings of car pictures. I see that the AACA Annual Grand National to be held in Allentown, PA has been rescheduled for August 21 and 22, 2020. The car limit has been reduced. The AACA Eastern Fall Nationals in Hershey is planning a car show only on October 10. However, both AACA events will require approval from the state of Pennsylvania. More uncertainty.

I have been looking forward to going to the yearly Chrysler Nationals in Carlisle, PA originally scheduled and still scheduled for July 10-12. This is the place to go if you are looking for parts or want to inspect correctly restored Mopars. But again, if the state of Pennsylvania approves it, what will it be like with all the restrictions (the new normal). More uncertainty.

As you know a small committee was formed to find a new meeting place for the chapter as a result of the Golden Corral closing. Several locations were investigated, but only two remained that seem to come close to our needs. Before a recommendation is made, a survey was sent to all members asking for input. For those 39 members who responded, here are the results.

- 71% would be willing to order their meal a day in advance if the restaurant required it.
- It was a 50/50 split when asked if members were willing to prepay for your meal a day in advance if the restaurant requires it.
- 60% responded with a price point of \$10-\$15 per person for an average meal. 26% responded with a price point of \$15-\$20 per person including tax and tip.
- 92% prefer attending in person rather than via video conference.
- 76% prefer meeting with dinner at a restaurant,
- 24% would meet with no food.
- The response in which area of Wake County would you prefer to meet was about equal at 60%.

After another committee meeting, it was decided that RallyPoint Sports Grill located at 837 Bass Pro Lane, Cary is where we plan to have our first re-start meeting in September, also, for October and November. The

meeting dates are yet to be determined. This is contingent on what the state/county pandemic directives are for restaurants at that time. (It would be difficult to hold a meeting with social distancing as it is now). Again, more uncertainty. This decision is by no means final and if other locations are brought forth, they will be investigated.

Stay well, stay busy.

## 4. Editor's Observations

### By Denny Oestreich

Without car shows and summer events to report on and get car pictures, it has been difficult to gather material for a newsletter. Some of my thoughts here will be duplicated in the NC Region newsletter. However, several members came through with some great stories. I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter.

Have you driven your Antique Automobile these past months? You should, you know, just to keep it starting and running smoothly. It seems the Covid-19 Virus is like rust to an antique vehicle; you cannot tell you have rust until something is wrong.

Due to the limitations of the stay at home coronavirus requirements The Triangle Chapter plans have been cancelled since February when we had a snowstorm. Then in March, the virus restrictions were imposed, and we have not been able to have meetings or other activities. Adding insult to injury, our meeting place restaurant, Golden Corral in Raleigh, has gone out of business and we will have to find a new meeting location. Our May 2, Chapter Car Show had to be canceled. We were planning a great show at a new venue, Brier Creek Commons, with 75 stores and 26 eateries. The work done by our show organizers is very much appreciated. Riley Reiner was the Show Chair who held planning meetings. The new venue arranged by Joe Parsons and others would have been terrific. Jim Gill was well into building the custom trophies. Helen Dipietro had updated our flyer and posted other advertising. Many others on the team were preparing to execute the plans to make our show the best. However, we will have to put the car show activities on hold until next year. Additionally, we have had several of our Take apart model T demonstration canceled.

Have you noticed lately that the Car Club magazines have an increased number of ads of cars for sale? In the latest AACA Antique Automobile I count 48 member's cars for sale. Recently I have heard from Fred Harley, that he is offering two vehicles for sale, a 1921 Ford Model T, Center-door Sedan, and a 1911 Buick Model 33 Touring. The Model T is an AACA Senior car, and the Buick an AACA Grand National 1st winner. Contact Fred at t 919-233-4889 for more information. Why do you think there are so many cars for sale?

I (Denny Oestreich) have nearly finished a 1957 Chevy 4 door restoration. After test driving, I had to fix several things that were not quite right. This month, I repaired a generator, refit the driver door gaps, touched up some paint/glue mistakes, adjusted the shifter linkage, added a tachometer, and installed a new air cleaner. On a recent test drive in the neighborhood I ran out of gas. The initial fill of five gallons only lasted through the first start, tune-ups, electrical idling tests, and 50 miles of test driving. I guess I can expect to only get 10 miles per gallon.

Please stay safe and at a social distance, wear your mask, and enjoy some of your extra time to work on your antique car or other hobbies. With no car shows or other events it is difficult for your editor to prepare newsletters, So, remember your editor and take some time to write your car story and take a few pictures of your projects to send them and help keep our interest up during these times.

## 5. Triangle Chapter Meeting Notes

Wow! We have not been able to have a meeting since February, so there are still no minutes for March, April, or May.



## 6. New Member Section

This section is to welcome new members of the Triangle Chapter that you may not have been able to meet yet. We will also include updates to contact and address information. Many people are dropping their land lines for a cell phone number. If you have changes let me know.

To our regular members, if you have an interest similar to our new members you may welcome them to the Chapter with a phone call or an Email, it will help to make them feel welcome.

Those of you who joined us in the late months 2019 and early 2020 we certainly welcome you to our Chapter and look forward to meeting and talking with you at a future event. We would love to see pictures and stories of your antique vehicles.

### Bill Stallings

Please see the attached pics and the article from Bill below. "I live on a family farm between Garner and Fuquay Varina. It has been in our family since 1900. I have recently started to have an interest in antique vehicles. As a result, I have been able to acquire several vehicles.

- 1929 Ford Model A Fordor
- 1951 M38 Jeep
- 1955 M38A1 Jeep

The Ford Model A is currently undergoing a restoration off site. The two military Jeeps have been restored and are parade ready. I look forward to an opportunity to meet everyone. Maybe we can have a mini drive to our farm. We should be able to host a car or two for viewing."

Cell: 919-428-0853

Email: bstallings@kpgnc.com





## Bill Stallings 1929 Model A



## Bill Stallings Jeeps

These members are in our member Directory but have not been able to meet anyone because of the strange year we are having.

### **Phil and Mary Farese**

1203 Smith Creek Way  
Wake Forest, NC 27587  
732-672-9263  
[57eldophil@gmail.com](mailto:57eldophil@gmail.com)

They have a 57 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz and a 1969 Corvette.

### **Wilson & Mary Fausal**

1032 Sturdivant Drive  
Cary, NC 27576  
[wefausal@gamil.com](mailto:wefausal@gamil.com)

They have 1904 Oldsmobile Light Delivery (Pie Wagon) and 1903 Ajax Electric Runabout replicas.

## 7. Heister Restoration Race

### **By Denny Oestreich**

During the Pandemic slowdown John Hiester of the Heister Automotive Group has come up with a novel idea to keep his service staff working and engaged. He has purchased 14 classic vehicles to see which dealership Service Team can perform the best restoration. Whichever classic increases the most in value, he will auction



it off and donate all proceeds to a charity of the winning team's choice! Each of John Hiester's four dealerships has received 3 to 4 vehicles, and they have twelve weeks to restore these cars and trucks. The participating dealerships are: John Hiester Chevrolet, Fuquay-Varina, NC; John Hiester Chevrolet, Lillington, NC; John Hiester Chrysler Dodge Jeep RAM, Lillington, NC and John Hiester Chrysler Dodge Jeep RAM, Sanford, NC.

"It started with, we'll put them in the shop and we'll pay them to work the same way we'd pay them to work on a customer's car," said Hiester.

Then the idea really took off as the dealerships split into teams – making it a competition. The teams have just 12 weeks, limited budget, and bragging rights on the line. Whichever team can make the biggest improvement for the least money wins. When that winning car gets auctioned off, the winning team gets to help decide which local charity gets the proceeds. Now, once the customer service work is finished, the real challenge begins. The technicians are back and working on something that has a carburetor, a new experience for them.

John Hiester has said it has been a huge morale boost for his team. The energy went from completely stressed out, to completely engaged and excited and I think they kind of feel like they're a part of something that is new and unique,"

The work is continuing and the excitement is building with just a few weeks left. Car enthusiasts can follow the progress on the [Hiester Automotive Group's Facebook page](#).

The Tarheel Traveler, Scot Mason, did a segment on the contest. See the story at: <https://www.wral.com/classic-cars-keep-employees-working-at-local-car-dealerships/19067565/>

Below are pictures of some of the pictures from Facebook that John Hiester (Pictured center in the first photo) and his team are working on. Maybe you want to purchase one of these vehicles.







**John Hiester's Restoration Race Vehicles**

## 8. Working on Our Model A

### By Riley Reiner

Our grandson, Colin Wimmer, who has been helping with the Take A-Par-T for several years, completed a most unusual school year and is out for six weeks. He asked if we could get our 1930 Model A coupe running and on the road this summer. It has been in the garage since 2004 waiting for attention. Several years ago, Don Aikin, George Ashley, Colin, and I pulled the engine and I took it to Ora Landis in Pennsylvania for a rebuild. Well the engine has been back for several years waiting for some attention. Colin was my push!

This week we removed the bellhousing and transmission for cleaning and inspection. We removed the



remaining bolts and removed the transmission from the car without a single bump or scratch. Hanging on the engine crane, Colin could have been standing on the dock at Atlantic Beach with a prize fish from the Blue Marlin Tournament, but it was a greasy Model A Ford transmission. We took his prize outside on Thursday, June 11th and he sprayed it down with engine degreaser. Within not more than two minutes, the sky opened with a major downpour which washed off the degreaser before it had time to clean the cast iron. I told Colin that we would pull it back inside and dry it off. After a lunch break, which is very important to any eleven year old boy, we went back to the garage and separated the transmission from the bell housing.



Colin really wants to have the car running before he returns to school on July 20th. Since this is a work in progress and I would like to get the car running again; I plan to have an update next month. There is much to this story which I may relate in later chapters, but it started in June of 1963 when I purchased the car. I do have some picture of me in my Boy Scout uniform getting the car before our weekly meeting, but that will be for another time. I drove it to high school for two years, college for three years and teaching school in Wake County for five years.



Riley Reiner and His Grandson, Colin

When the Model A died in 2004, it was left neglected in the garage. Colin Wimmer is about to change that! To be continued.

## 9. My American Pickers Adventure

### By Joe Parsons

Beginning with my father's Studebaker dealership in 1955, I have always been fascinated with Studebaker parts. On Saturdays, as a boy, I would rearrange the parts in the accessory show cases and look up parts in the body and chassis books. Even after class during high school I would go to Dad's garage to work in the show room, parts department, and even do mechanical work.

With the passing of my father in 1962, I dropped out of my senior year of college to liquidate his business. I sold all the used cars, the shop equipment, the three tow trucks, and more. I sold everything, but the Studebaker parts. Since the Studebaker corporation was in financial woes, they would not give me a reasonable return offer on the parts. I spent days inventorying the parts only to receive a very small buy back offer. Since our building was leased, I had to vacate within 30 days.

What to do with all the parts, i.e. sheet metal, chrome, and mechanical parts? Next door to the dealership the owner of a large field was preparing it for a soccer field by filling in a large hole. I had my answer ...throw the parts in the hole and cover them. Everything went into the hole and I watched a bulldozer operator cover all the parts.

Years passed, I got married and once again, I had the urge to buy and sell Studebaker parts as the



corporation was now out of business and selling parts was a big opportunity. During the early 70's I bought the inventories of a total of eight Studebaker dealerships. I really enjoyed taking parts to Studebaker meets and selling to owners who were restoring their many Studebaker models. This is an early photo of my youngest daughter Tricia and me at a Studebaker parts meet in York, PA. (She really enjoyed marking the parts with price tags and selling to members,)



**Joe Parsons (Right), his daughter, Tricia (Middle) and Friend (Left), at an Early Swap Meet selling Studebaker parts.**

When I moved to Raleigh in 2000, I had to downsize from years of collecting parts. I called a friend who was a major Studebaker parts vendor in Florida, He knew my parts from swap meets and I asked if he would be interested in buying my entire inventory. (Interesting fact: this vendor's father is the man who invented Gatorade and the father was himself was an avid Studebaker collector of cars and parts). The son came to my house in a huge U-Haul truck and purchased my inventory, which ended up in Florida.

Fast forward to present and my urge for buying Studebaker parts continues. In March, this year, I encountered a lady, whom I have known for 30 years. Her husband, also a Studebaker cars and parts vendor, had passed and she was preparing to move to Florida from near Spartanburg, SC. She was selling his parts collection. I told her, I still bought parts and she invited me to come and look at her inventory.

I drove 243 miles to SC on a Sunday arriving around 10:30 am which I figured would be plenty of time to look and buy parts. After five hours of picking parts, I soon realized I had not made a dent in the inventory. I called my wife, Betsy, and told her I would be staying overnight and coming home late Monday. (It was not a well-received phone call).



During this visit I met Dave who was helping the lady sell parts and cars. He was a great help for moving pallets and helping me with a ladder to reach on top of racks. We moved and picked around in the parts and I soon called him "Frank" from American Pickers. I joked with him that we should be videoing this picking for TV. Soon I became "Mike" and to this day I still call him Frank. We have become great friends and he kids me about losing my flashlight in the parts.





**The back of Joe Parsons SUV Filled with Parts**

A few weeks passed and I started thinking about the parts I left behind. ("Frank" had already mailed me my flashlight) So, I arranged for a second trip. I arrived in SC for a second picking and this time purchased even more than the first visit. I loaded my SUV and made the trip in one day. My garage floor was now becoming full as I unload another stash on top of the first load.

Within 10 days Frank called me to say the warehouse was to be emptied to make room for a lumber business. All the racks had to be empty! He knew I was not interested in the big items, e.g. sheet metal, bumpers, engines, transmissions etc., but I still remembered parts I left behind from my previous two visits.

Yes, I had to return for one last picking. This time I found parts I had missed during previous two trips. I could not believe some of the prized parts found this time. How could I have missed them? Another SUV full. I told "Frank" farewell and came home to a full garage of parts. I have organized the parts and now have begun the fun of selling on Ebay. Being in the Studebaker Club for 53 years, I am well known for my parts and sales have been good.



**Some of the Parts on Joe's Garage Floor. Anyone see Betsy's Car in this picture?**

I stay in touch with "Frank" and he is still searching for my flashlight which I lost in boxes during the third visit.



## 10. My Four Door Avanti Story

By John Dipietro

**Avanti**... Italian word, meaning forward. In 1961 Studebaker commissioned Raymond Lowey and his associates, Tom Kellogg, Bob Andrews and John Ebstein to design a 2+2 sports car that would save Studebaker's automobile division.

When the two-door coupe prototype was being built, a study prototype four door sedan was a concept for the possible future. We will never know if Studebaker would have ever produced the sedan, but it leads to interesting conversations amongst Avanti owners. This four-door prototype is presently in the Studebaker Museum.

It took over 25 years for the four door sedan to become a reality.



1963 Avanti



Raymond Lowery with the Studebaker four door Prototype

Salt Flats where he set 29 speed records.

### Short timeline to glory:

- The Avanti concept was created in 40 days and was designed within six months of commission.
- May of 1962 the first car was on a tour to all the Studebaker dealers in the United States.
- The Avanti was chosen as the Honorary Pace Car for the 1962 Indianapolis 500.
- August 14, 1962, Andy Granatelli took a new R-3 **Avanti** to the Bonneville

### Short timeline to the Avanti's demise, OR WAS IT:

- Soon after orders for the **Avanti** were pouring in and became too many for Studebaker to handle due to production problems, mainly with the fiberglass body (note: same company produced the Corvette fiberglass body, feel free to read between the lines).
- Due to production delays customers did not start receiving their **Avanti** until late 1962 and many orders were canceled.
- Studebaker announced in December 1963 that the **Avanti** would no longer be produced and the remainder of the completed **Avantis** would be issued as 1964 models (square bezels instead of round, surrounding the headlights).

For the next 44 years the **Avanti** would live on with various owners obtaining the rights to produce the car until the last one came off the production line in Cancun, Mexico, in 2007.

The Studebaker **Avanti** was built on a modified Lark convertible X- frame with fiberglass bodies. A total of 4,647 **Avantis** were produced by Studebaker. There were three models to choose from R1, R2, & R3. The difference between the models was the engine.

- Model R-1 came with the base 289-cubic-inch, single 4-barrel carburetor, V-8 engine. Base price: \$4,445
- Model R-2 came with a 289 cubic inch (ci), single 4-barrel carburetor with the added Paxton Supercharger. Base price: \$4655

- Model R-3 was a hand-built racing engine and came with a 304.5 ci, single 4-barrel carburetor with the added Paxton Supercharger. There were only nine factory produced R-3. Base price: \$5,980

There were design specifications for R-4 & R-5 models that were never factory produced.

- Model R-4 304.5 ci, dual 4-barrel carburetor, non-supercharged
- Model R-5, dual supercharged

One quirk was that the R-1 was the only model that could have the optional air conditioning at an additional cost of \$325. The R-2 & R-3 models could not have A/C because the area in the engine compartment was taken up by the Paxton Superchargers.

There were many “firsts” that came standard with all Studebaker **Avanti**. Power-assisted caliper disc brakes considered the most important brake development in 43 years, padded safety front dashboard, padded safety roll bar, torque boxes (better known as hog troughs) to stabilize the frame and to protect the underside of the body.

Other standard equipment included manual transmission, safety cone door latches, front suspension coil springs and sway bar, rear suspension leaf springs, bucket seats, inside trunk and hood releases and many more.

Optional equipment included air conditioning \$325 (R-1 only), supercharged engines \$210-\$398, automatic transmission \$420, power steering \$77, front & rear seat belts, push button radio with rear speaker \$65, silent mufflers, tinted windows \$32, heater and defroster \$80, electric clock \$15, windshield washers \$14, white sidewall tires \$32-\$49.

**Avanti** design ... “beauty is in the eye of the beholder”. Much has been written and said about the design of the *Avanti*. It was ahead of its time, nothing like it, with its aerodynamic wedge styling exterior lines and cockpit like interior. Raymond Lowey and his team used the airplane for inspiration. A reinforced fiberglass body, long simple angular front with a front hinged hood and no grille, unheard of, how would air get to the engine to cool it off? Roof and rear are tapered to a short tail with a concave body. What would be the reaction if the **Avanti** were introduced today? Judge for yourself ... love it or hate it.

#### History of the Avanti after Studebaker:

**1965-1982: ownership:** Nate Altman & Leo Newman: 2252 cars produced:

- 1966 base price \$6,575
- 1970 base price \$7,645
- 1975 base price \$11,445
- 1982 base price \$22,995

Altman & Newman owned Studebaker dealerships in Indiana and negotiated to purchase the rights to continue producing the **Avanti** using the Studebaker factory in South Bend. In 1965 the car was marketed as a hand-built, custom ordered automobile and was called the **Avanti II**. In 1976 Nate Altman suddenly died, his brother Arnold took over his brother’s role. Arnold Altman and Leo Newman continued to produce the Avanti until they sold the company in 1982.

**1983-1986: ownership:** Stephen H. Blake: 576 cars produced

Blake wanted to update and modernize the **Avanti**. He introduced the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Limited Edition Coupe, Touring Coupe Special Edition, a racing program, a prototype GT and a new Convertible Coupe. In 1985 Blake filed for bankruptcy.

**1987-1988: ownership:** Michael E. Kelly: 346 cars produced

In 1987 three models were introduced, a Luxury Sport Coupe, a Convertible Coupe and the traditional Classic Coupe. Due to federal regulations these new automobiles were built on the Chevrolet Monte Carlo platform. He was also working on the design for a four-door luxury sedan and a limited production limousine. In 1987 Kelly partnered with J.J. Cafaro and all manufacturing of the **Avanti** came to an end in South Bend, Indiana as production was moved to Youngstown, Ohio. In 1987 the 25<sup>th</sup> Silver Anniversary Limited Edition LSC was introduced to the public. In 1988 J.J. Cafaro purchased Michael Kelly’s interest in the company due to



visionary differences for the **Avanti**.

**1989-1991: ownership:** J.J. Cafaro: 272 cars produced

1987 base price \$55,900

1990 4 door LTS base price \$49,000

One of the first obstacles Cafaro faced was not having its own design and dedicated chassis. The Chevrolet Monte Carlo platform was being used at the time for the **Avanti**. Cafaro wanted control and did not want to rely on GM. Attempts were made to design and produce a chassis for all future **Avantis**, but that failed and forced Cafaro to use the Chevrolet Monte Carlo and Chevrolet Caprice on his **Avantis**. Cafaro continued to develop the four-door sedan and in 1989 introduced the **Avanti** Four Door Luxury Touring Sedan at the New York City Auto show with 1990 delivery date. The line of **Avantis** also included the Convertible Coupe and Traditional Coupe. In 1991 Cafaro ended production of the **Avanti**. The four door LTS never was the success that Cafaro hoped it would be with only 90 documented vehicles ordered.



**My Avanti Four Door Luxury Touring Sedan # 68**

**1992-1996:** no cars were produced

**1997-1997:** 3 prototype designs for a new look *Avanti* (AVX)

Jim Bunting did not own the rights to the *Avanti* name, so he named his designs AVX. He hired Tom Kellogg from the original design team to redesign the *Avanti* for the 90's and had three prototypes produced by Bill Lang. The hardtop was built on a Pontiac Firebird chassis and the T-top and convertible were built on Chevrolet Camaro chassis. These cars never went into production.

**2001-2001: ownership:** Michael E. Kelly & John Seaton: no cars produced

In 2001 Kelley & Seaton manage to purchase the **Avanti** rights from J.J. Cafaro. After 3 years and no cars to show for it, Michael Kelley took full ownership.

**2004-2007: ownership:** Michael E. Kelly: 91 cars produced

It was 13 years since any **Avanti** was built, however the **Avanti** was about to come alive one more time. In 2004. Fifty-three Avantis were built in Villa Rica, Georgia, using a Pontiac Firebird chassis. In 2006 Kelly moved all his operations for the **Avanti** to Cancun, Mexico where everything came to an end. In December of 2007 the FBI arrested Michael Kelly and charged him with running a Ponzi scheme and stealing over 342 million dollars. Michael Kelly died of cancer in 2013.

**Is this truly the end of the *Avanti*?**

### **A Dream Fulfilled**

I did not grow up a car guy. I lived the first 38 years of my life in New York City never having the desire or need to drive, I guess I get that from grandparents and parents who never drove a car. Public transportation was good enough for me. My need to drive suddenly changed at the age of 18 when I chose to attend New York Institute of Technology at Old Westbury NY. This is where I received my degree in architecture and met my much better half, Helen. Back to driving, it was a commuter school and since it was in the suburbs of Long Island, I needed to learn how to drive immediately.

As I tell my story keep in mind my background is in architectural design. Fast forward to 1989. Helen and I (we

are married now, 1982) are thinking about buying a new car, so we went to the New York Auto Show. That is when I saw the 1990 **Avanti**, four door Luxury Touring Sedan. It knocked me off my feet. The design was one of a kind, inside and out, and I did not know the history of the **Avanti** at the time. I not only wanted this car, I needed this car, until I got more than sticker shock, I got a sticker heart attack. The base price of the car was over \$48,000. To put this into perspective, Helen and I purchased our house for \$50,000 in 1982. There was no way I could afford this car. I walked away disappointed, but optimistic that someday I would own this car. Later that year I would test drive the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition Luxury Coupe, but again it was too expensive, and it was not the four-door sedan that I fell in love with.

As time passed by, things in life changed and the car was far from a priority for me, but always hidden in the back of mind, where it would pop out every now and then. Again, I am not a typical car guy. Can I fix them, No!. What catches my eye is design and creativity (remember, I am an architect). As I learned more about the history of Studebaker and the **Avanti**, I wanted the car even more, regardless of all the negative remarks made about the four-door sedan from the Studebaker purists.

You know the old saying about, “when all the stars have aligned”. Fast forward to October of 2017, all the stars aligned for me. Before this I had passed on a couple of four door sedans that were for sale for various reasons. But in 2017 everything came together. First, I turned 60 years old and needed a special birthday present to myself. Second, my brother sent me a Hagerty magazine that had an article about the history of the **Avanti**, which triggered my need for the car once again. Third, and possibly the most important, the INTERNET, which would help me find a four-door Avanti that was in good to excellent condition for sale. Especially as there were only 90 produced and it was now 27 years past its birth. I began my search on the internet and I immediately found Avanti four door #68 for sale in San Diego, California. It was advertised in a classic car showroom. After negotiating the price, I purchased the car and it was delivered to my house in November 1997.

I always believe that God has a hand in everything I do and don't do. God definitely had his hand in this one. If I was able to purchase the car in 1990 most likely I would not own it today. He had me wait 27 years and because of that I appreciate the car even more. I now understand how rare it is and want to maintain and preserve the car while enjoying it at the same time. The car has allowed me to get involved with the AACA and meet some wonderful people. The AACA has taught me that we are just the care takers of beautiful pieces of art. When people ask me, what am I going to do during my retirement years, I tell them I own a 1990 Avanti four door Luxury Touring Sedan.

Oh, by the way, the previous owner of car #68 is a very well-known Baptist Minister in San Diego. Who says God doesn't have a hand in our lives?



**The end**

I hope you enjoyed my “short story” and I didn't bore you too much.

John DiPietro



## 11. For Sale

Fred Harley is selling his 1921 Ford Model T, Center-door Sedan, and 1911 Buick Model 33 Touring. Both cars are in excellent condition. The Model T is an AACA Senior car, and the Buick an AACA Grand National 1st winner. Contact Fred at [fredharley@nc.rr.com](mailto:fredharley@nc.rr.com), or 919-233-4889 for more information and photos.”

See online information and pictures at:

1921 Ford Model T Center Door: <http://www.patgaglione.com/1921Centerdoor/content/landing.html>

1911 Buick Model 33: <http://www.patgaglione.com/1911%20Buick/content/landing.html>

## 12. Triangle Chapter Contacts

### Officers

President – Mike Hess (916-201-3973)

Vice President - Dan Fuccella (919-349-5911)

Treasurer - Marv Gage (919-846-4708)

Region News Reporter – Denny Oestreich, (919-846-8163)

Ex-Officio – Jim Gill (919-363-2616)

### Board of Directors

#### **2019-2020**

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Brian Wingler 919-962-9303

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### Committee Chairs

Awards - Jim Gill - (919-363-2616)

Newsletter Editor - Denny Oestreich (919-846-8163)

Webmaster - Denny Oestreich (919-846-8163)

Youth Coordinator - Dan Fuccella (919-349-5911)

Car Show Committee Chair – Riley Reiner (919-554-1158)

## 13. Publication Information

### **Triangle Newsletter Article Submissions:**

Thank you for thinking about contributing interesting notes, articles, and pictures for our newsletter. We need more of your stories for next month. Tell us about what you are doing while in quarantine, an antique car you acquired, a restoration you are doing, or your first car. We especially enjoy pictures of your cars or interesting car projects you have in progress. Please send or give your pictures and articles to Denny Oestreich at 919-846-8163, Email [OestreichD@AOL.com](mailto:OestreichD@AOL.com).

### **Web Sites**

You can see ongoing updates or recent cancellations and reschedules of Triangle and NC Region Activities

on our Website or Facebook sites. Both have many more pictures and updates of Triangle activities.

- Triangle Website <http://www.ncregionaaca.com/triangle/>
- NC Region Website: <http://www.ncregionaaca.com/region/>

**Facebook Page**

Barbara Werner is now updating our Triangle Facebook page and Helen DiPietro is making updates to the NC Region Facebook page. Please have a look, “Like” the page and give them suggestions or information for the pages.

- Triangle Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NCRegionAACA/>
- NC Region Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NCRegionAACA/>



## 14. New Members and Contact Updates

This page is an update to the 2020 Members guide.  
New members who were not included in the 2020 Members Guide are listed here.  
This also contains address or contact updates.  
You may cut a portion of this page out and paste it at page 28 of your 2020 Members Guide.

### New Members

**William H. Stallings III ..... 919-428-0853**  
9012 Cary Lee Drive; Raleigh, NC 27603  
[bstallings@kpgnc.com](mailto:bstallings@kpgnc.com)  
**Joined 2020; Bill has a 1955 Army jeep and a 1929 Model A**

### Corrections/Updates

(New Telephone Number)

**Parsons, Joe & Betsy ..... 330-502-5930**