

July 2024 President's Message

July brings plenty of opportunities to get our vehicles out for shows, cruise ins, parades, or just for a spin around the neighborhood. Before you head out, make sure to perform all the maintenance checks, especially the cooling system! Also make sure to invite someone to ride along with you wherever you go. We can grow our hobby and our club by sharing our cars and our outings with others, whether it is a family member, neighbor, or a new friend. Be sure to invite them to our next meeting as well! Our next meeting will be at the Shiloh Presbyterian Church Scout Hut on July 13 at 6:30 pm to share a potluck meal.

This month's message is difficult to write. As you probably know by now, my mom, Judy Holmes, passed away on June 28. Mom and Dad were two of the founders of our Alamance Region AACA club (initially the Alamance Chapter of the NC Region) back in 1964. She was involved in many aspects of our club over the years, including serving as Secretary, fundraising, and other committees for the NC Region as well as our Alamance Chapter & Region. I can't estimate the number of times we camped at the Fall Hershey show and flea market. She would walk miles of the flea market with Dad and us kids, and then fix supper for us back at the pop-up camper!

Mom kept busy over the years with many different interests. She worked as a substitute teacher, a sewing instructor at ACC, and as a business owner. She operated "Seam & Beam" in Graham where she sold fabric, sewing machines, and taught sewing classes. Her hobbies included everything from quilting and sewing, to tatting and embroidery. She was able to put her skills to use as she and Dad restored a 1931 Model A Coupe. In the early 1960's, upholstery kits were not available, so Mom sewed all of the interior! She even helped with the sanding to prep for paint.

Along the way, Mom and Dad raised a family of five children, with all of us participating in car shows, parades, and even era fashion exhibits. She was the driving force in keeping all of her family in the right places at the right times, from school, band practice, football games, Sunday School, Scout meetings and camping trips, and more. Her health declined over the last few years, but her vibrant smile, outgoing personality, and unwavering faith kept her going.

As we move forward into a new chapter of our Club, I am optimistic that we will be able to use these life lessons given to us by her to build not just a new clubhouse, but a larger, stronger membership. Thank you Mom for the love and guidance, and for staying forever young!

We'll see y'all down the road!

Rick Holmes



Judy Holmes

May 4, 1940 – June 28, 2024

The Alamance Region of the AACA lost a long-time member on June 28th as Judy Holmes passed away surrounded by her loving family.

Among the many activities in her life, she was a founding member and an integral part of the many events of the club. She and her husband Richard served this club and the North Carolina Region in a number of ways over many years, including her work

Continued on next page...

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Chief Judge:	Rick Holmes 919-592-6861
Webmaster:	Rick Holmes 919-592-6861
Youth Coordinator:	Rick Holmes 919-592-6861

Next Weak Spark Deadline

Aug Issue 7/27/24

Next Club Meeting

July 13, 2024
6:30 pm
at Shiloh Presbyterian Church
Scout Hut
for a pot luck dinner

Judy Holmes *(continued)*

on the quilting committee that produced a quilt depicting all the chapters in the NC Region. Alamance was a chapter of the NC Region in the early days. The quilt now hangs in the NC Transportation Museum in Spencer NC.

Judy will be missed by us all and we wish her large and growing family the comfort of all the great memories her life has given them. We will remember Judy for her

commitment to the Alamance Region, AACA and all its activities. She was ever present and engaged in our club and we owe her a great deal of gratitude for her part in shaping the culture of the club over so many years.

<https://www.omegafsc.com/obituary/Judy-Holmes>

Bill Cox

July 2024 Treasurer's Report

The net income from our car show exceeded our budget figures by \$1,500 in spite of the rain forecast, thanks to our members who contacted our many loyal sponsors. The interest income on

the funds from the sale of our clubhouse has paid for the expenses incurred in clearing the new land. Many thanks to Butch McKenzie for HOURS of hard work clearing the building site and saving the club so much money!

Jeannie Johnson

Minutes of June 2024 Meeting

The June meeting was held at Perry Nichol's shop, with VP Donnie Nance presiding. Perry has added several new vehicles to his collection. Progress on the clearing of our new clubhouse property

was discussed, as well as the health issues of some of our members. Hamburgers were prepared by Mickey Kluttz, the Wicker's, and Rhonda and Debbie.

Submitted by Donnie Nance for Mike Blalock

Land Clearing

Considerable progress has been made in clearing the building site on our land. Butch McKenzie has spent countless hours on his bulldozer taking down trees, sawing them up and putting them on a burn pile. Bob King obtained burning permits and he along with others have been monitoring the fire for days. Rick Holmes has cut logs to add to the pile and Larry

Coble and Judy and Jerry Purchell have monitored as well. "Flame Thrower Jerry" was able to get a roaring fire going and Judy Purchell and Ande Shoe have monitored and have been the photographers. The goal is to have the land cleared and ready for grading in a couple of weeks. This has been a major undertaking!

Jeannie Johnson



National 2024 Events *(see aaca.org for details)*

July 10-13, 2024 – Big Horn Mountain, Wyoming – Western Divisional Tour, sponsored by AACA Nebraska Region. Open to vehicles up through 1999.

August 22-24, 2024 – Hampton, Virginia – Special Eastern Fall Nationals, sponsored by AACA Historic Virginia Peninsula Region

September 12-14, 2024 – Loveland, Colorado – Western Fall Nationals, sponsored by AACA Poudre Valley Region

September 22-27, 2024 – Fairfield, Pennsylvania – Revival AAA Glidden Tour®, sponsored by the AACA Sugarloaf Mountain Region

October 8-11, 2024 – Hershey, Pennsylvania – Eastern Fall Nationals, sponsored by AACA Hershey Region

October 23-26, 2024 – Huntsville, Alabama – Southeastern Fall Nationals, sponsored by AACA North Alabama Region

Local 2024 Events

First Saturdays of each Month (Apr - Oct), 4 - 6 pm, AutoZone/Sonic, 1509 E. 11th St, Siler City, NC

Second Saturdays of each Month - Cars & Coffee, 697 Hillsboro St, Pittsboro, NC

August 3 - Zooland Region Meet, Ashboro, NC

August 10 - General Greene Chapter Meet, Piedmont Triad Farmers Market, Colfax, NC

Sept 14 - NC Region Fall Meet, Spencer, NC

A flight on *Sentimental Journey*, B-17G 44-83514



There she stood on the tarmac, the culmination of my life-long dream. Her polished aluminum skin glistened in the bright, early summer sun. Oh, she was a beautiful sight! That is, if a weapon of a long-past war can actually be considered beautiful.

Flying on a B-17 had been the most significant thing on my personal bucket list for as long as I can remember.

B-17s were produced by the thousands, and yet here she sat, one of only a relative handful that remain. Even better, she still lives her life in the air, and not confined to a museum, like many of her kind.

Sentimental Journey, B-17G 44-83514, was built by Douglas Aircraft Company in late 1944 under license from Boeing. She was accepted by the Army Air Force on March 13, 1945, too late in the war to actually see combat. For a time, she was simply placed into storage.

In 1947 B-17G 44-83514 was taken out of storage and put into service with a Reconnaissance Squadron as a photo mapping aircraft. Because she was used for mapping, all her turrets and armaments were removed to reduce weight. In this job she would be designated as an RB-17G and was based at Clark Field in the Philippines.

Upon completing its duties in the Philippines, in May 1950 *Sentimental Journey* was flown to Olmsted Air Force Base in Pennsylvania where she was converted into a DB-17G and assigned to drone director duty at Elgin Air Force Base in Florida. It was here that she participated in Operation Greenhouse – the fourth postwar nuclear weapons test series in the Pacific. *Sentimental Journey* served as a “mother ship,” which controlled unmanned B-17 drone aircraft which flew directly into radioactive clouds to measure the blast and thermal effects and collect radioactive cloud samples. She remained a drone director aircraft for the balance of her military career.

In 1959, B-17G 44-83514 was put up for auction and was



My seat in the radio compartment. *Right*, Betty Grable chose to have her back to the camera in this iconic image used in the plane's nose art in order to hide her baby bump. She was expecting at the time.

purchased by Acme Aircraft Parts of California where she received her civilian registration number of N9323Z. In 1960, Acme sold the plane to Western Air Industries (later Aero Union) who converted



A flight on *Sentimental Journey*, B-17G 44-83514



It was a beautiful day for a flight!

her into an Air Tanker 17 to fight forest fires. The plane flew thousands of hours over the next 18 years fighting forest fires throughout the US.

In the fall of 1977 Aero Union decided to sell their B-17, and on January 14, 1978 she was purchased by the Commemorative Air Force. In 1981 *Sentimental Journey* underwent an extensive restoration to return her to original war-time configuration. Interestingly, the top turret actually came from the B-17 many know as *Lacey's Lady*, the B-17 that served for years as a canopy over the Lacey's service station in Milwaukie, Oregon.

So what's it like to fly in a B-17? Probably not quite like you might think. Because we're talking about planes that were built for war, and not to carry passengers, there is a notable lack of creature comforts. You won't find comfortable seats that recline, or fuselages sealed completely from the outside weather. Remember, in order to keep warm, the airmen who fought on these planes wore heated suits, and layers of clothing, including their iconic leather airman's jacket.

Surprisingly, at start up and idle the big radial engines aren't as loud as one might expect. Although their sound is definitely unique, and quite a bit different than the



The Carolina countryside never looked so good!



The lower ball turret mechanism immediately aft of the radio room.

A flight on *Sentimental Journey*, B-17G 44-83514



Contrary to news reports, we did **NOT** drop our bomb load on the Carolina Panther's stadium.

There wasn't a single Focke Wulf to be seen. No Me-262s either, thankfully!

automotive engines we're accustomed to. However, when the pilots hit the throttles for take off, the 1200-hp engines definitely get LOUD, and vibrate the airframe. The rush from the thrust of those engines sets you firmly back in your seat! Once up in the air, we were free to move around the plane and enjoy the flight. We had wonderful weather that day, and there was no turbulence to bounce us around. And no Messerschmitts to contend with either!

Would I ever fly on a B-17 again? Oh, in a heartbeat! Only next time I'll have to really save my pennies to pony up for the bombardier's or navigator's seat in the nose of the plane, right behind that big, beautiful plexiglass canopy!

Bruce A. Anliker

*With credit to the Commemorative Air Force for the history of *Sentimental Journey*.

Did you know?

That right here in North Carolina there is a B-17 being rebuilt? That's right! In Asheville, NC (Fletcher to be precise) there is an organization of people known as **Hanger Thirteen** who are rebuilding a B-17F known as **Lucky Thirteen**.

On September 6, 1943 during a mission to Stuttgart, Germany the *Lucky Thirteen* suffered flak damage to her right wing resulting in a fuel leak that caused her to drop from formation. She was then shot down by a Focke Wulf-190 over Beauvais, France.

Be sure to check out the story and the progress on the *Lucky Thirteen* at: **HangarThirteen.org**



Back in 2019 I had actually purchased a flight on the B-17 known as the 909 when they were scheduled to appear here in Burlington, NC. Unfortunately about 2 weeks prior to their local appearance the plane crashed, killing 7 passengers and crew and injuring 6 others. Long after the accident, I found this flyer for their local appearance still hanging on the bulletin board of a local restaurant. As the saying goes, one man's trash is another man's treasure, so I took it and had it framed as a memorial.

Wait a Minute...I Resemble That Remark!

O listen to WBAG. I really like that they are a true local radio station plus I've had an opportunity to meet some of the staff and they are super folks (and of course they are a longtime supporter of our car show)! The only bad thing about WBAG is I wish they had more power so I could listen to them further out.

Anyway, I was listening just before our car show and heard the promo. For whatever reason one line hit me (though I've heard it many times before). It goes something like "Come see the cars Granddaddy used to drive" or something like that. Wait a minute...I'm a Granddad and some of those cars are really old! How could that be me? Then I made the huge mistake and started thinking...

I became a grandparent at the very young (as I look at it now) age of 53. Medicare and retirement #2 were not a thought in my head. I didn't feel like a grandparent, didn't look like a grandparent (yes not wearing your glasses and looking into the mirror is a wonderful thing) but I was in fact, one. My dad was 48 when his first grandchild was born so pretty young too. So how does this relate to the car show advertisement?

When many folks think of our show, I believe that they associate our show with antique vehicles. I would say those would be vehicles no newer than the 1950's. My grandfather was born in 1898 so that means the cars of the early 1920's and newer...you know the really OLD cars! My dad was born in 1934 so you are looking at the cars he might have driven from 1940's (He had a '40 Ford Coupe early in his life) so those '40's and '50's were really OLD cars too. I was born in 1956 and drove a 1960 Ford

Falcon as my first car. Somehow, I don't think of those 1960's cars as that old, however, as I began to think about it that Falcon is 64 years old...**64 YEARS OLD... HOW COULD THIS BE?**

Well, it all boils down to perception and how old you are and how old your grandparents were whenever they began to drive. I

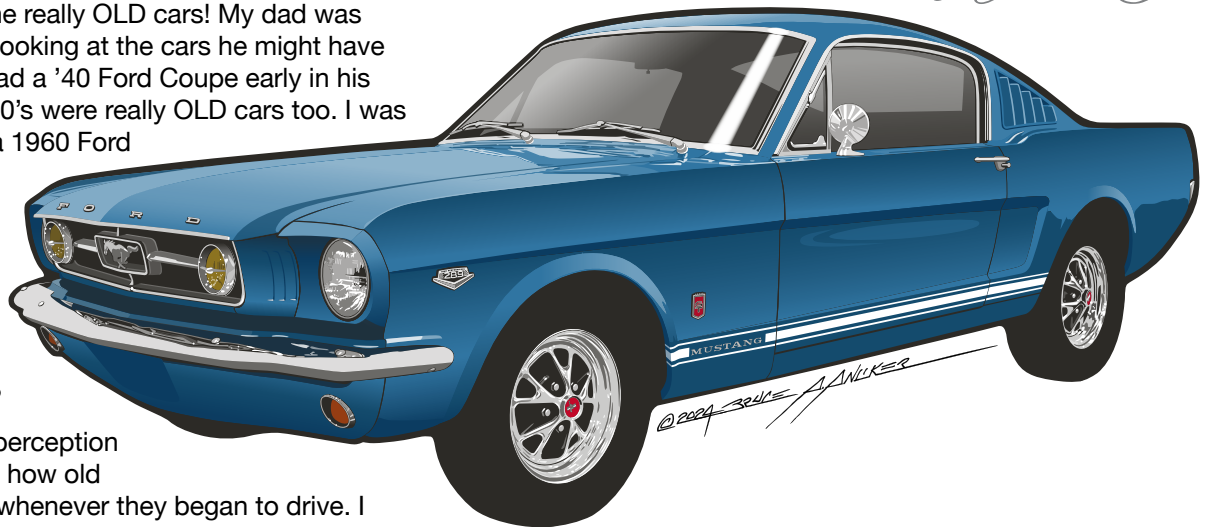
don't think my kids see the Mustang as super old—nothing like a '40 Ford. However, I'm sure my grandchildren do or will perceive it as an antique just like I do the cars of the 40's and older. There are none of the modern-day vehicle conveniences that my soon to be driving grandson will have, i.e., adaptive cruise control, lane departure warning, steering wheel controls, automatic climate control and the list goes on. They will see my car as a technological dinosaur and wonder how did I survive without hands-free navigation and communication?

In 2025 the model year 2000 vehicles will become AACA eligible (how does that make you feel?). One day those vehicles will belong to grandparents whose first car was a 2000. They will hear the car show promo and their car will be the one that "your grandparents drove." So will I say to them...welcome to the club!

Finally, as we celebrate this Fourth of July, please take a moment to remember all those who sacrificed and still sacrifice so that we have the freedom we enjoy...freedom we should never ever take for granted. We live in the greatest nation on earth, and we should never forget that.

I'll see you down the road!

Henry Gaither, Jr.



In Memorium

In Memory Of

Bill Irwin

By Kathy & Alan Irwin

He lived by Plan: Humility-Hope



In Memory Of

Dave Rich

By Pat Rich



In Memorium

In Memory Of

Judy Cox

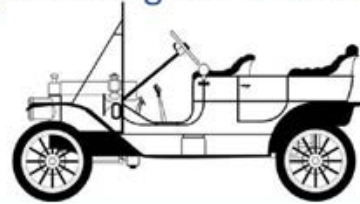
By John & Pat Cox



In Memory Of

Katie & E. B. Dawson

By granddaughter Lou Ann Smith



In Memory Of

Tal Johnson

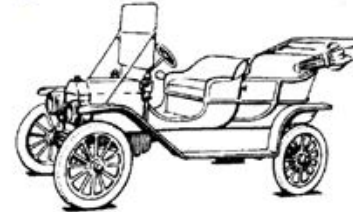
By Jeannie Johnson



In Memory Of

Walter R. "WR" Smith

By his son Chuck Smith



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