

CELEBRATING PAAC'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY BY LOOKING BACK & REMEMBERING***HOW IT ALL BEGAN (MAYBE)***
By Janet Travis

Back in 1968, a counselor with Prescott High School had a vision. Jim Geator, who was into Model 'T's thought it would be fun to get a car club going to share the love of old vehicles. He knew a few guys who had old cars and trucks and they agreed. So Jim ran an announcement in the Evening Courier letting anyone in the Prescott area know there would be a meeting in the Rock House at Sharlot Hall Museum to discuss forming a club. In a recent interview with Keith Bochart, Pat Mackin, Lyle Gilson, and Bob Hinshaw, all charter members of PAAC, they all agreed that Jim Geator was the one that got the club started.

Keith Bochart had a Standard Station on west Goodwin Street. This was a FULL Gas Station where they washed your windows, pumped your gas, and repaired your vehicles. He saw the announcement and attended the meeting. Lyle Gilson, who was working at American Laundry saw the announcement and he also attended. A written record of the beginning meetings has not been found and probably there never was one. The group that nite agreed a car club was a good idea. Pat Mackin thinks he started attending about the third meeting. He was in high school and taking auto shop. Bob Hinshaw wasn't sure when he started attending, but was sure it was some of the early ones. He and Burt Wright were working at the Prescott Fire Department.

Others that formed the early group included Del Walker the drafting and shop teacher, Gene Neil an attorney, Ron Solt owned Solt Lauitsen men's clothing store, George McMullen a shop teacher, G. C. (Johnny) Coffee who started 'Old Car Value Guide', Max Merritt a policeman, Gomer Jones had a car dealership, Paul Simpson, Stan Leake a student, Syd and March Griffiths had a gas station, Roger Johnson had a hardware store, and by the time the club incorporated in March 1970, there were 32 members. As today, the founding members came from all walks of life and what brought them together was a love of vintage vehicles.

Over the next maybe 18 months or so after the initial meeting, the group formed a car club called the Prescott Car Club. They had outings, meetings, and get-togethers. They organized a vibrant club. Unfortunately, photos and written documents of the early days are scarce or hiding in boxes someplace. By the fall of 1969, those participating had elected officers and become a club that wanted to incorporate and become official. Jim Geator was President. Gene Neil wrote up and handled the paperwork for the club to become incorporated.

By the time the incorporation paperwork was filed, the name had been changed to Prescott Antique Auto Club, PAAC for short. In the interview with Pat, Keith, Lyle, and Bob for this article, they agreed that 'auto' instead of 'car' was chosen as 'auto' would include all self propelled vehicles and not just cars, which made the club name more inclusive.

In the newsletters for the next year, March, 2020 thru February, 2021, articles will be run about how PAAC has developed over the last 50 years from a vision of Jim Geator's to the very vibrant and active club it is today. Jim is undoubtedly looking down from the great beyond smiling.



Jim Geator could be considered the 'Father of PAAC'. It was his vision and drive that got the club started in 1968. Photo from 1968 Prescott High School Hassayamper.

FEBRUARY 2007
FROM THE PRESIDENT'S TAILPIPE

It's official . . . The first PAAC board meeting in our new quarters.

Altho not as plush as the church meeting place, the new building shows that a lot of hard work builds more than a building but a true sense of pride in belonging to PAAC. Those of you who have not visited, plan to make the March meeting and enjoy the new digs and reacquaint yourselves with the great people we have in the club. Remember that it's auction nite starting at 6:30pm. Bring all those treasures that have been cluttering your shop and trade them for more treasures to fill the empty places.

The new building was made possible by the hard work of previous club members. The Watson Lake show needs your help. All the events have chairmen, but they need help. The parking will again have the help of the Scouts, but we need ticket takers, help in the swap meet, and Ed Hoffman has plenty of openings in the car show event.

PAAC members are the envy of the other regional car clubs. The Watson Lake show, the new building, the club enthusiasm all point to the energy of our membership. New members...attend the next meeting and bring a friend. Support a great club.

Ed Willimann