

CHESAPEAKE BULLETIN

VOLUME 66, NUMBER 9, SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2026



On Sunday, September 13th, Chesapeake Region hosted their annual Autumn Harvest Car Show at Manchester Volunteer Fire Grounds. While the weather was not our friend, we did have just over 60 vehicles venture out for the day to support our show.



Autumn Harvest Show



Paula's President's Message

Hello Chesapeake Members!

Fall is upon us and the leaves are changing quickly. Take some time out of your day and go outside and enjoy the crisp air and the beautiful scenery. Don't put away your classics just yet, we still have a few things coming up.

We are planning our trip to Barry's Car Barn the end of this month and there is still time to join in. Be sure to call me to lock in your spot. The club will be paying your admission to Barry's provided that you RSVP in advance and lunch is on your own. Please review the flyer for Barry's Car Barn that has all of the details outlined.

We will be celebrating Oktoberfest at the next meeting at the church on Monday, October 12th at 6:30. We will have a light dinner and a special guest to help serve. YOU DO NEED TO CALL PAULA to RSVP so that she is prepared with enough food. Please BRING YOUR OWN DRINK. It will be a fun night and Tom Rosso will be our guest speaker regarding automotive security. This will be our last meeting for 2026.

We will not be having a November meeting as it was scheduled for the week before the banquet and there is no meeting in December so our members can enjoy the holiday time with your friends and family.

I am looking forward to the Banquet at Friendly Farms on Sunday, November 15th. Don't wait to send in your reservation. The price is the same as last year at \$25.00 a person with the club subsidizing the rest. WHAT A DEAL.

In closing, enjoy the Fall weather and check your calendar and get ready for some great events.

Paula Lynn Ruby



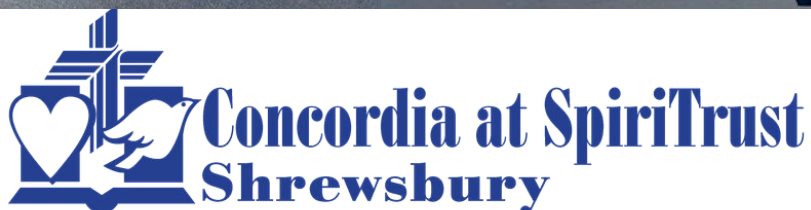
Chesapeake AACA Monthly Membership Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes are distributed by email. Please review them to stay up to date!

*Fondly,
Judy Dawson*

SpiriTrust Shrewsbury

On Wednesday, September 16th a group of Chesapeake Members put on a car display for the residents of SpiriTrust Shrewsbury. It was a beautiful day and the residents seemed to enjoy seeing the cars. Thanks to everyone who participated.



Goal Achieved! The 43 year Journey

Dating back to 1976, my grandfather, Anthony “Tony” Baldino, was a member of the AACA. I still have the original letter in a binder welcoming him to the organization. That letter marked the beginning of what would become a nearly 50-year family journey with one very special car. My grandfather originally purchased a 1953 DeSoto Firedome after previously owning a 1941 DeSoto coupe. The story goes that he wanted the new Hemi V8, and on January 21, 1953, he acquired Serial Number 55066772 in Auburn, New York. The DeSoto became the family car. My dad, Rocco Sr., and my Aunt Mary Ann were both little kids when the car was new. The years went by, but the DeSoto stayed with the family. In 1965, my dad was offered the car, but instead chose a brand-new 1965 Pontiac Bonneville. The DeSoto was then parked in the garage, where it remained for several years. Around 1975, my grandmother suggested that my grandfather take the DeSoto to local car shows. That suggestion would change the car’s future forever.

My grandfather was a mechanic and knew how to bring the car back to life after sitting for so many years. After attending several AACA shows, he earned his first Junior award in 1983, followed by his First Senior. He would spend the next several years competing against an exact duplicate of his two-tone blue 1953 DeSoto. Along the way, he earned several Third and Second Place Grand National awards, continuing through 1992. Tony kept going to Fall Hershey and many other AACA shows throughout the East Coast region. Every trip was made with an open car trailer. Eventually, that trailer was replaced with a similar new 1988 Unger and Wilhelm Eliminator — the same trailer I still use today. I still have and cherish the miniature Winross model trucks that my grandfather either received or purchased at the Hershey show each October. I traveled with him from Syracuse to Hershey a few times, riding onto the show field in the DeSoto. I was about five years old when he completed the restoration in 1983, so I don't remember much. But I do remember tagging along with him to the body shop owned by his good friend Nick Orso and visiting the parts warehouse owned by James Ranalli Sr. My dad was officially given a bill of sale for the DeSoto in 1983, but he did not take physical ownership of the car until Tony passed away in 2002. By then, I had moved to Maryland for college. After the funeral services, my dad took me out and taught me how to drive the DeSoto and its Fluid Drive Tip-Toe transmission. You start the engine with the safety clutch depressed and then place the transmission into Low, High, or Reverse. From there, it is driven much like an automatic. In High gear, which is third gear, you build speed until about 20 to 25 mph. You then let off the accelerator, and the next gear engages automatically with a distinctive “clunk.” No clutch is needed. When you stop or slow down, the transmission automatically returns to the lower gear, accompanied by another, slightly different clunk. That was the last time I drove the DeSoto for nearly 20 years.

From 2002 until about 2009, my dad occasionally showed the car at Oneida Region events. Eventually, life got busy. I was living in Maryland, working and raising a family, and the DeSoto once again sat. Fortunately, my dad had built a custom three-car garage in 1988, and the DeSoto remained safely preserved inside. After my father's passing in 2021, I brought the DeSoto back to life. I was able to drain the old stale gasoline, check the oil, install a new battery, and — amazingly — it started right up. In 2022, my daughter Brie and I attended the National DeSoto Convention in Altoona, Pennsylvania. We even had to borrow a pickup truck from our neighbor to get the DeSoto there. We attended the outings and dinners and then the judged show. Brie even participated in judging with the other kids so she could learn how the process worked. During awards, we heard nothing for our class but we were in for a surprise when they announced Best in Show was our 1953 DeSoto!



Goal Achieved! The 43 year Journey

The DeSoto returns to Hershey every other year, and it will be there again in a few weeks. When we learned that an AACA Grand National show would be held in Allentown, Pennsylvania. I decided to enter the DeSoto. There was one goal in the back of my mind: Finish what Grampa had started. I wanted to earn the First Place Grand National award that had eluded him.

After a long few days, the show finally arrived. We waited for our turn to be judged. The judges carefully went over the car. Other than the usual questions – including, “Can you open the doors?” – they didn't say much. I was nervous and anxious waiting for the results. After checking out of the hotel, I needed a place to clean up before the awards dinner. Being a member of the fire department, I stopped at the nearby Allentown Fire Department. They were kind enough to let me leave the DeSoto on the trailer inside the station while I got cleaned up. Then it was time for the awards dinner. More than 500 people were in attendance. The cars competing at the Grand National were among the finest AACA vehicles, with many already having achieved First Senior status and earning scores of 380 out of 400 points or higher. Everyone waited as the winners were announced. Finally, they called my class.

Then I heard my name. “Rocco Baldino – 1953 DeSoto...” “First Grand National!”

I made my way through the crowd and received a beautiful, heavy trophy, a Grand National wheel tab, and the Grand National grille badge. After 43 years, the journey was complete. My grandfather had earned his First Junior in 1983. He followed it with a First Senior and spent years chasing that elusive Grand National award. In 2026, I finally completed what he had started. It was an incredibly emotional day. More than just winning an award, it felt like I was finishing a promise to my grandfather and honoring all the time, work, and dedication he had invested in this car. This DeSoto has been part of our family for more than 70 years. My grandfather restored it. My father preserved it. I brought it back to the show field.

And now, the next chapter begins as we are preparing to pass the DeSoto along to my daughter, Brie. She will become the fourth generation of our family to own this car.

She has already learned how to drive it and has driven it to two local shows.

The car that started with my grandfather in 1953, entered the AACA world in 1976, earned its First Junior in 1983, and finally achieved a First Grand National in 2026 will now continue into its fourth generation.

The goal was achieved. But the journey isn't over.
Rocco Anthony Baldino Jr.



Tech Talk...with Phil Hack

Now that fall is here and we no longer need A/C, I was finally able to hold a tech session to diagnose a malfunctioning Air Conditioning unit on Bruce Stumpp's '47 Ford Street Rod. If you haven't seen this car, it is truly beautiful, built several years ago by Lucky-7 shop in PA. Attending was Jack Treadwell, Larry Butcher and Danny Baust. Ron Fleming, who has extensive knowledge of A/C systems headed up the session. Ron was also able to score A/C test gauges, vacuum pump, leak detector fluid and a sniffer for detecting leaks. Unfortunately, the system has been plagued with problems for several years. Though Bruce had had several people work on it, the system never operated for very long before quitting again. Since it has been used very little, we surmised there was a refrigerant leak somewhere. First on the agenda was to connect the gauges and we quickly determined the system was nearly empty of refrigerant R134A.

Charging the system took only a few minutes and the compressor started, bringing the system to life blowing nice cold air. We then injected some leak detector fluid and checked around for leaks and found nothing. Next, we used the sniffer which is a small hand-held device with a suction hose to place near possible leak areas. Normally it produces a slow steady audible beep. When refrigerant is detected, the beep increases in frequency. We quickly found a Schrader valve leak which is quite common and easy to replace. We continued searching and determined there was a leak in the evaporator coil. The refrigerant evaporates inside this coil, absorbing heat, producing the cold surface for air to blow across and into the interior. Unfortunately, removing the evaporator required removing a large part of the dash and the heater core. You must also have special equipment to evacuate and capture the R134A. This is a dangerous greenhouse gas that should not be put into the atmosphere.

We recommended Bruce take it to a shop to have the refrigerant removed and the Schrader valve replaced. He should then determine how long it takes to lose enough refrigerant to render the system inoperable. If it lasts a year or more, he should be okay. If less, he really needs to look into having the evaporator replaced. Since we cannot capture the refrigerant, it needs to be removed by a shop with the proper equipment.

After our work was completed, I pulled out a diagram of a typical automotive A/C system and explained how the system works. My sincerest apologies to Bruce's wife Norma for having to suffer so long without A/C. Her homemade blueberry coffee cake was delicious! Thank you.



Phil Hack

AACA Annual Grand Nationals

The AACA held their Annual Grand Nationals & Zenith Competitions on August 20th – 22nd at The NB Center for Automotive Heritage in Allentown Pennsylvania. The Chesapeake Region was well represented with Tom & Lauri Rosso, Tom Young & Rosemary Desmond, Kenny Stevenson, Jack Anderson, and Rocco Baldino all in attendance (sorry that Phil Hack missed out!). Also with us was my friend (who got me into all of this) from Tidewater Region Rick Seaman. This being the first time I had been to and seen the NB Center, to say I was in awe is an understatement! The grounds were amazing filled with buildings housing, shops, tools, equipment, and cars cars cars!!! When we pulled into the field and parked in our assigned space immediately in front of the “house”, I guess I shouldn’t have been shocked when I looked up to the open second-floor window and found our host, Nicola Bulgari standing there in a white bathrobe overlooking his “yard” like it was just another ordinary Saturday morning! I know that Rocco spoke with Nicola at some length as he had his eye on that ’53 Desoto, the kind of car that he had a fondness for. The weather held out for us all despite the forecast for a lot of moisture.

It was a lot of fun hanging out with our group for lunch on Friday and then again at the Banquet on Saturday evening. This is what makes the hobby fun. Attending a show, helping each other out with little problems, chatting it up on the field, and then pumping each other up at the awards banquet!

Awards:

Tom & Lauri Rosso– 1965 Valiant Signet - First Grand National Award

Preservation Board with first tab

Tom Young – 1960 Thunderbird - Repeat Senior Grand National Award & Preservation tab

Rocco Baldino – 1953 Desoto S16 - First Grand National Award & Preservation tab

Jack Anderson – 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air - Repeat Senior Grand National award & Preservation tab

Kenny Stevenson – 1947 Ford - Preservation tab



Winner Winner!!!!

More Photos of the Grand Nationals Event.



New Addition to the Crib

Mark and Mary Stershic welcomed a new baby to their garage. A 1986 Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme. 57k miles 307 with 350 turbo hydramatic is now part of their fleet.



Taneytown Memorial Park Car Show

On Saturday, October 3rd, Rocco Baldino took his DeSoto out to the Taneytown Memorial Park Car Show.



Region Activities 2026

Date	Time	Event	Location
October 2026			
10/6-9	All Day	AACA Hershey Fall Meet	Hershey, PA
10/8-11	All Day	Endless Summer Cruise-In	Ocean City, MD
10/10	5-8 p.m.	Graul's Market Cruise-In	Parkton, MD
10/12	7:00 p.m.	Chesapeake Region General Membership Meeting	Towson, MD
10/23	4-8 p.m.	Markets at Shrewsbury Cruise-In	Shrewsbury, PA
10/24	8:30 a.m.	Chesapeake Region Barry's Car Barn Trip	Intercourse, PA
10/25	11-3 p.m.	Rumble in the Ruins Show	Glen Rock, PA
November 2026			
11/7	11-3 p.m.	Markets at Shrewsbury Toy Run Cruise-In	Shrewsbury, PA
11/7	Morning	Tall Cedars Pancake Breakfast	Parkville, MD
11/8	1-4	Jerry's Chevrolet Fall Show	Baltimore, MD
11/8	10-3	Sunday in the Park Car Show Hampstead Lions Club	Hampstead, MD
11/15	11:00	Chesapeake Region Annual Banquet	Upperco, MD

Winner Winner!!!!



On Sunday, September 13th, Allen and Cindy Swim attended the 43rd Annual Pontiac Show in Urbana, MD. Allen brought home a second place win



Elected and Appointed Officers for 2026 (Elected Positions Make up the Executive Board of the Club with full voting rights)

Position	Name	Email	Phone
President	Paula Ruby	paulaspackard@hotmail.com	410-627-1642
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Treasurer	Allen Swim	jaswim@comcast.net	410-599-7064
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Director at Large	Thomas Young	tbirdtoms60@verizon.net	443-744-6338
Director at Large	Gary Wilmer	wilmervicky@gmail.com	443-340-7690
Director at Large	Thomas Dawson	tomdawson315@gmail.com	410-688-8358
Chief Judge	Henry Chaudron, Sr.	henrypoly61@gmail.com	443-520-8541

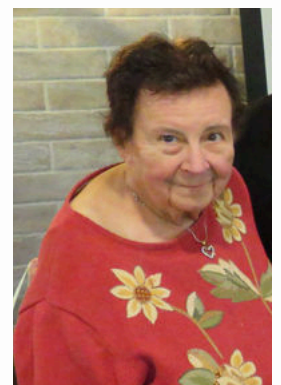
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SUNSHINE REPORT FROM MARGARET

Get Well Cards to Al Zimmerman and
Teresa Baust.
Sympathy Card to Cindy George on the
passing of her husband Bill
Sympathy Card to the Family of Ruth
Synodinos.

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