

Our Newest LHACBS member, Fred Wolf

Fred Wolf is our club's newest member. His professional bio reads as follows: "Fred Wolf has over 40 years of experience teaching at the technical school and college levels. He has extensive experience in diesel mechanics, automotive technology, refrigeration, electronics engine controls, and welding. He was a previous Board Member of the New Jersey Motor Truck Association and New Jersey Teacher of the Year (twice). He is a Certified Proctor for EPA section 608 & 609 Refrigerant Gas Testing and a Certified Forklift Instructor."



As we wanted to learn more about Fred's interest in joining our club, Board member Mike Schillizzi and Vice-President Ray Reynolds met him for breakfast at the Scotchwood Diner. Fred lives in Scotch Plains, New Jersey.

In addition to an impressive professional career, Fred has a lifelong interest in cars and boats. His interest in cars came first. While in the third grade, Fred saw a copy of "Weekly Reader." This was a periodical distributed in many elementary schools. On one of the pages, a picture of a 1955 Ford Thunderbird caught Fred's eye. He loved the color of the T-Bird. It was aquamarine. He knew someday he had to have one.

Thirty-seven years later (1983), Fred purchased a 55 T-Bird from a friend's grandfather. The car needed work. However, Fred had the knowledge and ability to bring the T-Bird back to life.

Fred has attended car shows, since his youth. In 1984, Fred learned of Lead East. Lead East is a quality classic car and Rock "n" Roll event. It is described as "The World's Biggest Oldies' Festival." It is held at the Hilton Hotel, Parsippany, New Jersey. Fred has taken his T-Bird to Lead East, every year since 1984.

Let us turn to Fred's interest in wooden boats. Growing up, Fred's father had a plastic model of a wooden boat. Fred credits this model with stoking his interest in wooden boats. This interest was further ignited through a friend, named Ralph. Ralph was a master carpenter. In the early 70's, Ralph and Fred converted a Volkswagen Bus into a camper. Together they took a trip to Thousand Islands. It is there that Fred saw his first wooden boat. His immediate reaction was "WOW, I have to have one of those someday."

In February 2019, Fred received a telephone call from his stepson. His stepson found a Facebook post by Mike Schillizzi. Mike was selling a 17 ft, 1957 Chris-Craft, Sportsman. He thought this could be the boat Fred spoke of so often. After driving to Lake Hopatcong and seeing the boat, Fred made an immediate offer to buy it.

After purchasing the boat, Fred asked Mike if he would help change the name of the boat to "Born too Late." Here is the story behind the name. When Fred was 12 or 13 years old, he had a crush on a girl who was a little older (18 months to be exact). The girl's name was Ginny. When you are older in life, it does not matter if the guy is a little younger than the girl. But a young, teenage girl just did not date a younger male. It was during this time that Fred first heard the song "Born too Late," by the Poni-Tails. In his heart, Fred knew the true meaning of the song.

Fred was out of luck. He and Ginny remained friends. As a matter of fact, Fred encouraged Ginny to marry someone else. Fred served as an usher at Ginny's wedding. Luckily for Fred, the marriage did not last too long. After her divorce, Ginny and Fred occasionally stayed in touch.

In 1985, Fred operated a local gas-station. To his surprise, Ginny drove in. She was having car trouble. Fred agreed to fix the car. He also took the opportunity to ask Ginny for a date. He explained he had a 55 T-Bird. Their first date was June 15, 1985, when Fred drove Ginny to Lead East in his T-Bird. They have been together ever since.

If you are familiar with Lead East, you might know that you can volunteer to serve in different capacities at the event. In exchange for your services, you receive two free passes and a free spot to show your car. Fred has served as a Lead East volunteer since 1985. His first job was picking up garbage. In 2019, Fred and several others became partners in purchasing Lead East. One year ago, Fred became the sole owner.

On June 18, 2022, Fred attended his first boat show. It was the LHACBS' 47th Annual Show, held at the Lake Hopatcong Yacht Club. It was there that he saw the 1955 Chris-Craft, 21ft, Black Cobra, owned by Katz's Marina. It is a vintage Hot Rod boat, believed to be a collaboration between Jim Street and George Barris. After the show, Fred contacted Jara Katz and made arrangements to exhibit the Black Cobra at this year's Lead East event.

Fred is planning to attend our club's November 20th annual meeting. If you see him there, please introduce yourself. Club membership is more than just the boats. It is the connections you make with the people you meet and, more importantly, the lasting friendships.