

John and Karen Villandre

Some of you may remember about three years ago Pete Goodson began writing this column and I thought it would be a good time to do it again. Pete ran the column every month but due to my schedule this year I hope to do it every two to three months. Another change is Pete focused on some of the old time members and I want to focus on the new generation of members. This will give all of us a better chance to get to know the new members much faster.

This month I had the privilege of spending almost two hours chatting with and learning more about the Villandre family. John and Karen live in Clayton and the Club now has several members they can call neighbors. Karen and John joined the club in March of 2011. At the time John had recently purchased a 29 roadster. This car was comprised of several cars much like many we have all seen. I remember going over to see the car with Alex Janke shortly after the purchase and Alex and I both encouraged John to continue working on the car but we both went away saying it may be a long time before we see the car running. John was excited and eager to get the car running and it was not long after that John showed up at a lunch tour in Concord driving his new car. The car did not have a body on it but that was no reason to not show it to the club and be proud that it ran. Today the car is a completed driver and now they both can enjoy the car with the club for a long time.

John and Karen have a son who is 18 and a daughter 12. John was born in Florida and moved to Calif. at about the age of 19. Karen is a Piedmont CA girl. John attended St Mary's College as did Karen. It was in college where the two of them were in line for a class in alphabetical order. Karen's last name began with a "W" and John was "V". What a great opportunity! As they say, the rest is history. They were married in Oakland in 1991. They have lived in their home in Clayton for the last 16 years.

John works as a building inspector for San Pablo and Karen has spent her working career in social work and counseling business. I asked what attracted John to the Model A and he said he had wanted one since he was 16 years old. John also has a hobby of repairing motorcycles but would rather fix them to sell then buy an-other. I asked what was the most exciting thing in life for both of them and without hesitation they both said the birth of their first child, their son. It turns out he was born premature and had many of the associated problems a premature baby could have. It was really touch and go for the first few weeks. I also asked what they would like to do in life if they could do it over and Karen said she would like to have been a nurse or doctor and John said he would like working in the automotive field but not a mechanic.

Both John and Karen have fathers who are living alone and are aging in poor health and wanted me to know that this year will be challenging for both of them to spend the time needed to be with the parents and will limit some of their activity with the club. They will attend as much as they can but not as much as they would like.

As I was leaving John stopped me and told me how much he has enjoyed being a part of our club and if it had not been for the help from many club members, especially the help he has had from Herb Neumann, he would have thrown in the towel and would have sold his model A long ago. Sometimes we have no idea how important each of us can be to other people by simply taking a little time to show we care about our hobby friends.

I am looking forward to talking to other new members this year and passing on information from my visits.

