

My Life of Airplanes, Motorcycles, Race Cars, Birds & Trains!

Ray Clark asked me to tell my story about my experiences with airplanes, cars, motorcycles, and trains. So where do I start? I was 18 when I bought my first car, a 1957 Chevy Bel Air. Boy was it ugly!



My neighbor's son who I had a big crush on, owned it, and he said he would sell it to me for \$250 but I had to help him rebuild the engine. Guess what I got to do with rebuilding the engine? I got to wash all the parts with gas. I have blonde hair that at the time was clear down my back. So I put my hair up in two pig tails. I think I had more gas in my hair than what I was using to clean with. Terry showed me how to replace spark plugs, oil change, etc... The first time I changed the oil, no one told me about the canister the filter fit in.

Well, it dropped right by my face and hot oil went splashing all over me and my hair. Just at that time my Dad pulled up coming home from work as I was sliding out, and all he said was “great job”! In the years to come, I re-upholstered the seats, headliner, and had the car painted red.

This now moves me into my first experience of replacing spark plugs. Sitting on the engine reaching down to replace the plugs, my friend who sold me the car pulls in with his black Stingray. Climbing out was two other guys, one I knew was Mike who had helped rebuild the engine. The other, unknown to me, would be my first husband. Paul decided at that point he was going to marry me, but first he had to get past Mike. Mike was the one who was teaching me to fly planes. (See photo below). But Paul beat him out and one year later we did get married. With that marriage came 5 years of rebuilding engines for our race car. A custom stock car. I drove out at Seattle International Race Way, road track racing, with 15 to 20 other cars. Average speed at that time (1973) was 140 mph. I got the biggest rush driving at those speeds and it has stuck with me. That was when my life changed. I had a love affair with cars. After five years of racing I took

several years of 1st Place Championships. Then I got pregnant and retired. As time goes, we got divorced.

I started working at Boeing Aerospace, and this bug that bit me kept me in a variety of cars. A 1979 VW Super Beetle, so I would not speed and get tickets. That did not work. Then a 1980 Black Scirocco, with a License plate that said VORTEX. (That really got tickets). Then a Red 1985 GTI Cabriolet, yet another one that got me tickets. 13 years after my divorce I met my next husband at Boeing, then the car buying slowed way down. Don was much older and sensible than me. LOL... But we had some nice cars, Cadillac, a Truck and my first 1988 T-Bird. We had moved to Spokane, and then to Canada where we built our dream home. My husband unfortunately died from cancer 7 years later after we moved to Canada.

THAT IS WHEN MY LIFE TOOK A TURN.

I met my next husband, who was a Burlington Railroad Engineer. Ken was someone I was not prepared for. He loved new cars, 4x4's, motorcycles, boats, wave riders, and snowmobiles. Over 12 years I had 6 Harley's, 3 Cadillac's, a BMW M3, a Mercedes SL650 Convertible, 2 Ford 350s. The best time I really had was when I snuck onto the train right in front of the

station and got to drive the train out of Spokane, Washington to Whitefish, Montana and back. On the way to Montana there is a tunnel that goes under the mountain that is 6 miles long. There is this big door that as you approach it would open like a big kaleidoscope. Then as soon as your 1.5-mile train was through, it would close and there you are in this black darkness until at the other end it would do the same and open. (Here are pictures of the Diesel she engineered to Montana, followed by a picture of the one on the return trip).





But things changed with us when I got broken. I had a motorcycle accident, then a car accident. I had to have my knees replaced, my back fused, and my shoulder surgery. Well, to make a short story shorter, we got divorced. I took my Mercedes after having the engine rebuilt and went to go see my brother in Graham, Washington. I had my three Schnauzers with me. On my way home, I looked at them and said “let us see what this baby can do”! 160mph when the governor shut me down. Those fence posts were flying by! I had a radar, and there was not anyone on the road. I would never endanger anyone’s life. When I moved back to my hometown, I decided that I did not want the expense of owning a German car.

I had seen the Retrobird some years before, but Ken did not fit in it, as he was too tall. So, I decided to look for one. I found a Silver with a Black top, 2004 T-bird,

Pacific Coast version. It had a beautiful pin stripe done by a local person, in the Thunderbird green, and caught a lot of attention.

That is when I met Steve... Steve and I met on a dating site, and after 2 years of that not working, I told my best friend that this guy was my last date. When I pulled up in front of a real restaurant (not a coffee shop), he was rocking back and forth on his feet, hands in his pockets. He looked like he was about to run, because I was late due to road construction. I am not sure to this day if it was the car or me, when I pulled up in front of him and rolled my window down. He smiled this big smile and asked, "You Andrea?", and I asked "Are you Steve?" We went in and had a nice dinner and drinks. Then he asked if I wanted to go for a walk. In Tacoma on the waterfront, is a wonderful walkway they built. You could park cars, grass to lay in and walk your dog. We walked down and sat on a concrete bench, and talked for 3 hours. This was September 13, 2012. It was COLD, and I do believe my butt was frozen to the bench! Walking me to my car, Steve asked if he could give me a hug. Sure! I give big bear hugs, and so does he. He walked away about 10 feet when he turned and asked if he could have another. Sure! We found out that we were 2 exits

apart. Steve did something I am not even sure men still do today. He brought me red roses, stopped by every night to say good night, had many dinners, and saved my life. (Another story).

Then in January, he took me to the Big Wheel in Seattle and proposed to me as the wheel went around. It almost did not happen because I was so busy looking out as he got on his knees. He had to get my attention as the wheel was coming to a stop. I had to pick a date I could remember. We got married February 14, 2013, in my brother's Castle in Graham, Washington. A year later, we planned on moving to Florida. I decided to sell my '04 Retrobird, a big mistake at the time. After going back home to Washington, it took three years later to find my 2005 50th Anniversary Retrobird. I could not be happier to have found it. Steve found it first and I did not like it but went back to look at it again. It had been owned by an old man who bought it new, and his family sold it after he had passed. I met his Granddaughter one day on the road, she saw it and started honking her horn to get my attention. She told me then about her Grandfather, and I told her I loved the car and would take good care of it. Now my Daughter has asked to be the one to get it after me, but Steve said she would

**have to wait until we were both gone, then she would get it. This is my story and I am sticking with it!
Andrea Yaudas – July 19, 2021**

**Andrea has lived an adventurous life with many talents!
Enjoy the additional photographs of her many activities.**





The picture below is of Andrea doing backyard work with an earth mover.





Andrea's Volkswagen

Andrea's AMX Race Car

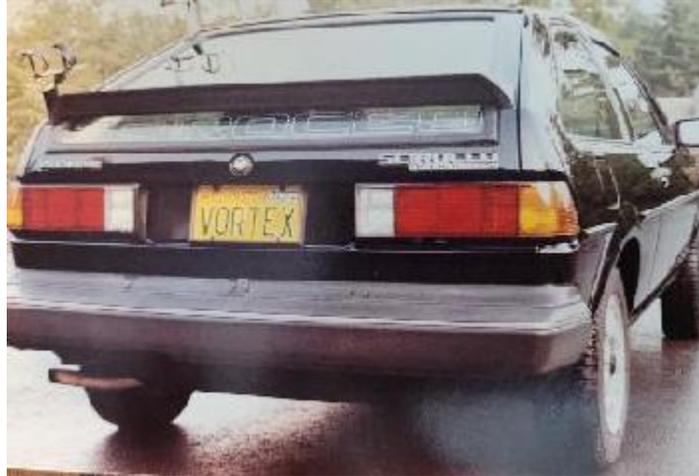


Andrea's Dirt Bike









Andrea's Mustang



1997-Mercedes-Benz-SLI600



Passengers waiting for Andrea, the pilot, to board an aircraft for a flight over the mountains in Montana!

