

Hang'n' in the Garage *By Paul Greco*

WARNING - This activity may cause compulsive and obsessive behaviors presenting symptoms of uncontrolled automotive collecting.

A place to park the car? Is a church merely a building?

There is a room in almost every abode, which is rarely used for its designated purpose. This room probably has seen every kind of activity, but none more relevant than the human need to **socialize!** No it's not the living room or the dining room and not even the family room – it is the **garage!**

In the house where I grew up, it was our only playroom. It was only the minimum size, but we squeezed in a Ping-Pong table and would spend hours playing. Later on the slot car fad would take over that space, but not before I began to see that large flat surface as a convenient work place. The pitched driveway also had a retaining wall on one side, which also made a perfect variable height workbench that grew as I grew. At an early age I began to utilize those spaces to explore all things mechanical.

Before long, friends and neighbors would begin to notice that maybe the things I was doing could be of some service to them and I was always performing some sort of fix-it or another. Kids started hanging around just to see what was happening that day. Most often it was small repairs to bicycles, but that grew into customized rides and progressed into *motorized* vehicles. As such, interest increased rapidly as everybody wanted to ride on those! As my skills and the tool collection increased, the place began to take on a completely new atmosphere,

almost as if we might even have a clue as to what we were doing!

One slightly older fellow's family owned a few gas stations and I started hanging out at those to bring it up to a completely different level. I worked for tips pumping gas just for the experience and the opportunity to be there. He also introduced me to some other guys in the neighborhood who had really cool garages and also a car-club that rented six garages in a row! I can tell you that it was pure exhilaration to visit these places – full of excitement and intrigue.

My life took on a new direction as a result of the things I saw and learned. I began to accept those kids hanging around my garage and was willing to show them all kinds of stuff, as was taught to me.

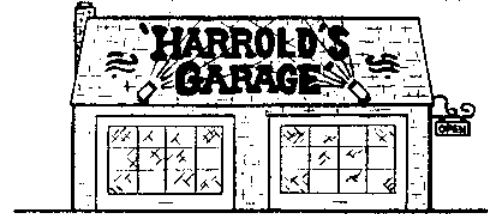
I think the most fun were the **bull sessions** - coming up with all fashion of weird and crazy ideas for

projects, most of which of course would never be built. Except one time, around Halloween, I thought it would be a good idea to build a guillotine. I got about half way through that one until I realized how really **sick (and dangerous)** that would be. I decided it would be much better to turn it into a workbench!

Alas, I moved from my boyhood home to Long Island but still only have a one-car garage! Between work surfaces, tools and parts hanging

everywhere, and the current project car, it's a miracle anything can get done in there at all! As such, I am forever scribbling plans for the garage of my dreams. My latest fantasy is a building that is "T" shaped two cars wide by two cars deep with a one-car size covered patio and a pool halfway down one side that opens into the center with another roll up door. It would have a loft above for living or working and all the space would be finished like a living room, but with cars in it. And when it's party time, we can pull the cars out, open the

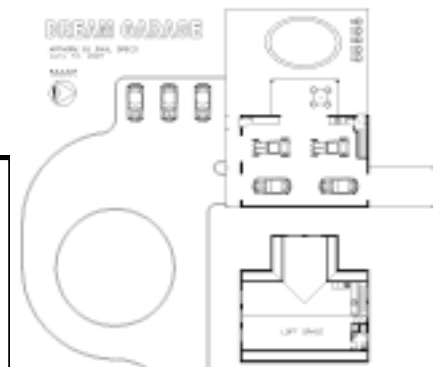
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Old business card – how it got that name is another story!

side door to the pool and let it all **hang out!**



The spouse speaks: When a young couple dreams of a nice size house, garage, yard, a few kids and a dog it sounds ideal. My husband, being the caraholic, wants a 3 car garage and I want very little living space, so a room or two attached to a commercial building is my dream. When I grew up, girls had boyfriends who hung out in bars, poolrooms, and bad neighborhoods or with other girls, always worrying and wondering where they were. I always know where my husband is, when he comes home early from work or on his weekends or days off (even on his vacation) he's in his favorite place – the garage or the driveway! I always know where he'll be when I pull up to the house. Sure beats alcohol, drugs, women or gambling! Sometimes when I approach my honey at his playtime, I have to use my Volkswagen interpretation dictionary to understand what he says he's doing, but what matters most is that he is happy. A million dollars couldn't buy that and I'm ecstatic knowing his main goal is to spend the least pennies he can. It feels good to know that he's hanging in HIS garage! - Rachel