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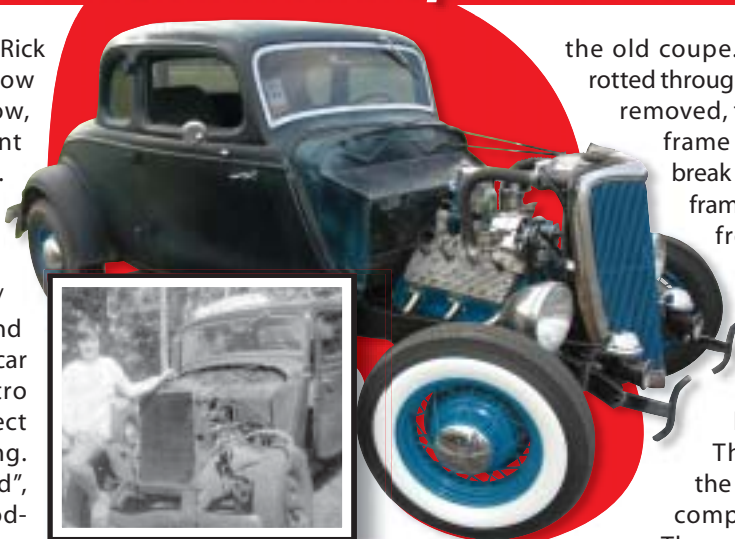
WINTER 2006

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The Ford Model 40 As A Therapeutic Aid

When we first laid eyes on Rick Zurek's '34 Ford five window coupe at our 2005 car show, it was immediately apparent that it was a very rare item. In a world filled with '33-'34 coupes with chopped tops, reproduced bodies and frames, one-piece fender/runningboard assemblies and modern running gear, Rick's car stood out. It was not a retro rod, newly built to only reflect an earlier era of hot rodding. Nor was it a trendy "rat rod", built to shock the sport of rodding back to reality. This car was a hot rod, pure and simple.



Conceived as such in 1956, and continued over the course of many years, the little coupe has remained faithful to those original concepts. To put it another way: How many Model 40 Fords out there can lay claim to being a hot rod for over fifty of their 72 years? We'll bet there are darn few.

Rick Zurek was just a few months away from his sixteenth birthday in the summer of 1956. Residents of Chicago, Rick and his family were spending the summer at their cottage near Covert, Michigan. That year, fellow Illinoisian, Adlai Stevenson, was campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination, and Gogi Grant's "Wayward Wind" had just knocked Elvis Presley's "Heartbreak Hotel" out of the number one spot on the Hit Parade. Rick and his dad, Walter, decided to tackle the restoration of an old car. Soon, this idea was modified slightly when, instead of restoration, they opted to find a '32 Ford coupe and build a hot rod. Even back then "Deuce" coupes were scarce and relatively expensive. Summer was waning, and no suitable project car had been found. Then Walter happened on a '34 Ford five window, driven to and abandoned for scrap at a Chicago junkyard. The radiator was still warm when Mr. Zurek handed over \$25.00 and drove the 21 year-old car home.

Rick was mowing the lawn when his father drove up in the dilapidated coupe, and he could hardly contain his enthusiasm. He recalls, "I went nuts!" The car was stored in a makeshift lean-to for the winter and the next summer, father and son were working in earnest to repair

the old coupe. The floorboards were rotted through and, when the body was removed, they discovered that the frame was rusted and about to break apart. A solid replacement frame was purchased for \$5.00 from a rodder in Benton Harbor. Rick diligently ground the rust off the frame, painted it and replaced the original mechanical brakes with hydraulics off a 1940 Ford. The body was bolted on the new frame and the other components were added.

The next year, Rick graduated from high school, attended college for a year and then joined the Air Force. The '34 project then took a long hiatus as marriage and career choices took Rick all over the country.

In the early 1980's, Rick, his family, and the '34, took up residence in South Haven, Michigan, and work on the old car resumed. A rebuilt flathead V8 from a '48 Ford police cruiser was fitted with Fenton aluminum heads and bolted up to the stock '34 transmission which was connected to the original '34 rear end. Rick learned to use a lathe so he could fashion aluminum risers for the twin Stromberg 97 carbs on the Fenton manifold. In 1999, the car made its debut at a car show in South Haven, although it was towed instead of being driven. It was again towed to the 2000 show, but in 2001, the car made it to the show grounds under its own power, but still needed work to make it right. Said Rick, "...the brakes weren't really that good, and the steering wasn't great."

Rick continued improving the car. Then, in July 2002, his wife, Barbara, died of cancer. Suddenly the '34, which had been just a pleasant pastime, became a way for Rick to deal with this tragedy, giving him a needed respite from his grief.

Since 2002, the brakes have been improved, the engine has been fine-tuned, new gauges have been added and a sun roof has been installed in place of the original canvas top insert.

We hope to see Rick's car here at future shows, and we invite everyone to meet Rick, and take a closer look at his '34 Ford. They're both hot rodding veterans. **R&R**

Rodding News

Editor's Notes: The Rest Of The Story On The Z-Man's '34 Ford Coupe

I love a good car mystery. When Rick Zurek's '34 Ford coupe appeared in a recent Benton Harbor-St. Joseph, Michigan Herald-Palladium feature article, a dim and distant memory was awakened. The picture brought to mind another '34 Ford coupe story that surfaced several years ago, in the early 1980's. I can remember it like it was yesterday.

I was car pooling to a monthly meeting of the Kalamazoo Antique Auto Restorers Club with fellow members Terry Richcreek, Fred Grant and Bill McLaughlin. It was Terry's month to drive, and as we burned up the highway miles (and a good deal of gas) in his mother's big Lincoln, he was telling us of a rare automotive find he had made earlier that day. A well driller by trade, Terry had been installing a well point at a

home near Covert when he discovered a '34 Ford five-window coupe stored inside an outbuilding. He was enthused about his discovery. He mentioned talking to the elderly folks there, who told him the car belonged to their son. Terry expressed his intentions to possibly arrange a purchase.

The Town Car lumbered on toward Kalamazoo, and the discussion moved on to other topics. I couldn't forget that '34 Ford story, however, and every time I saw Terry I bugged him for any new information. After Terry's untimely death a few years later, my thoughts turned to other cars and other projects. That '34 coupe got shuffled to the dark recesses of my memory bank...until that November 17, 2005 human interest article.

I picked up the newspaper and right there, in black and white...and Ford blue, was a head-on shot of a handsome, old timey Ford hot rod. As I quickly skimmed the accompanying text, I learned that the car had spent many years in storage in Covert! Could this be the car Terry Richcreek had discovered many years earlier? I had to know. When I talked to Rick Zurek before starting our feature article in this issue, I asked him if anyone had ever tried to buy the car. He mentioned a fellow named Richcreek who had approached his mother several times about selling the car. By golly, it was the same car! Rick chuckled as he related how each offer escalated by a couple hundred dollars, and his mom would then call to say that she had gotten another offer on that "old junk car" in the barn. When the offers got to fifteen hundred dollars she just couldn't understand why he didn't sell it.

So, there it is. It took twenty or more years to solve the mystery of the '34 Ford coupe in Covert, but the car survives and, more importantly, it is in good hands. Now, I guess I'll return to the mystery surrounding the supposed presence of a '69 Hemi Road Runner in a barn in rural Van Buren County. **R&R**



Rodder Alert: The "Last Hurrah" For Vintage Tin Hunters



We've been alarmed by the unending lines of trucks, loaded down with old cars and heading to the scrap iron dealers around here. No doubt all of our readers have seen similar vintage tin "funeral" processions in their areas, too. No one can really be blamed for what is happening. Times are tight, and the \$100.00 a ton prices being paid for scrap iron can make an antique car from the fifties or early sixties worth better than \$200.00, and any old truck worth up to \$500.00. Most often the prices these cars bring are higher than what they would be if sold intact as project or parts cars. Unfortunately, once they are scrapped, and titles are turned in to the state, their life span is very short before the crusher is fired up.

A recent trip to a local yard, usually heavily populated by post-1990 vehicles, uncovered the remains of a '57 Cadillac, a '59 Buick, a '53 Studebaker coupe, a '60 Diamond T truck, a '49 DeSoto sedan and an early 60's VW sedan/dune buggy. All of these were pulled from behind barns or the insides of old garages because of the lure of high bucks from the scrappers. The main reason for imparting this information here is to encourage all our rodder friends out there to run, don't walk, to their nearest wrecking yards to see if there is anything that can be rescued before the hulks are bound for China. Keep in mind that most of these cars and trucks are not necessarily restorable, but may just yield some very desirable parts for that next rat rod or custom project. The aforementioned DeSoto, for example, had a near perfect pair of ribbed bumpers that were almost standard equipment on any fifties era custom. The nailhead in that old Buick could have been coupled with that sleek '53 Studebaker and, with a little massaging, been Bonneville bound. **R&R**

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Drag Racing News

Bob Ott Triumphs at Indy Fall Classic

Stellar reaction times and consistently superb runs propelled Bob Ott of Watervliet, Michigan to the Super Street Eliminator title at the NHRA Indy Sportsman Fall Classic National Open, held October 14-16 at Indianapolis Raceway Park, home of the NHRA U.S. Nationals.

After successfully qualifying his reliable, big block '69 Camaro, Bob scored a first round, double breakout victory over Crawfordsville, Indiana's Richard Baker and his '69 Camaro. Baker had the starting line advantage with a .005 reaction time, to Bob's .014, but "took too much stripe", breaking out with a 10.846 e.t. to Bob's 10.890.

In the next round, Bob was matched up against number one qualifier and perennial I.R.P. stalwart, Steve Dillman, in a '67 Chevy II. Dillman took a slight .024 to .028 advantage at the tree, but Bob grabbed the win light with a 10.923 when Dillman broke out with a 10.892.

In the third round, Bob bested Amber Voges-Billingsley of Decatur, Illinois in her '98 Chevy Camaro, enjoying a .016 to .019 starting line advantage and then running a 10.931 to her 10.879 break-out.

In a semi-final match-up of '69 Camaros, Bob nailed a win over multi-national event winner, Rudy Matthews, of Ohio City, Ohio. Bob's fine .015 reaction time complemented a near perfect 10.909, and was enough to nullify Matthews' outstanding .003 light and 10.946 pass.

About The Winning Driver and Car

Bob Ott has been involved in drag racing for over 35 years, first attending the drag races in 1969 with his cousins Lyle and Don Ott, working on Paul Schmidt's Modified Production Chevy Nova.

After returning from a tour of duty in the Army, where he was stationed at the Panama Canal, Bob bought a '69 Chevy Camaro. After outfitting the car with a 331 cu. in. small block and 4-speed manual transmission, Bob took part in his first bracket race at Osceola, Indiana Dragway in 1976 and spent nearly twenty years competing in the brackets there as well as at US.131 Dragway.

Then, long time friend and fellow drag racer, Gary Hammond, of Coloma, encouraged Bob to transform his Camaro for NHRA Super Street competition. A big block Chevy and a Powerglide automatic were soon installed in his Camaro and Bob began participating at NHRA Division 3 events in 1995. He also ran at NHRA and IHRA national



Photo Courtesy
Of BME Photography

The final was Bob's show all the way. Finding himself facing the 2004 Sportsman Fall Classic defending champ, Brett Mason of Jackson, Michigan in his Midnight Draggin' '57 Chevy, Bob never faltered. He grabbed the advantage at the tree with a .013 to Mason's .031 and then drove to a 10.897 to 10.847 double break-out victory. Bob expressed his thanks to wife Carla, sons Nate and Shane, daughter Tonya, sister Sharon Williamson and all of the crew back at his business, Best Creative Printing in Benton Harbor, for their helping make the victory possible. Other Sportsman Fall Classic victors who joined Bob Ott in the Winners' Circle included Mike Hazlett, Competition Eliminator; James Monroe, Super Quick; Ray Vierheller, Super Stock; Bobby Gyorke, Stock; Pat Martin in Super Comp and Steven Hoyt in Super Gas. **R&R**

events whenever possible.

Currently, Bob's venerable red and yellow '69 Camaro is powered by a 489 cu. in. big block Chevy, backed up with a Coan Powerglide and a 4.56 equipped, 12-bolt Chevy rear end. Bob relies upon an ACD throttle stop and Dedenbear timer to achieve the requisite 10.90 Super Street elapsed times. The engine was machined and assembled by Todd Hammond of Parkside Motor Machine in Coloma, Mich. With a Callies crankshaft, Wiseco pistons, Total Seal rings, Howard camshaft, and a Dart intake manifold topped off with a Holley Dominator carburetor the engine makes enough ponies to easily propel the 2,825 pound (with driver) Camaro. While primarily set-up for 10.90 Super Street competition, the car has run as quickly as 9.39 @ 141 miles per hour "off the stop. **R&R**

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Racing Journal

Galesburg Awards Banquet

At the annual Galesburg Speedway Awards Banquet, track owners Ralph and Ryan Warning presented trophies to Late Model Champion, A.J. Foote; Sportsman Champion, Steve Landers; Mini-Stock Champion, Tom Cody; and Street Stock Champion, Bob Garrett. **R&R**



A.J. Foote



Photo Jim DenHamer

Steve Landers



Photo Jim DenHamer

Tom Cody



Photo Jim DenHamer

Bob Garrett

Photo Jim DenHamer

Berlin Raceway Season Champs; New Hall of Fame

Berlin Raceway held its annual racer awards banquet on Friday November 4, 2005. Presented by Bailey Excavating and Sweet Manufacturing, and sponsored by Boyne Machine, the event was conducted at the Pinnacle Center in Hudsonville, Michigan. Six hundred and twenty-five drivers, crew members, sponsors and family members were on hand to see the 2005 Late Model Championship trophy presented to Tim DeVos; the 2005 Super Stock trophy presented to Brian Wiersma; the 2005 Pro Stock trophy awarded to Casey Berenbrock; and the 2005 Sportsman trophy presented to Terry Bockheim.

Other big news at the Berlin banquet was the announcement, by Mike Strelvel, Berlin's Director of Race Operations and Boyne Machine's Mike Blackmer of the formation of the Berlin Raceway Hall of Fame. Inaugural inductees were: Berlin co-founders Chester and Rose Mysliwicz, and Chuck Mysliwicz. **R&R**



#12 Tim DeVos in line-up at Berlin Raceway

Photo John Berglund

Kalamazoo Speedway Season Champs Honored

Kalamazoo Speedway held their annual awards banquet on Friday night, November 11, 2005. The event was held at the Cole Auto Mall and 500 guests attended. Lane Automotive and Hardings Friendly Markets were recognized for once again supplying the racers and the track with a \$50,000 cash point fund.

Among awards presented this year: Super Late Model Champion, Andy Bozell; Limited Late Model Champion, Brandon Lyons; Sport Stock Champion, Bryan Van Zile; and Pure Stock Champion, Greg Haynes. Rookie of the Year honors went to Jerry Drake, Super Late Model; Kyle VanSparrentak, Limited Late Model; Ben Raber, Sport Stock; and Mark Shook, Pure Stock. Additional awards of recognition included: Most Popular Driver, Rick Sexton; Jack Hunt Sportsman Trophy, Phil Bozell; Hard Charger Award, Brian Bergakker; Mick Schuler Good Times Award, Mark Fliarrman; Big Show Promo NASCAR Mechanic of the Year, Ron Finkbeiner; M.Maitner Best Appearing Team, Jack Reed Racing; Andy Jach Most Improved Driver Awards, Lloyd Brooks, BJ Orr, Tom Rutherford; and Eric McGlothlen Hard Luck Awards: Jake Caines, Dale McGhann, Michelle Sexton, and Hank Miller.

Some highlights for the 2006 Kalamazoo Speedway season were announced. The 2006 Kalamazoo Klash will become one of the highest profile asphalt track races in the country with the prize for the A Feature winner being \$25,000. The race will be run on July 19, 2006.

Also, next year points will be awarded for qualifying and heat races in addition to feature events. A new qualifying system will go into effect in 2006 with all four classes qualifying through two hot lap sessions, with the best time being that evening's qualifying time. **R&R**



Photo John Berglund

Brandon Lyons Limited Late Model Champ

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Gary and Donna Howe Receive RPM Achievement Award

The Annual RPM Promoters Workshop, conducted by Racing Promotion Monthly, was held on December 8-10 at the Eldorado Hotel Casino in Reno, Nevada. Over 700 representatives of 181 race tracks, associations and series attended the event which featured speakers and discussion groups addressing the state of short-track racing. Giving the opening address was National Speed Sport News columnist, Dave Argabright, who urged promoters to be true to their short track roots, moving the sport forward while keeping it within the reach of entrants and fans from all walks of life. Keynote speaker was Tom Curley of Vermont's Thunder Bowl International Speedway. Curley urged promoters to confront the issues that face the industry with resolve and creativity.

Two RPM Promoters Workshop Achievement Awards, providing recognition to individuals and tracks that have distinguished themselves through their weekly programs, were presented during the workshop. **Gary and Donna Howe of Kalamazoo Speedway in Kalamazoo, Michigan** received one of the RPM Achievement Awards. **R&R**

4th Annual Michigan Racing Scene Peoples Choice Awards

The results are in for the 4th Annual Michigan Racing Scene Peoples Choice Awards and we've included some here.

- Favorite Track Photographer.....Tom DeVette
- Favorite Pavement Super Late Model Driver.....Lee Anderson
- Favorite Race Track-Dirt.....Butler Battlegrounds
- Best Dirt Track Promoter.....Ed & Carmen VanDuinen-Merritt
- Best Pavement Track Promoter.....Gary Howe-Kalamazoo
- Favorite Short Track Pavement Race.....Kalamazoo Klash
- Driver You'd Most Like To Meet.....Lee Anderson
- Best Paved Track Concessions..... Berlin Raceway

We extend congratulations to all the winners. With folks and events like this on tap, the short tracks of our area are in good hands.



Butler Battlegrounds the favorite dirt track of '05

Photo John Berglund

2005 Michigan Motor Sports Hall of Fame

The 2005 Michigan Motor Sports Hall of Fame Induction ceremonies honored the following inductees: circle track racers Dick Decker, Bill Whittington, Dennis Castele and Tim Felver; hydroplane racer, Mark Tate; and drag racers Bruce Allen, Charlie Johnson and Noah Canfield.

In addition, Darcie Fuzi was presented with the "Mick Schuler Media Award" and Carmen Van Duinen received the "Pat Beebe Award." **R&R**

New Products

Edelbrock



Edelbrock/Lingenfelter LS 1 CNC Cylinder Heads

No one has ever done more to make GM Gen.III cylinder heads perform than Lingenfelter Performance Engineering. Edelbrock's new aluminum LS 1 head has 203cc intake ports and stock location exhaust ports CNC ported by Lingenfelter and also brings 65cc combustion chambers, reinforced rocker bosses and extra thick port walls to the performance table. Available individually as bare castings (EDE61979), or as complete assemblies (EDE61969) with 2.02" stainless intake valves, 1.57" exhaust valves and titanium retainers, heads will fit all /97-up GM LS 1 and all Gen. III 4.8L, 5.3L and 6.0 V-8 engines. **R&R**



Edelbrock LS 1 Pro-Port Cylinder Head

The new Edelbrock Pro-Port LS 1 Cylinder Head (EDE61989) is just what the professional cylinder head shop ordered. Stock LS 1 heads are somewhat limited in the amount of custom port work that can be performed, but the new Pro-Port head has extra material in critical areas, a thick deck surface for maximum gasket retention, heli-coiled rocker stands and exhaust flange bolt holes, valve guides and powered metal valve seats. New port designs, never before possible, can be created with these heads and increases in horsepower output will be considerable. **R&R**



Flaming River Mopar Steering Columns

Flaming River has recognized the need for updated steering system components for Chrysler Product cars, which are becoming increasingly popular as candidates for heavy street modifications. The idea of a polished, tilt column in something like a '69 Charger or a 71 'Cuda is very appealing, and now it's possible. The five-position column is built with new components, stainless steel knobs and levers, and a GM wiring harness. The column is 34" long with a 2" diameter and is made of 304 stainless steel. It will replace early (key-in-dash) Chrysler, Dodge and Plymouth columns in cars with power steering and either push button or floor mounted shifters. The column includes a universal joint and requires an aftermarket steering wheel. Choose from unpolished (FLA20006CP) or polished (FLA20006SSCP) columns. **R&R**



Mopar Steering Components

To complement their new stainless steel Mopar tilt column, Flaming River now offers a Coupler Shaft Kit (FLA1505M) which includes a steering box coupler, connecting shaft and u-joint. The kit greatly simplifies a power-to-manual steering conversion.

Header clearance on Mopars can be increased by using Flaming River's new Steering Shaft Couplers. Nickel plated for corrosion resistance and good looks, the couplers are 1-1/2" diameter and available for manual column/manual box (FLA1506M) or power column/power box (FLA1506P). **R&R**



Holley

Holley HP Main Body Retro Fit Kits

Those stalwarts among the ranks of the Holley double pumper carbs, specifically the 0-4777, 0-4778 and 0-4779 versions are still a mainstay for budget-minded racers on oval tracks and drag strips everywhere. Holley has introduced a HP style main body which can be retro-fit to earlier carbs to not only bring them into the twenty-first century, but to make them even better performers. The contoured HP main body reduces air turbulence and are fitted with threaded, changeable air bleeds, down-leg boosters and accelerator pump shooters. Vent tubes have been calibrated for maximum performance. Bodies are available with a shiny finish (HLY34-300S) or the traditional Holley dichromate finish (HLY34-300C). **R&R**



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NEW PRODUCTS

New Allstar Products



Internal Thread Chasers

Here's a tool that can restore damaged threads in a matter of a few minutes. The 14mm model will repair damaged spark plug threads in aluminum heads without having to remove the head. Think about it. Damaged threads can be restored even in the pits, in the heat of competition. The tool is threaded past damaged threads and, using the good threads as a guide, is carefully backed out to restore threads. Available in 10mm (ALL96430), 12mm (ALL96432), 14mm (ALL96434) and 18mm (ALL96438). **R&R**



Telescoping Magnet (ALL14173)

The Allstar Telescoping Magnet exerts a strong, 3lb. pull to retrieve dropped fasteners or tools from inaccessible spots in an engine, under the hood or anywhere it's likely that a dropped item can damage parts if it's not rescued. It extends over 2 feet and retracts to just 5" so it will fit anywhere. **R&R**



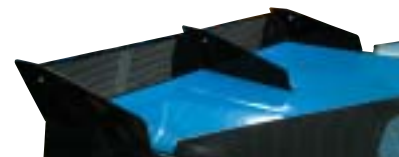
Telescoping Mirror (ALL14174)

Locate oil leaks or inspect hard-to-see areas with this handy 6-1/2" long mirror which extends to over 19" to offer coverage to just about every part of a vehicle. **R&R**



Digital Calipers (ALL96411)

Metric or SAE LCD displays are shown in dimensions ranging up to 6 inches in .001" increments. Zero setting assures accurate measurement of inside, outside and depth dimensions with little or no chance of error. On/off switch conserves battery power and the protective carrying case keeps the instrument in a secure spot. **R&R**



Aluminum Adjustable Rear Spoilers

Choose a black powder coat or plain finish on this quality, well-designed dirt late model spoiler that is made from two laser cut sections totalling 72" wide x 8" tall with a 1" rear reinforcing lip. The three vertical supports are adjustable up to 2". Mounting hinges are included. **R&R**



Cool Shirt Personal Cooling Systems

The Cool Shirt is an amazing item designed to keep racers cool for the longest races. Basically a shirt with an intricate network of tubing sewn in, the Cool Shirt circulates coolants all around the racers upper body to ward off heat related problems.

Designed to work with the revolutionary Cool Shirt, these personal cooling systems are available in square, 12 quart size (ALL13030), a space conscious round, 10 quart system (ALL13032), or the Port-A-Cool system which adapts the Cool Shirt to be used with an aerosol spray can of coolant. Each time the valve on the can is depressed, it provides several minutes of heat relief. Kit includes one can of spray, holder with belt loop, fittings and tubing. **R&R**



Crimping Pliers and Terminal Kit

Ratcheting Pro-Style Pliers (ALL76220) will make professional crimps on 10-22 gauge standard and reinforced terminals. Standard Pliers (ALL76022) strip insulation from solid and stranded wire, crimp solderless terminals and can even cut #4 to #10 screws. A perfect complement to the pliers is the Terminal Kit (ALL76224) which contains 82 pieces including generous quantities of the most often used connectors for automotive wiring. Packed in a sturdy case with divided compartments to keep everything organized. **R&R**



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NEW ALLSTAR PRODUCTS

Rodding Journal

Journey to '05 California Hot Rod Reunion



(Left to Right) Bob Gladstone, Rick Kirvan, and Len Hughes.

All Photos by John McLellan

Fourteen years after the inaugural event, I was finally fortunate enough to attend the 2005 California Hot Rod Reunion with some of my friends. To fully appreciate just what the California Hot Rod Reunion means to guys my age, you'd have to go back to the time we got our hands on a copy of Hot Rod Magazine. Today, psychologists would call what happened when we first saw that magazine a "significant emotional event"...an experience of such magnitude that, no matter how many years go by, we can remember exactly when it happened, and where we were when the event took place. The idea for a trip to the 14th Annual California Hot Rod Reunion the first weekend in October was first brought up last spring by dragster historian and certified nitroholic, Dave Crane, who had made the trip in 2004, and was passionately looking forward to returning this year. We planned to leave on Thursday September 29th, and return on Sunday October 2nd. It was determined that we'd need a minimum of four people to make all of the expenses fall into line. That original four included Dave, Chicagoans Dan Doyle (owner of the restored Gabby Bleeker Austin AA/FA) and John Metler (front engine dragster owner) and me. Unfortunately, Dan and John had to pull out of the group. That left Dave and me. Finding replacements was easy. Dave recruited magneto expert, Len ("Dr. Spark") Hughes, and I rounded up fellow itinerant hot rodder and all-around good guy, Rick Kirvan. Rick's wife, Beth, after surveying everyone's qualifications (or lack of same), appointed me as the "Adult Supervisor" (sure don't know why, but she even gave me a button with this designation!). This was back in early August. I had already reserved a room at the Double Tree Inn in Bakersfield, and Len had reserved a rental car for us to use when we landed at the Ontario, California airport.

About three weeks before the trip, we booked cheap

round trip flights on Ted (a part of UniTED) Airlines and we were pumped. Unfortunately, without warning, a debilitating illness befell Dave Crane, making the trip an impossibility for him. (He is slowly, but surely recuperating as this is written.) We were now a party of three. Then, with about two weeks to go before the flight to California, I met up with the Barnes and Gladstone "Michigander" AA/Fuel Dragster crew at Martin's rain makeup Funny Car Nationals and Bob Gladstone expressed an interest in becoming the fourth member of the party.

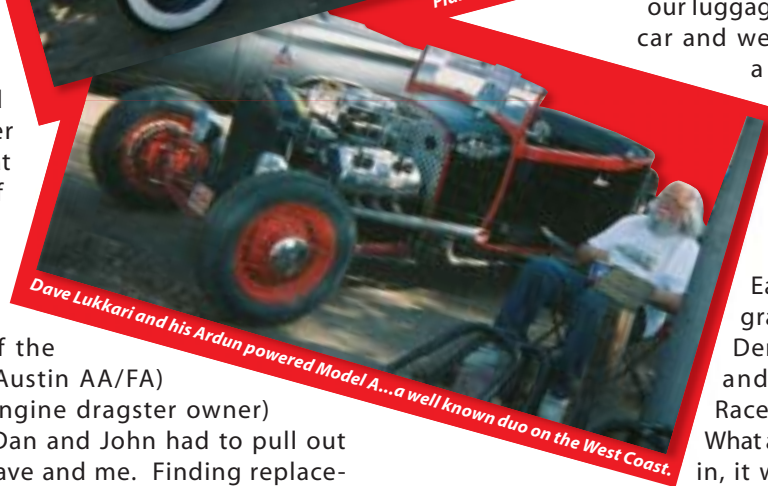
He cleared it with his wife, and the next thing we knew, the four of us - Len, Bob, Rick and yours truly - were on a plane, heading for the "Left Coast." We arrived in Ontario, grabbed our luggage, picked up the rental car and were on our way. After a three hour journey to Bakersfield, we pulled into the Double Tree, took a quick tour of the parking lot and then turned in for a good night's sleep. Early Friday morning, we grabbed breakfast at the Denny's down the street, and headed to Famoso Raceway and the reunion. What a sight! When we pulled in, it was as if we had been

transported back to 1968. Front engine dragsters, vintage gassers and alterededs were everywhere. We parked near the swap meet and each went our separate way, agreeing to meet at Ralph Kitron's encampment in the Cacklefest pit area at noon.

The swap meet was a fairly good size, but overall it was not as large I had expected. I'd always assumed that California hot rod type swap meets were teeming with neat, nostalgic pieces and parts not available in our part of the country, but this did not turn out to be the case. While there was a fair selection of early hemi parts, mostly



Plain Deuce, girl with "graphics."



Dave Lukkari and his Ardun powered Model A...a well known duo on the West Coast.

overpriced, there was very little in the way of parts for other classic engines like Oldsmobiles, Buicks and Fords. Bob Gladstone did make a connection with a fellow who had a pair of mag wheels for the "Michigander" so the meet was a success for him.

From the swap meet, I entered the "Grove", a tree-shaded area of the pits where a fair number of rat rods were distributed among more conventional cars. A highlight of this area was the grouping of restored historic drag cars which included Gene Moody's restored '55 Chevy D/Gasser; Jim Lytle's Allison powered '34 Ford; the fastest gas dragster in the country in 1965: George Bolthoff's restored AA/Gas slingshot; and the Dragmaster "Two Thing".

At three o'clock Friday afternoon, the first round of Top Fuel qualifying took place. These fuelers are what I call "new wave" front engine cars. They are all new, from their chassis to their aluminum billet replicas of earlier popular drag engines. Limited to 425 cubic inches, one magneto, one fuel pump and a 6-71 blower, these cars are extremely impressive, with the capability of turning high five-second elapsed times at better than 250 miles per hour in the quarter mile. To underscore the performance potential of these cars, Jack "The Sheriff" Harris, who recently turned control of the "Nitro Thunder" car over to his son, Brett, bolted on an experimental set of M&H 12.00 x 16 slicks, and took a 5.76 @ 265 mph (a new speed record for front engine cars) final ride in the car on Sunday. The crowd was impressed.

This year's reunion had close to thirty cars signed up to compete for a berth in the Top Fuel field, prompting NHRA officials to expand the size of the field to sixteen cars instead of the usual eight. This was a real plus for the spectators. At the conclusion of the qualifying on Saturday, the bump spot was 6.115 seconds, and the top qualifier had turned a 5.93 e.t. (In 2004, the bump spot was 6.46!) Talk about significant emotional events! It had been nearly forty years since I'd felt this way at a drag race!

The "Cacklefest" on Saturday night was definitely a highlight in spite of a nasty fuel altered crash right at the outset. The pair of altereds, both low six-second flyers, were to kick off the fest and would have been followed by the famous Marcellus and Borsch "Winged Express" fuel altered. It was pretty scary for a moment there, but the crash did serve

to remind all of the old timers present that this unruly behavior was not totally untypical of this breed of drag cars in their heyday.

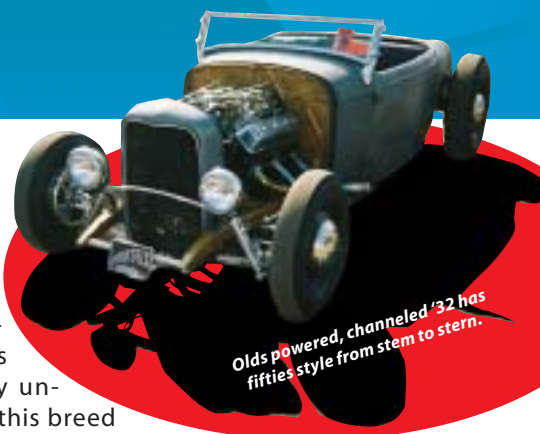
The driver was not seriously injured, but the car was a mess,. By the time the track was cleared the "Winged Express" ride was canceled and the "Cacklefest" got underway.

No less than forty-six restored fuel and gas dragsters were pushed down the return road, fired up right in front of the stands, and then driven into place diagonally across the center line of the strip. For the next forty minutes the air was heavy with nitro fumes and the sound of real iron Chryslers, Oldsmobiles, Buicks and Chevys. Many of us remembered that forty years ago it was not uncommon to see seventy fuelers vying for a spot in a thirty-two car field.

Ah, the good old days. There was not a dry eye in the place. Was it sentimentality...or nitro fumes? Who knows? Likely, it was a combination because, to all present, one could not be had without the other.

The "Cacklefest" capped off our visit to the reunion. We saw many well known drag race personalities there, made some new acquaintances and gathered in a whole bunch of great memories. Early the next morning we were bound for the airport, leaving the past behind (for now) and returning to the present.

Plans are already underway for a return trip next year... one that will allow us to stay for Sunday, too. **R&R**



Olds powered, channeled '32 has fifties style from stem to stern.



One of the prettiest historic fuelers: the "Poison Ivy" of Miller & Martinez.



A small portion of the "Cacklefest" pits. Here we see, from foreground back, the restored 392 Chrysler dragsters of Peterson & Fitz, Kuhl & Olson, King and Marshall and Jerry "The King" Ruth, and just the tip of the roll bar on the Safford, Gaide & Ratican 371" Oldsmobile fueler.

New Manufacturer



Forrest Lucas and his wife Charlotte first recognized the need for more specialized lubricants when they were involved in a nationwide trucking business. When they started the Lucas Oil Products Company in 1989, they dedicated themselves to upholding a corporate image of producing and marketing only the finest line of lubricants for all forms of competition, from circle track and drag racing to off-road racing and tractor pulling. Forrest Lucas, who serves the company as president, sums it up this way, "Our forte is to make better products for industries and specialty situations that are not having their needs completely satisfied by other oil products and, believe me, the major oil companies have left a lot of weak spots...We have the staff and the technology and we intend to do a lot more".

Lucas Oil has been directly involved in the American racing industry through multiple vehicle sponsorships and racing event promotions at all levels ever since the company discovered the need for better lubricants in the entire racing industry.



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18th Annual Lane Automotive Cruise Night And Car Show May 26-27, 2006

Before you know it, the snow will be melted, the birds and the bees will be doing their thing and, best of all, our favorite cars will be coming out of storage, heralding the beginning of another cruising and car show season. Not being particularly big fans of winter, everyone here at Lane Automotive eagerly awaits the beginning of preparations for Lane Automotive Car Show & Cruise Night #18. Pencil in May 26 and 27, 2006 on your calendar right now.

We are hard at work looking for ways to make the show a better experience for everyone. The 40th Anniversary Circle display will feature the Cars of 1966. We're on the lookout for street, drag and circle track vehicles that made their debut in 1966. Among notables that year were Dodges and Plymouths with the new street version of the 426 Hemi, Ford Fairlanes with streetable 427 engines, the first Dodge Chargers, the Pontiac GTO (as a separate entity from the Tempest line), Corvettes and Impalas with 427 big blocks, and the American Motors Marlin.

The popular "Noisefest" will make its sixth appearance as nitro and alcohol fuel dragsters, funny cars and other race cars and hot rods fire up their engines to the delight of the crowd. Live music will add sparkle to the Friday night Cruise Night celebration, and a DJ will provide the sounds during the Car Show on Saturday. A whole row of food vendors will provide a veritable smorgasbord of tasty items. We can't wait! Copy or cut out the registration form below, fill it out and mail it to us.

2006 Lane Automotive Car Show Registration

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CAR YEAR: _____

CAR MAKE: _____

CAR MODEL: _____

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