



Cruisin' News

January 2006

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Don't Drool at Scottsdale

(the editor's ramblings)

Did you see the Barrett-Jackson auction this month?

Just think, all those poor people who have no interest in cars suddenly find themselves with little or nothing to look forward to after Christmas. They go through all that hype and celebration and suddenly Christmas is here, then 24 hours later it's gone. Some people go into clinical depression from the harsh let-down of Christmas ending. The high of the festive attitudes and the joy of the Christmas spirit people share at that time of year is suddenly gone, and all they have to look forward to is two more months of snow storms and cold temperatures. Shutting themselves in the house, they suddenly notice that the Christmas specials they missed on TV are no longer being aired, and the only thing left in their place is another repeat of one of the Jaws movies.

Or, if they have cable TV with the Speed channel, they can watch the Barrett-Jackson auto auction.

For us car enthusiasts, this event is almost as exciting as Christmas, maybe more so for some. It is the antique and custom auto auction of the year, probably as much because of it being televised as it is from the cream of the crop autos featured.

Even last month, when most normal people were still celebrating the coming of Christmas, some of us car nuts were passing around a brochure that showed some of the cars to be sold in the 2006 auction held annually at Scottsdale, AZ. And the Speed Channel is providing plenty of commercialism by airing reruns of last year's auction in the weeks preceding the 2006 auction, not to mention all the promotional advertising during other shows on the channel.

But even without all the commercial hype, there truly are some wonderful cars offered each year at this auction. Last year a concept car from the 1950s brought over \$3 million, and this year two antique concept cars are being offered!

However, with all the excitement of seeing such unusual and beautiful cars being bought and sold also comes some sadness. For normal guys like me, when I see a 1956 Thunderbird or 1938 Studebaker fresh out of some top-notch restoration shop sell for \$70,000 it makes me wonder if I'll ever be able to afford such a car.

I don't have to have a 1970 Hemi Cuda nor a 1933 Duesenberg to make me happy. I don't even want the \$3 million 1954 Pontiac concept car. Where or when would I ever drive such a thing?

But I have always wanted a 1955 T-Bird, and can remember when I couldn't even dream of buying one when they were selling for \$10,000. For me it wasn't any different than a Duesenberg then. And as my income increased, so did these cars' values, so that I wasn't any closer to getting one when they were selling for \$20,000. And last year's Barrett-Jackson auction sold several for over \$50,000. These cars, which are not even considered to be among the "hottest" cars on the market, are rising in value faster than my income.

So, the excitement of watching this auction is somewhat mixed with sadness as it drives home a stake into my heart that says you'll never have one of these.

That's when it's time for a reality check. Cars are not worth what they sell for at Barrett-Jackson. While most collector cars' values are based on auction results, there are many other auto auctions besides the Barrett-Jackson in Scottsdale. And most of those auctions see cars go across the block that are much more like yours and mine. Let's face it, none of us are driving one-off concept cars to the Wednesday cruises. And I might dare say there are very few of us who have a 100-point perfectly restored or customized car with nary a scratch even on the frame.

Nor do I think we have any club members who would think nothing of flying down to Scottsdale, AZ, and freely bidding on any number of cars as the price climbs steadily well into six digits. The people bidding at this auction are of a totally different class, and must have more money than I'll ever see based on how they throw it around there on "toys."

The Barrett-Jackson auction is the land of Oz, and there are plenty of nice old cars right here in Kansas (or South Dakota). And I've seen some very nice examples bought and sold for much less than Barrett-Jackson prices.

More than once, I've heard some restaurant waitress or bus boy at one of our cruises wishing they could afford a car like one of ours. There is no need to envy those buying and selling at Scottsdale, AZ, this month when we are very fortunate, and even envied, to have the cars we have now right here in Sioux Falls.

The Babe Gets Another Heart Transplant

How many of you wish you had hung onto your first car? Well, Doug Walker did. He bought his 1955 Chevy Belair when he was in high school in 1967. He had it when he met Karen. He drove it when he and Karen married.

"It got limburger cheesed" on their wedding day, Doug recalled. "I had to change the exhaust manifolds because of that."

And if you followed them on any of last summer's cruises, you may have noticed how Karen still sits in the middle of the front bench seat, nestled up close to her driver.

"She's the one that named it The Babe," Doug noted.

The Walkers' '55 has undergone a lot of changes since Doug first bought it 39 years ago. When he got it, it had rust in the fenders and was powered with the old Stove-Bolt Six matched to a three-speed.

"We had a lot of fun with the six for about six months," Doug remembers.

But he had a need for speed that a six-banger just wasn't going to satisfy. He had to have a V-8.

"That one summer I went through three of them. That 265, it wasn't fast enough. Then a 283..."

Every time he got beat in a street drag race, he said he had to put a bigger engine in it.

When he jumped up to the 348 c.i. engine, he suddenly found the car wasn't going to be street legal because he couldn't fit an exhaust in it. That ended up being switched for a 327 c.i. but by then the car was his drag racer. He raced it on drag strips with that configuration until 1977, when he sold the motor and the fiberglass tilt front-end and parked it.

At that time he also switched from drag racing to circle racing. But he wasn't going to let The Babe go, as he was sure if he ever quit circle-track racing, he would fix the '55 Chevy up again. And he did, in 2001.

But then he was faced with the dilemma of having to find a front clip and a front seat for the car. Finding another engine wasn't an issue, as he always seems to have a spare engine lying around the garage.

"I was putting it back to the way it was in '67 when I was driving it," he said.

That brought a 400-horsepower 327 c.i. motor with a four-speed behind it. This engine had a big cam and ported and polished heads under a single four-barrel carburetor. But after seeing last summer's gas prices reach \$3 per gallon, not taking into consideration the even higher price for premium fuel, Doug made a New Year's resolution to improve the 3 MPG gas mileage his car got.

In the first week of 2006, Doug pulled out the 327 and replaced it with a 350 c.i. engine that is basically stock with the exception of a hotter cam. It may not be as quick as the 327, but he was determined it was going to look good, so he painted it the same color as the car. The Mickey Thompson valve covers and finned oil pan are also trimmed between the fins in the car's blue color.

If anyone wasn't sure Doug didn't like paying for all that high-priced petro last summer, he sold that souped-up 327 that was burning more than its fair share last summer.

Doug said he believes this will be the last motor change for this car.

"I'm getting tired of changing motors," he said.

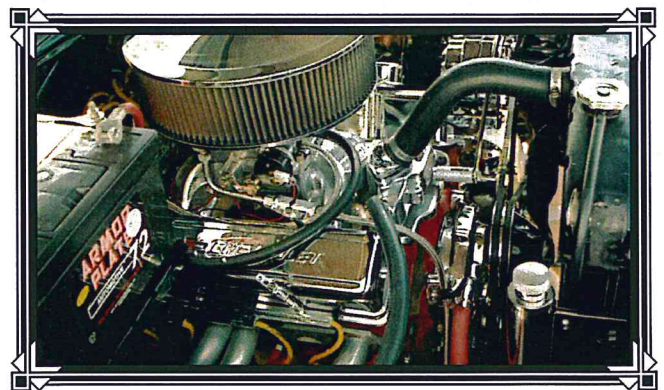
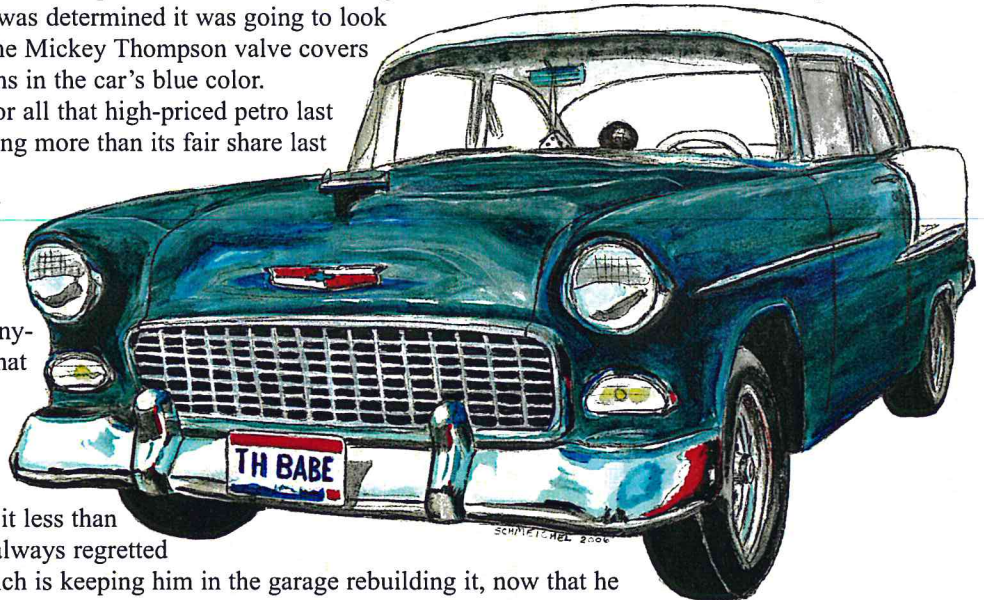
"When I was a kid, I could do it in a night."

He has another project that needs his attention anyway – a 1957 Chevy convertible. If you guessed that he had one when he was in school, you're right.

"My stepfather always said if you're going to have a hotrod, you better have a dependable car," Doug said.

That's when he got his 1957 Chevy, but he sold it less than a year later, before he met Karen. He said he has always regretted selling that car, so he recently got another one, which is keeping him in the garage rebuilding it, now that he has The Babe in a little more economical condition.

It needs a lot of work, and won't be ready for the 2006 cruising season, he said. But everyone can bet they'll see The Babe running around again.



January Birthdays

Ike Wiese-1/5
Bob Schriever-1/8
Jean Tlustos-1/10
Michelle Lee-1/14
Randy Ludwig-1/16
Doreen -1/21
Marilyn Haper-1/24
Mary Thoen-1/27

January Anniversaries

Allen & Shirley Alby-1-20
Bob & Mary Thoen-1/23

February Birthdays

Don Jones-1/2
Sandra (Sam) Schmeichel-2/14
Ken Buchanan-2/18
Joyce Gough-2/23
Ron Roe-2/23
Denny Muchow-2/26
Harold Fiferlick-2/27

February Anniversaries

Roger & Cheryl Van Noort-2/3
Terry & Sandy Peterson-2/11
Buckie & Virgene Schrader-2/23
Rich and Melania Barnes-2/26

Upcoming Cruises & Events

Jan 21 -- Christmas party at the Renner Legion Hall.
Jan 25 -- Cracker Barrel
Feb 1 -- Coyote Canyon
Feb 8 -- Champs
Feb 15 -- Valentino's
Feb 22 -- Ming Wah
Aug. 11-13 -- Old Iron Company's Spencer Rod Run

Fill The Scrapbook

Photos of events involving the Great Plains Streetrodders are being sought.

Club president Doug Walker has the club scrapbook, which holds pictures of some past events, but mostly from previous years. He asks that if anyone has a photo for the scrapbook, please give it to him so he can include it, thereby updating the scrapbook.

Classified Ad

WANTED – 1960-1974 Volkswagen Bug (standard Beetle). Need not be running, don't want a convertible nor Super Beetle, nor automatic transmission. Call Jules at 361-1127.

WANTED – Chevy engine, 305 or 350 c.i. in running condition. Call Kenny Buchanan at 334-6668 or 376-7264

FOR SALE - 1970 Monte Carlo, ivory white, mechanically excellent, interior and body needs restoration. 350/350 automatic. May sell the street and strip engine with dart heads separate since it was originally built to go in another rod. Total package \$3,600. Call Eugene (712) 338-9036.

FOR SALE – 1942 Packard parts, including a grill, trim pieces, windows and more. Call Gary Ebright at 339-4571.

FOR SALE – 14-inch beauty rings and baby moons to fit Ford rims. This is a complete set of four, but one of the baby moon hub caps is banged up. The whole set will go for \$20. Call Brian at 498-0178.

WANTED – Classified ads for the Great Plains Streetrodders newsletter. If you are a member of the club, it'll cost you nothing. But it can help you sell something, or find something. The very first time that classified ads were included in the newsletter, they worked. Brian Lee sold a Johnny Lightning diecast car. To place your ad, call Brian at 498-0178 or email him at bg4given@gmail.com

Party Reminder

It's about time for the Great Plains Streetrodders' Christmas party, or maybe past time, depending on how soon you get your newsletter. The Christmas party is to be held Jan 21 at Legion Hall in Renner at 6 p.m. Those attending are asked to bring a gift valued at about \$10, preferably specific to their gender, for a gift exchange. Couples should bring one gift for a male recipient and a second gift for a female recipient, each valued at around \$10.

Dinner will be served, consisting of whatever you bring. It will be a "pot-luck" dinner, so each one attending is asked to bring a dish containing something delicious to eat to share with the other revelers.

Submissions For The Newsletter

If you have anything to submit for the Great Plains Streetrodders newsletter, the deadline is the second Wednesday of each month. Anything will be considered for addition to the newsletter.

To submit something, contact Brian Lee at 605-498-0178, email bg4given@gmail.com or look for him around his 1961 Ford Thunderbird or 1951 Chevy sedan delivery.



A Web Full of Memories

There are a lot of places on the Internet related to our hobby for those who have a computer and Internet access.

For those of you who like to surf the internet, here's a web site that might bring back memories:

http://www.thestatenislandboys.com/U_thrill_me/index.htm

If looking at pictures of old cars on the Internet is your thing, try <http://www.seriouswheels.com> as they have a gazillion pictures of old cars, including original antiques, customs, street rods and even modern concept cars. They are categorized alphabetically to help when you want to see a specific type of car.

Another good web site for viewing pictures of old cars is www.carnut.com, which offers a large number of photos taken at car shows during past summers. This one includes programming to allow you to view the pictures in a slide show presentation. With just a couple of clicks of the mouse you can sit back and simply watch the show. But there are other features here besides the photos, including a forum to share car thoughts, wrenching write-ups, editorials and a list of humorous bumper stickers.

If you know of some interesting nostalgic or old car websites, share them with your fellow Great Plains Streerodders. Email the web address to Brian Lee at bg4given@gmail.com and he'll put it in the newsletter.

Come To The Party

Once again, the Great Plains Streetrodders will be celebrating Christmas as a club a little late, but with no less joy.

The Christmas party will be held Jan 21 at Legion Hall in Renner at 6 p.m.

Those attending are asked to bring a gift valued at about \$10, preferably specific to their gender, for a gift exchange. Couples should bring one gift for a male recipient and a second gift for a female recipient, each valued at around \$10.

Dinner will be served, consisting of whatever you bring. It will be a "pot-luck" dinner, so each one attending is asked to bring a dish of something delicious to eat.

At The Auction

Jerri and his friend Tom were enjoying the Barrett-Jackson Auto Auction in Scottsdale, AZ, even though they had to sit in the back row against the side of the tent. Finally the 1957 Chevy Jerri wanted came up on the block and he got his bid paddle ready to raise.

Before he could make his first bid, Tom, peeking through a separation in the tent flaps behind them, pointed at a funeral procession passing on the road below. Jerri slowly laid down his paddle, took off his hat, bowed his head and closed his eyes in prayer.

His friend was amazed. "Wow, that is the most thoughtful and touching thing I have ever seen. You are the most sensitive man I have ever known."

Jerri shrugged. "Yeah; well, we were married for 35 years."



