

Driven Determination

Keith Schmuck is one of the most determined and talented guys I know when it comes to multi-tasking. He always seems to have more than one project going on at the same time. The 1937 Chevy coupe he bought at an auction is a prime example of his determination. After getting the car home, he tore into it, shedding the 1960s hot rod appearance it came with. The rusty 350 Chevy and power glide trans with the “too wide” ‘57 Chevy rear-end had to come out. The main body shell with doors and trunk were solid along with the rust-free floor. The front fenders weren’t too bad either, but the running boards and rear fenders were shot.

Time went by and in 2007, Keith had the ‘37 completely mocked up with everything in primer. At that time he pulled the body off the frame with the doors and trunk lid in place and took it to Terry Hoffman’s Body Shop in Luverne to get the car painted piece by piece.

While the ‘37 body was at the body shop, Keith’s own shop burned to the ground. Everything for the ‘37 was a total loss from the frame to the engine and trans combination, to all the other old and new parts. Keith’s tools and other assets also were destroyed, including new parts for a ’70 Chevelle, a recently restored John Deere tractor, a brand new 4-wheeler, air compressor, welders and much more. Working with the insurance company to get a new building to replace the shop wasn’t too hard, but it became frustrating when it came to replacing everything else. Apparently even with receipts and charred remains, if the parts aren’t on or in the cars, they are not covered.

After much dismay, everything slowly came back together with a new building and tools to continue on ward as only Keith knows. After chasing around the area and finding out that ‘37 Chevy parts are hard to find, Keith eventually bought a complete car at Oakleaf Salvage to replace the sheet metal that was lost in the fire. He also went to French Lake Motors in Minnesota to get the final radiator support piece he needed to hold the front sheet metal together. He found another 350 Chevy and another 700-R4 trans that he went through before installing. He had Ike Wiese build him a 3-2 set-up, which is a focal point in the engine bay. Although building the ‘37 was a struggle, and I underline that, Keith never lost his drive to finish what turned out to be a beautiful car. About two years ago, Keith threw together a Model A 4-door rat rod with a 401 Buick engine and other parts he had bought at swap meets. He loves to stand back and hear the remarks about his rat rod that took so little time and money. Keith mentioned he recently talked to Darla, his wife, about selling either the ‘37 or the ‘70 Chevelle. She said, “You can always find or buy another Chevelle, but not another 1937 Chevy Coupe.” cars, but the ‘37 has a soft spot in their hearts, and I bet it will remain the longest.

