

## *Feels Blessed Today*

By Bob Schmeichel

It is no surprise to me when I hear someone talking about a car they have, that is brand specific, that they remember their parents having when they were a child. Everyone piling into the car going somewhere, whether it was going on vacation, to the grandparents, or to town for one thing or another, it meant everyone was together as a family unit going on what could be an adventure. I remember there was always a comment coming out of the back seat if a drive took longer than a half hour, "Are we there yet?" Those times were filled with the old car smells, no seat belts, fogged-up windows, and the crowded warmth along with sounds the old cars made no matter what time of the year it was. Those memories usually are happy ones that with some work can be recaptured for their own children or grandchildren to experience. Gary Bowman is one of those people who thought highly of the 1961 Rambler 4-door classic his parents had.

In 1995, Gary spotted a 1962 Rambler convertible with a for-sale sign sitting at a filling station in his hometown of Hills, Minnesota. After speaking with the station attendant, he was informed that it was owned by the pastor of their local Lutheran Church. Getting excited about what he saw of this little convertible, he drove home and spoke to his wife about the possibility of buying this car and fixing it up as a project. She agreed with him getting the car and the next few years were history. Even though the car had only 65,000 on the odometer, Gary went through his processes of bringing the little Rambler up to a new-car look and feel as he could afford it. He started with putting new brakes in then attention was given to the six-cylinder engine to make it purr again as when it was new. He did say there was a bit of a learning curve with working on the transmission. He said it was called an E-Stick transmission, a 3-speed with overdrive, which helps the car get 25mpg even today. Gary did higher a bodyman and painter to freshen up the red exterior, and then redid the front seat upholstery and a new top himself.

Four years ago Gary got double pneumonia and wound up in Mayo Clinic diagnosed with Polymyositis. Today Gary can't push himself as hard as he used to, but feels blessed to be upright with the use of meds and oxygen. He enjoys the camaraderie of his grandkids for rides whenever he can in his little red Rambler convertible.

