

Living With and Making History

By Bob Schmeichel

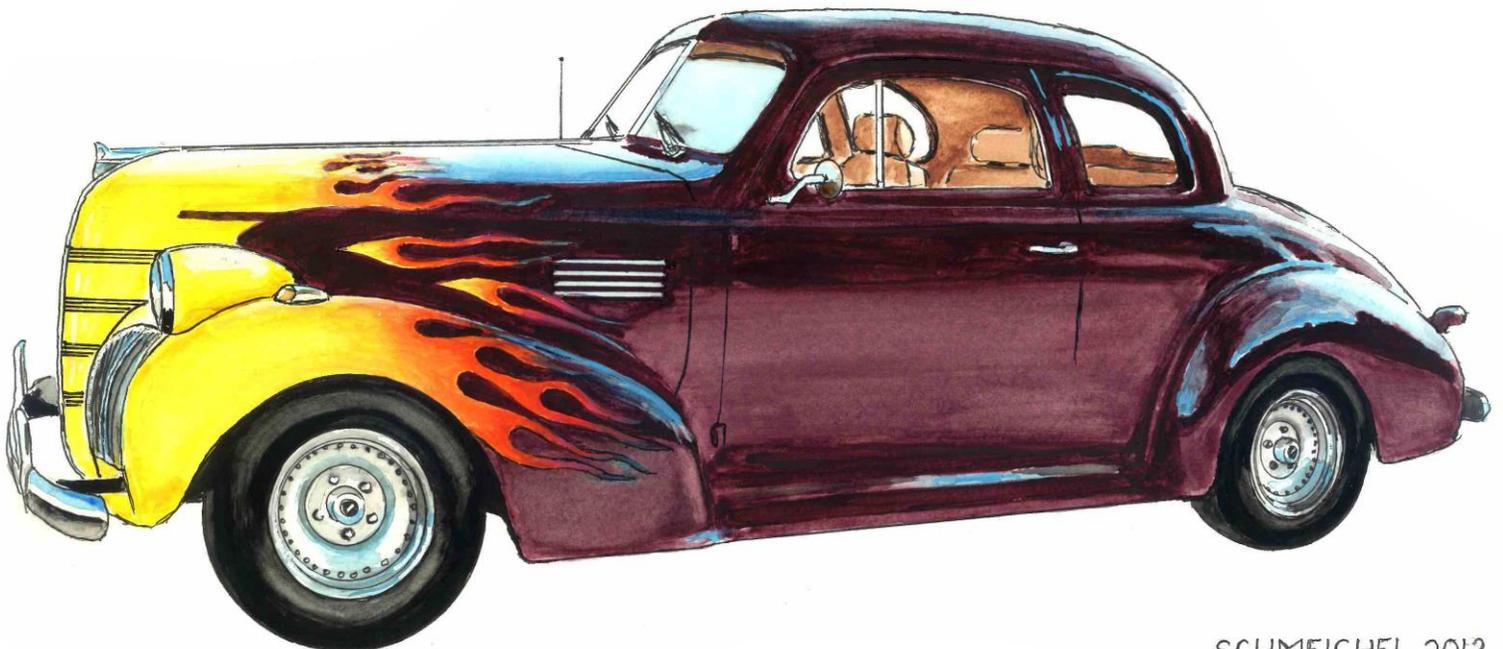
At 6 or 7 years of age, Jim Kuhle started building model cars, which helped him understand how older cars were put together, thus solidifying his interest in cars ranging from the '30s through the '60s. We both agreed that building cars was just like building model cars except it's on a bigger scale using welding and nuts and bolts to hold everything together instead of gluing.

But with being single and the co-owner with his brother of the Electric Construction Company, a business started by their grandfather 106 years ago in Sioux Falls, has taken most of his time, consequently

turning him into a workaholic. Jim would allow himself to take a break from work now and then, but work was and is always on his mind, which puts meaning to the phrase "No rest for the living."

The past few years have not been easy for Jim, who has gone through a couple of health issues that could have taken his life, along with hanging out with his buddy John Sweeney, who also went through his own life-threatening illness. Going through these times has made Jim reevaluate his own life and his love for old cars.

Then in January of 2011 with the temps dipping to 30 below, Jim decided to give himself a mini vacation to Palm Springs, California, to get out of the cold. One morning in California while sitting in a coffee shop and reading Auto Trader, his thoughts were pulled to something other than work. He found a 1939 Pontiac coupe that was for sale at what he thought was a reasonable price. Since the car was only 25 miles away from where he was staying, he called the owner and rented a car to go check it out. Upon arrival he saw a quality-built, beautiful car that he couldn't wait to drive. It had a 350 Chevy engine with a 700R4 overdrive trans, a Nova rear end, and a Heidts front end with rack and pinion steering. It also had a beautiful flamed paint job and Vintage Air to keep the leather interior cool in the summer time. After driving the car and seeing that it had really good road manners, Jim asked the 73-year-old owner why he was selling the car. He replied that he and his wife had driven the car all over the western part of the U.S. and made fond memories, but now had an interest in building a late '30s pickup. After spending almost a half day with the owners, Jim finally left but without the car. Back at home and dealing with work again, the Pontiac wasn't too far from his mind. Three days later he called the owner back and bought the car and had it shipped to him because it was the dead of winter here. From that point on, Jim said the rest of the time coming with the Pontiac will be his own history. Jim joined the Great Plains Street Rodders over a year ago and enjoys the camaraderie along with the time the club gives him away from work. He is planning on retiring soon so he can more fully redirect his enjoyment into old cars.



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