

Keepin' Life Fun

By Bob Schmeichel

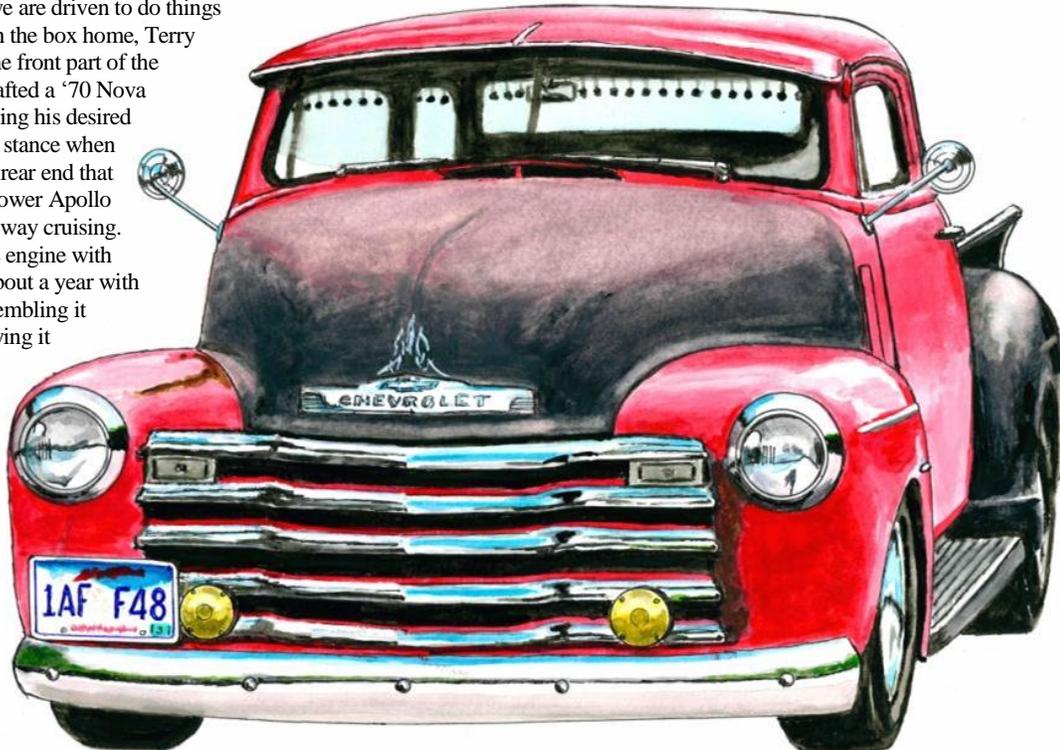
It seems that all through my life I have always heard older people say, "You get out of life what you put into it." And now being older, I am finding myself saying the same thing to younger people. Funny how that works! I honestly believe that the majority of everything that humans do puts a smile on their face or at least a feel-good feeling of accomplishment. If it doesn't work that way, we have learned to laugh about it later in life as a lesson learned knowing not to make the same mistake again. In the four-wheel reference as a hobby and the generation I am in now, there are no specific guide lines or limitations to what people choose to fix up or drive. It is a continual learning process no matter what level we choose to build or restore a vehicle. The real reward comes when you finally turn the key and drive it around the block, followed by the first time you really drive to a gathering of people at a local car show or to a Saturday night burger spot. The general feeling I get at these things is the easy-to-talk-to camaraderie and that everyone is equally respectful to each other no matter what their ride is. These happenings don't have to do more than put a smile on the owner's face while visiting with other car-loving people with similar interest, which makes it feel like icing on a cake. Many memories and strong friendships evolve out of these low-key events that last a lifetime. I have aged gracefully with this continuing picture and the allure is still there. I for one am glad we have a variety of car-likes realizing how boring it would be if everyone had the same vehicle or four-wheel interest.

I know this may sound like a cliché, but most car people driving around where ever they go will notice an old car setting anyplace in the world that is not being used. If they have driven by it without recognition, there is always a menacing question in the back of their mind wanting to know what the heck it was and what kind of shape it's in. This usually gets a real auto enthusiast to turn around and go back to get the questions answered with their own eyes. This kind of sets up the story that Terry Jellis started out with after finally deciding to stop to check out a car.

It was an early fall morning in 2004 with the sun just coming up as Terry was driving heading east to cut down some trees for firewood. As he was rolling along and approaching a neighbor's farm three miles down the highway, he noticed that the shop door was open revealing a Model A just inside the door opening. Realizing he had seen it many times before but never stopped to ask about it, today was the day he would stop. As he drove into the yard and walked towards the large open door, he was met by the owner and the questions with answers unfolded. With that a new car-related friendship began, but the answers about the Model A were that the owner was going to restore it someday. As they were standing there in the doorway talking and the sun just coming up, which lit up the way back part in the building, Terry noticed something else that grabbed his attention immediately. Even though it was just an old pickup cab body by itself, Terry saw the potential of what it could be again. This old remnant of a 1948 Chevy pickup cab with its faded, red paint and a chopped top told him it was a hot rod in past years. There was a grill and front fenders laying beside the cab, but as it turned out, it too was destined to be built by the owner sometime in the future as well. So Terry left that day, not forgetting what he had seen, and later stopping by time after time to see if the owner was ready to sell. Finally after three years of stopping by, the owner was ready to part with the cab and front fenders to make room for a new project. Although Terry had hot rods to drive, he was eager to get the cab home that day in 2007 and start gathering parts to put it together. Later the same year on a winter day, while hunting down a tailgate for another pickup project of Terry's, he found a bare frame with a pickup box on it in Tracey, Minn., for a '48 Chevy pickup. It was exactly what he needed and priced right, but not wanting to wait to get it home, he commented laughing, it only took him a couple hours to dig it out of a snow drift during a blizzard that was

going on at the same time. Funny how we are driven to do things sometimes!! After getting the frame with the box home, Terry immediately bolted the cab on and cut the front part of the frame off below the firewall. He then grafted a '70 Nova sub-frame to the original frame establishing his desired ride height in the front so it had the right stance when finished. After that came a '68 Chevelle rear end that eventually has been replaced with a narrower Apollo rear end with a higher gear ratio for highway cruising. For go Terry installed a 350 Chevy crate engine with a 350 turbo. After pushing himself for about a year with gathering all the necessary parts and assembling it himself, he was finally driving and enjoying it like he never thought possible.

The attention this old hot rod truck gets never stops. Terry has built quite a few cars over the years and still has a bunch for choices to drive if he so desires. For Terry, each of his cars has their likes, which is why he has held onto them. Terry said his brother, Ron, got him into this street rod hobby back in 1955, and that he has never thought about unhooking from it yet, but Terry emphasizes his main thing about having this kind of vehicle is just plain having fun with it and the friends that you gather up along the way. These are both precious and priceless at the same time!!



SCHMEICHEL 2014