

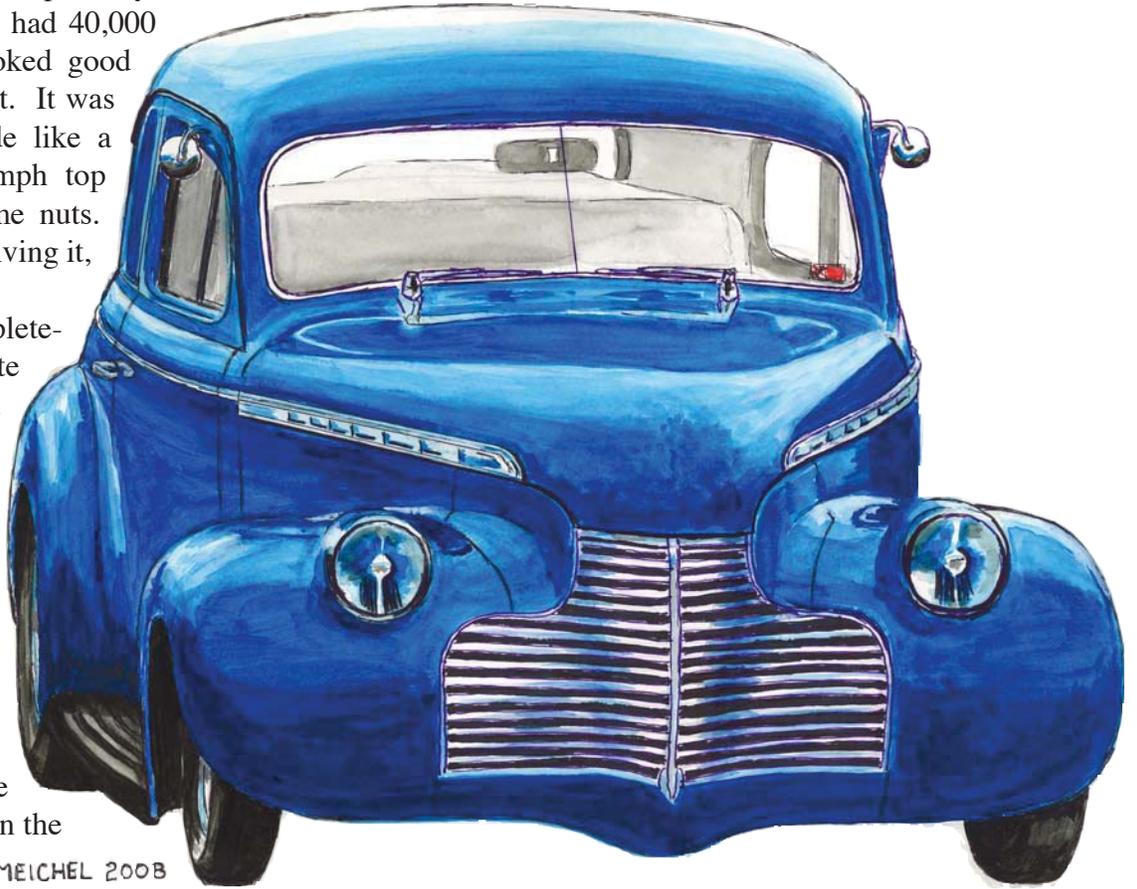
# *It's The Best One He's Built*

By Bob Schmeichel

I have been in the street-rodding hobby for 36 years and my 1940 Chevy is number 6 of what I have built for myself as well as a half dozen other cars I have done for other people.

I bought it in an original, partially restored form in 1987 for \$1,700. It had 40,000 original miles on it and looked good with its then new black paint. It was mechanically sound but rode like a lumber wagon with a 45 mph top highway speed that drove me nuts. So after about 8 months of driving it, I decided to streetrod it.

I tore into it and completely disassembled the complete car, body off, right down to a bare frame. I cut the frame off at the firewall and grafted a Camaro sub frame that I narrowed 3 inches. I bought a 454 Chevy engine with a transmission out of an enduro racer over the phone that the owner said ran good when he took it out. I was questioning that when he pulled it out of a snow drift on the ground with his tractor



SCHMEICHEL 2008 when I went to pick it up. I took it apart when I got home, had it bored and all the machine work done, then put everything back together myself with as many new parts as I could afford at the time to get it running. The transmission seemed to be OK visually, but I had it rebuilt by a friend anyway to give myself a piece of mind. I went to Arndt's next (which is no longer) and bought a 9-inch Ford rearend through Marv (one of our members) out of a '71 Mustang.

The whole project was kind of coming together all at the same time, so I needed to get going on the body and

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started by stripping it down to bare metal. I found some body mounts gone and the entire floor in the trunk was broken loose all the way around. After a couple of weeks of welding everything up that needed it, I decided it was time to attempt to put the body on the frame for a mock-up.

Now, here is where it got fun, and you have to follow me to understand why it got that way. Because I narrowed up the sub frame, I had to mount the engine higher and back, which is what I wanted to do anyway to get the fan into the center of the radiator. And because I did that I had to create a new recessed firewall to accommodate the engine set back as well as a tunnel in the floor of the body for the transmission and driveshaft where it was flat before front to back.

Once I had everything in place with all I had to do, the car practically fell together. I say that laughing as you can usually put something together and take it apart 20 to 30 times before you are happy with the end result when doing something like this.

So now, with everything bolted in place, I started doing body work along with making and mocking up everything I could do to make it different. One of the special things I always do is to create my own dash, and in this car, I did it out of metal which has always kept that area a focal point at car shows. Also, this is the first car that I haven't chopped the top on it out of all that I have built, and to this day I still like the big spaciousness inside.

Once I had everything pretty much to my satisfaction in the

mocked-up state and ready to paint, I created my own special color. It wound up being pretty simple, utilizing a straight none metallic violet tinting color with blue pearl added to it. The recipe is my own, although I have done other cars using a similar technique to create other one-off similar colors. Believe it or not, I took the car apart and painted it in pieces outside in my driveway in December of 1989. There was a week then when it was 70 degrees all week long, which was the window I took advantage of to paint it. The following week it snowed.

I put the car back together the final time through in the spring of 1990 and have been driving it ever since. I have never had as much fun with any car as I have with this one in the most recent years, and mainly because of my wife, Sandy, being there and enjoying it with me, which makes the whole picture really special.

The really only other desire that I would liked to have done with this car is to run it at the Bonneville Salt Flats as it rolls really fast and easy. After I checked out the rules of what was required to do that, I opted not to spend the money that way.

However, in the summer of 2006, while at a car show in Sioux City, I put the car on a chassis dyno to see what it had for horsepower and top speed. While the horsepower wasn't anything to brag about, the top speed touched 170 MPH. That had a lot of people watching and asking the guy operating the dyno if that was correct, and him clarifying that it was indeed correct quite a few times. That made my day with all the Bonneville desires I have ever had, considering the fact that I had built the engine along with the entire car and had been driving it for 16 years already.

I will probably redo this car some day, but for the present time, I am

having too much fun driving it. I do have a desire to build one more car, but because it takes so much time and drive the older you get, I am going to create a totally one-off creation. I will be creating my own handmade body, frame and suspension. I already have the design down, and Sandy wants to physically help me build it, learning to

### *Classified ads*

FOR SALE -- NOS 1966 Chevelle rear bumper, still in GM's factory rubberized wrap. I've seen them listed on E-Bay in the \$450-\$500 range. The first \$375.00 cash will own it. Call Jerry at 368-2418 for more details.

FOR SALE -- 1959 Chevy promo model, 1/25 scale, black and white two-tone, plastic, chassis and roof are slightly warped. \$10 or best offer. Call Brian Lee at 498-0178 or email [bg4given@gmail.com](mailto:bg4given@gmail.com)

FOR SALE -- 1984 454 c.i. engine with 400 transmission, engine rebuilt 2,000 miles ago. Can hear it run. \$2,500. Call Red Duerksen at 772-4850.

FOR SALE -- 1952 Packard parts, including a grill, trim pieces, windows and more. Call Gary Ebright at 339-4571.

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](mailto:bg4given@gmail.com)