

Early Ford V8 Club #109



www.earlyfordv8victoria.com

P.O. Box 53517 Broadmead RPO
Victoria, British Columbia V8X 5K2

RUMBLES

July 2018

Fords & Friends 2018 issue.



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Contributions always appreciated

**The next regular club meeting will be held on
September 11, 2018, at the Victorian. 7:30 PM.**

See you there.

The Executive Crew 2018

EARLY FORD V8 CLUB R.G. #109



President

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Chris Chown	250 595 0312	cdchown@outlook.com
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Vice President

Treasurer

Secretary

Directors

First Past President

2018 CLUB AGENDA & EVENTS

ACTIVITY AGENDA – January through December

JAN 9	REGULAR CLUB MEETING 7:30 AT THE VICTORIAN
FEB 4	TOUR AT U-BLAST IT. DETAILS TBA.
FEB 13	REGULAR CLUB MEETING 7:30 AT THE VICTORIAN
MAR 13	REGULAR CLUB MEETING 7:30 AT THE VICTORIAN
MAR 18	CLUB TOUR & LUNCH. WHIPLASH CUSTOMS
APR 10	REGULAR CLUB MEETING 7:30 AT THE VICTORIAN
APR 15	CLUB TOUR & LUNCH – GORD MARTMAN N. SAANICH
APR 28	CLUB TOUR – ELECTRO SHINE 11:00 AM START
MAY 8	REGULAR CLUB MEETING 7:30 AT THE VICTORIAN
MAY 25, 26, 27	ROCK & ROLL FOR LITTLE SOULS at GR Pearkes Arena
JUNE 12	REGULAR CLUB MEETING 7:30 AT THE VICTORIAN
JUNE 24	VCC 2018 SWAP MEET at Saanich Fairgrounds
JULY 9	BBQ and F&F 18 status updates.
JULY 22	FORDS & FRIENDS 38 TH ANNUAL SHOW & SHINE
AUG 18,19	HANDS ACROSS THE WATER – FRASER VALLEY CLUB 120.
AUG 25	ANNUAL 109 CLUB BBQ. Saturday at Norries. 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM.
SEPT 11	REGULAR CLUB MEETING 7:30 AT THE VICTORIAN
	POSSIBLE CLUB TOUR. DETAILS TBD
OCT 9	REGULAR CLUB MEETING 7:30 AT THE VICTORIAN
NOV 13	REGULAR CLUB MEETING 7:30 AT THE VICTORIAN
DEC 15	CHRISTMAS PARTY DETAILS TBD.



Club News



ALL MAKES WELCOME 35TH ANNUAL HOUGEN PARK PICNIC



35th Annual

Hougen Park Picnic August 19, 2018

Hougen Park is in Abbotsford, BC. Follow the signs from Hwy 1,
take exit 99 (Cole Road) and continue South.
The park is just past the rest stop.

ADMISSION \$15 PER CAR LOAD

DASH PLAQUES, CORN FEAST, PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARDS,
KIWANIS KITCHEN, GOOD FRIENDS,
FUN AND FOOD.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 19, 9AM - 3PM

Please contact **GARY CLARKE** directly if you wish to attend this very special event.

EFV8 BBQ INVITATION FOR AUG 25TH AT ROSEMEAD FARMS

CENTRAL SAANICH.



You are invited to our annual club BBQ, taking place on Saturday August 25th from 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM. We are most fortunate to have Rosemead Farm, once again, for our venue located at 1939 Meadowbank Road, in Central Saanich.

We will provide the usual variety of burgers & dogs complimented by fresh local corn and seasonal berries. Members are requested to bring a salad or a desert if you can. Non-alcoholic beverages will be served.

Your RSVP directly to Norrie Spencer would be most appreciated so we can insure we have the right amount of food.

This year we will expand the door prize opportunities and hold a special 50/50 draw.

Please come on out and join in for a fun day with members and guests of the EFV8 109.

Should you have any questions please call Norrie 250 652 1862

or Chris at 250 595 0312.

Thank you all for your interest and continued support of the EFV8 109.

THE FORDS & FRIENDS SHOW 2018.



The 38th annual F&F show took place on Sunday July 22 at Heritage Acres in Central Saanich. We are most pleased with yet another excellent show with over 200 show cars attending. The weatherman cooperated perfectly, and we enjoyed a busy day with a strong turnout of spectators and fellow enthusiasts. Lots of kids (big and small) kept the model train rides fully loaded throughout the day.

Our guests were royally entertained with live “50s and 60s” Rock & Roll tunes by RUKUS, lots of fun with energetic sports dancing in the full sun! Lots of youngsters showed us how it should be done as they demonstrated new found skills!

The EFV8 club continuously searches for ways to make our popular event even better in every possible way. For the first time this year we were pleased to have the Lions

Club provide some extra food services, complimenting Jobs Daughters and the Saanich Historical Artifacts Society. Seemed to work out quite well for everyone with limited line ups and no shortages. Ice-cream was excellent.

The show has been well supported by a large group of very special sponsors and this year was one of the best ever. We were so pleased to have Mile Nineteen Signs & Graphics along with Drivers Welding set up a kiosk to introduce new services and custom designed apparel. Mile Nineteen is a new venture specializing in auto related promotional signs and sportswear. Located at Drivers Welding on Sooke Road, just ask for Miss Daisy!

We were also very happy to welcome the good folks at KMS Tools back to Fords and Friends this year. Do yourself a big favor and visit the newest location on Vanalman for excellent value and large selections on tools and accessories.

Finally, we get to say thanks to all the many EFV8 Club 109 members and associates who did such a wonderful job of putting this all together. We would not have enjoyed the pleasure or success for the show without you! Many thanks and much appreciation to all!

The following photos and text provide a brief presentation of the “Winners” for this year’s show. Should you wish to see more please visit the club website www.earlyfordv8victoria.com.

See you next year.

BILL & NELS JENSEN

FF 2018 WINNER PARTICIPANTS CHOICE BEST TRUCK

1937 FORD PICK UP.

This magnificent 37 Ford pick up was purchased in November 1977 in Kelowna B.C. Bill and his wife liked the fender lines, so a deal was made, and the truck was hauled to a Richmond farm. Then the real work started, and the finished result approximately 40 years later, is completely spectacular. Bill is very quick to point out that there were many good folks involved in the project and there were a few periods (years) when the truck sat idle with no work being done on it.

Today the 37 is a truck that could be considered art form that you would never tire of. The attention to detail is astonishing and it is plainly evident that nothing short of perfection has been the minimum standard, right down to powder coated nuts and bolts!

On very special aspect is that this restoration project over so much time has been a labor of love for Bill and his son Nels. Building the truck has been coupled with building many very special memories for the entire family, just like it should be.

The 109 club is very pleased to congratulate Bill and his family on winning the Participants Choice this year and we are looking forward to seeing everyone at our next show. Thank you all for joining in.







BOB FOLDY. WINNER F&F 2018 DAVE PEMBERTON MEMORIAL TROPHY for PARTICIPANTS CHOICE BEST CAR IN THE SHOW.

1937 LINCOLN ZEPHYR.

1987 My parents went for a trip to Port Hardy. They had stopped for lunch in Sayward and my Dad saw the add for sale of a 1937 Lincoln. The car was located in Courtney, so we called and bought the car.

I think we paid \$3,500.00 for it back then.

When we made the deal the seller said he had a four door that we could part out located in Cumberland. We drove out there and stripped anything good and were on our way.

The car had a 283 Chevrolet, power glide, and Pontiac rear end.

We started by going with a 5.0-liter EFI, 4 speed top loader, and 9" rear. Many other hodge podge parts and pieces. Work started and stopped over the years and the car mostly sat idle.

About 7 years ago we built a 351 Cleavor for the car to replace the 5.0 litre. By this time we had more time and money to put into the car. We custom made the rear suspension with ladder bars Currie torsion sway bars, and QA1 coil overs. 9" was replaced with an 8.8 torsen and 3.73 hear set.

Front suspension starts with a Lucky 7 axle and retains the transverse leaf. Front also has the Currie torsion sway bars and QA1 shocks. Axle is held in place with SoCal speed hairpins. The front was a challenge to fit together and actually work. We had to add leaves and reverse the eyes to get the right stance. Braking is all Wilwood. The front and rear calipers have individual masters located under the dash. Keeps engine bay very simple.

Transmission is a Tremec T56 magnum 6 speed. Clutch is McLeod with hydraulic throw out bearing. We fit the master under the dash on the same mount as the brakes.

My dad and I had many discussions during the build. His favourite saying was “who’s going to see it”. I would get all bent out of shape on details under the car, and this was the famous come back line. Lol. Some of the best ideas came from my Dad, and with my machinist background and his make anything work philosophy we made it happen.

When all the mechanical was done it went to Dave Bennet for paint. Then back to us for assembly. Then back to Dave Bennet and Critter for more assembly and upholstery.

It is so nice to be able to drive this car. Mother’s Day was our first drive. I hope the next one doesn’t take 30 years!

Thanks, Bob

The Early Ford V8 club 109 extends our hearty congratulations to Bob and his family on such a fantastic rebuild on the Lincoln Zephyr. The participants trophy win is so well deserved and we all thank you for attending Fords & Friends 2018.



*Dave Pemberton
Memorial Trophy*







RON WRATTEN. FF 2018 WINNER, SPECTATORS CHOICE

1956 Chevy Nomad.

This lovely Nomad has been in Ron's care for 49 years and is a great example of a clear dedication to painstaking restoration to original standards. The car was purchased in Port Albernie in 1969 when it was in poor shape and had lots of rust. Ron has paid special attention to maintaining special original features such as the power windows, a 265 with "power pack" factory issue. At that time GM offered factory tinted glass called Easy Eye, which is still in the Nomad. Considerable body work was required using pick and file. Ron's father was a long-term body man and the tailgate was restored by his son, so it really is a family affair in the long term.

This car has an original Hurst shifter complete with a two-colour acrylic knob. Ron mentioned that his wife says it looks like a Yoyo!

Ron and his family are to be congratulated on the very successful restoration of a fine classic automobile.





***JIM JENNINGS* FF 2018 WINNER ARTIFACTS CHOICE BEST FLATHEAD**

1947 MONARCH.

Jim Jennings bought his 1947 Monarch after hearing about it from his brother Ted, who was probably hoping Jim would get one too – and he did. Jim writes: “My 1947 Monarch 4-door sedan was originally bought new from Canadian Motors Ltd. in Regina, Saskatchewan sometime in 1947.

Then in 1949, a Mrs. Smith bought this car and drove it until 1958, when she stopped driving the car with only 63,405 miles on the odometer.

“Mrs. Smith and her young son Don (who would have been about 26 years old) put the car up on blocks in a garage in Surrey, B.C., where they lived. Fifty years passed when Don felt it was time to sell this time capsule.

“Ted and his wife had just finished rebuilding their '47 Monarch, an identical car. Don had seen Ted's car at the 2013 Deuce Days show and went home to check details on his car regarding weather seals around the doors and other important finishing touches for Ted's restoration. Don mentioned at the time that he might sell the Monarch.

“A few months later, I gave Don a call only to find out that he was about to place ads in several magazines that very day to sell the Monarch. Don said he would hold off on placing the ads and would send me some pictures of the car. A few days later the pictures arrived and after a short phone call, I bought myself a matching 4-door Monarch identical to my brother's car.

“A few days later I headed off to Surrey with a car trailer, picked the Monarch up, and brought it home.

Brother Ted's is totally restored and mine is a survivor with just over 65,000 original miles to date. Both vehicles are in Victoria, B.C."

Jim continues to be a very active, valuable member of the Early Ford V8 Club 109 in Victoria. He owns and has owned multiple collectible cars, still doing most of the mechanical work himself. The 47 Monarch is a common sight on the streets of Victoria and attends many club events throughout the year. Full details on the two 47 Monarchs owned by the Jennings brothers is available in the Members Rides section of our website. www.earlyfordv8victoria.com

Congratulations to Jim Jennings for a great win and such a long-term dedication to the wonderful Ford Flathead!

The Artifacts trophy was presented by John Walls (on the right) of the Saanich Historical Artifacts Society and his new 2IC, Cam Whalley (on the left). SHAS hosts the F&F show and is a valuable supporter of the EFV8 club.



Thanks to everyone at SHAS for all your help.





MARLENA ZETTERBERG

FF 2018 WINNER SPECIAL CATEGORY

For the first time in our show history we have been fortunate enough to meet a very special young lady who entered her very own "collectible" vehicle in our show. Marlena Zetterberg is the recipient of a special award for entering her Pedal Power Ford 8N tractor, all spiffed up and ready for show! This special tractor was a present from her grandfather and looks to be a favorite far into the future. Marlena is very quick to inform anyone within earshot that the Ford is an 8N not an N8, just so you know. All the way from Nanoose Bay.

One of our favorite sponsors, Mile Nineteen Signs & Drivers Welding, were kind enough to recognize a new enthusiast and awarded a special Tee shirt for Marlena.

We are most grateful to Marlena and her family for joining us at F&F 2018 and congratulate all on such a great effort. Hope to see you next year with your latest addition to the fleet.





TECH TALK

If you have any technical issues you would like to share, please submit to the Rumbles editor. Thank you.

Cooling a '46 Ford Sedan



In this Tech Tip, John offers some guidance to a customer looking to cool his 1946 Ford Sedan.

“I have a 1947 Ford Deluxe Tudor sedan with the original inline 6-cylinder that over heats. I am looking for an aluminum radiator that will work for this car. The existing radiator measurements are: Total height 29 1/2”, total width 16 1/8”, core height is 22 5/8”, and core width is 15 1/4”. The top hose and center bottom hose on right side radiator is 3”

thick and the radiator has L mounting bracket on each side about 5 1/2” from bottom and a bolt slot on each side about 23” from bottom. Would you have any radiator that will fit this car? Thank you for your time.”

Hi, you inquired about a radiator for your '47 Ford with an inline six. We have a couple of options that will easily cool your engine so long as you have sufficient air flow available thru the radiator. This is accomplished by either an electric fan with high cfm rating or a shroud encompassing the tips of the fan blades to force the air to be pulled thru the radiator. Radiator number 91734242 or radiator 10680141 can be viewed on our website to see the hose configuration and mounting style. Combining these aluminum radiators with sufficient air flow will out cool the copper or brass options considerably. Feel free to visit us on the web at www.speedwaymotors.com or call 1-800-979-0122 with questions or to place an order.

How to Identify Early Ford Axles

The different types of early Ford axles are easy to identify by referring to the picture, which was scanned from an old magazine article that was written by Neal East.

The 1928-1931 Model A axles have a uniform curve from end to end. The spring perch bosses are 2 1/4 inches.

1932 axles were the first Ford axles to be made with a slight drop. These axles are often referred to as '32 heavy axles. They are unique among early Ford axles in having a wider recess at the ends, and a slightly raised area on the front and back of the spring perch bosses in the shape of an I-beam. The spring perch bosses are two inches.

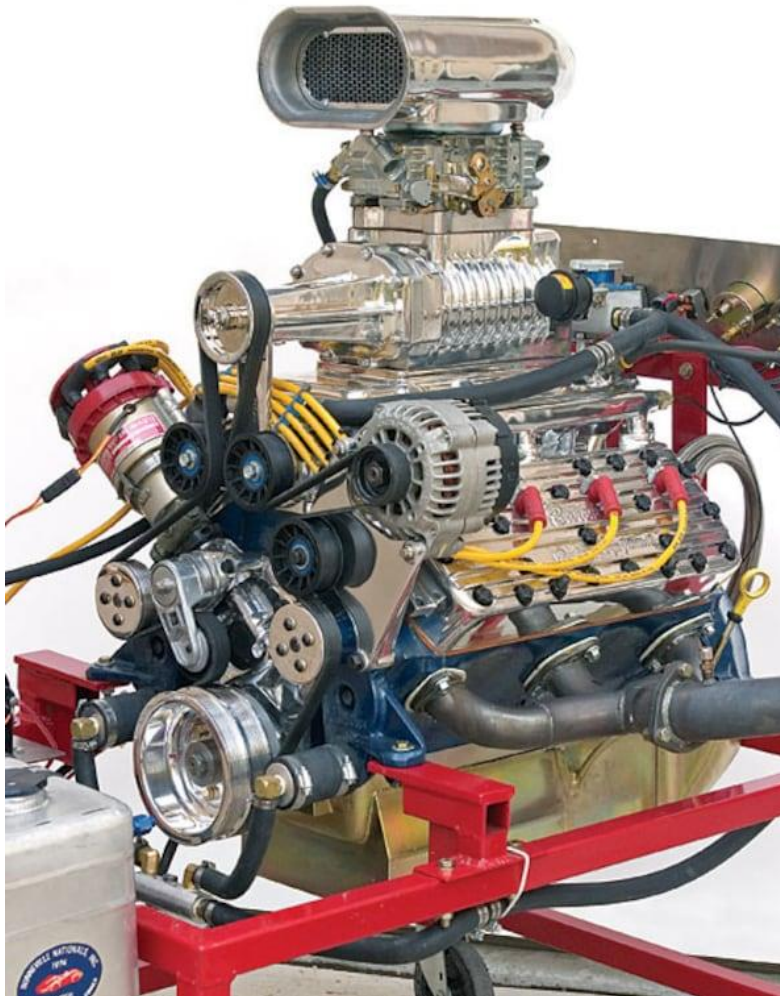
The '33-'36 axles have narrower recesses at the ends and along the center compared to the '32 axles. The spring perch bosses are two inches.

The 1937 V8-60 axles the only early Ford axles that are hollow forgings. They are flat along the front and back, so their cross-section resembles an oval track with short straightaways. They are relatively lightweight and not recommended for heavier cars. Their spring perch bosses are 2 1/4 inches.

1937-1948 axles are not recommended for earlier hot rods. All of the early Ford axles that were made from 1937 through 1948 have shorter distances between the kingpin bosses and the spring perch bosses. When these axles are being dropped, there is less material to work with, so they can't be dropped as far as the '28-'36 axles, and they don't look as good. Also, with the perch bosses being farther apart, this places the wishbones closer to the tires, making the trailing edge of the tires more likely to hit split wishbones on tight turns. Spring perch bosses on all '37-'48 axles are 2 1/4 inches.

Years	Kingpin Width	Perch Width	Perch Height	Desc
1928-31	51 7/8	36 1/4	2 1/4	continuous curve across
1932-36	51 3/4	36 3/8	2	ends curve more
1937-41	50 7/8	38 1/2	2 1/4	
1942-48	52	40 5/8	2 1/4	1948 has holes for tube shocks

Yes, this is a flathead!



FLATHEAD MYTH #2

MYTH:	Flatheads are old, ancient, obsolete technology.
TRUTH:	Mostly true, but the French military used flatheads as late as the early '90s and "ancient" flathead technology has evolved to run over 300 mph at Bonneville. On the street, flatheads are happy on today's crappy gas, because that's the only kind of gas there was back in the '30s.

Yes it is complete. The beautiful new interior for my 47 Tudor is ready to go. My most sincere thanks go out to KEN ASH for doing such a fantastic job. This was not easy by any definition and Ken deserves the highest praise for sticking with it. Say's with conviction that he is now officially retired!

I had hoped to show it off at F&F but due to unexpected mechanical difficulties I had to spend most of the day in the back parking lot!

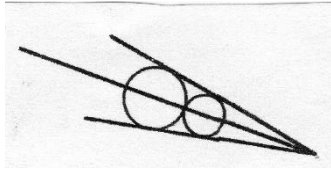
Next issue of Rumbles will feature the whole story with even more photos.

Stay tuned! Chris Chown.



Henry Ford said:

“If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said ‘faster horses.’”

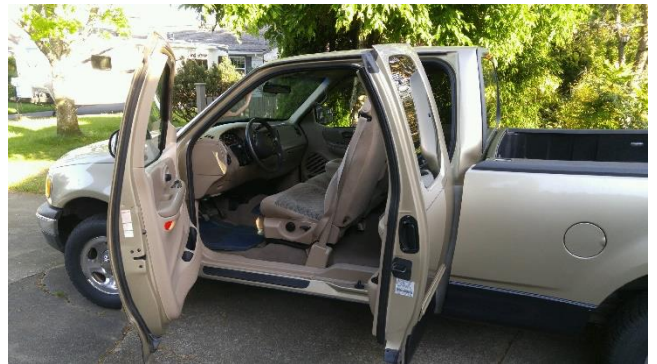


Buy & Sell.



WANTED. Long time friend and fellow enthusiast Bill Campbell, from the Century Toppers is looking for a rare inside mirror. The item is a 1940 inside mirror as shown in the attached photo. If you can help, please contact Bill through the Century Toppers Club.

FOR SALE.



GARY CLARKE is offering his 2000 F-150 for quick sale. This truck is in excellent condition and boasts a 4.6 L V8 engine with only 179,000 KS on the clock. The interior is “like new” of course! Also has a tow package and a bed liner plus four doors for easy access. Asking price is \$4,900.00. Please call Gary at 250 652 9823 for more details.

If you can help TONY PARE, please let me know or call him directly.

Hi Chris, We tried to bring my son Dave's 48 Business coupe over to your show, but his schedule was in conflict. He has been enjoying his car for the past month and a half, he won 1st place at Big show in Abbotsford Tradex. Anyway this past Monday a new driver who has been at the wheel for 7 days decided to merge by crossing 3 lanes and hitting his car in the right rear sending him air borne and landing on the concrete median. **Lots of structural damage underside which he can fix but what we need badly is a good right rear fender.** If you could ask around to the island guys for us, it will be much appreciated. ICBC estimate \$25,000.00 damage so far without it being up on a hoist. Thank You Tony Paré 604-230-3664

2018 Committees:

Always glad to have your help!!



Name	Lead Hands	Supporting members	Date Formed.
Fords & Friends	Bruce Somers, Lauri Stevens	To be determined	Jan 2017
High School Shop Awards	Lew Williams	Norrie Spencer, Bruce Somers, Jim Jennings, Tony Cond	Jan 2017
Newsletter	Chris Chown	Al Wills, all members	2014
Tours	Gary Clarke	All welcome	2016
Phone Committee	Norrie Spencer, Dave Wallace, Bob Mortimer	As needed	2014
Website development	<i>Al Wills</i>	Chris Chown	2017
Membership	Jim Jennings	Lew Williams	2016
50/50 Refreshments	Mike Mortimer	Bob Mortimer	2017

EFV8 #109 Club History

Under review

All members contributing

Spring 2017

2018 Christmas Party

Open.



JUST FOR FUN

Contributed by Bill Pritchard, because he should know!



An Amusing Truck Joke

A grizzled old trucker was eating in a truck stop when three Hell's Angels' bikers walked in. The first biker walked up to the old man, pushed his cigarette into the old man's pie and then took a seat at the counter.

A moment later the second biker walked up to the old man, spat into the old man's milk and then he too took a seat at the counter.

The third biker walked up to the old man, turned over the old man's plate, and then he took a seat at the counter.

Without a word of protest, the old man quietly left the diner.

Shortly thereafter, one of the bikers said to the waitress, "Humph, that old coot, he was not much of a man, was he?"

The waitress replied, "Not much of a truck driver either, he just backed his big-rig over three motorcycles and drove off."

Working people frequently ask retired people what they do to make their days interesting. Well, for example, the other day I went downtown and went into a shop. I was only in there for about five minutes and when I came out, there was a cop writing out a parking ticket. I went up to him and said, "Come on, man, how about giving a retired person a break?"

He ignored me and continued writing the ticket. I called him a "Nazi."

He glared at me and started writing another ticket for having worn tires. So, I called him a "doughnut eating Gestapo."

He finished the second ticket and put it on the windshield with the first.

Then he started writing a third ticket. This went on for about 20 minutes. The more I abused him, the more tickets he wrote.

Personally, I didn't care. I came downtown on the bus!

Crusty's young nephew, Cranky, applied for a position as mechanic at Click & Clack's garage. It just so happened that a young woman had walked in that day also looking for a job. There was really only one position to be filled, and since both applicants seemed to have the same qualifications, Ray asked them both to take a written test.

Upon completion of the test, both only missed one of the questions. Ray went to Cranky and said, "Thank you for your interest, but we've decided to give the job to the young lady."

Cranky asked, "Why? We both got nine questions correct. Since my uncle Crusty works here, I should get the job!"

Ray said, "We have made our decision not on the correct answers, but rather on the question that you missed."

Cranky then asked, "And just how would one incorrect answer be better than the other?"

Ray replied, "Simple, the young woman put down for question #4, 'I don't know.'

You put down, 'Neither do I.'"

History 101

BONNEVILLE/LAND-SPEED RACING

Harold Johansen, one of the longest active dry lakes racers, dies at 94



Land-speed racers defend their sport as the last bastion of pure amateur racing, in which the participants compete for personal achievement rather than for glory or big sponsorship checks. They talk about the guys who keep coming back year after year to eke out another few miles per hour or to break a speed record in some needle-specific class. They pattern

their pursuit after guys like Harold Johansen, who raced for more than 70 years and who died over the weekend at age 94.

Unsurprisingly for a racer active in the sport for seven decades, Johansen racked up a number of land-speed accomplishments, chief among them the 60 records he's held and his membership in the 200 MPH Club. Retiring from the sport just didn't seem to suit him, however, despite the macular degeneration that kept him out of the driver's seat in recent years; after all, he still had one more record he wanted to capture – and probably would have had another after that.

Born in the Lincoln Heights section of Los Angeles in June 1924, Johansen got his automotive education in part through vocational classes in high school and in part after buying an already hopped-up 1929 Ford Model A roadster from an impound lot before he got his driver's license. He street raced with it during World War II then in 1945, as he told Richard Parks [for a circa-2008 interview](#), he took it to the first postwar SCTA dry lakes meet and promptly blew a head gasket.

After that, he vowed to never race his street car again, so after graduating from high school he bought a 1927 Model T, joined the Bungholers car club, and with his fellow club members' help fit the T with a flathead V-8 with Riley overhead-valve conversion heads. Ready for the October 1946 El Mirage meet, the T posted a speed of 108 MPH.

In pursuit of greater speeds, Johansen picked the minds of some of hot rodding's pioneers, among them Clem Tebow, Don Clark, and the Tipton brothers. He switched to the Outriders club later in 1946 and then in 1949 founded his own SCTA-affiliated club, the Road Masters, with Clark, Tebow, Jim Khougaz, and Ben Harper. He traded off the Riley engine for a Mercury flathead V-8 good for 123 MPH, but he still wanted more.

He'd later build another 1929 Model A, this one on a 1932 Ford frame and powered by a 300-cu.in. Chevrolet six-cylinder good for 194 MPH. Another Chevrolet engine, this one a V-8, got him into the [Bonneville 200 MPH Club](#) in 1974 with a 208.86 MPH record in the C/Gas Roadster class.

By that time, the Road Masters had disbanded, and he'd joined the Sidewinders to keep racing. With his red hat secured, however, Johansen decided to chase another 200 MPH record – this time in a car powered by a four-cylinder Ford engine. He started another club, the Super 4s, in 1978 (the year he retired from the Los Angeles Fire Department and went to work as a consultant to the movie industry, specializing in fire and explosive safety), meanwhile collecting parts and expertise in extracting power from early Ford four-cylinder engines.

According to Hot Rod, the closest Johansen ever got to his goal was 164 MPH. However, he kept returning to the dry lakes and to the salt to campaign his roadsters, and while other hot rod pioneers from the pre- and post-war periods remain today, Johansen was perhaps the only one to continue racing the entire time.

Johansen died in his sleep on Saturday, according to the American Hot Rod Federation. No funeral services have been scheduled for him.

1933 First Dymaxion car produced



The first three-wheeled, multi-directional Dymaxion car—designed by the architect, engineer and philosopher Buckminster Fuller—is manufactured in Bridgeport, Connecticut, on this day in 1933.

Born in Massachusetts in 1895, Fuller set out to live his life as (in his own words) “an experiment to find what a single individual can contribute to changing the world and benefiting all humanity.” After making up the word “Dymaxion” as a combination of the

words “dynamic,” “maximum” and “ion,” he took the word as his own personal brand. Among his groundbreaking creations were the geodesic dome and the Dymaxion house, which was made of lightweight aluminum and could be shipped by air and assembled on site.

In 1927, Fuller first sketched the Dymaxion car under the name “4D transport.” Part aircraft, part automobile, it had wings that inflated. Five years later, Fuller asked his friend, the sculptor Isamu Noguchi, to make more sketches of the car. The result was an elongated teardrop design, with a rear third wheel that lifted off the ground and a tail fin. Fuller set up production of the Dymaxion car in a former Locomobile factory in Bridgeport in March 1933. The first model rolled out of the Bridgeport factory on July 12, 1933—Fuller’s 38th birthday. It had a steel chassis (or frame) and a body made of ash wood, covered with an aluminum skin and topped with a painted canvas roof. It was designed to be able to reach a speed of 120 miles per hour and average 28 miles per gallon of gasoline.

Sold to Gulf Oil, the Dymaxion car went on display at the Century of Progress exposition in Chicago. That October, however, the professional driver Francis Turner was killed after the Dymaxion car turned over during a demonstration. An investigation cleared Dymaxion of responsibility, but investors became scarce, despite the enthusiasm of the press and of celebrities such as the novelist H.G. Wells and the painter Diego Rivera.

Along with the Nazi-built KdF-wagen (the forerunner of the Volkswagen Beetle), the Dymaxion was one of several futuristic, rear-engined cars developed during the 1930s. Though it was never mass-produced, the Dymaxion helped lead to public acceptance of new streamlined passenger cars, such as the 1936 Lincoln Zephyr. In 2008, the only surviving Dymaxion was featured in an exhibit dedicated to Fuller’s work at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City. An article published in The New York Times about the exhibit recalled Fuller’s own impressions of the Dymaxion: “I knew everyone would call it a car,” he told the literary critic Hugh Kenner in the 1960s; instead, it was actually “the land-taxiing phase of a wingless, twin orientable jet stilts flying device.”



This newsletter is provided free of charge to members and associates of the Early Ford V8 Club R.G. 109.

Should you wish to contribute an item or offer comments please contact Chris D. Chown via email at cdchown@outlook.com