

# SWANKS NEWS

Swanks Car Club

Established 1956

Swanks Newsletter

March-April 2024

## Hot Rod Junkies Car Show

Photos: Ron & Kevin Dahley

The HOT Rod Junkies Car Show was the first car show in North Dakota for 2024. Some of us had been looking forward to the show for months and it did not disappoint. The show moved to Valley City this year from Jamestown ND, and it looks like it will return to Valley city for the next few years. The show in the Winter Show Building has more room with 60 plus cars featured this year and with a little rearranging could accommodate 70 cars.

Valve cover racing was back this year and by measuring the crowds it was as popular as always with 39 racers on hand to compete. This year's show was for two days, January 27 and 28 giving more car people an opportunity to attend. It was good to get back to car shows admiring so many different styles of hot rods and visiting with old friends and making new ones.



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Issue Dates: Jan. 25th, March 25th, May 25th, July 25th, September 25th, November 25th

Going to a car show? Bring your camera and send in the photos for the next newsletter.

Got a project or a new car? Take a few photos and submit them to the newsletter.

Got something to sell? Put it into the newsletter—  
rondahley@gmail.com



## Car Show Season 2024 Begins!

# Hot Rod Junkies Car Show 2024



# Swanks Christmas Party

Photos: Joan Thiel & Ron Dahley

The Swanks held their Christmas Party on January 12, 2024, at the Cottonwood Golf Course Club House in Casselton ND. An estimated 30 members were on hand for games, laughter, lots of food, and gift opening. A big thank you to Joan and Mike Thiel for making the arrangements including the catering. The steak and sides were very good. Thanks to Joan for also bringing games and hosting the event. Mike brought his hot wheel track and operated the races that determined who got what gifts.



# Barrett Jackson Scottsdale 2024

Photos: Don Nustad

Ace Reporter and Crack photographer Don Nustad was sent to do a special feature on Barrett Jackson Scottsdale. He has provided us with inside pictures of the big show. Thank you, Don, for your excellent coverage! Don, remember to save your receipts so Joan can reimburse you.



# Lake Havasu Car Show

Photos/Words: Terry Madsen

These pictures are from the car show and swap meet at the racetrack. The 1/4-mile track, there were cars all the way around. The Thursday night car shows up town, it usually fills both sides of the street for about 4 blocks. Mostly the same cars each week.



## Swanks Cooking Corner



When you can't find your cake pan , but you have olds parts, Lol

That's Funny!

*I'd rather be at a car show!*



# Personalized License Plates

Photos: Ron Dahley



# Bench Rodding with Clark Davis

I met Clark Davis at the El Zagal Duster's Car Show in Bismarck ND this March. Clark brought his 1909 Sears Motor Buggy to the show. Yes Sears sold automobiles! And this is an excellently preserved example of one of the earliest models.

Clark: "I have owned the car for about 14 years. It had just gone through a two-year build to get it back to its original beauty. Everything on the car is original except for the material on the top and seat. The wheels are wood spoked with hard rubber tires, no flats! A tiller is used to steer the car and a crank is used to start it. This vehicle sold new for \$395.00. If you wanted to save money one could purchase the motor buggy without fenders and a top this would save you \$25.00 and choosing to purchase the vehicle without the kerosine lamps would save you another \$12.95. The motor buggy will more than meet the advertised top speed of 25 miles per hour. It is powered by a two-cylinder Reeves model P air cooled engine producing 52 cubic inches and 10 horsepower and a Reeves variable speed transmission. This particular vehicle is Sears 1223rd motor buggy noted by a copper plaque fastened to the



Clark Davis and his 1909 Sears Motor Buggy



rear of the body. A person at a car show came up to me and asked if I had bought the car new, I informed him that the car is 115 years old! I drive it in parades and for rides periodically, it runs well. "

The Sears Motor Buggy debuted in the 1908 Sears Catalog and sold through 1912 selling 3500 vehicles. Sears again sold the Allstate Automobile in 1951 and 52, the Allstate was basically a Henry J produced by Kaiser-Frazer with Allstate badging a more deluxe interior and featuring Allstate tires and batteries. Only 2363 Allstate automobiles were produced before Sears and Kaiser-Frazer discontinued their auto venture. No doubt the Sears Motor Buggy and the Allstate automobile are very rare today.



# Ted Talk with Ted Bryans

Let's talk drag racing this time. How about Bob Tasca III breaking a 25-year-old record with a funny car! On February 9 Bob went 341.68 miles an hour. His Dark Horse Mustang Nitro Funny Car had a time of 3.840 seconds breaking the 25-year-old record. This took place at the SCAG Power Equipment Pro Super Star Shootout Presented by Johnson's Horsepowered Garage at Bradenton Motorsports Park on the Gulf Coast of Florida. Over 40 race teams came to test and compete giving the teams a chance to prepare for the upcoming NHRA season that started with the Gator Nationals just weeks later. This was the inaugural non-NHRA event put on by the Professional Racers Owners Organization. The event was held on February 8, 9, and 10. Bob made his record-breaking run on Friday the 9th.

Austin Prock debuted in a John Force Funny Car and won the funny car finals and earned \$250,000, pretty good start to one's funny car career. Another big winner was Doug Kalitta winning in Top Fuel and taking home \$250,000. Erica Enders found herself taking the win in pro-stock earning \$110,000. If you did not make the top 8 racers elimination in Funny Car or Top Fuel Dragster you went to the Top Fuel Funny Car Shootout. A two-tenths staggered tree in favor of the funny cars evened out race. The race came down to Funny Car driver Chad Green going up against four-time world champion Steve Torrence. Chad Green came out on top with his 23 Ford Mustang. The Shootout also featured Top Sportsman, Pro-Stock, and Stock Eliminator classes with winners enjoying a big payday. I look forward to next year's Pro Super Star Shootout.



# A History Lesson

Austrian Chevrolet Vintage Group

The Auto Wash Bowl in Chicago circa 1920's. Lots of dirt roads back then. "The nearly 80-foot-wide, ridged concrete bowl was about 16 inches at its deepest point in the center. Customers paid 25 cents to an attendant who strapped a protective rubber cover over the radiator. Patrons would then enter the bowl via a ramp and drive their cars around and around the bowl at a speed of about 10 miles an hour. The ridges in the concrete would vibrate the car and the water, creating a sloshing action that helped wash away all the mud from the chassis and wheels.

The process took about three or four minutes. The car would then exit the bowl where patrons who wanted a complete car wash could enter one of the bays where the rest of the car would be cleaned. On a busy Saturday, about 75 cars per hour would go for a spin in the wash Bowl."



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## Americas Most Beautiful Roadster 2024



Beth Myers' limited-edition '32 Ford two-door tub built by Roy Brizio Street Rods is crowned America's Most Beautiful Roadster at the 2024 Grand National Roadster Show. The 74th annual Grand National Roadster show was held at the Ponomo Fairplex on February 2-4, 2024. Photo and Information: Tim Bernsau Hot Rod

# Radical, legendary custom Ford Model T emerges after a half-century in mothballs



KJ Jones Writer Hot Rod Archives Photographer Jan.23,2024

"Uncertain T," the iconic, radically abstract Ford Model T-based hot rod that has been completely off everyone's radar since the mid-1970s, was found and purchased by Galpin Ford's Beau Boeckmann, and was displayed 100-percent "as-is" at the Grand National Roadster show in Pomona, California.

Originally built by Steve Scott (who was a Car Craft associate editor for a brief time), the uber-unique, cutting-edge car features a fiberglass body that's mounted on a hand-fabricated aluminum chassis, with headlights, radiator shell, and other effects from a

1921 Model T. Power comes from a 384 cubic-inch, 1957 Buick Nailhead V-8 with Hilborn stack mechanical fuel injection, which is mated with a 1955 Pontiac hydro automatic transmission. A quick-change rearend completes the driveline.

For nearly six years after its introduction in 1965, Uncertain T toured the U.S. and won almost all the prestigious custom-car awards of the period. It was featured in, and on the cover of major magazines (Car Craft, Popular Hot Rodding), and had the honor of being replicated by Monogram as a 1/24-scale plastic model kit. That recognition was, as it still is, one of the ultimate affirmations of an outstanding custom car, and it helped Uncertain T earn a prominent spot in the annals of American automotive history.

Unseen for nearly 50 years, the whereabouts of Uncertain T have been discussed, speculated about, pontificated on, and mythologized, with stories about the car and its whereabouts handed down through generations. Multiple Uncertain T clones have been built in tribute. The original car's recent recovery—ironically, from a Van Nuys, California, warehouse that is literally a stone's throw from Galpin's headquarters—is undoubtedly making a lot of noise throughout the hot rod diaspora.

One thing is very certain: Beau, and Galpin's lead restoration specialist Dave Shuten, plan to restore the Uncertain T to its exact original configuration and appearance and return the custom hot rod to the car show circuit it once dominated. And, like its extraction from long-term storage, the car's entire restoration will be recorded for future posterity.

In addition to the Grand National Roadster Show, the Uncertain T will also appear (as a barn find) at the Detroit Autorama in March, before returning to Southern California for restoration.



Four years ago Swanks members Gary Johnson, Mark Weber, Mike Thiel and Ron Dahley attended the Detroit Autorama and on display was a clone of the Uncertain T. It was a beautiful replica of this historic hot rod. At that time everyone, except for a few people, assumed the original Uncertain T was lost, probably forever. It is nice that it has been found. Should it be restored to its original beauty or kept as a time capsule? Plans are for a full restoration.

# Feature Car

Kustomrama

## LEHMAN'S 1940 MERCURY CUSTOM



Step into the past with another standout piece from the Clean Gene Sadoian Collection: Mel Lehman's 1940 Mercury Custom. Snapped in the early 1950s, this image reflects a time when community and creativity fueled Fresno's vibrant hot rod and custom car scene.

Mel, a real estate agent from Fresno, invested four months and \$3,000—a hefty sum at the time—to transform a humble four-door into a showstopper. Chopping four-doors was unconventional due to perceived awkwardness, but Mel's Mercury defied such notions with its sleek silhouette and custom flair. Lehman's Merc, a product of collaboration and local talent, became a full custom thanks to Gordon's Custom Shop. Its debut at the Oakland Roadster Show in 1953 showcased not just a car but a feat of engineering – a stainless steel firewall complete with polished solenoids for a sleek, button-free look, designed with his engineer father's guidance.

# Quaker Steak and Lube Car Cruise

## Clearwater, Florida

Photos: Jim Jacobson

A good friend and fellow North Dakota Street Rod member, Jim Jacobson spent some time this past February in Florida. Jim shared some photos from a car show at a local Quaker Steak and Lube Restaurant in Clearwater, Florida that he attended. Thanks Jim!



# What's the Diff?

Photos: Google Images

References: Auto Univerism / James Kraus  
Car Talk Community

## The 1957 and 58 Mercury

A 40 Mercury is the feature car this edition so why not continue with Mercury for "What's the Diff?" I always knew that one could distinguish a 57 model American car from a 58 by the headlights. The 57 models continued with the single headlight and the 58 models all went with quad lights, that's what I thought, but I was **wrong**. I should have known as one of my favorite 57 models is the 57 Chrysler 300C and yes, they all had quad headlights. The Mercury is more confusing because you could have a 57 Mercury with single headlights or one with dual headlights, that is right Mercury made cars with single and dual headlights! I'm not sure of the reason I'm guessing that Mercury might have switched mid-year? Plymouth is an example of car manufacturers gearing up for dual headlights where the Plymouths and Dodges had a single headlight with a smaller light next to it. Some states had laws requiring automobile headlights to be a larger size and remember the 12-volt electrical system was introduced in 55 and 56 so the larger headlight was not necessary but the laws had not kept up with auto manufacturers.

Look at the pictures and you will see a 57 Mercury with single headlights and the second with quad headlights. The third picture is a 58 Mercury.



57 Mercury Monterey



57 Mercury Turnpike Cruiser



58 Mercury Turnpike Cruiser

The easiest way to differentiate a 57 Mercury from the 58 is by checking out the front bumper and grill, notice on the 57 the grill opening is above the bumper and on the 58 the grill is lower and surrounded by the bumper. The turn signals and park lights are moved, and the hood ornament has been removed on the 58. The 58 Turnpike Cruiser sported red C-pillar running lights.

The 57 Mercury offered a 368 Cubic Inch engine that produced 290 hp. The 58 Mercury offered the consumer two versions of the 430 cubic inch engine, the three carbureted version produced 400 hp the biggest engine in American cars in 1958.

"The real ultimate 1950s phantasmagorical dream machine was the 1957-1958 Mercury Turnpike Cruiser. The fifties promised space age gadgets, pushbutton convenience, large windows suggesting bubbletop visibility, powerful engines, and plenty of visual extravagance. The big Mercury delivered.

Beyond the actual features of the Turnpike Cruiser, it likely led the industry for catchy nouns and adjectives encompassing Merc-O-Matic Drive with Keyboard Control, Full-Cushion shock absorbers, Skylight Dual-Curve windshield, Full-Vision steering wheel, Seat-O-Matic memory power seat, Travel-Tuner radio, Breezeway Ventilation, Merco-Therm heater and Climate-Master air conditioning." James Kraus

# rock and roll



## Early style of rock music

Encyclopedia Britannica

Rock and roll, style of popular music that originated in the United States in the mid-1950s and that evolved by the mid-1960s into the more encompassing international style known as rock music, though the latter also continued to be known as rock and roll.

Rock and roll has been described as a merger of country music and rhythm and blues, but, if it were that simple, it would have existed in an earlier style of rock music before it burst into the national consciousness. The seeds of the music had been in place for decades, but they flowered in the mid-1950s when nourished by a volatile mix of Black culture and white spending power. Black vocal groups such as the Dominoes and the Spaniels began combining gospel-style harmonies and call-and-response singing with earthy subject matter and more aggressive rhythm-and-blues rhythms. Heralding this new sound were disc jockeys such as Alan Freed of Cleveland, Ohio, Dewey Phillips of Memphis, Tennessee, and William (“Hoss”) Allen of WLAC in Nashville, Tennessee—who created rock-and-roll radio by playing hard-driving rhythm-and-blues and raunchy blues records that introduced white suburban teenagers to a culture that sounded more exotic, thrilling, and illicit than anything they had ever known. In 1954 that sound coalesced around an image: that of a handsome white singer, Elvis Presley, who sounded like a Black man.

Presley’s nondenominational taste in music incorporated everything from hillbilly rave-ups and blues wails to pop-crooner ballads. Yet his early recordings with producer Sam Phillips, guitarist Scotty Moore, and bassist Bill Black for in Memphis were less about any one style than about a feeling. For decades African Americans had used the term rock and roll as a euphemism for sex, and Presley’s music oozed sexuality. Presley was hardly the only artist who embodied this attitude, but he was clearly a catalyst in the merger of Black and white culture into something far bigger and more complex than both.

In Presley’s wake, the music of Black singers such as Fats Domino, Little Richard, Chuck Berry, and Bo Diddley, who might have been considered rhythm-and-blues artists only years before, fit alongside the rockabilly-flavored tunes of white performers such as Buddy Holly, Eddie Cochran, and Jerry Lee Lewis, in part because they were all now addressing the same audience: teenagers. For young white America, this new music was a soundtrack for rebellion, however mild. When Bill Haley and His Comets kicked off the 1955 motion picture *Blackboard Jungle* with “Rock Around the Clock,” teens in movie houses throughout the United States stomped on their seats. Movie stars such as Marlon Brando in *The Wild One* (1953) and James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) oozed sullen, youthful defiance that was echoed by the music. This emerging rock-and-roll culture brought a wave of condemnations from religious leaders, government officials, and parents’ groups, who branded it the “devil’s music.”

The music industry’s response was to sanitize the product: it had clean-cut, nonthreatening artists such as Pat Boone record tame versions of Little Richard songs, and it manufactured a legion of pretty-boy crooners such as Frankie Avalon and Fabian who thrived on and who would essentially serve as the Perry Como and Bing Crosbys for a new generation of listeners. By the end of the 1950s, Presley had been inducted into the army, Holly had died in a plane crash, and Little Richard had converted to gospel. Rock and roll’s golden era had ended, and the music entered a transitional phase characterized by a more sophisticated approach: the orchestrated wall of sound erected by Phil Spector, the “hit factory” singles churned out by Motown records, and the harmony-rich surf fantasies of the Beach Boys. By the mid-1960s this sophistication allowed the music greater freedom than ever before, and it fragmented into numerous styles that became known simply as rock.

Greg Kot

# Swanks Please Drive Careful



## Frequent Events

- 1Tues.** El Roco Cruise Night Grand Forks ND 6:30-9:30.
- 2nd Tues.** Elks Car Show Fargo ND 4-8:30 pm 3435 North Broadway.
- 2nd Wed** Detroit Lakes Cruise Night June-Sept, 4-8:30pm
- Wed.** Cruise Night Bismarck ND 6 to 9 pm Scotty's Drive-in.
- Wed.** Cruise Night Pelican Rapids MN 6:30 Main Street.
- 1st Thurs.** Moorhead Car Cruise May- Sept. 5-8:30pm
- Thurs.** Cruise Night Grand Forks ND 6-8:30 pm Culvers Restaurant.
- 1st Thursday** Moorhead Cruise Night Moorhead MN 5-8:30 pm Downtown Center Avenue Moorhead. Starts in May.
- 2nd Thursday** Barnesville MN Show "N" Shine 6-8 pm Downtown Barnesville.
- 3rd Thurs** West Fargo Cruz Night West Fargo ND 4:30-9 pm Sheyenne St. Sheyenne St.

## Ron's Helpful Hot Rod Tips



## Up Coming Events

**Please check to ensure the events dates and times have not changed.**

**Mar. 13 and 27** Lunch Cruise Abercrombie ND 10-1

**Mar. 23-24** Motorhead Madness Duluth MN

**Mar. 22-24** World of Wheels Winnipeg MB

**April 6 -7** Toppers Car Show 2024 West Fargo ND

**April 6-7** Gopher State Timing Assoc. car show St. Paul MN

**April 13-14** Prime Steel Car Show Grand Forks ND

**April 14** Red River Motorcyclists Spirit of America bike & Car Show Alerus Center Grand Forks ND

**April 20** Valley Vintage Car Show West Fargo ND

**April 10 and 24** Lunch Cruise Abercrombie ND 10-1

**May 5** Cruise for a Cure Car Show Veterans Memorial Arena West Fargo ND 11-3

**May 19** Art Olson 50th annual Swap Meet & Car Show West Fargo Fairgrounds 8-3

**May 31, June 1 & 2** Devils Run Devils Lake ND

**June 9** Buggies & Blues Car Show Bismarck ND 8-5

**June 14-15** Bridge City Cruisers Valley City ND

**June 21-23** Back to the 50's St Paul MN

**June 29-30** Smoke & Shine Car Show Alerus Center Grand Foeks ND 10 am each day July 11 Crooked Lane Cae Show Colfax ND 5pm

**July 11** Crooked Lane Cae Show Colfax ND 5pm

**July 19-21** Street Car Nationals Mn State Fairgrounds St. Paul MN

**July 20** Chaffee Days Car Show Chaffee ND 4-8

**July 25** Cruise to Casselton Swanks Car Show 5-9

**Aug 10** Run To The Rapids Car Show Park Rapids MN

**Aug 11** Big Wheel Car Show Jamestown ND 10-4

**Aug. 15-18** Lucas NHRA Nationals Brainerd MN

**Aug. 17** Headwaters Cruisers Car Show Park Rapids MN 10-3

**Aug. 18** Rapids MN 7-3Pantowners 49th annual car show & swap meet Sauk

**Aug. 21** Cruise to Lisbon Lisbon ND

**Sept. 8** Cruise to the Island Mayville ND

**Oct. 12** Frankensteiners Ball #19 Isanti Fairgrounds Cambridge MN 9-3