

The Counts Streetin' News



The Counts Car Club Proudly Celebrates 63 Years of Service

Fun With Cars Since 1957

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Counts Go Racing

By: Robert Meyers

To break up the long March winter doldrums and provide a change of pace for members in early March, we substituted a typical family night for a new activity. We are fortunate to have in Rapid City an indoor go kart



track that features high performance go karts as well as more family friendly models. Flags and Wheels indoor racing scheduled a date for the club to try our hand at performance karts and it did not take long to determine which club guys have very competitive spirits.

The faster karts available to us were quite fast or the short indoor track with speeds up to 45 mph down the long straight away. 45 mph doesn't sound like much to "hot rodders", but at two inches off the concrete approaching a tight 90-degree turn will get the adrenaline flowing in the youngest or oldest veins!

The turnout for the evening was good with an estimated twenty-five members and spouses. Some of our younger members brought their children and drove karts that seat additional passengers. This would be an excellent activity for our club to partake during the winter months as a family night.

While about racing, I want to pass along another idea for the months of May through October in the form of drag racing. In previous years I have coordinated with Sturgis Dragway to have club racing as part of their regular schedule. In the past we have competed against the Custer Cruiser Car Club, the Rapid City Ford Club, the Black Hills MOPAR Club and more often, a race between club members. The format for the racing is "bracket style racing" which enables a slower car to compete with a faster car with equal chances of winning. The Sturgis Dragway is an 1/8th mile track, provides an exciting evening and no club member has ever damaged their ride! Think about this concept and we can discuss the details when we resume club meetings.

Editor's note: Specific Friday evenings at Sturgis Dragway is reserved for Street Legal Drags. Visit their website www.SturgisDrags.com for a complete schedule of events. Wouldn't it be a novel idea for Friday, July 10th during our Rod Run to include the drag strip as a special event? Our club could sponsor the evening, attract new members and have Fun with our cars!













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DON & JAMIE KIGER'S 1955 FORD THUNDERBIRD CONVERTIBLE





Engine Transmission Color Interior

292 CI Automatic Flame Red Red / White

HIGHLIGHTS

1 of 422 HO Thunderbirds produced in 1955 Very rare HO coded early build promotional car No expense spared frame-off concours restoration with 16 miles since completion One repaint in Flame Red Matching numbers New convertible top **Original hardtop New interior** New undercarriage, brakes, exhaust, mounts and hoses 16 miles since restoration Original radio included Kelsey Hayes wheels New bias ply wide Whitewall tires Rebuilt 292 Cl engine Rebuilt carburetor 12-volt system New alternator, brakes, fuel tank, exhaust and hoses **Restoration receipts**

The HO in the dealer-code area of this 1955 Thunderbird's data plate means there's more to this T-Bird than its 16-mile-old concours restoration and stunning red paint. HO vehicles were deemed "Home Office" and were returned to Ford after the promotion. This example was sent to a Texas dealership. The HO coded cars were not for sale, they were for promotional use only.

Rather than being shipped out to one of Ford's zone offices, this was one of 422 early build Thunderbirds destined to be used by the Ford factory to promote the new-for-1955 model. While magazines of the era liked to compare the early Thunderbird with Chevrolet's Corvette, beyond their two-seat cockpits they were very different cars. The 'Vette had sports-car intentions while the first-generation Thunderbird was a "personal car of distinction," one that combined "road-hugging stability and high performance" with "the ultimate in comfort and practicality," as was said in a Ford brochure. In its earliest years, Corvette's annual sales were meager; just 700 were sold in 1955. By comparison, the Thunderbird was an immediate hit with 16,155 sold in 1955 against a target of 10,000 units. This Thunderbird is a significant piece of Ford history, and, as such, it deserved special treatment. That's why it was given a no-expense-spared, frame-off restoration. The matching-numbers 292 CI Y-block V-8 was rebuilt, as was its 4-barrel carburetor, and it was converted to a 12-volt ignition system. This car has the 198 HP version of the 292 under its scooped hood, joined to a Ford-O-Matic 3-speed automatic transmission. The sheet metal and chrome trim have been massaged to like-new status. Likewise, the undercarriage looks great, too, fitted with new brakes, a new exhaust system and a new fuel tank. Sparkling Kelsey-Hayes wire wheels mount brand-new bias-ply wide-whitewall tires. Remarkably, the T-Bird's hardtop (made of "glass-fibre," according to the brochure) is its original; the T-Bird also has a new convertible top (to match the car's brand-new red and white interior).







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Contenders from Detroit Autorama 2020

John Gilbert, Author

Chuck Vranas, Photographer

America's Greatest Hot Rod Show is what they call the Detroit Autorama and winning the Don Ridler Memorial Award is the ultimate goal for custom car show competitors to aspire to. The process to narrow down the field for the Ridler is called the Great 8 and the eight cars or in some cases trucks chosen to compete for the Ridler are announced on opening day right before the public rushes in.

For 2020 as in every Don Ridler Memorial Award presented in years past the field of competitors are as diverse as the days are long in an Alaska summer. Here in no particular order of who we believe will win the Don Ridler Memorial Award are the Great 8 picks for 2020. Good advice for anyone considering the build of a Ridler contender is to have a sign with all the information necessary to be included in a hotrod.com article.

SEE ALL 33 PHOTOS

1955 Chevy | Irvine, California

The concept premise for Bob Matranga's 1955 Chevy "Brute Force" was to imagine what would a 1955 Chevrolet look like if it were built to today's standards of a modern bespoke supercar such as a Bugatti, Bentley, or Pagani. The answer came in a twin turbocharged 540 cubic inch Merlin V-8 with Arias Hemi heads configured to deliver 800 reliable and tractable horsepower but with minor adjustments by turning up the boost wick could produce 1,400 horsepower. The platform for Brute Force is a Morrison Tri-Five chassis with IRS (independent rear suspension) triangulated rear control arms. The front suspension features the extreme kind of detailing necessary to be a serious Ridler contender. All machined from one piece the uprights consist of the spindle, backing plate and steering arm with a brake

caliper mount and cooling scoop. The one-off wheels by Evod are shod with Pirelli P=Zero tires. Designer Chris Brown re-penned the shape of the 1955 Chevy with subtle lines that clean up the looks but don't lose the feel of a 1955 Chevy.









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1969 Camaro | Muskogee, Oklahoma

Stunning in Candy Apple Red Axalta paint is the 1969 Chevy Camaro owned by Tim and Angie Wheeler of Muskogee, Oklahoma and built by Steve Cook Creations of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The interior is by Gabe Lopez and air conditioned by Vintage Air, Dakota Digital custom made the gauges. Brakes and Suspension by Baer Brakes and Detroit Speed. The 418-inch LS3 engine was built by Don Hardy and relies on Lokar Performance Products for engine oil and transmission fluid level dipsticks and gas and brake pedals. Advanced Plating of Nashville, Tennessee took care of chrome plating and various plated surfaces. It has only been in recent years where 1969 Camaros have become more popular than 1967 and 1968 Camaros and recognized as good material for customizing







1929 Ford Model A truck | Louisville, Kentucky

The name of Greg and Gail Wilson's 1929 Model A Ford pickup truck is Driftwood and sports a woody body built by Hercules Motor Car Inc. of Tampa, Florida and features stunning hardwoods woodworked to a fine cabinetry finish by Mike Sullivan of Louisville, Kentucky. The chassis was sourced from Pete and Jake's Hot Rod Parts of Peculiar, Missouri and Hot Rod Carbs handled the induction on a Ford Flathead V-8 engine built by Miles Machine of Louisville, Kentucky. Also, from Louisville Holcomb Services provided the transmission. The

bodywork, custom paint, and assembly was performed by Brad Stark's Rod & Custom of Paducah, Kentucky, and the interior was upholstered by The Re-





1963 Chevy 2 door station wagon | New Ulm, Minnesota

"Impressive" is the name of the 1963 Chevy station wagon owned, built and entered by Brad, Brady, and Cory Ranweiler of Show Cars Automotive Inc. in New Ulm, Minnesota. Impressive started life as a red 1963 Chevy 4-door station wagon and the most obvious body modification is it has converted into a 2-door station wagon. The flawless black paint done by the Ranweiler family at Show Cars Automotive is in PPG paint products from start to finish. Sheetmetal body parts were sourced from Dynacorn and laser cutting by DLC. Parts and services for the custom one-off Chevy 2-door wagon were sourced from all over the United States. From Washington state a Morrison chassis equipped with 14-inch Wilwood disc brakes at all four wheels. Evod Industries in California machined a one-off set of wheels mounted on Pirelli tires. Station wagons take extra yards to upholster the interior was done by M&M Hot Rod Interiors of Alabama.





1934 Ford pickup "Staxx" | Toledo, Washington

Jerry Logan is the owner and designer of this drop dead gorgeous little 1934 Ford pickup truck. The cab is a genuine 1934 Ford pickup cab with a 4 inch chop and a 2 inch channel over a pair of American Stamping frame rails. Power for the truck comes from a radical looking and highly detailed 312-inch Ford Y-block engine topped with a Magna dual-scroll supercharger fed by a modified Borla fuel-injection system.

Equally as vintage as the Y-block engine is the Borg-Warner Super T10 4-speed manual transmission, or in the jargon of the ancient past, a 4-speed stick. Richardson's Custom Auto & Body handled spraying PPG paint products from end of the truck to the other. The interior is upholstered in exotic Stingray leather and Classic Instruments are responsible for indicating the oil pressure, engine cooling, and voltage available. Custom one-off

wheels whittled out of billet aluminum by Mike Curtis Design.



1956 Olds 98 convertible | Woodland, California

"Oldssled" is the moniker Jeff Hess gave his 1956 Olds convertible built by Mike Filion's Pro Design of Santa Ana, California. Intended from day 1 to be a Ridler contender the project took 7 years to complete and represents 2,500 hours of labor for Doug Starbuck's Starside Design in body and paintwork alone. The paint brand is House of Kolor and the custom mix hue is called "Way Past Midnite Blue." Subtle graphics include ghost scallops accented with two-tone nickel plating. Advanced Plating of Nashville, Tennessee did all of the plating work on Oldssled including triple-plated chrome. Power comes a fuel-injected first-generation Chrysler Hemi. Every component of the 1956 Oldsmoblie has been fully-smoothed and painted in HOK Way Past Midnite Blue including the boxed frame with air-ride suspension. The fully custom one-off interior was fabricated and upholstered by Bill's Auto Upholstery.





1955 Cadillac Coupe Deville | Genoa, Nevada

The amazing fact about this year's field in the Great 8 pick is the number of homebuilt cars chosen to compete for the Ridler. Frank and Demi Hinmon's 1955 Cadillac Coupe De Ville is a real argument starter thanks to the addition of suicide rear doors bringing the count up to 4 door sedan specifications. From Nashville, Tennessee Iconic Metal Works' Kory Gray is the fabricator and Bakersfield, California's Kal Koncepts' Dion Giuliano gets the credit body and custom paint work. The leather upholstery interior done by Mike Wray in Cayucos, California at Cayucos Auto Interiors is air conditioned by Vintage Air. All hell will break loose if anyone ever sticks their foot in the gas pedal the engine is a duel-fueled 598 cubic inch Chevy bigblock blown with a Procharger and fed with either 92 octane pump gas or racing fuel. MSD boost controller is mounted on the custom center console.







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Band Names Inspired By Cars

There's nothing quite like the musical harmony of a finely tuned engine. Bonus: the song is instrumental, so you don't have to learn any words. Perhaps looking for similar auditory perfection, countless musical groups have turned to the automotive industry for inspiration when naming their bands.

No, the Beatles didn't get their famous name from the Volkswagen Beetle and the Fab Four has nothing to do with cylinders. But since no list of significant musical groups is complete without mentioning John, Paul, George, and Ringo, I went for it.

Now that we've gotten that out of the way, let's chat about a few best-known bands with car names.

The Cars - *Elektra / Warner Music Group*



Where else would we start? The Cars—made up of Ric Ocasek, Benjamin Orr, Elliot Easton, Greg Hawkes, and David Robinson—were on the leading edge of new wave rock in the 1970s. *Rolling Stone* wrote, "They have taken some important but disparate contemporary trends—punk minimalism, the labyrinthine synthesizer and guitar textures of art rock, the '50s rockabilly revival, and the melodious

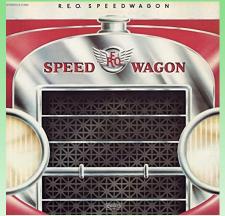
terseness of power pop—and mixed them into a personal and appealing blend." Appealing indeed. Formed in Boston in '76, The Cars rocketed to stardom. The group's debut album sold six million copies and the band was named *Rolling Stone*'s "Best New Artist" in 1978.

Inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in April 2018, The Cars' appearance at the ceremony was their last reunion before Ocasek died of heart disease five months later.

Appropriately enough, one of the band's biggest hits was *Drive*, released in 1984.

REO Speedwagon – *Epic Records / Columbia Records*

As the story goes, keyboard player Neal Doughty was taking a History of Transportation class at the University of Illinois in the fall of 1967, and he learned about the REO Motor Car Company's Speed Wagon truck the day before his new band began looking for a name. Thank you, Ransom E. Olds. Although the original band members didn't stay together, Doughty and Illinois classmate Alan Gratzer carried on with other musicians as REO became a



commercial success in the 1970s. Doughty is currently the only remaining original member.

REO Speedwagon has sold more than 40 million records and has 13 Top-30 hits to its credit, including *Keep On Loving You* and *Can't Fight This Feeling*. Five decades after it started, the band is still touring, proving there's still plenty of life in that old REO.

<u>The Fabulous Thunderbirds – Chrysalis Records</u>



Another Texas band, these blues rockers have been performing since 1974 (although lead singer Kim Wilson is the only remaining original member). While the band's name seems like a Ford tagline from the mid-1950s, the Fabulous Thunderbirds are actually named for a mythical Native American bird, which gets its name from the belief that the beating of its wings causes thunder and stirs the wind. That didn't stop the group from playing up the car connection, how-

ever. Check out the cover of their *T-Bird Rhythm* album above. Could it be Don Kiger's car?



President's Message



Good Evening everybody,

I hope that this email finds you still healthy, happy, working on your hotrod, and maintaining proper social distancing. I wanted to drop everybody and email to address the current emails that have been going around and bring everybody up to speed.



First off, I want to give huge props to Dick Towne for giving us officers the ability to meet virtually. Dave W and I had a brief meeting online this past Tuesday (17th). It lasted all of 5 to 10 minutes. While no club business could be settled without a quorum of club members, this will qualify as a meeting to keep the weekly meeting streak going. Us club officers will continue doing this as long as needed to ensure the weekly meetings continue. I understand the importance of this legacy for members and am grateful for Dick in setting this up for us.

Next up, what is going on across the county is absolutely nuts. I am sure all of us have either been affected by the economic slowdown due to the virus or know of somebody or some family that has. I know my family personally has. I also know that there are some members that have yet to pay their yearly dues. Right now, I am suspending that. If you haven't paid your dues due to financial hardship, fixed income, etc., don't stress it. Just let me know, and I will direct our treasurer of your status and we will settle when things get better. This will not affect your standing as a Count. Additionally, I firmly believe that as Counts, we always take care of our own first. If this economic downturn has resulted in a hardship to you or your family, let me know and I will direct our treasurer to refund your yearly dues to you. I know it isn't much, but as a club it is something that we can do to help each other. Once things are back to normal, we can settle back up the dues. Again, this will not affect your standing as a Count, and nobody except myself and our treasure will know.

In closing, although I hope that this will be a short-lived status, I believe this will be our new normal for a few weeks. I hope that we can pull off our Car & Coffee event at the end of May. Please, do all that is necessary to keep you and your family healthy. If there is anything that you need the club to do in assistance, do not hesitate to reach out to me or one of the officers.

Don't forget, driving your vehicles on a nice day could be considered social distancing. It could also be considered good for the soul.

Dave

THE PRESIDENT'S CORONAVIRUS GUIDELINES FOR AMERICA

15 DAYS TO SLOW THE SPREAD

Listen to and follow the directions of your STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

IF YOU FEEL SICK, stay home. Do not go to work. Contact your medical provider.

IF YOUR CHILDREN ARE SICK, keep them at home. Do not send them to school. Contact your medical provider.

IF SOMEONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAS TESTED POSITIVE for the coronavirus, keep the entire household at home. Do not go to work. Do not go to school. Contact your medical provider.

IF YOU ARE AN OLDER PERSON, stay home and away from other people.

IF YOU ARE A PERSON WITH A SERIOUS UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITION that can put you at increased risk (for example, a condition that impairs your lung or heart function or weakens your immune system), stay home and away from other people.





For more information, please visit

CORONAVIRUS.GOV

THE PRESIDENT'S **CORONAVIRUS GUIDELINES** FOR AMERICA

DO YOUR PART TO SLOW THE SPREAD OF THE CORONAVIRUS

Even if you are young, or otherwise healthy, you are at risk and your activities can increase the risk for others. It is critical that you do your part to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Work or engage in schooling **FROM HOME** whenever possible.

IF YOU WORK IN A CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE INDUSTRY, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security, such as healthcare services and pharmaceutical and food supply, you have a special responsibility to maintain your normal work schedule. You and your employers should follow CDC guidance to protect your health at work.

AVOID SOCIAL GATHERINGS in groups of more than 10 people.

Avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts — ${\bf USE\ DRIVE-THRU,\ PICKUP,\ OR\ DELIVERY\ OPTIONS.}$

AVOID DISCRETIONARY TRAVEL, shopping trips, and social visits.

DO NOT VISIT nursing homes or retirement or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance.

PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE:

- Wash your hands, especially after touching any frequently used item or surface.
- Avoid touching your face
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow.
- Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible.

CORONAVIRUS.GOV

School operations can accelerate the spread of the coronavirus. Governors of states with evidence of community transmission should close schools in affected and surrounding areas. Governors should close schools in communities that are near areas of community transmission, even if those areas are in neighboring states. In addition, state and local officials should close schools where coronavirus has been identified in the population associated with the school. States and localities that close schools need to address childcare needs of critical responders, as well as the nutritional needs of children.

Older people are particularly at risk from the coronavirus. All states should follow Federal guidance and halt social visits to nursing homes and retirement and long-term care facilities.

In states with evidence of community transmission, bars, restaurants, food courts, gyms, and other indoor and outdoor venues where groups of people congregate should be closed.

After 15 Years, This Street Rod Came Back To Keep On Winning

Tim Bernsau, Author

Eric Geisert, Photographer

Tim Kerrigan's 1933 Ford Roadster was one of 14 extraordinary street rods competing for the America's Most Beautiful Roadster award at the 2019 Grand National Roadster Show.

It was not just one of the best-looking and best-built cars of the year, as it would go on to be one of year's most honored rods, grabbing top honors wherever it showed up. As usual, most of the AMBR contenders were freshly built rides. Kerrigan's stunning burgundy 1933 Ford is better described as freshly rebuilt. The Roadster that got so much attention last year got an equal amount of attention 15 years ago, when the car was a Ridler Award finalist at the 2004 Detroit Autorama. Later that year, it appeared on the cover of Street Rodder Magazine's October issue. By the time it showed up at the Grand National Roadster Show in 2019, it had undergone a thorough transformation and even had a new name: Timeless.



Timeless Then

In 2004, Street Rodder reported that Kerrigan's roadster was built by Leonard Lopez and the



crew at Dominator Street Rods in Brentwood, California (the shop is now located in nearby Tracy). The all steel aftermarket body, built with a large percentage of custom fabricated sheet metal, was extended to make room for the modern Ford engine. The running boards were lengthened 7 inches to match the stretched wheelbase. The body was widened 6 inches, 4 in the rear and 2 inches in each rear fender. The doors were reshaped and stretched 5 1/2 inches. Handmade front fenders were modified to flow into the lower grille area. The Dominator chassis included independent front and rear suspension components and a custom fabricated frame. The Winters quick -change rear ran 4.11 gears, and low profile Michelin tires rolled on 17- and 20-inch Colorado Custom wheels. The

enlarged engine compartment glowed with chrome parts on the 4.6-liter Ford DOHC Cobra engine with an ATI ProCharger blower, tied to a Tremec five-speed transmission. For the interior, Classic Instruments custom built a set of gauges featuring the insignia of Red Line Oil (the company was founded by Kerrigan). Sid Chavers upholstered the custom bucket seats and panels in red-dyed leather, and covered the floor with red carpet, creating a monotone theme with the paint. The custom color was called Red Line Red, mixed from

DuPont (now Axalta) Hot Hues and sprayed by Creative Images.

Timeless Now

The imagination and vision that goes into a street rod project doesn't stop when a project gets finished. Evolving ideas and changing tastes have been the driving force in this hobby since the beginning, especially when you're talking about enthusiasts like Tim Kerrigan, builders like Leonard Lopez, and cutting edge cars like this roadster. When Kerrigan decided to treat the car to a complete makeover, he knew he wanted to include the original players who had contributed to the success of the car's first version, specifically Lopez and Chavers.



Paul Blatt at Dominator made the major body mods. Most of the style elements that have been retained and the ones that have been transformed can be spotted quickly. Start with the paint. It's still red, but the color changed from tomato juice to wine, better suited to the roadster's elegant profile. The color is a custom mix, as before. Painter Steve Martinez at Dominator created the special formula using House of Kolor candies and pearls. Tony Pimental and Jordon Machado spent weeks wet sanding it to perfection. The laid back 1933 grille, new handmade headlight housings, and custom taillights also contribute to the sophisticated style.

Timeless Top to Bottom

Underneath, you'll find the custom Dominator chassis, with pushrod inboard coil-over shocks and modified Wilwood disc brakes in front—and IRS set-up in back, with the Winters quick-change flaked by Wilwood inboard brakes. Custom Evod wheels, measuring 18x8 and 20x10, were created for the car. The tires are 225/40ZR18 and 275/40ZR20 Nittos.

Timeless Under the Hood

The blown Ford Cobra R engine runs 8-stack fuel injection from Imagine Injection, covered with a hand-fabricated air intake system painted body color, the same as the hand-built valve covers. The entire exhaust system, from the stainless headers to the mufflers, was custom built at Dominator.

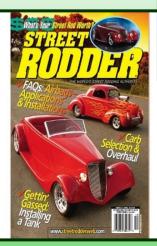
Timeless Inside and Out

Sid Chavers updated the interior, using two-tone Caressa Crme and Chatham Navajo Italian leather to cover the custom seats built by Alex Perez, the door panels, and the trunk (which houses the custom fuel tank). Chromed brass trim accents the leather and the dash. The carpet is top quality German weave. Kerrigan worked with Classic Instruments again to create a beautiful gauge cluster from his own design. The B&M Ripper short-throw shifter was retained from the 2004 version of the roadster.

Endless Winning Streak

At the roadster's successful reappearance at the 2019 Grand National Roadster Show, Kerrigan collected awards for Outstanding Paint, Outstanding Engine, and Outstanding Detail. He won a few more at the Sacramento Autorama, including Best Rod and the coveted Joe Bailon Memorial Award. He took the Grand Sweepstakes Cup Award in Portland, the Goldmark Award in Boise, and Goodguys' 2019 Street Rod d'Elegance title.







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