Guys who work on cars can fix anything. I mean, parts is parts, right? You got fasteners, you got brackets, and you got screwdrivers and hammers and wrenches to put all those parts together. Anything made up of such parts and put together with those kinds of tools is a piece of cake.

Or so I thought. The lazy-Susan base cabinet in our kitchen was in need of repair, and I figured that I could fix it 'cause I'm a car guy. It seems that gravity over the years had collapsed the ball bearing mechanisms that operated the two rotating shelves. I located a kit made by a reputable manufacturer and figured that if I tore out the old lazy Susan, and took off the cabinet doors, I could install the new shelves in the fashion of building a model ship in a bottle. So, I carefully measured the opening with the doors off & ordered the two-shelf kit. It arrived on a Thursday, and Friday ayem I demo'd the old shelves.

But once the old shelves were out, I decided that the inside of the cabinet could stand to be painted, and now is the time to do it. And three hours later, that step was accomplished with two coats of gleaming white enamel. Hey, if you're gonna restore an old cabinet (or car), you gotta decide if you're going to make it better than the factory did when it built it new. And, to my amazement, the new shelves and support bar all fit into the cabinet. OK, it was a little tough and required some dismantling of the support, some gymnastics to diagonally insert the two shelves and rotate them in through the door opening. And some creative out-of-sequence assembly inside that tight under counter corner cabinet. But it worked. I don't believe I had to insult the new shelves ancestry more than once. The worst was working on my hands and knees, on my back, or twisted onto my side. But it all went together more or less as planned and I felt good about it. I screwed on the cabinet doors, and I was done. I then placed my hands on the countertop edge to boost myself up. But my right hand was on the electronic stove controls. As I boosted myself up, my weight on those buttons made for a very unhappy stove. It immediately started beeping and flashing an "F9" code, which the manual says "call a repairman, cause you can't fix this unless you're an astrophysicist." Two days later, the repairman diagnosed the damage. It needs a ninety dollar part. Which won't arrive for a week.

Fix one thing, break another. I can't wait to get started screwing my Dart back together.

-Bob

-Bob Gough, Y'r 'umble Ed'tr /Prez

The Newsletter Of The Mopar Club/San Diego

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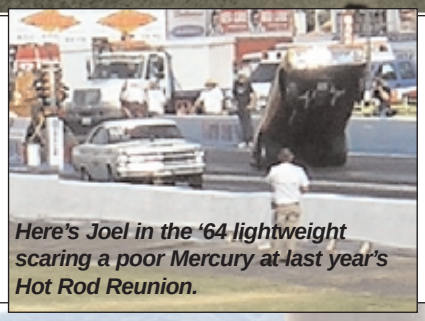
FEB 2007

Winter doldrums!!!

Upcoming Club Activities For '07 Expect to have a back country **cruise** or two. It'll be an opportunity to get your old Mopar out on some scenic roads. As usual, the cruise participants will end the outing with a picnic. Cruisemeisters Jim and Kay Signorelli will be planning the event(s), and you will hear more as plans develop.

No photos of car shows this month, so here's a nice shot by Jackie Nichols of Shannon Corkill's Bird at the Club Xmas Party.

The Big 3 Swap Meet is another annual Mopar Club tradition. The Club has its space reserved under the trolley, just west of the station for Saturday and Sunday, Feb.24-25. So empty your garage of those old car parts and bring 'em down to the Club swap space. You just might convert 'em to cash. The Club will have a BBQ and dogs/burgers/sodas. **The All-American Car Show IX** is in the planning stage, headed by the able ShowMeister, Mike Mattern. The Club is seeking input from all members as to a possible new location and/or date for the event. These will have to be finalized by next month so the Club can calendar the day with the Car Club Council of San Diego, and thereby avoid conflicts with other car shows held in the county. But now is the time to decide on a venue and date. It's not that we're unhappy with the beautiful lawn at Simpson's Nursery in Jamul. It's just that the weather last year was intolerable with a record heat wave. We've been pretty lucky up to last year with our selection of a date in July in East County. But attendance has suffered because of high temperatures that are typical of that area (that and another car show on the same day last year). So get on the horn and call Mike or the Prez if you've got an idea for a location. Oh yeah, if the venue is free for our use, that goes a long way.



Here's Joel in the '64 lightweight scaring a poor Mercury at last year's Hot Rod Reunion.

The usual suspects at The Mopar Club Big 3 Swap Meet space, a couple of years ago.

Clubmembers in NHRA racing: Racing a '64 Belvedere lightweight in Super Stock is **Joel Minor**, assisted by his dad, Dick, and Joe Bourdage. They move up to a Hemi this year. And **Chad Karaginides** is committed to step up into serious NHRA racing. With help from his dad, Steve (aka "Kary"), Chad has built a dragster and obtained his license to race Super Comp. Dad and son have been building their dragster around a Keith Black 572 c.i. big block that puts out about 1000 horsepower, and testing has proved that it'll break out of its dial-in by a wide margin. Yeah, it would've been a whole lot cheaper and easier to start with a big block Bow Tie. But what are ya gonna do when you're dyed in the wool Mopar guys? Chad is pointing to his first event this March in Arizona.

Profile

the 1/4 million dollar baby

The Barrett-Jackson Auction, held in Scottsdale, Arizona, is where the high roller car collectors go to buy the best examples of automotive history, and in one week millions of dollars will change hands, and for 6 hours or so every day, the Speed channel brings the frenzy into your living room, where you've seen Hemi Cudas go for six figures and more. Much of the credit for those high prices goes to Craig Jackson, a car guy who has a fondness for American muscle cars. Over the past few years, the auction has featured the genre, and only the finest restorations cross his auction block.

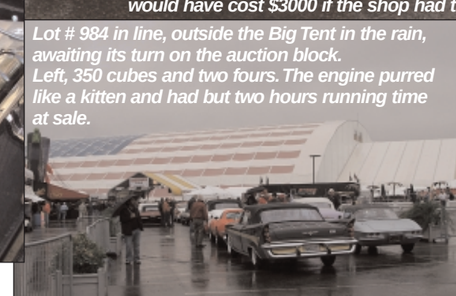
Clubmember Lee Meyer has first hand experience with the Barrett-Jackson 2007 that just occurred the week of January 15-21. Lee was instrumental in restoring a 1959 Desoto Adventurer convertible owned by Lee's friend Greg Groom who is known for his 300 letter car and 50s fin car restorations. Greg had become burned out on restoring cars some 5 years ago and this adventurer was the last classic he had left. The car sat in Greg's yard for the past six years, ignored for most of that time. Well, not ignored entirely, as Greg would strip parts off it to sell when he received an inquiry. But last year, Lee convinced Greg that it might be a good time to restore the car and sell it at the Barrett-Jackson. After all, there were but 97 of them produced, and only six are known to exist today. None of those have changed hands for many years.

As with many restorations, this one started badly with Greg deciding to deliver the car to a buddy's paint and body shop in Tacoma. Greg gave him instructions that the body was to removed from the frame, and the original color, black (the only other Adventurer color was white) was to be applied. And Greg gave him a reasonable 6 month deadline for this work. Well, the body shop guy dropped the ball. When Greg went up to get the car, it was in primer, with doors, fenders, hood, and trunk removed, all separate from the frame. That's when Greg called Lee. What Lee found was a totally dismantled car, with virtually all trim and interior needing new parts or restoration, and assembly. The main problem, it was late September 2006, with less than four months before the auction. Of course, the Adventurer was previously accepted by Barrett-Jackson, with documentation submitted by Greg, with help from the owner of a 1971 Cuda, dubbed by Car Craft magazine as the World's Greatest Street Machine. Greg was unsure of the penalty if the car wasn't ready, but he didn't want to find out and he didn't want to embarrass the owner of the Cuda.

Well, Greg and Lee got down to work. Chrome, stainless and gold anodized trim pieces were sent out to shops for restoration, with Greg and Lee sweating that none of these irreplaceable items would be ruined or damaged. Interior seat covers and carpet were ordered; not an easy task as the Adventurer black carpet was woven with unique gold threads. Lee and Greg meanwhile considered other body shops, but were skeptical that they would find a trustworthy shop that could meet the quality and deadline. So Lee decided to finish the bodywork and do the final blocking of the primered car then shoot the car himself in the considerably less than ideal place of Greg's garage. It took pretty much all of the paint they had to give the car six coats of PPG single stage urethane. The engine, tranny and differential were already rebuilt, but needed painting and assembly into the frame. After Greg assembled the frame, suspension and drivetrain, they found an auto shop that had a large hoist, enabling them to drop the body onto the chassis. Of course, the car had to be transported to and from the shop with the hoist, so this step was by no means easy. But once back in Greg's garage they assembled the rest of the body. With the doors, trunk, fenders and hood in place, Lee began the arduous task of long-block sanding the paint, beginning with 1200, then 1500 and finally 2000 grit wet sandpaper. After that, the paint was buffed somewhere between 10-12 times with progressively finer polish. The block sanding and buffing alone took at least three weeks time. Finally Greg and Lee were feeling good about how the car looked. The problem was, not all of the trim was done, and none of it was installed. Not to mention the wiring, plumbing the brakes and coolant systems, or the interior or top. The days were 15 hours long, but the remaining time was short, and oh yeah, the car still had not been started.

Well, all those parts did come together, the car was started and tuned two days before on Tuesday, with the last of the trim pieces, the interior, and a final polish by Lee occurring on the Wednesday the day before the car was due to arrive at the auction. Greg loaded the car into his enclosed trailer sometime after midnight, and arrived Thursday morning in Scottsdale for check in. Lee and Michelle Lyga arrived midday Sunday. A coveted spot inside the main Showcase Tent was reserved for the Adventurer, also arranged by Greg's angel friend who owned the SuperCuda. There were several cars still being assembled by their owners on check-in day. Unfortunately a ham-fisted Barrett-Jackson driver broke the Desoto's door latch on the driver's side, forcing Greg to scramble to locate a friendly repair shop, get the car there, perform the needed repairs and return to the auction on the same day.

If you like fins, the Virgil Exner design for the '59 Desoto is what you want. And bling? Nothing today comes close to the Adventurer trim. Right: the bling carried into the interior: those flecks in the carpet are gold threads. Lee restored the unique steering wheel himself, a task that would have cost $3000 if the shop had time to do it.



Lot # 984 in line, outside the Big Tent in the rain, awaiting its turn on the auction block. Left, 350 cubes and two fours. The engine purred like a kitten and had but two hours running time at sale.

Lee and Greg.

Hey Lee! Michelle's hanging with some Bosox dude!

The gavel hammers down on Lot #984, and a 258,000 bucks changes hands.

All photos coutesy of Michelle.

Sunday night, a gala was hosted by Barrett-Jackson for the sellers, and Lee and Greg after the dinner spent some time at the car talking with folks who happened to stop and look, as you never know who might be a buyer. Although Michelle had a good time at the dinner, she was unimpressed with the turnout of collector cars. But by Tuesday, when the car auctioning began, Michelle changed her mind, for under the largest tent in North America were assembled some very wealthy folks eager to spend their bucks. The lighting is intense, the sounds are loud, and the crowds are dense. Amid the glamour, bling and glitz, the auction moves quickly, pressuring buyers so that the next car can be rolled onto the block. The excitement generated by the high-dollar bidding is palpable. Michelle realized this was no ordinary gathering of car folks. And this lasted for eight days.

The big moment came for Greg and Lee on Friday afternoon. Lot No. 984 was called to the block. But when the Desoto was pushed outside the auto tent in the line awaiting its turn in the big auction tent, it began to rain. As Greg steered the car up onto the block with Michelle in the passenger seat, Lee wiped down the sheet metal and glass with a chamois. Lee opened the door for Michelle, she swiveled the bucket seat and stepped out, and they were escorted to their positions for the auctioneer's bidding. Greg was hoping to at least break even on his investment with a bid of around $100k. If the car got somewhere around $150k, Greg figured the work and stress would have been worthwhile. He and Lee nervously watched during the ten minute bidding. $100k came and went. Greg started to breathe again. $150k, then more, and when the gavel hammered down, the car sold for $230,000. Om top of that Barrett-Jackson charges an 8% fee to the seller and a 10% fee to the buyer, so the final purchase price totalled $258,000.

At any of a hundred or more steps during the three month assembly of this rare 1959 Desoto Adventurer, the project could have gone sideways, forcing cancellation of the entry. Even damage to the car by an auction employee was overcome. But Lee will tell you, if you have a rare car in primo condition and you want to sell it for top dollar, there's only one place to consider: Barrett-Jackson Scottsdale. And be sure to get a good day.

Upcoming Events

- **RaceLegal 1/8 Mile Drags** At the Q, 6p-12, Fridays Feb 16,, Mar 9, Mar 23, www.racelegal.com
- **41st Big 3 Swap Meet** Feb 23-25 @ The Q The Mopar Club has its usual spot. Bring your stuff to sell. Sodas/dogs/burgers on The Club!
- **Mopars At The Strip**, Las Vegas, Mar 30-Apr 1 www.moparsatthestrip.com
- **Spring Fling XXI**, Woodley Park, Van Nuys, May 5-6, show & swap, www.cpwclub.com
- **Monday Nite Car Club** 6:30p Tuesdays VFW Hall 12650 Lindo Lane, Lakeside www.mncc.cc
- **East County Cruisers** 6:30p Tuesdays, Tyler's taste of Texas BBQ 576 N. 2nd St, El Cajon
- **Fallbrook Rods & Relics** 7-9p, Sat. Sunrize Cafe, State Rt 76 @ Mission Rd. Bonsall 760/723-4020
- **Clairemont Cruisers** 5-8p 4th Sat Woodies Chili Dogs Clairemont Town Square
- **Santee Lakes** every Fri. 4-8p, $2 for entry
- **Crusin' Italian Style,** Pernicano's, 1588 E. Main, El Cajon, ea. Thur nite 619/338-5225
- **Chicken Pie Diner,** 14727 Pomerado Rd., Poway, ea. Wed, 6-9p
- **The Malt Shop** Every Friday, 6p, 3615 Midway Dr.
- **Home Town Buffet** 1st Sat each month 9am, Main St. El Cajon, host King Pins
- **Dalton's Roadhouse** 1st Sunday each month Noon-4p 775 Center Dr. San Marcos
- **Cruise Nite Ramona** 5-7p Sun, Denny's State Rt 76 @ Main St. 760/789-0513
- **Boll Weevil/Chief Auto Parts** 6-8p last Tues of month, 169 Rancho Santa Fe Rd, San Marcos
- **Fred's Old Fashioned Burgers** 1st, 3rd & 5th Sat ea. month, 2754 Alpine Blvd, Alpine, 5p, food/ cash
- **Clairemont Cruisers** 4th Sat 5-p, Woody's Hot Dogs in Cl'mont Town Square
- **Monday Nite Car Club** Tues 6:30p, VFW Hall 12650 Lindo Lane, Lakeside
- **East County Cruisers,** Tues 6:30p, Tylers Texas BBQ 576 N. 2nd St, El Cajon
- **Coco's Restaurant** 11a-3p 3rd Sun 16759 Bernardo Center Drive, Rancho Bernardo
- **Casa De Oro Cafe** 5p 2nd & 4th Sat, 9809 Campo Rd, Spring Valley

Classifieds

As a tangible benefit to being a member of The Mopar Club, you get free ads. Give Bob a fax 858/292-5344 or better e-mail dgough1@san.rr.com

For Sale: '03 Dodge Grand Caravan Sport 55kmi., $15,900.00 3.8 L. V6, white/gray exc. condition, always garaged/factory maintained,100k trans. factory ext. warranty, new Michelin tires, brakes/rotors,16" alloys,Touring Suspension, power sliding door/gate, roof rack, bra, cargo tray, Marc @ 760-902-4800

For Sale Together: '65 Coronet 440 HT, Strt Body, Fbrgls Hood, Hemi Scoop, Frame Conn., Roll Bar, Weld Wheels 3.5x15 Front, 8x15 Rear, 3" Ex., No mtr., setup for small block, 904 w/low gears, 8.75, Fuel Cell, BG Fuel Pump '**72 Duster 340 4-Spd Pro-Street**, 1/2 done, Back 1/2, Frame Conn., Roll Bar, Fbergls 6-Pak Hood & Bmprs, 340 Grill, Narr'd 8.75, Moser Axles, Weld Whls 33x18.5x15 MT Tires, Hders, 3.55 S.G., 440/Steel Crank, Steve Kary 6/460-5024

For Sale: '06 Dodge Magnum SRT8, 13k miles, $39,950.00, pristine condition, always garaged/detailed monthly, SRT option group 1 & 111, Sirius radio, GPS, side air bag, power sun roof, Mods: (excess of $5k) KW adjustable coil & shocks, Flowmasters, GS Motorsports fan mod & ESP mngt., 180 thermostat, Mopar cold air intake, SRT 8 floor mats, clear bra, tinted front glass, '07 slotted rotors dustless C-TEK brake pads, Marc @ 760-902-4800

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