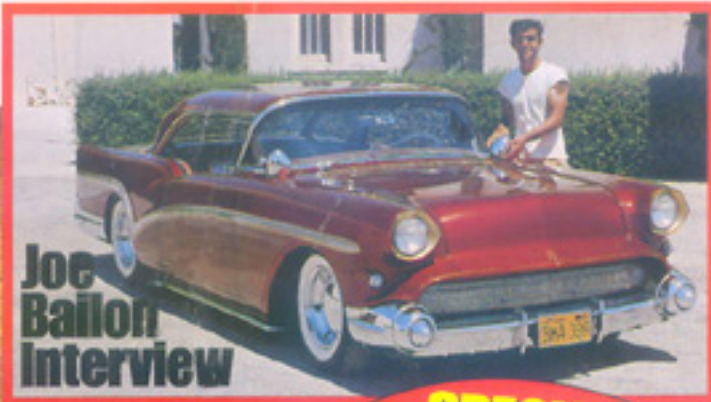


ROARING ROADSTERS THE HOTTEST OF THE STREET RODS

July 1995

ROD & *Custom*

Joe
Bailon
Interview



SPECIAL!
16-PAGE STREET ROD
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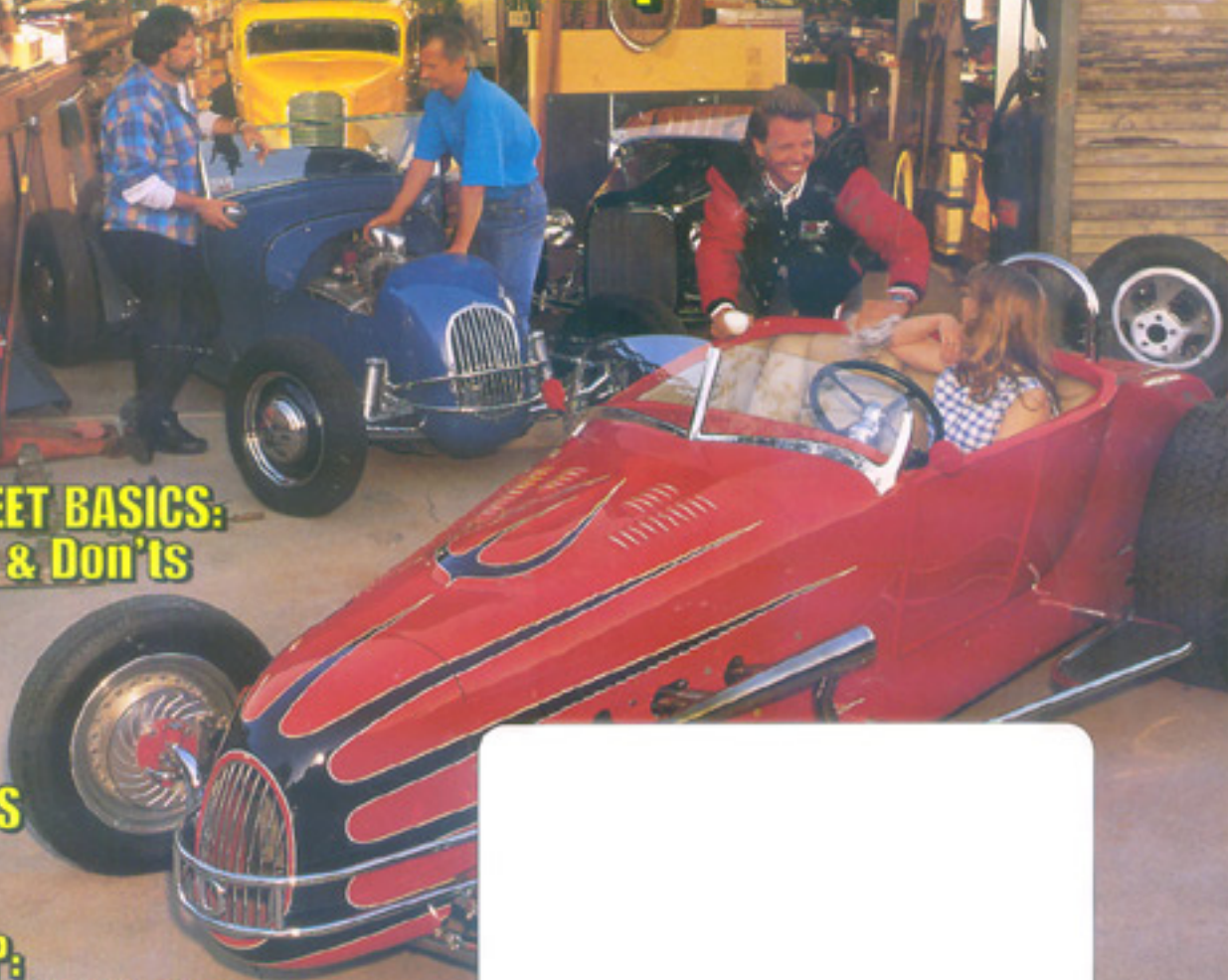
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OLDIES

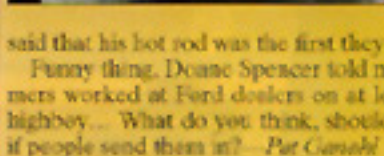
A couple of issues back we asked you to send photos of your high school hot rods, regardless of when you went to high school. We've been getting some interesting replies, although the photos tend to be of understandably poor quality. Here are some from Malcom Nevin, who resides in Lutherville, Maryland. The year is 1950, the place is Cleveland, Ohio, and that's Malcom on the left front tire, with his friend Harry Walkup.

Malcom said his channeled '32 three-window was about the only hot rod in the Cleveland area at that time. He built it from articles and photos in *Hot Rod*, sending for parts from Alex Xydias' So-Cal speed shop: Douglass mufflers, Belond headers, Edelbrock Super Dual intake (shortly after these photos), Harmon-Collins cam. It had a Zepoyr side-shift trans and ignition, and Malcom said it would cruise at 90 on the then-unlimited Pennsylvania Turnpike on frequent trips to Washington, DC, where he was stationed in the Air Force.

On one such trip he said he stopped for gas late at night at a station in Ohio in front of a Ford dealer. When he left, he said the kid pumping gas closed the station, ran and woke up his friend where they were rooming, jumped into their '32 roadster and chased him down. They were from California and were working at Ford dealerships on their way across the United States, and they

said that his hot rod was the first they'd seen in the Midwest.

Funny thing, Duane Spencer told me he and famous customizer Jimmy Summers worked at Ford dealers on at least one trip across the country in his '32 highboy... What do you think, should we keep running these fuzzy old photos if people send them in? —*Pat Ganahl*



DONUT PATROL

Mike Chiovetta of Huntington Beach, California, is an arty, crafty and humorous rodder who has been sending us fun stuff for many years. This time it's a note about an early morning gathering of rods and rodders every Saturday and Sunday at a



donut shop at the corner of Adams and Magnolia in Huntington Beach. Get there by 8 a.m.; everybody's gone by 11. No rules, no fees, anything's welcome. In fact, header-maker Mark Weiss is sometimes seen there in his converted bumper car, along with Mike's own rod '24 Dodge woodie and Bruce Twitchel's very yellow '56 F-100. —*Pat Ganahl*

FORDS AT CARLISLE

A big new event for you East-coast Fordnatics is the All-Ford Nationals to be held June 9-11 at the big swap meet grounds in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Staged by Carlisle co-owners Bill Miller and Chip Miller, it will feature all varieties and ages of FoMoCo vehicles, including race cars, as well as vendors, drag races, tech seminars, entertainment and Ford celebrities. Kids can participate in a Mini-Ford display of gas, battery or pedal-powered kid-sized Fords. Last but not least, one lucky spectator will drive home in a restored, red two-top '55 T-Bird. For info, call the Carlisle Event Hotline: 717/243-7855. —*Pat Ganahl*

LIL' DUDE

Remember when R&C used to honor a car club of the month? One such was the Hanover Rod & Kustom Klub from Pennsylvania, featured in the September '62 R&C. John and Joan Herr can be seen in the club group photo on page 41 of that issue, along with Joan's brother, Maurice Bell, who owned a show-winning '32 Ford five-window that was the club's primary feature car. Painted a deep burgundy with whitewalls and a chromed, two-carb flathead, it was shown on page 40. It was known as Lil' Dude.

The Herr's, who still live in Hanover, bought the coupe from Maurice in 1972. But after 19 years of storing it in their garage,

they decided it was time for a body-off rebuild and another turn on the show circuit. John Matthews of Vintage Specialties in Gettysburg did the work, changing the color to a contemporary teal blue metallic. The upholstery is now grey and aqua velvet. But the Isky-cammed '51 flathead remains in place. So do the show trophies; it has collected more than 60 already. —*Tara Baskus Meilo*





There is nothing like driving or riding in a fenderless roadster, looking down a hood full of louvers and watching the front wheels spin. The ride wasn't as choppy as I expected, and the noise level was very tolerable.



Creese also formed the traditional and decorative nerf bar from mild steel with the obligatory initial placed in the center. Itchy Dits also striped the 8-inch Dietz headlight buckets in the "Tommy the Greek" style, also very trad.



First, note that the sprint/lakes-type headers, formed by TRI-C, are blued out. Davis like to boogie. The three-piece hood was originally solid, but heating problems led to lots of louvers...not the easiest things to paint and stripe.



The old-style buggy sprung front suspension includes a Super Bell front axle (and no, the weld wasn't ground smooth, either). The car also has a 4-inch drop, '37 Ford spindles, JFZ disc brakes, a single leaf spring and four-bar split wishbones.

ing for Dick "Magoo" Megugorac.

One of Magoo's customers had acquired the old Jack Thompson '27 track roadster (seen in the August '58 *Hot Rod*) and commissioned him to modernize the old warrior. Due to finances, the project got sidetracked. Creese obtained the steel body and Magoo frame, as well as the roadster's original Essex frame, with the intention to restore the old Thompson trackster. That's when Davis entered the picture. "I'll buy the 2x3-inch rectangular tube frame, front and rear suspension and small-block Chevy," offered Davis, "If you finish it." So Creese finished it.

The completed product consists of the aforementioned mild-steel rails, buggy spring front and rear suspension, Center Line aluminum wheels and 350 inches of '75 Chevy pounding into a 350 turbo hooked up to a 9-inch Ford third member. Covering the chassis is a Specialty Cars 'glass body fitted with a Creese-formed three-piece hood, belly pan and a Speedway Motors nose. Its 'glass and aluminum shell is filled with a load of Dan Miller threads.

By now loyal R&C readers know that



The rear tube pushbar encircles the panel below the decklid, as well as the side-mounted '39 Ford teardrop taillights and personalized license plate. Note the location of the tailpipes and Tommy the Greek design on the turtle deck.



Even though a T roadster isn't the roomiest of body styles, Davis and Miller did their best to provide adequate legroom. TRI-C Engineering also built the "ultra-slim-tilt" steering column. The motorcycle-style rear-view mirrors kinda work.



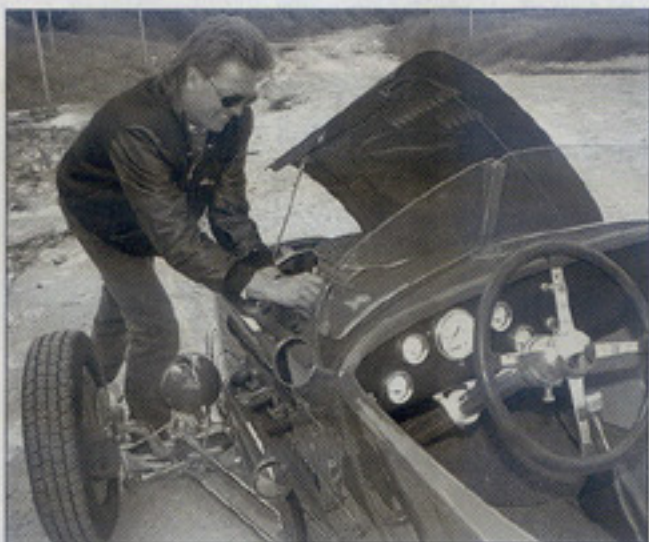
One of the roadster's neat little details is the step plate located in the center of the side nerf bar. Yes, these are for high stepping.



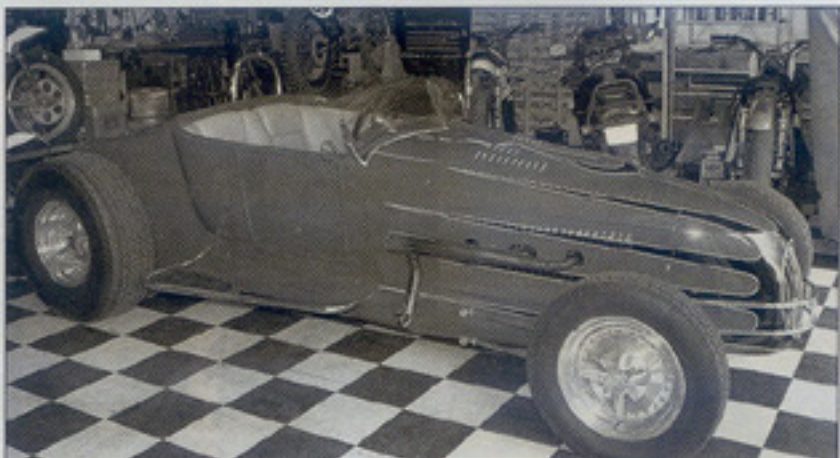
Now you can see why the nerf-mounted step plates are necessary. The Davis dirt-T has no doors, no roof, no air, no sounds, no six-way seats and no bull-oney.

I love track-style roadsters. I grew up with these types of rods, and to me they represent the hottest part of hot rodding. Now, the Davis "dirt-T" isn't killer fast, nor does it spin donuts at the flick of the steering wheel or push of the accelerator pedal. But it does have a go-to-hell, don't mess with me, bad to the bone attitude. It starts, stops and goes around corners like any low-profile roadster. It has a bitchin' exhaust note. Its chopped, Du Vall-type windshield allows full exposure to oncoming bugs. Better yet, "biker-maximus" Davis can enjoy its full hair-blowing capabilities without running into California's helmet law. Yes, it has heating problems, which will be dealt with by mounting an auxiliary radiator in the trunk...and Davis still wants to scare up a steel body, because he feels some of his pals think of it as a kit car. But all in all I wouldn't mind having that nosy little fun runner ensconced in my garage.

Years ago, we tried to push track roadsters as a viable alternative to building T-buckets or highboys. That alternative still exists. I can see it all now.



Gary Davis began his movie career as a motorcycle-jumping stand-in for Evel Knievel more than 20 years ago and has worked his way up to stunt coordinator and second-unit director for such films as *Terminator 2*, *Patriot Games*, *F/X* and *F/X2*.



When he isn't spinning around the block in his track roadster, Davis is working on and riding his collection of vintage flat track and TT motorcycles. Included are Triumph twins, BSA Gold Stars and Matchless one-lungers.

Either a '23 or '27, Kurtis-type midgenose with a three-piece hood, louvers galore, a straight axle, hairpins, a Donovan small-block, a four-speed, a quickie

with chromed axlehousings, knockoffs, implements, dirt trackers...and lots of chrome and yellow paint. Now, where's my raincoat? **AC**



Many track roadsters were dual-purpose cars and their owners (and drivers) would make tuning passes at El Mirage during the off season. Bert "Elca Twin" Letner and his scalloped and slippery T was timed at 141 mph in 1948.



Jack Thompson's dark blue '27 T (with red wires and upholstery) was another *Hot Rod* cover subject (August '58). A huge $\frac{7}{8}$ x $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch flathead powered the car, and we understand that it is being restored to its original condition.



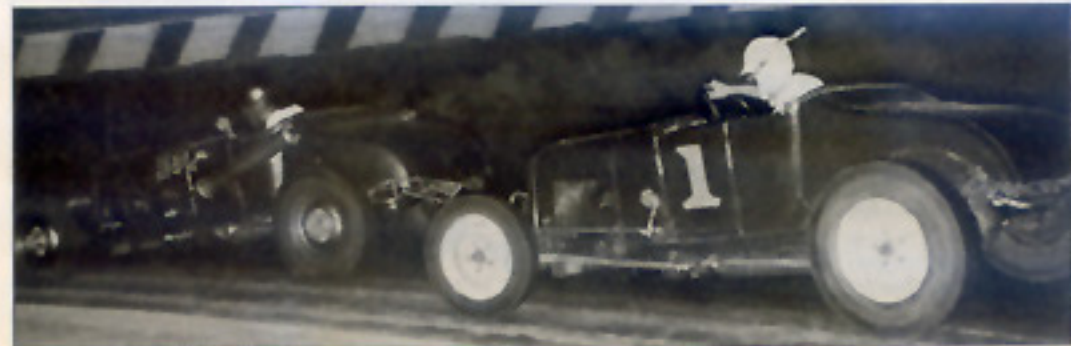
Although rearing roadster action during the late '40s was fierce, interest in track roadsters began to wane, and by 1955 the California Roadster Association (CRA) became the California Racing Association. Number 4 was owned by Phil Weiland.



R&C's January '73 cover featured the famed Bick Kraft '23 T, which was lovingly restored by Ron Weeks. The famed old track-star, built in the early '50s, later became the Highland Plotting Spl. and now resides on the East Coast.



Pete Chapouris built this British racing green '27 for his dad, Pete the elder (shown here). The kid sticking his tongue out is Pete the younger (who is now working for his old man). Windshield posts were carved by Lil' John Buttera.



When we said that track roadsters generated lots of energy and had great spectator appeal, we weren't pulling your chain. Check out this photo of Jim Rathmann (number 16) leading Jack McGrath (number 1). Both became famous Indy drivers. Also, note the muffs.