

Road

Chatter

Website: www.nirgv8.org

Northern Illinois Regional Group #8 Volume 55 Issue #5&6

Ken Bounds' 1951 Mercury Sport Coupe
SEE PG. 4



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"Monty" Historic 1947 Ford V-8 Vermont State Police Car
SEE PG. 6

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MEETINGS

7:30 pm on the third
Tuesday of the month at
the Wheeling Township
Service Center, 1616 N.
Arlington Heights Road,
Arlington Heights, IL

NEWSLETTER

Send submissions to
Editor, 3890 Woodlake
Drive, Hanover Park, IL
60133
or e-mail
[Shoeboxford.john
@gmail.com](mailto:Shoeboxford.john@gmail.com)
or call
331-425-1187

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Other Early Ford V-8 Regional
newsletters are welcome to use
material from the Road Chatter,
provided that Road Chatter is
credited as the source.

A Word From NIRG President Ron Steck

President's message



Welcome to spring everybody! It's finally here. I had a Zoom meeting a couple weeks ago with the national president of the Early Ford V-8 Club of America, along with the board of directors and about 30 regional group presidents. We discussed various issues involved with resuming our monthly members meetings. At this time, it has been decided that if we follow our state mandates for gatherings, we will be able to meet. However, our usual meeting spot, the Wheeling Township Service Center in Arlington Heights, is not going to make a decision about making a room available to us and other users until July 1st.

Our board and officers had a Zoom meeting recently and have planned a couple tours. The first will take place on Saturday May 22nd with the 23rd as a rain date. This will consist of a drive to the Oregon area and having lunch at a drive through as some may not want to eat inside. Then we will continue driving, heading down to the Amboy Depot Museum. The other tour planned will be on Saturday June 19th for "Drive Your V-8 Day". We will drive to DeKalb and have lunch. Then we will head to Whiskey Acres Distillery for a tour. We are also planning a fall colors tour which will be possibly a two- or three-day event. We will keep you informed as more details emerge. See page three for details on the May and June Tours and a future issue for information on the Fall Tour.

I have been doing some work on one of my vehicles already and have been to one car show. I hope you are all doing well at this time, and that you were able to get your vaccine. I have had both of mine at this point. I am looking forward to getting to see as many of you as possible in the future. Take care everybody.

Ron

In Memoriam

Rich Doligale, 74, a former member of our Northern Illinois Regional Group passed away April 1st after a long illness.



Rich and Judy Doligale joined the group in 1980 and were very active members for many years. Rich was an officer and board member for 15 terms, including NIRG President for three years in the 1980's. He and Judy arranged many tours for the club. For the newer members, Rich is the guy who acquired the club tent. Judy passed away in November 2011 after a long, debilitating illness. Rich held NIRG membership until 2007.



Northern Illinois Regional Group Events ...

Join our first Tour of the Year

We will visit Oregon, Illinois and travel south to the Amboy Depot Museum

Saturday May 22nd, 2021

Bring your Early Ford V-8 (or modern)

(Rain date May 23)

Meet at the Culvers Restaurant - 4068 E. Main St. (Rt. 64) in St. Charles
at 8:30 am and depart at 9:00 am

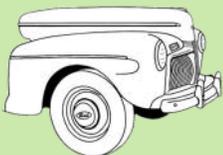


Call Ron Steck to RSVP or for more information at 630-777-4001

DRIVE YOUR FORD V-8 DAY

TOUR TO DEKALB

Saturday June 19, 2021



Destination: Tour of Whiskey Acres Distillery in DeKalb

Meet at 10:00 a.m. at McDonalds Restaurant

2175 W. Roosevelt Road, Wheaton, IL (Route 38 & County Farm Road)

We will stop for lunch at Fatties Pub on the way

\$10.00 fee for Distillery Tour -- For info and to RSVP contact John Emmering

Cell: 331-425-1187 or Shoeboxford.john@gmail.com

Genevieve – Our 1951 Mercury Sport Coupe

By Ken Bounds



Genevieve arrives in Glen Ellyn

My family in Northeast Missouri celebrated my sister's fourth birthday on March 17th, 1951. Unknown to my family and I, four days earlier at the St. Louis assembly plant in Hazelwood, Missouri, a Kerry Blue 1951 Mercury Sport Coupe rolled off the assembly line. It was purchased by a lady in St. Louis; she later sold it at an unknown date to a man named Floyd Griebel, Jr.

By the early winter of 2012, Earl & Gene Heintz, long time members of our Northern Illinois Regional Group, had owned that same Mercury for over 35 years since purchasing it from second-owner Floyd Griebel in 1977. They enjoyed driving it to many meets and club events and often drove it to the Lake Geneva Classic Car Rally. Earl wrote a nice article about the Mercury which appeared in the January 2008 Road Chatter – be sure to take a look at the article, which is available on our website, www.nirgv8.org. Having admired the Mercury for many years, I was surprised and thrilled when Earl called and asked me if I was interested in buying it. When I told him that I was very interested and ready to come and see it, Earl said that I would have to wait until spring. He said he would not sell the car to me until I was able to test drive it and be happy with it. The weather had turned bad and the car was not leaving the garage!

Eventually, spring arrived. On April 13, 2013, exactly 62 years and one month after the car was built, Carolyn and I each took a short test drive in the Mercury and fell in love with it; we bought the car on the spot and drove it home. Earl and Gene always called the Mercury their “anniversary car” because they were married in 1951. We named her “Genevieve”, a tribute to Gene.

After putting a few hundred miles on the Mercury locally, it was time for its first road trip. Carolyn drove Genevieve about 1,000 miles round trip to the Spring Fling in Lees Summit, Missouri, on Memorial Day weekend. The car performed flawlessly and Carolyn had a great time driving it. Since that first trip, the Mercury has been one of our favorite road cars. We have driven it to dozens of regional group events, three more Spring Flings, a National Driving Tour, and seven National Meets.

Soon after we bought the car, I went to work making minor corrections and improvements to get it ready for Concourse judging. We had already committed to driving the 1950 Convertible to the 2013 Grand National Meet in Lake Tahoe, so the next available meet was the 2014 Eastern National Meet in Gettysburg. After a warmup trip to the Spring Fling in Council Bluffs, Iowa, we prepared Genevieve for the meet. The Mercury made the 680-mile trip to Gettysburg with ease. When Concourse day arrived on June 25, there were still those butterflies in your stomach as the judges descend on your car. Judging seemed to go very well and we were both relieved and thrilled when National President Steve Lemmons presented us a Dearborn Award for Genevieve.

The next opportunity for judging was at our own Central National Meet in Springfield that August. Genevieve again breezed through the judging and was awarded a Dearborn Medallion. We also received a special delivery for the Mercury at the meet. Our friend Dick Fell delivered an overdrive transmission he hauled from Colorado that we purchased from Bernie Sawin. More on that later. Genevieve even did service as a “loaner car” for National President Steve Lemmons at the meet.

Thirteen months after receiving the Dearborn award in Gettysburg, we were off on a 1,000-mile quest to pursue our second Dearborn Medallion at the 2015 Central National Meet. Little did we know that this would be the “meet that never was” in Brainerd, Minnesota. During the welcome party on the very first day of the meet, a terrible storm wreaked havoc on the meet hotel property and surrounding area. Thousands of downed trees took the power lines with them. A number of Early V-8’s were severely damaged; some were destroyed. Genevieve received damage both from branches and power lines. The next day most of our members spent hours assisting in freeing trapped cars and clearing the roads before heading home.

We finally did receive the second Dearborn Medallion the following year at the 2016 Central National Meet in Tulsa. With that award, Genevieve graduated into the Emeritus Division. She has since received Dearborn Emeritus Medallions at the 2017 Eastern National Meet in Chantilly, Virginia, the 2018 Grand National Meet in Dearborn, and the 2019 Central National Meet in Auburn. Her plaque is full! We have now driven Genevieve over 6,600 miles just to national meets.

I mentioned earlier that Genevieve is one of our favorite road cars. We own two 1950 Fords and enjoy their drivability. But the Mercury is something else! The 1951 Mercury drives almost like a modern car. It is longer, wider, heavier, and more powerful than the Fords with improved steering and braking to match. And what a great upgrade that overdrive has been! The 1949-1951 Mercurys had a standard rear axle ratio of 3.90:1 and an optional ratio of 4:27:1 for overdrive-equipped cars. Interestingly, there was a “plains” option of the standard axle in overdrive cars. The Borg Warner overdrive has several nice features, but the most obvious is the approximately 30% reduction in engine speed when engaged.

We installed the overdrive in June 2015, keeping the 3.90:1 axle, and the improvement was immediately obvious. The reduction in RPM’s on the road makes for a smoother, quieter ride. But the big improvement is miles per gallon. We have consistently seen an increase of 4-5 M.P.G. We can now easily drive over 300 miles on a tank of gas.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Genevieve spent over a year in storage. But with an end to virus in sight, we are anxious to resume driving this great car to many more events and road trips.



Near disaster at Brainerd, Minnesota



At Truman Presidential Library, 2013



2017 Safety Check--Roundheads Pizza



Ken receives Dearborn award from President Steve Lemmons

Early Ford V-8 Law Enforcement Legacy



Vermont State Police Preserve the Memory of Their First Fleet with “Monty” a Restored Early 1947 Ford Fordor Patrol Car

By John Emmering

Spying an old Ford V-8 parked in a lot behind Boardman’s Garage, an auto shop in Plainfield, Vermont back in 1970, Corporal Harvey Jones of the Vermont State Police inquired of the shop’s owner “What year is that old Ford?” Corporal Jones was pleased to learn the Ford was a 1947, the same year that the Vermont State Police came to be, and the car was the same make and model of the initial fleet of Vermont State Police patrol cars. Looking over the old Ford and inquiring with the shop, Jones found that the fenders were rusty, it had been repainted white, the transmission was bad, and it did not run.

As a public information officer for the Vermont State Police, Corporal Jones hoped to restore a 1947 Ford to show the public what the earliest Vermont State Police Cars looked like. He somehow saw promise in that old ’47. The garage owner was happy to part with the 1947 Ford for a reasonable price and soon the old V-8 was hooked up to a tow truck for the 45-mile trip to a garage in Essex, Vermont where restoration work would begin. Corporal Jones and many of his colleagues got to work in their spare time on a complete restoration of the car they would affectionately name “Monty”.





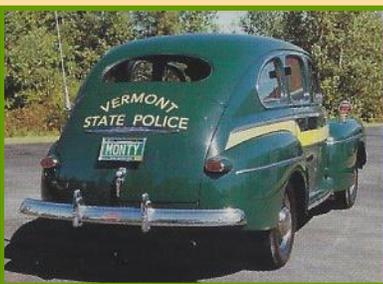
The restoration was a two-year process. Replacement parts were located, the old white paint was sanded off, fenders repaired, engine and transmission both pulled and rebuilt and the myriad of other tasks that go into a restoration were completed. While some Troopers worked on mechanicals others with skills in upholstery installed a new interior kit. To keep the patrol car as authentic as possible an original red warning light was located and installed on the left fender and the correct radio system was obtained. Most of the radio equipment was installed in the trunk due to its size.

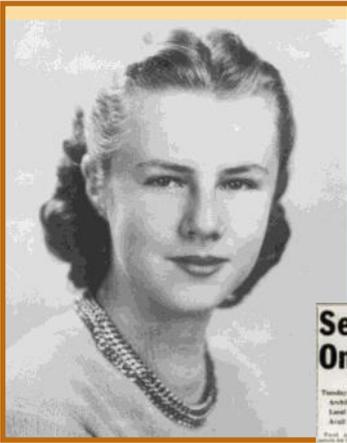


Finally, in 1972 “Monty”, the newly restored 1947 Ford Fordor which had been transformed into a replica of one of the first patrol cars of Vermont State Police when the agency was formed in 1947, was unveiled to the public. Sporting its new authentic green paint job and police accessories “Monty”, was immediately popular when it was displayed at public relations events around the state. Ford V-8 car buffs often have questioned Troopers who accompany “Monty” about the car’s model year because it appears to be a 1946 model instead of a 1947. Since the car was originally titled as a 1947 model, “Monty” seems to be one of the very early 1947 Ford automobiles produced before February 19, 1947, which were essentially identical to the 1946 Ford models.



As the 50th Anniversary of the Vermont State Police approached it was clear than “Monty” needed a facelift. After almost 25 years of traveling the State of Vermont for public relations events “Monty” was showing wear and was brought to the State Police Special Services garage where new patrols cars are outfitted for duty. There “Monty” received a new green pain job. The car’s bumpers and other chrome items were removed and replated and “Monty” looked as good as new once again. The 1947 Ford patrol car was center to the 50th year anniversary festivities in 1997. The old V-8 patrol car continues to draw the attention of the public as it is displayed at various gatherings. “Monty” opens up communication between Troopers and various types of people from car buffs to children and those who recall days gone by. “Monty” has proven to be a great ambassador for the Vermont Troopers.





College Girl's Mysterious 1946 Disappearance Leads to Formation of Vermont State Police

While “Monty” the 1947 Ford patrol car was restored to commemorate the establishment of the Vermont State Police, few realize that it took a high profile case to convince the State Legislature to form the agency. With the State motto “Freedom and Unity” the citizens of Vermont didn’t feel they needed the presence of a statewide police agency until a young girl’s tragic disappearance took place in 1946.

The incident unfolded on Sunday, December 1, 1946 when 18 year old Bennington College sophomore Paula Jean Weldon of Stamford Connecticut, finished her work shift at the college's dining hall. Paula returned to her dormitory room and changed clothes, announcing to her roommate Elizabeth Johnson that she was going for a hike. Paula’s roommate declined an invitation to join her, so Paula, wearing a red parka jacket, blue jeans and white sneakers set off on her own at about 2:45 pm.

Paula’s destination was The Long Trail, the oldest long distance hiking trail in the United States. The trail runs along the Green Mountains from Massachusetts through Vermont to the Canadian Boarder and spans 272 miles. Paula enjoyed hiking on a stretch of the trail that passed through the Bennington area. Several people observed Paula as she left the campus on foot. Service station operator Danny Fager saw Paula leave the campus and walk along Highway 67A toward Bennington. Paula hitched a ride from a car driven by a local man, Louis Knapp, who dropped Paula about three miles from the trail entrance. Three young men saw Paula 30 minutes

later as she spoke to them before crossing a bridge that led to the trail at around 4:00 pm. Paula, wearing inadequate clothing and bringing no supplies headed down the trail as darkness began to fall. After that the young co-ed was never seen again.

When Paula did not return to her dormitory room, her roommate Elizabeth thought she might be studying at the library and drifted off to sleep. When Paula failed to show up for classes Monday morning the college administration became alarmed. The local Sheriff was called as well as Paula’s father William Weldon, an affluent industrial designer, who immediately drove in. An elaborate search was conducted over many days with police, Boy Scouts, fellow students and others hunting for Paula with to no avail. No trace of her was found on this or any other search.

Distraught father, William Weldon appealed to the FBI and also called on the New York and Connecticut State Police to assist in the case. Weldon was quite vocal in his criticism of the State of Vermont for not having a statewide law enforcement agency, only a traffic highway patrol. Weldon’s plea reached the ears of the state legislature which voted to form the Vermont State Police as a full service police agency. The state purchased 25 1947 Ford Fordor sedans and three Pontiacs for the initial 55 man force. The new Troopers were paid \$45.00 for their six day work week. Ironically the tragic disappearance gave birth to this highly professional state police agency.

1935 Ford Thermostat Replacement

When I bought my '46 Ford V-8, back in 1982, I needed two thermostats for it. I found that the thermostat from my '68 Slant Six Dodge Dart was a perfect fit, except the diameter of the main flange was too large in diameter. A pair of snips and some filing solved the problem. I used 160-degree stats and never had an overheating problem, even on 90+ degree days, parades, and yes, pulling my 15' fiberglass boat around with a 65 HP motor on it. Fast forwarding to the present, I now found myself looking for some economical 160-degree stats for my '35.



It turned out that the water outlets and design on the '35 set-up (and I assume '36, etc.) would not allow the use of Dart thermostats, so I went online. I determined that Stant had a thermostat (#45356) that would come closest to fitting. The flange, like the Dart thermostat, was also too large. But I thought what the heck, I'll just file it down like I did 30 years ago. It also turned out that the two legs that hold the guts of the stat were interfering with the inside diameter of the pump outlet. Fortunately, the part interfering was minimal as shown in red in below photograph.



I soon discovered that the made in USA Stant seemed to have metal as hard as tool steel; much too tough to snip or file by hand. Although it may not have been necessary, I taped the stat up to keep grit off the internals before I headed for the grinder. It was a blessing in disguise. The tape provided a perfect snug fit as I slid the stat into an old Bayer plastic pill bottle I had lying around.

Holding the bottle firmly in one hand made for a secure jig to push the stat against with the other hand. I was able to control the stat with minimal wobble (if any) which sometimes occurs when grinding things on edge, especially as you rotate the piece. The taped top end of the stat made for a comfortable "key" to push and rotate the stat with as I ground down the outside diameter as shown below.



Note: I would recommend grinding the diameter to the *same diameter* as the rounded and raised ring that is on all pumps which enables the hose to seal tight. See the next paragraph on this.

I solved the inner diameter problem using a rag stuffed tightly into the pump outlet. A few passes with a Dremel tool took care of the problem. Turn on the Shop Vac and hold it near the rag when removing it, then stick the nozzle down the pump for a few seconds and it should fit perfect.



I chose to do two grindings on each outlet, 180 degrees apart, to keep the stat as concentric to the outlet as possible. And herein lies the reason for keeping things concentric: *It's the hoses that keep the Stats in place.*

The factory service bulletins for the early years illustrate the original, bi-metal, butterfly-type thermostats that were used up through 1934. One of the problems with the butterfly type was that if the hose clamps were over-tightened, it distorted the stat, and I do not have to tell you what happened after that! These early butterfly stats were apparently driven into the hoses (not sure where, but probably up toward the radiator) because there was actually a factory "driving tool" that was used.

It all changed for '35, and perhaps that's why I've read of various ploys to keep the modern stats from moving out of position. I never had that trouble with my '46, so I don't expect to have any with my '35—if and when I ever get it running! Photo below shows the stat in place. Note the similar diameters of the stat flange and pump/hose sealing ring mentioned in article



**What's Happening with
Members and Friends of the**



Sat. March 27th



Madeleine O'Donnell celebrated her 85th Birthday with a drive-by party with several NIRG participants



Ron Blum, Ken Bounds, Scott Gilday, Pat Maroney, Stan Stack and Len Vinyard participated



George and Dawn Zulas found this attractive 1950 Ford as they traveled through Inglis, Florida



In The Rearview Mirror

By: Ken Bounds



10 Years Ago This Month – May 2011

The May Road Chatter was filled with articles about a very busy April, including A Night at the Races in Maywood, an Eggs & Eights Breakfast in Geneva, the Pizza Meeting in Addison, and a Photo Opportunity and Safety Check in Lombard. May included a well-attended tour to the B-17 restoration project in Marengo. Three members attended the 38th Annual Spring Fling in Lincoln, Nebraska May 26-30.

20 Years Ago This Month – May 2001

The May Road Chatter contained an article borrowed from the Redwood Review detailing resources available to V-8ers on the World Wide Web. (Many of those websites are still valid and useful today). The May 15 monthly meeting included a technical presentation from Jerry Malecki about vintage radios.

30 Years Ago This Month – May 1991

The May Road Chatter contained tech articles on Flathead cooling by Chester Lawrence and how to install an auxiliary electric fuel pump by Chuck Wrobel. At the May 21 monthly meeting, Secretary Ken Bounds read a letter from the National Club congratulating editor Diane Wrobel on the quality of the Road Chatter. Plans were being made to attend the Central National Meet in Bristol, TN.

40 Years Ago This Month – May 1981

Over 50 members and family attended the Grayslake swap meet May 3 with at least 11 Early V-8s parked in the space reserved for the NIRG by Don Schuh. Long-time member and host of many club picnics, Jack Groot, passed away May 5. A group of over 40 V-8ers and family attended a breakfast driving tour hosted by Jackie Groot May 24. It was a beautiful day, a great tour, and a delicious brunch. The Wrobels even purchased a 1966 Mustang along the route!

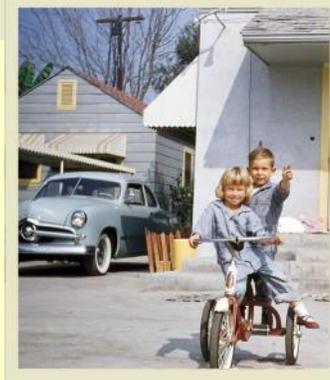
50 Years Ago This Month – May 1971

On Sunday, May 16, over 20 NIRG members and friends had a successful trip to visit B. S. Wisniewski's in Milwaukee to browse their antique parts inventory with many finding a few nice parts. A trip the previous November was a bust when the manager did not show up to open the building. A planned weekender to Galena had to be cancelled because too few members with operable V-8s signed up.

*Ford V-8
Snap shots
from long
past ...*

DRIVE DOWN Memory Lane

IN COLOR



Happy Birthday

Happy Anniversary

Stan Stack (5/02)
Phyllis Madrigali (5/04)
Dick Livingston (5/05)
Jim Taylor (5/06)
Dawn Zulas (5/08)
John Ellis (5/09)
Grace Mohawk (5/09)
Marilyn Krenger (5/13)
Ray McMahon (5/14)
Caroline Mireles (5/14)
John Bauer (5/17)
Frank Koeder (5/18)
Irene Vinyard (5/18)
Gary Osborne (5/20)
Jeffrey Trilling (5/22)

Scott & Nicole Gilday (5/06)
Mike & Susan Freund (5/17)
Sam & Nina Van Bruggen (5/24)
Jeffery & Mondira Trilling (5/30)
Paul & Joanne Linzer (5/31)
John & Robin Emmering (5/31)

GAIL LEICHT (6/01)
THOMAS MYERS (6/04)
JOHN SLOBODNIK (6/04)
BOB MILLER (6/05)
DELICE SERRITELLA (6/07)
JUDY BUSCAGLIA (6/10)
RON STECK (6/10)
MARISA CLAYBAUGH (6/19)
SAM DIX (6/28)
JOHN KRENGER (6/29)
ELAINE BRAUN (6/30)
JANET LEVINE (6/30)

THOMAS & JUDY MYERS (6/08)
DICK & LINDA LIVINGSTON (6/12)
LIN & PAT STACEY (6/14)
RICK & MARISA CLAYBAUGH (6/15)
SAM & JANIS DIX (6/18)
PAUL & JANET LEVINE (6/22)
RON & COLLEEN STECK (6/24)
ALAN & LOIS WALL (6/27)



"I passed, Pop! I passed! Can I have the car tonight?"



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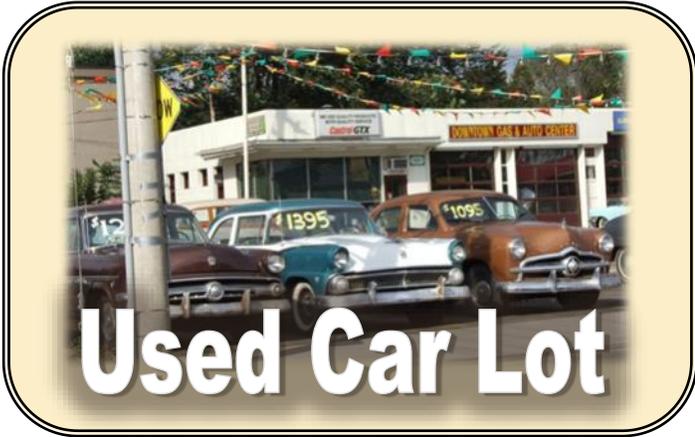
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1953 Ford Customline Tudor. Car is a survivor, no rust, my aunt and I were the only owners, never been in the salt. Total rebuild -Engine, Trans. rear end, front wheel bearing, exhaust system, double manifold, new radiator, springs, brake system. Less than 2,000 miles on rebuild. I have all the receipts on the work, over \$20k.. This is real driver. **\$19,000 Contact Stan Stack at 847-382-4223.**



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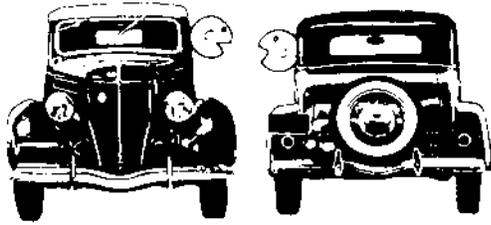
1936 Ford Club Cabriolet. Excellent restoration. Rare Body Style. \$36,750 **Call Ray McMahon at 630-853-6832.**



1951 Ford Custom Tudor, 100 miles on complete body-off restoration, V-8 with Overdrive. Has not been shown, but will likely be a high-point Dearborn car. **Offered at \$35,000. Contact former National President Jerry Reichel at 678-758-2403.**

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Photo of the Month

Our veteran member and Membership Chairman Ken Bounds poses with “Genevieve” his 1951 Mercury Sport Coupe, our featured car. Ken’s Mercury, formerly owned by members Earl & Gene Heintz, has a history of over 40 years of involvement with our regional group. Read Ken’s story of his experiences with his Mercury on page 4.