WORDs from the PREZ

Hunting Season, Holiday Season, Car Show Season! It’s great to get out of the hot frenzy of summer and settle down into the old routine. The Counts wound up the year their formal event, the Annual Awards Banquet, and their silliest event, the Annual Christmas Party.

The Car Show is approaching fast and talking to people around town it sounds like there are a number of fresh local cars that will be displayed for the first time. We have all the available floor space rented at the Rapid City Civic Center for the February 27-March 1 show. Be sure to attend as an exhibitor or a spectator. An entry blank is available at www.countscarclub.com. Be sure to submit your entry early as we already have twice as many applications received as this time last year.

If you didn’t attend the awards banquet, you missed a great evening. The evening is full of emotion ranging from surprise, embarrassment, confusion, tears, laughter, and pride in the last year’s accomplishments; it is truly a great time. I’ve learned two things from this event: First, a Count should never get on a roof, a scaffold, or a ladder. Secondly, we have great taste in wives and girlfriends, even if their taste in men can’t be explained.

Remember to attend the 7:00 p.m. Tuesday meetings so that you stay informed. Sure, the club house is crowded, but we miss you when you’re not there. Guests are always welcome. We need to keep up the recruiting effort during these next few months.

Bob Dunfee

Think Spring!
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Wow, it is cold out there. Winter is fully upon us and for some this is a good thing. Long evenings in the shop with the warm glow of a welding rod and all the catalogs and publications you didn’t have time to read last year can make winter one of the best times in the car hobby. Of course, if you’re without a shop it can get pretty frustrating. In the middle of two house deals I have room for two daily drivers inside out of the elements. My old shop is about 8 miles away and the Cyclone and Bobbi’s Mercedes are sleeping there, I stop over every now and then to give their batteries a boost and remember the good old days of bright walls, forced air heat, a floor drain, and halogen work lights. The Truck from Hell ’53-4 Chevillac is languishing beside the new house, covered with two car covers, a tarp, and a bunch of tie downs. She is lonely and cold, but I actually started it a couple weeks ago. So much for getting the body off the frame this winter. The snow banks around it have made it even more non-descript; looks kind of like someone covered up a wood pile out there.

Further out in the tree line the future-custom Chrysler is looking pretty snowed in too. A couple of chrome headlight rims peek over a snow drift, the top of the Mopar cop car wheels are visible on the North side, and you can see where the deer have been pawing at the grass under the rear bumper. She’s lonely and cold too, but full of new antifreeze. I suppose after 46 years she’s had to sit outside before.

Out in the unheated garage the 500 c.i. Cadillac engine is partially disassembled. I bang my elbow into it about twice a week, struggling past to get to my work truck. The $1,100 rebuild kit is still not ordered and those frequent greasy elbows on my jacket continue to remind of this. Next to it is the 400 Chevy, with the rockers all loosened up and old M/T valve covers on only finger tight. It assaults me too, stubbing my toe on the engine stand and reaching out with its chrome dipstick to taunt me as I pull into the too narrow garage.

Lots of time to play with paint schemes on paper and work on the new garage design, lots of time to search E-bay for elusive parts. Not much fun with the tools though. I can’t wait for the excitement of the car show and some spring weather.

Comments on how to improve the continuous quality and information we give you. Just call Jim at 605-390– 2238 or Casey at 484-8965 and give us your ideas!

Our plans are to update parts of the online Streetin’ News as the new info comes in. So check us out often.. The editors
It seems that many of the Counts activities have been taking place on some of our more cold and snowy nights. Such was the case when former Counts active member, Smokey Lien invited us to see his project. Smokey was a member in the late 50’s and when he came back from the service in the 60’s. He was best known for his 1954 Chevt 210 two door that was painted a metallic red and ran wide whites and spinner caps. Now 40 plus years and a few neat cars and pickups later he has embarked on a street rod project. It is a ‘30, ‘31 Model A 2 door sedan that will have several deuce additions, like grill shell and gas tank in the rear. That ought to add some interior room under the dash. The body has been removed from the frame and stripped of all paint and rust. The chassis is nearly completed with a Mustang !! Front IFS and disc brakes. It has a rumpy former stock car small block Chevy and Turbo 350. He is getting ready to remove the original gas tank and then the body will go back down on the frame. Many club members were there to offer hints and suggestions to Smokey. Now It’s time to go back active in the Counts, right, Smokey!
The Counts took on a local visible project. We volunteered to run the Story Book Island concessions stands, collect at front gate, run the train and be Santa Claus. This took place on November 29 (5:15 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.). We had 20 people to include wives that worked the project.

The wives ran both concession stands, Bob Myers, Tom Goergen and Warner Ghere took care of the train while the rest of us did odd jobs. Bob Myers and Tom Goergen took turns driving the train while Warner Ghere collected tickets and loaded the kids and gave signal to start the train. Midway through the night the train battery ran down. They contacted the Story Book Island Employee to get a different battery. He asked Bob Myers if he was sure it was the battery and if they knew how to change the battery. Can you imagine asking this group if they knew anything about changing batteries or if they were sure it was the battery? Well they let him know right away they knew what to do. So the battery got changed and the train ran the rest of the night.

Frank Webb was the Santa Clause and a good one he was. As I (Bob Mallow) was passing by Santa Clause there was this couple trying to take a picture with their child on Santa’s knee and I heard Santa say to the mother “you can sit on my lap” she said are you sure? Santa said I’m sure there’s room. One other time I went past Santa, he had an 80 year old woman on his lap and they were taking pictures and they ran out of film so they went in to the Souvenir shop to get some film and I heard the woman say to Santa “if he wanted her to get off his lap while they got the film” and Santa’s reply was “O this is fine”. What a night Santa had.

Well the rest of the areas were uneventful. We had over 800 people come through the gate and took in over $1,000 at the front gate. We are planning on doing this next year so make sure you plan on helping next year and thanks to all who helped.

Bob Mallow
Awards Banquet 2008

The Counts of the Cobblestone annual Awards Banquet was held on November 14th at the Quality Inn in Rapid City. With over 65 members in attendance there were moments of seriousness and levity. The big winners for 2008 were:

- Car of the Year: Bob Meyers ‘41 Willys Coupe
- New Rod of the Year: Henry Yantzer ‘36 Packard Cabriolet
- New Machine of the Year: Skip Abell ‘52 Buick Convertible
- Old Machine: Steve Kroger ‘50 Chevy Custom
- Old Rod: Steve Ringler ‘38 Ford Convertible

A preliminary poster-sized copy of the Rod Run T-shirt artwork was presented to winners, but it will be modified slightly to show the location as Blackhawk this year.

Member of the Year, based upon points accumulated for meeting and event attendance, club apparel worn, and driving/showing their car during point’s season was extremely close. Gary Kreun was within 6 points of the top Count, and Tom Goergen was within 4. To help put them over the top next year, Gary was given a T-shirt and a calendar so that he could remember what to wear and when to wear it; Tom was provided with some Rod Run event posters so he would know where to go and garner more points.

Bob Rohrback’s fantastic metal sculptures were the awards for top cars of the year.

The artwork for the Counts 2008 Rod Run was on display too!
The Member of the Year honors went to Jim Neuzil, and none of his activities and shows revolving around the Studebaker organization were even counted. Jim continues to be an active and visible member of the club, and carries the Counts banner far and wide. This year we are awarding a new style Counts jacket in black with the 50th Anniversary logo embroidered on the back and it should be ready for presentation in January.

Tom was not in attendance, but his past-President award was displayed. Another junk-turned-to-art creation by Bob Rohrbach featuring a connecting rod and two small aluminum pistons turned into a gavel was shown and Tom received it at the next regular meeting.

After all this seriousness, we got to the Special Recognition awards…mostly based upon those carefully guarded secrets of our failings that always get found out much to the delight of the members.

The gag awards and the bar session made a fun evening.
Back in the very early 1960’s, the Counts had a car show that was held at the old Rapid City Auditorium, located where the Dahl Fine Arts Center is located today. During those years the competition for top custom was hot and heavy. A local young man by the name of Forrest Cutler, many of the car people know Forrest as the former owner of D and F Diesel Electric and Dakota Battery for many years, decided to take an almost brand new 1959 Impala 2 door hardtop and customize it. Over the next two or three years all the neat “tricks” of the west coast boys were incorporated into one of the finest creations to ever roll out of the Midwest. This car had frenched headlights and taillights, nosed and decked, shaved handles, modified shortened side trim, molded into one piece bumpers and removed scoops from the front of the hood. It was painted and modified by Gary Hanson, who worked at the Angel Bros. Body Shop on 5th St. near where Bully Blends coffee shop is today.

At that time the top upholstery shop in the area was Slims Auto Trim, Run by Slim Powell and his wife. It’s amazing that that’s Roy Keith Powell’s Dad and mother. They put the wildest white diamond tuft upholstery job into this car. It had white tuck and roll and diamond tuft upholstery everywhere.

After showing the car for several years, Forrest had someone take it from the Tri-State Exhibition that the Sabers of Denver put on to a show in Colorado Springs. On the trip by trailer back to Rapid City, some towing damage occurred to the paint on the rear quarter panel. After that Forrest locked it up in his garage in 1968, not to see the light of day till 1999. Forrest decided to sell it to someone in Colorado that year.

Now comes the neat stuff. The winter issue of Rod & Culture magazine has a 4 page color spread on this beautiful car, now owned by someone in western Wisconsin. This car still has the paint that was put on it in the early 60’s and Slims fantastic interior. For more details on this car go down to your major magazine store and pick up a copy of ROD & CULTURE magazine and check it out. Jim N

**Former original Member of the Counts Passes Away in November, 2008**

Dell Johnson, one of the founding members of the Counts way back in 1957 passed away from undisclosed health problems in November, 2008. After his stint as a very active member for about 10 years he got into the Van scene. Dell was at the Counts 50th Reunion In November of 2007.
FOR SALE
1965 T Bird, $5500. Frank Webb 355-0348
Jewelry Display Case, 1940’s vintage. Gary Kreun
342-8775
1948 ICH Pickup. Titled in SD. $2500 Rush Elliot
574-2923
1970 Chevelle/El Camino 12 bolt rear $600 Kurt
Desinger 341-4724
79 Ford 9 in rear, 3.55:1 gears $75 Casey Barrett
484-8965
71 Nova 10 bolt, complete $75 1950 Chevy Rat
Rod Drag project $1,250 1976 Yamaha RD350 mo-
torcycle $800 Dick Towne 391-5063

FOR SALE
1983 BOHLER CAMPING TRAILER
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GREAT STREET ROD AND SMALL CAR
CAMPER CONTACT JIM AT
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LIGHT WEIGHT, EXCELLENT
CONDITION, TOWS GREAT
Has awning, front window cover, 5
bolt wheels and good tires.

$15,500.00 or offer—Trade down
605-t18-1381

FOR SALE OR...
1923 T Bucket street rod with matching
tear drop 4’ X 5’ trailer. Small block Chevy, Auto-
matic. Runs excellent, fun to drive. Merle
On Tuesday evening, January 6th. Several Counts members made the trip out to R and K Chassis Fabrication in Rapid Valley. Randy Baumiller, who is well known for his 'Killer' Orange Model A chopped coupe that is powered by a blown 427 CI Chevy. This car can pass anything but a gas station as your editor can attest. We all made a group trip to the Vintiques 25th. Rod Run a few years ago, It was an experience to say the least.

Randy is well known for his race and street car chassis that he fabricates in his shop located behind his house in Rapid Valley. He has all the right equipment and tools to do the job right. He started out as a part time fabricator 20 years ago and has gone full time the last 2 or 3 years.

Check out some of the project that are being worked on in the shop now. You can see there is nothing that Randy won’t tackle.

One radical '64 Fairlane And Chassis

Wild Chevy Pickup

Dave Price’s Model A Roadster

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I started to get interested in cars at around 11 years old by building model cars such as: Hemi Under Glass, The Hawaiian, Boot Hill, Stone-Woods-Cook ‘41 Willys, to name a few. Mom would drop my brothers and I off at Toy Hobby on Saturdays to race HO cars all day! It was a good time.

My first car was a 1960 Ford Falcon, 2-door post with a 6cly. 3 speed on the floor. Wow! Was I cool! My first engine overhaul was a 289 special out of a 1964 Ford Fairlane. We didn’t have a garage at home, so after a little begging, my dad let me rebuild it in my bedroom, as long as I kept it clean. He was a little upset when we had to bring it up the stairs, fully built with even the exhaust and intake manifolds. Oops! Ya’ it was heavy!

Do you still own it today…
No, sadly I don’t have any pictures of it either.

How did you get it?
My dad bought it for me.

What projects since then?
I had two 1964 Chevy Impalas, both two door super sports, a 1955 Chevy short box pickup, a 1950 Chevy pickup, and a 1970 Chevy Camaro Rally Sport (which was Nancy’s). I had Dick Towne’s help with this project!

Who inspired you…
My dad. He had a body shop and I would get to help him after school. He sponsored a stock car for Randy Stevens and Dave McCoy, who at the time worked for my dad. I would hang around and watch them build the racecar, which was a 1956 Ford 2 door Sedan with a 312 in it.

Favorite part…
I like building engines and hunting for new car projects

Least favorite...
Well, if I had to choose it would be bodywork. It takes too long. If you make a mistake you see it forever.

Future projects…
Right now I am building a 1959 Chevy Impala, 2-door hard top with a 348 Tri-power Turbo 400 Transmission. When I got the car the top was crushed down to the dash. It was full of rust and a nice home to many critters! Since then I’ve put on a different top, floor and trunk pans and two-quarter panels on this car. Tom Goergen is doing the upholstery. I’m getting there though, slow but sure. My next project is a 1966 Ford F100 short box with a 390 in it.

What advice would you give…
Pick something you really like and stay focused, which I personally have a hard time doing. Money and an understanding wife help too!

PS. As you can see I have a grandson who is interested in cars, too!

Bob is putting the finishing touches on the “59

Bob’s grandson is going to be a Gearhead too!

Bob is getting well known for his welded car parts trophies that he first did at Counts 50th. You have a lot of talent, Bob!
On a cold Sunday afternoon, December 14th of last year, the Counts held their annual Christmas party. It was held at the Piedmont VFW club at 1 PM. It was a pot luck dinner with the club furnishing the main course, Fried Chicken. Now I can't remember ever going home from any Counts pot luck hungry. You just can't beat what everybody brings, wives and single members alike seem to outdo themselves.

After dinner it was time for the famous Christmas White Elephant gift exchange. As usual Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus (Skip and Anita Abell) were the MC’s of this activity. With over 40 plus members participating in this activity it took several hours to go through all the “gifts”. It appears that the quality of the stuff seems to get better and better each year. The famous Christmas Wreath surfaced again this year with actual competition for who would take it home. Kurt stole it away from Bobbi Dunfee and said when it comes back next year it would end it’s 10 year journey amongst the club members.

I believe it was one of our best Christmas parties and I am looking forward to next December. JN
The Life and History of Counts Member, Wm. “Skip” Abell

Skip Abell, Car Guy

In order to tell you who I am, I need to begin with my heritage. My Grandfather, Willam B. Abell Sr. courted my grandmother Mollie many years ago in Laramie, Wyoming, on a motorcycle with a sidecar. We have (somewhere) a picture of them on the bike, in muddy leathers, somewhere in the Black Hills. We’d like to think it was near the carving of Mt. Rushmore, but don’t know for sure. Grandpa Bennett worked for the railroad and spent much of his life in a love-affair with all things mechanical. My dad, William B. Abell Jr. (Bill), was born in Laramie, the family moved to Tucson AZ shortly after Bill’s birth. The earliest pictures we have of Bill were in a very smooth soap box racer at about age 8. Under Bennett’s tutelage, Bill was a good mechanic, and understood how to make mechanical things work better, and look very nice. The family moved with the railroad to the Los Angeles California area (Glendale) in the late-30’s. One of the Abell families treasured stories involves Bill as a freshman in Glendale High School. In those days, many people were moving to California, and 13-14 year old boys were called men and made their own decisions. It was for this reason (we think) that dad was sent to Glendale High to get himself registered and go to High School. And so he did, ostensibly doing very well, bringing home good papers, especially his artwork. Fast forward to the first parent-teacher conference, and Mollie went to school to visit with Bill’s teachers. She was told in the office, that there was no Bill or William Abell registered in the school. Incredulously, she was on her way out, preparing to ensure young Bill received the beating of his life, when she noticed one of his pictures in the hallway. Back to the office she went with the picture in hand, demanding to know where or who the author was. She was told it was the work of Benny Zablinski, a transfer student from Tucson AZ…suspicious, she asked to meet Benny’s teacher. Sure enough, Benny was actually Bill who was “damned tired” of being first in line, so given the opportunity, he took action for himself! Also somewhere in the family archives is a picture of dad and my mom, Lea Smeland, standing by Bill’s hot rod, a 32 Ford roadster, with no hood, fenders or top. In one of his car stories, dad told me the ’32 was one of the hottest cars in town, in fact, he was a member of a roadster-only club based in Los Angeles where membership depended on the car being timed over 100mph on a dry lakes bed. I recall dad telling me it was Muroc, but I’m not sure. In 1990, I met Tex Smith, a renowned magazine editor. He actually remembered my dad, as he was in that area at that time. Guess dad and I look a lot alike! My folks married in 1942, shortly after dad “fibbed” about his age and enlisted in the Navy to fight in the Pacific. I came along in May of ’43 about the time Bennett was moved to northern California. My mom and I moved along with Mollie and Bennett, and their sons, Tom and Gene. When dad got out of the Navy, he moved his small family to Antioch California, a small town on the San Joachin River, about 45 miles from San Francisco. My first memory is of my mom, brother Mike, and sister Pat driving the family car, a black primered chopped, channeled, fenderless ’32 Ford with a big, loud motor. Let me tell you, that ’32 was the envy of all the kids in Antioch. To this day, if I go to a reunion, someone from the old neighborhood will mention it. Anyway, on this day, a line broke and we all got sprayed with a hot liquid through the partially open windshield. Mom was pregnant with my baby sister Laurie, and as I remember, that night...
mom demanded the ‘32 go down the road. It was replaced by an Anglia, with a straight pipe.
Dad was a motorhead all of his life! My first car came along when I was 12; dad brought a ’27 Toadster home for me to learn on. It never ran, ‘cause I traded it to an older friend for a pair of
earrings for my mom’s birthday. Dad’s next attempt came when I was 15, he bought a dark blue
’49 Ford 2dr sedan for us to share. I could do anything I wanted to it, as long as it always ran
good enough to get him to his job on the graveyard shift at a local plant. The Ford got its coils
cut, 6” lowering blocks, dual pipes, some pin-stripping and (to cover some amateur body work) a
scallop-flame sort of thing on the hood. We called it Mr. Blue. When I got my license at the ripe
old age of 16, (1957), I was the envy of the kids in my freshman class, one of the only guys with
a fixed up car. I traded that Ford for a ’36 Ford, coupe, that for a ’32 pickup, it for a 50 Ford, and so on. By
the time I had graduated in 1961, I’d had 18 cars. As
you might imagine, after 18 cars in three years, my
grades barely qualified me for graduation, college was
simply not an option…and all of the local law-officers
knew me better than dad ever intended, so he helped
me into the Air Force…I was gone by August, leaving
my last two cars, a ’50 Ford 4dr, and a ’50 Olds convertible for dad to dispose of.
The Air Force sent me to Ellsworth AFB. Imagine my
shock and dismay, a native Californian who had seen snow
only once on a winter trip to Lake Tahoe, being sent to
South Dakota! Ellsworth in December, 1961 was not a
friendly place to a California boy. For that matter, Rapid
City was downright unfriendly to “flaps”. It took me only
until the spring melt to find a ’51 Chevy coupe. Again, I
was one of very few airmen to have a car. I remember pur-
chasing insurance with the lowest down payment I could
negotiate, taking the policy binder to the base police, get-
ning the car registered and never making another insurance
payment until the next spring when it was time to re-register my car.
When I met Anita in February, 1964…on a blind ski-date at Black Hills State College…I had a
maroon ’57 Plymouth Fury with a 318 (I think) and pushbutton automatic. I never had enough
gas money for frequent trips to Spearfish, so I talked her into transferring to the National College
of Business in Rapid City in March. By the time she moved, I sold the Fury, and bought a ’55
Chevy 2dr sedan which I sprayed black primer (except for two wide-white power stripes). When
we married 6-months later, in September of 1964 we had pooled our assets (well mostly hers) and
bought a 4-speed ’63 Impala SS with a 400 hp 409 from local drag racing legend Billy Baker.
The ’63 lasted us only until the next spring when after a St. Joe drag race, we mutually decided
that a bit of maturity was essential in our lives, and we traded the ’63 for a new ’65 SS with a 283
automatic. Anita and I moved back to California after I got out of the Air Force in August of ’65.
If you were fortunate to be raised in California in the mid-late 50’s, you remember what a magical era that was. American Graffiti depicts my life realistically. Change a few names, and that’s the way it was. I think that is pretty much the story no matter where you were raised in this great country back then. In those days, California was the cutting edge of change, (as was the east coast, I imagine). I grew up with beer being the beverage of choice for the party crowd, with the hard stuff reserved only for the real tough crowd. Four years later, it was Marijuana, Cocaine, LSD, and all that stuff Jimmi Hendrix, the Grateful Dead, and Janis Joplin about. My life in South Dakota had been sheltered much more than I had imagined. Anita and I thought we’d been dumped into a huge vat of ice-water, then shoved into boiling water to warm up. We spent one frightening year in my old home town before we contacted a recruiter and I got back into the Air Force and safely back at Ellsworth. Our first child was born about a month before our move. Believe me when I tell you that there was no way (financially) that we could afford hot rods. It took both of us working a part time job to keep groceries on our little table. Actually, it wasn’t until I had retired from the Air Force, and had a couple of years under my belt as a civilian out at the base that we were able to think about building a car.

Anita and I were on the first “real” vacation of our adult lives in 1986, when I picked up a copy of a street rod magazine that advertised the NSRA Street Rod Nationals in St. Paul Minnesota. Since we were on our way to the Twin Cities, we decided to drop by the Fairgrounds to see a few cool cars. The hook was set. We found and began building our ’31 Ford Coupe that same winter. The first Count we met after we started the project was a wife, Ann Hovdenes. She put us in touch with Ralph Allen, and he did the suspension in our rod, installing a state-of-the-art after market Mustang II IFS from Performance Engineering. We delivered the frame to Brent Willan at the Speed Center for installation of his trademark “T” bucket rear suspension, and Gene Jobgen at A&A handled basic body chores. We had the car complete enough that we took it to St. Paul for the Nats in 1989, and we’ve never looked back. We joined the Counts after the Nats, and when the first snow-flake fell, we tore the coupe down for some finishing touches. Much chrome and brightwork on the 305 Chevy. Anita and I shot a base-clear paint job, and after many hours of color-sanding and buffing in John and Rich Hovdenes’ shop (The Sun Shield Center), it was ready for Roy Powell over at Slim’s Auto Trim. We did most of the final detailing in the Civic Center, just prior to the World of Wheels Car Show. Perhaps now you
understand our empathy for the folks that do that on Thursday and Friday of our show. Anita and I had our first real nights sleep in months the weekend after that car show! We drove our little coupe over 15,000 miles the summer of ’90. We took it to Georgia, Florida, across the gulf coast to New Orleans, up to Dallas, and on to Oklahoma City in time for the Mini-Nats, then home where we washed clothes, changed the oil (worked a week), and headed to Pueblo, Colorado for the Rocky Mt. Nats. In all, we hit 18 rod runs between the car show in February and the Vintiques Rod Run in Watertown in September.

We continued our journeys in 91’, heading west this time, back to California in time for my 30th High School Reunion. It was on our way home from that adventure that we decided to buy an in-progress ’41 Chevy 2dr sedan from a friend in Brookings, SD. It would be a good investment, we reasoned. A few changes and we’d be able to sell it to finance my dream rod, a 29 hiboy on ’32 rails. Although we tried hard to sell it, we never did, just kept modifying it and adding cool stuff until it became a member of the family.

Meanwhile, as they say on TV, we helped our son re-build and update my dad’s GMC pickup. Remember my dad, the car guy? Dad had built the little jimmy from junk yard parts after we left California in ’66. In the fashion of the late 60’s, it had lots of chrome, a late model 235 six, loud pipes, pale yellow paint, and black tuck and roll. Dad had willed the truck to his first grandson, and after his untimely passing at the ripe old age of 52, Anita and I drove the old truck back to South Dakota. Our son, William B. Abell IV (get the picture?) was its proud new owner. I’m not sure about specific details or transactions, but Anita and I have bought the truck from him 3 times over the years. We plan to give it to him in our will! I’m in the process of another rebuild, plans were to be driving it this past summer, but surgery, yard work, volunteer work, and household chores got in the way…there’s always next year!

In the middle of the last rebuild of the ’41 sedan, (1995), fellow Count Gary Kreun turned me onto an original steel 1929 Ford roadster that had been in the same garage since the flood of ’72. We bought it, hauled it home, and began my fantasy build. As fantasies go, this one hasn’t ended yet. It sits in the garage, full of parts, and should be on the street one day, with a 3-deuce equipped 283 that was built by our son when he worked in a machine shop.

In 1992, I became the Western South Dakota NSRA Safety Inspector, a volunteer position I’ve held since. Last year we consolidated East and West, and today, I represent the whole state. I’ve held several club offices, and was on the first Counts Car Show committee when we took over from the World of Wheels. I’m not sure how long I served on the committee, but have “stepped down” 3 times! I did the Counts newsletter for something over 15 years, and served on several other committees in the club. If asked, I’d tell you my proudest moment as a Count was the meeting night Rich Hovdenes talked us into taking the beer fund, our cars, and any spare change we had to Baken Park to show support for lung cancer prevention. KKLS was doing a live remote with a DJ in an iron lung to raise money for the cause. Somehow, the impromptu car show, and solemn procession of Counts emptying their pockets into the glass jar inspired him. We gained so much positive publicity from that single event that people actually started waving at us as we cruised about Rapid City. My most embarrassing moment as a Count would have to be the last Rod Run we gave free beer…at a campground in the hills. Change was in the wind!

Recently, Anita and I purchased a red and white ’52 Buick convertible from a friend of many years, Joel Pine. We’ve done a lot of work on the old rag, and finally have it on the road, reliably. Over the years, we have re-done the ’31 coupe 3 times, driven it over 100 thousand miles, done the ’41 Chevy twice, and driven it offer 80 thousand miles, done the GMC at least twice, have a strong start on the ’29, and now have the Buick to play with along with Anita’s red ’94 Mustang convertible. So, three children, and six collector vehicles…get the picture? I wonder if one of them will have a car story to tell one day?

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