

SWANKS NEWS

Swanks Car Club

Established 1956

Swanks Newsletter

September-October 2024

Swanks Car Show 2024 It got hot!



Swanks blow up truck really blew up!

The blow-up truck did not disappoint spectators as it blew up and caught on fire. The fire was quickly put out without any injuries but made for a good show. Our best count of show cars was 582 vehicles calculated by Johnny "Rocket" Nustad. This is a difficult job that is not exactly precise because the show always has cars coming and going during the evening.

I believe we have full agreement among Swanks members that the show was a huge success, both spectators and car owners seemed pretty pleased with the show. The only complaints that I'm aware of is some grumbling regarding parking availability and with the town full of cars I don't know where we can add more parking spots but I'm sure it will be a topic of discussion at the next Swanks meeting as we begin planning for 2025.

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Issue Dates: Jan. 25th, March 25th, May 25th, July 25th, September 25th, November 25th

Going to a car show? Bring your camera and send in the photos for the next newsletter.

Got a project or a new car? Take a few photos and submit them to the newsletter.

Got something to sell? Put it into the newsletter—
rondahley@gmail.com

Swanks Car Show 2024

Ron Dahley



Swanks Car Show Continued...



Feature Car

The Li'l Coffin '32 Ford Show Car

By Joe McCollough

11/12/2020

Tags: News, Museum of American Speed, Hot Rod History

This is the Li'l Coffin. You've probably seen it before. It's kind of a big deal. And it's a near miracle that it's still here, looking almost exactly as it did when it was immortalized as the Monogram model that many of us built when we were kids. But that hasn't always been the case. It's been a bumpy road involving many total transformations, ownership changes, and actual fires. But we're getting ahead of ourselves.



You may have heard Wichita referred to as the “Kustom City”. Arguably, one man is singlehandedly responsible for that reputation; Darryl Starbird. His Star Kustom shop cranked out the customs, many of which grabbed national headlines and show trophies and gave the West Coast guys a run for their money. But that's another story for another time. What's important to the story of the Li'l Coffin is that sometime around 1955, the inevitable happened. The hot rod kid blasting around Wichita in his channeled Deuce Tudor landed a job working for Starbird after school. Not only did this give him a chance to finely hone his car building chops, it also meant big things were in store for his hot rod.

The first version of the Li'l Coffin was “finished” around 1956, but with the help of Starbird and others at the shop, the car was updated significantly over the next few years. Features in the “little page” magazines started showing up in 1959, but the world got an eyeful of Stuckey's creation on the cover of the (now full-size) Car Craft in November of 1960. In a particularly epic “coupes and sedans” issue, the not yet named Coffin appeared along with Chili Catallo's Little Deuce Coupe in it's pre-Barris, pre-Beach Boys configuration (then called the Silver Sapphire), the Jackman Bros. Sport Coupe, and Andy Kassa's channeled East Coast 3-window. By this time, Stuckey's sedan had the molded fenders and Studebaker rear pan added along with a '40 dash, '54 DeSoto hemi in front of the '39 box, and quad headlights from a '59 Harley. Interestingly, in all but one of the exterior shots of the car, it features a '32 grille. But in the lead photo of the feature article, it sports a handmade Edsel-esque grille, an insert loaded with show-car requisite bullets, and scallops. The article credits Starbird as the photographer, and the Kansas plates are from '59, so it's likely that the shot of the grilled and scalloped version came in just in time for the presses.

With a few magazine articles and the Car Craft cover to his credit, one might think Stuckey would have been content to rest on his laurels. But remember the part about old show cars being updated constantly? Well, we're just getting started with this one. In 1960, Stuckey left Starbird's to start his own shop. Around this same time, he sold the Li'l Coffin to his friend Larry Farber. This is where the Coffin would transition into its most famous iteration.

The more traditional upright grill shell was replaced with the horizontal version, still using the Harley headlights. The body was sectioned 4 inches and the doors were modified to open suicide-style. The engine was given a six-carb intake and moved back in the chassis, causing a major rework of the cowl that would include the turbine-looking scoop and bullet features on the sides. That is a pretty radical list of modifications to an already radical car, but perhaps the most far-out update was the chopped and cantilevered top.

This version of the car got a lot of attention, including several magazine features. In a foreshadowing of things to come, the newly reworked Li'l Coffin appeared on the cover of the November '62 Rod & Custom.

Continued next page.

Lil Coffin Continued...

Around this time, several of the magazines were pushing model car content to hot rod crazy kids who lacked the space, money, or driver's license to build the real thing. Rod & Custom was no exception. The Coffin shared the cover with a bunch of model cars, there were several model car "how to" articles inside, and the Revell "Outlaw" kit was advertised on the back cover.

This is the part of the story where the Li'l Coffin is immortalized in styrene. In 1962, Monogram contracted Darryl Starbird as their "model car consultant." He showed up in their ads and even encouraged "customization" in the instructions that came with your Big T kit. In this role, he encouraged Monogram to buy the Li'l Coffin from Farber in order to create their own kit.

Fast forward to 1967. Monogram toured the car around for several years, sold a bunch of models, and were all done with it. A lot of stories would end there. But not this one. Darryl Starbird bought the car from Monogram, stored it for a few years, then decided it was time to bring it back into the limelight. He restyled it into a sedan delivery and called it the "Monkey Ward Delivery". It hit the show circuit around 1970, and photos show it with a blower, psychedelic paint, and fat tires, but the bones of the Li'l Coffin were still there.

Are we done yet? Not even close. The "Monkey Ward Delivery" did the rounds for several years, then was put back into storage. Then, around 1980, the creative bug bit Starbird again and it was updated to again represent what was happening on the street rod scene at the time. The bodywork was modified yet again and converted into a dual cowl phaeton with a removable, Carson-style top. The chassis was updated with a Jag IFS, Corvette IRS, and Tru-Spokes. Starbird called it the "Fabulous Phaeton" and debuted it at the NSRA Street Rod Nationals in 1981, then hit the show circuit that had become very familiar to the little '32.

Here's where things get even more interesting. While Starbird was pulling the car into the trailer, a leaky fuel line caught it on fire. Starbird himself barely made it out before the whole interior went up in flames. The fire department showed up in time to put the fire out before it moved forward of the cowl, but the damage had been done. It burned all the lead out of the body and cooked the interior and the padded top.

Back into storage it went, and there it sat for another decade or so. But by now you're figuring out that Daryl Starbird is not easily discouraged. The charred remains were once again pulled into the shop around 1990 and the Li'l Coffin was again modified to reflect the contemporary trend. In the early 90's, that meant billet wheels, a V'd windshield (yes, the Li'l Coffin once again had a-pillars for the first time in 30 years), and sleek bodywork with billet grilles front and rear. It hit the shows (again) then sat on display in Starbird's museum in Oklahoma.

We're going to press fast forward once more, this time to 2007. The '32 Ford was turning 75 years old, and some folks in the automotive industry decided to throw it a party. A panel of experts were assembled to select the 75 most influential '32 Ford hot rods of all time. After much consideration and poring over the long and colorful hot rod history of the Deuce, the final selections were made and the Li'l Coffin made the cut. The cars that still existed (several had been lost to time) were assembled at the Grand National Roadster Show. But where was the Li'l Coffin?

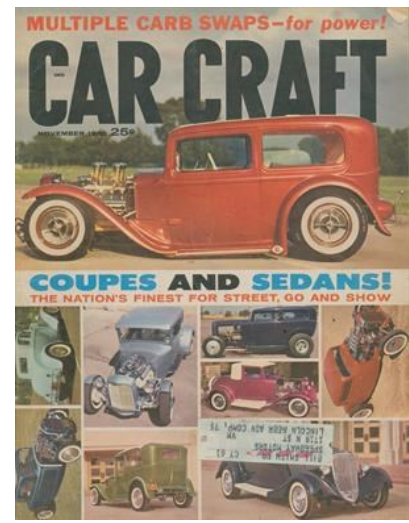
Instead of shining under the lights in California, it was under the knife in Oklahoma. But this time, it wasn't being updated. Instead, it was being backdated to the version that earned it the illustrious title of one of the 75. Seeing the renewed interest in nostalgic hot rods and customs, Starbird tore into the Li'l Coffin for the last time to return it to the early 60's configuration that we all remember from the model kit and magazine covers.

So, the next time you think show cars have it easy, remember the epic saga of the Li'l Coffin. This humble '32 Ford sedan from that Wichita used car lot has had some serious adventures and quite a bit of fame, and we're thrilled that it lived to tell the tale.

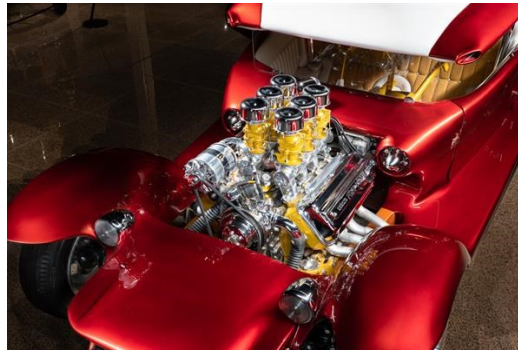
Note: The Lil Coffin has been featured in Swanks News before but we felt that October around the corner this article would be suitable. Besides this is a different author with more information to be shared on this wonderful historical show car.

Continued on the next page.

Lil Coffin Continued...



Car Craft 1960



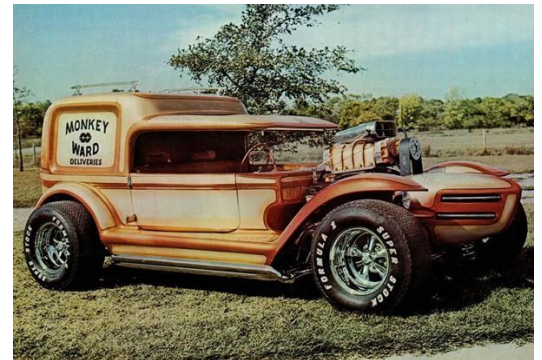
except for the early days it has always been hemi powered



Lil Coffin today



Wonder how many kits they sold



The "Monkey Ward Delivery" Circa 1970



Nov. 1962 Rod & Custom



Lil Coffin's name may have come from the interior when a young lady stated it looked like a coffin. This is 1960's version of interior



90's version



Lil Coffin today



No matter how many times you've seen it, the Lil Coffin's aggressive restyling by Stuckey and Starbird will still draw you in and surprise you. That's what a great show car is supposed to do.



History Lesson

Nostalgic Vintage Cars

Rent-A-Racer Shelby GT350-H



The 1966 Shelby GT350-H, also known as the "Rent-A-Racer," is a legendary muscle car with a unique history. Here are some key highlights:

Special Edition: This model was a collaboration between Shelby American and Hertz Corporation, allowing customers to rent a high-performance car. It was part of Hertz's "Rent-A-Racer" program.

Engine: The GT350-H was equipped with a powerful 289 cubic inch V8 engine, producing around 306 horsepower. This provided thrilling performance and speed.

Design: The car featured classic Shelby styling, with a distinctive black paint job accented by gold racing stripes, and included unique "GT350-H" badging.

Performance: With its high-performance engine, lightweight design, and upgraded suspension, the GT350-H was known for its excellent handling and acceleration, making it a favorite among driving enthusiasts.

Legacy: The 1966 Shelby GT350-H has become a highly sought-after collector's item, symbolizing a unique blend of performance and accessibility. Its association with the Hertz rental program adds to its storied legacy in automotive history.



Fun Fact :

Steve Magnante

Don't go hunting for a Super Bee convertible; none were built. Like its chief rival, the Plymouth Road Runner, the Bee entered life in 1968 as an all-go pillar-coupe with minimal frills, but unlike the Road Runner, which grew a more luxurious hardtop version in mid-1968 and a convertible variant in 1969 and 1970, the Super Bee never went topless (though a hardtop was added for 1969).

Swanks Car Show 2024 Registration

Joan Thiel

440 registration packets were handed out and we received 346 completed forms. So where did our participants come from? Joan Thiel tells us. Thanks Joan!

Casselton ND 38	Durbin ND 3	Hope ND 1	Oriska ND 2	Battle Lake MN 1	Sisseton SD 3
Fargo ND 69	Enderlin ND 4	Horace ND 8	Page ND 2	Campbell MN 1	San Clemente CA 1
West Fargo ND 40	Fingal ND 1	Hunter ND 4	Reile's Acres ND 1	Dilworth MN 1	Thornton CO 1
Moorhead MN 18	Finley ND 5	Jamestown ND 10	Sanborn ND 2	Doran MN 1	Harrodsburg KY 1
Alice ND 1	Fort Ransom ND 1	Kensal ND 1	Sheldon ND 4	Fergus Falls MN 1	No Address 1
Amenia ND 1	Frontier ND 1	Kindred ND 9	Spiritwood ND 2	Gary MN 1	
Argusville ND 2	Galesburg ND 4	Langdon ND 9	Thompson ND 1	Georgetown MN 1	
Arthur ND 3	Grand Forks ND 4	Leonard ND 6	Tower City ND 1	Glyndon MN 6	
Buffalo ND 1	Gwinner ND 3	Lidgerwood ND 4	Valley City ND 2	Halstad MN 1	
Chaffee ND 2	Hankinson ND 1	Lisbon ND 6	Wahpeton ND 2	Hawley MN 2	
Clifford ND 1	Harwood ND 3	Mapleton ND 9	Walcott ND 4	Lake Park MN 3	
Cooperstown NS 2	Hickson ND 1	Marion ND 1	Wheatland ND 4	Pelican Rapids MN 1	
Dawnport NS 3	Hillsboro ND 3	Mayville ND 7	Wimbledon ND 1	Sabin MN 4	
	Hope ND 1	Oakes ND 2	Audubon MN 1	Ulen MN 2	

That's Funny

Her : I bet he's thinking about another woman ...



HIM: It has spark.
It has fuel.
Why won't it start???

Swanks Cookin'

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Ted Talk with Ted Bryans

I'm looking forward to Hot Rod Magazines 20th annual Drag Week. The dates for Drag Week are Sept 15th through Sept. 20th so when you read this it will be history, hopefully you will catch it on TV or on You Tube. This unusual activity was the brain child of David Freiburger with the first drag race taking place in 2005.

If you are unfamiliar with this type of drag race the participants must drive their cars to the race tracks they are allowed one passenger, they race at various tracks to determine the fastest street car in the U.S.

So, you have 5 days of racing with street/strip cars driving from racetrack to race track without assistance vehicles. The drivers drive approximately 1000 miles in the 5-day event. Racers must make repairs on the road as needed, making for a very challenging experience. It is not unusual to see competitors working together and helping one another out to get through this grueling event.

This years schedule: Sunday Sept.15 Registration and testing National Trail Raceway Hebron, OH

Monday Sept. 16 Race day and drive National Trail Raceway Hebron, OH 247 miles

Tuesday Sept. 17 Race day and drive Indianapolis Raceway Indianapolis, IN 248 miles

Wednesday Sept. 18 Race and drive US 131 Motorsports Park Martin, MI 144 miles

Thursday Sept. 19 Race and Drive Milan Dragway Milan, MI 199 miles

Friday Sept. 20 Race and Awards National Trail Raceway Hebron, OH



HAPPY BIRTHDAY Gerald Quam

Monday Sept. 23 Swanks Member Jerry Quam sent me this beautiful picture of him and his 39 Ford heading out to lunch with a nephew to celebrate his 84th birthday. He said life isn't too bad when you can go cruising in a beautiful old rag top on a sunny Arizona day.

Readers may remember from earlier newsletters that Jerry was an active Swanks member in the early sixties before moving to California where he ran a successful auto business in Los Angeles and eventually moved to Arizona. Jerry is an amazing historian on anything automotive especially from the early days of hot rodding.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JERRY!



Back to the 50's 2024

Kevin Dahley & Ron Dahley

The 50th annual Back to the 50's weekend presented by the Minnesota Street Rod Association was held this past June. The weather seemed to be threatening all weekend but for a two hour shower on Saturday it cooperated, cool and cloudy but for the most part dry made for a comfortable experience. The Swanks took up residence on Spoerl Hill with a lot of stories and laughter throughout the weekend. With over 10,000 cars registered and the King of NASCAR, Richard Petty making an appearance, live music, a pinup contest, and vendors sharing their wares made a great weekend.



Back to the 50's Continued...



On August 8, 1992; 21 year-old Tony Stewart flipped over the wall at Salem in a USAC race. **"When I started hitting the trees, I knew I was in trouble."**

What's the Diff? The 1958-59-60 Edsel

Mac's Motor City Garage

The Edsel might not be the biggest blunder in Motor City history, but it is the most celebrated. Formed as a new division of Ford Motor Company, the Edsel brand began on a grand scale with a separate dealer network and four model lines for 1958: Ranger, Pacer, Corsair, and Citation.

With no true market segment of its own, one way Edsel sought to distinguish itself was with bold, distinctive styling: a vertical horse-collar grille at the front and boomerang taillamps at the rear. In the mid-1950s, all the automakers toyed with vertical grilles in their styling studios, most notably Packard. However, only Edsel was brave enough to bring the look to market.

Edsel also tried to set itself apart with unique operating features, including an automatic chassis lubrication system and a push-button automatic transmission with the controls in the steering wheel hub. Unlike Chrysler's push-button automatic, the Edsel's shifter was electrically operated.

When the 1959 models were introduced, the writing was already on the wall for Edsel. First year sales were barely 68,000 units, a fraction of the the division's projection of 200,000. The four model lines were slashed to two, Ranger and Corsair, both based on Ford chassis, and the unique, expensive, and troublesome mechanical features such as Teletouch were discontinued. The Edsel was now essentially a reskinned Ford, and company VP Robert McNamara was working to pull the plug altogether.

The horse-collar vertical grille motif was retained for 1959, but the aggressive headlamp pods were scrapped and the lamps relocated down in the horizontal grille elements. At the rear, the taillamp housings now carried three round lamps each instead of the wild boomerang lenses. So while the 1958 and 1959 Edsels are similar in overall theme, each is a one-year design and they are easy to distinguish from one another. Parked side-by-side, they're different cars.

For 1960 the Edsel was nothing more than a Ford with a different grille and taillamp treatment. The grille is split into two elements, creating a decidedly Pontiac-like effect. There was now but one model, the Ranger, with the station wagon version wearing Villager emblems.

At the rear, the '60 Edsel got a slightly different bumper than the Ford, and vertical mini-fins with paired taillamp and backup lamp housings. The 1960 is the rarest of the three Edsel years with only 2,846 units built.



1958 Edsel



1959 Edsel



1960 Edsel

Rock trivia How many Top 10 U.S. hits have the Rolling Stones had?

(A) 13 (B) 18 (C) 19 (D) 23



The Eagles

“Lyn’ “Eyes”

“Lyn’ Eyes” is a classic rock song by the American rock band Eagles. Released in 1975 as part of their album “One of These Nights,” the song quickly became one of the band’s most popular and enduring hits. Let’s explore the details of this iconic track:
Background:

Artist: “Lyn’ Eyes” was performed by Eagles, a rock band known for their harmonious vocals and country rock sound. The band members included Glenn Frey, Don Henley, Bernie Leadon, and Randy Meisner.

Release Date: The song was released in 1975 as part of Eagles’ fourth studio album, “One of These Nights.”

Writers: “Lyn’ Eyes” was written by Don Henley and Glenn Frey, two of the founding members of Eagles. Henley came up with the concept, and Frey contributed to the composition.

Musical Style:

Genre: The song falls within the country rock genre, characterized by its blend of rock and country elements, melodic guitar lines, and smooth vocal harmonies.

Instrumentation: The recording features acoustic and electric guitars, bass, drums, piano, and pedal steel guitar, creating a rich and textured musical arrangement.

Vocals: Lead vocals are primarily handled by Glenn Frey, with harmonies provided by Don Henley and other band members, showcasing Eagles’ trademark vocal harmonies. Lyrics:

Theme: The lyrics of “Lyn’ Eyes” tell the story of a woman trapped in a loveless marriage who seeks solace and excitement in a secret affair. The song explores themes of infidelity, deception, and longing for freedom.

Narrative: The narrative follows the protagonist as she navigates the complexities of her relationships, torn between the security of her marriage and the allure of a forbidden romance.

Memorable Lines: Iconic lines like “You can’t hide your lyn’ eyes / And your smile is a thin disguise” resonate with listeners, capturing the essence of the protagonist’s internal conflict and the consequences of her actions.

Cultural Impact:

Chart Success: “Lyn’ Eyes” was a commercial success, reaching the top of the Billboard Hot 100 chart and becoming one of Eagles’ most successful singles.

Critical Acclaim: The song received widespread critical acclaim for its songwriting, musical arrangement, and emotional depth, cementing its status as one of Eagles’ signature songs.

Legacy: “Lyn’ Eyes” has endured as a classic rock staple, frequently appearing on radio playlists, movie soundtracks, and compilation albums. It remains a fan favorite and a testament to Eagles’ songwriting prowess and enduring appeal.

Conclusion:

“Lyn’ Eyes” by Eagles is a timeless classic that showcases the band’s exceptional songwriting talent, musical craftsmanship, and distinctive sound. With its captivating melody, poignant lyrics, and impeccable musicianship, the song continues to resonate with audiences decades after its release. As one of Eagles’ most beloved hits, “Lyn’ Eyes” remains an essential part of the rock music canon and a testament to the enduring legacy of the band.

Drive Careful Swanks



Up Coming Events

Please check to ensure the events dates and times have not changed.

- Sept. 18 Classic Cruise Night Abercrombie ND 6 to 10pm
- Sept 19 West Fargo Cruise Night West Fargo ND 4:30 to 9pm
- Sept 20 Rock "N" Roll Stroll Car Show Henning MN 4 to 8pm
- Sept 25 Lunch Cruise Abercrombie ND 10 to 1pm
- Sept 25 Classic Cruise Night Abercrombie ND 6 to 10pm
- Sept 28 Rods, Ribs and Rock "N" Roll Car Show Rort Ransom ND 1 to 5 pm
- Oct 2 Classic Cruise Night Abercrombie ND 6 to 10pm
- Oct 6 Uffda Day Car Show Rutland NS 10 to 3pm
- Oct 9 Lunch Cruise Abercrombie ND 10 to 1pm
- Oct 9 Classic Cruise Night Abercrombie ND 6 to 10pm
- Oct 12 Frankensteiners Ball #19 Isanti Fairgrounds Cambridge MN 9 to 3pm
- Oct 16 Classic Cruise Night Abercrombie ND 6 to 10pm
- Oct 23 Lunch Cruise Abercrombie ND 10 to 1pm
- Oct 23 Classic Cruise Night Abercrombie ND 6 to 10pm
- Oct 30 Classic Cruise Night Abercrombie ND 6 to 10pm

Ron's Helpful Hot Rod Tips



Will it Work?

