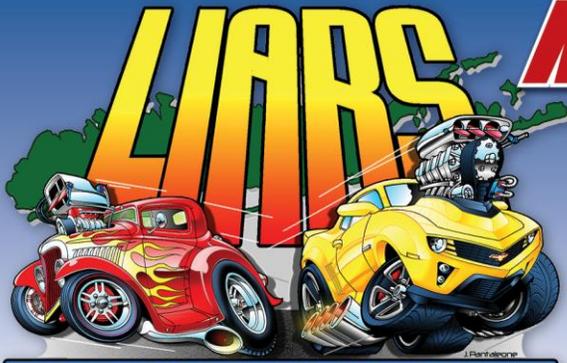


LEND A HAND AND BRING A CAN!



MODEL CAR BRIEFS

Meeting themes:

"Mid-engined cars"

Discuss further planning for our club, show flyer, addressing "road bumps"...

Newsletter Stuff:

Richard Manri
(631)-589-6876
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Club Stuff:

Dominick Gerace
(631)-834-4223
Superbird440@juno.com

The LONG ISLAND AUTO REPLICA SOCIETY (L.I.A.R.S.) Model Car Briefs is dedicated to bringing you the best and most up to date information about our great hobby of model building.

Were in our 33rd year as a Club; let's hope we all stay healthy during this post COVID-19 crisis and that we can all attain some measure of prosperity. Then perhaps we can build a new Club display in memory of Rich Argus...

LIARS Web Page <http://www.liarsmodelcarbuilders.com/>

LIARS Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/people/LIARS-Long-Island-Auto-Replica-Society-Model-Car-Club/100057442748403/>

MCB Contributors: Richard Manri, Dominick "Mickey" Gerace, John Heyer, Mitch Horner (for Model Railroader), Vlad Radu (for AutoEvolution), Howard Koby (for Hagerty), Aaron Robinson (for Hagerty)

From our LIARS Unofficial Official

Hello Model Car fans! Another NNL East is in the books! I met up with Mike Brennan and Ted Pappacena at 6:30 AM and made the trek into Wayne New Jersey. It was a good ride, albeit a little rainy. The show was fantastic as usual. Spent a little too much money! Saw a lot of awesome models! Got my creative juices flowing again. And this past week, I actually picked up some projects and started working on them again.

I did a little promotion of our upcoming show with some of the guys from other clubs. I also asked a few guys where they get information on our show from. Overwhelmingly it was our club website. So we'll put information about the show up on there ASAP.

The Dodge Demons for the club build were handed out last month. It's not too late if you want to join in, I have

some left that I will bring to the next meeting. I think I have three or four left. Please keep in mind that if you do pick up a model for the club build, the finish date is the club Christmas party. I'm still ironing out a couple membership issues with IPMS, but I'm sure that will be resolved soon.

The theme and sub theme for the show was voted on last month. The main theme will be Ford Thunderbirds, and the sub theme will be any car from any model year ending in 5. For example, 1945, 1955, 1965, up until 2025! You get the idea. Doc V/Bill mentioned our 2025 show flyer being late, which we did discuss last month but were waiting on a few things to get it in movement. It will be brought up again this Thurs. We should also go over who is managing vendors setup, since Ernie is no longer able to manage that aspect of the show.

If anybody would like to volunteer or have a suggestion on something they would like to see, we will entertain it at the meeting.

That's it for now, please try to bring a canned good to donate for the center. We've all been guilty for being sporadic about this, but think about those who are much less fortunate than us.

Otherwise, I can't thank everybody enough for their input and all the support! Hope to see you all this Thursday!

Your unofficial official,

Dominick "McMonte" Gerace,



Remember those folks who made a difference in your life in 2024 (good or bad) and use the lessons learned to be a better you. Life is made up of people, events and decisions. 2025 is a time to start fresh. So surround yourself with good people, be active, happy and make remainder of 2025 great. Richie.

Some Words from the Editor At Large

Well, two things happened for me this month. First off, I got my own new ride a 2025 Chevy Trax LT. Not anything fancy, but a commuter car to gets me from point A to B, and to next Years NNL East. Frees up car sharing schedule as I 'll have a bit more time and not have to pick up family members as much since mom now drives the Blue Trailblazer.

Second, beautiful weather despite heavy pollen allergies and some rainy dayz. Got at least one more build completed since NNL East the 26th. Speaking of that, walked out with several bargains and goodies on top of lugging around two bigg clear crates with my 15 show entries in them! One of these entries, and some of you may know which one, will be featured in the next issue of Auto Modeler which goes over NNL East coverage.

While it was rainy and not too chilly that day, the rooms were stifling hot except one in the vendor area that miraculously had AC on, but was still scorching from the other room temps! I don't recall this last time and I had to

step outside a few times to get fresh air.

Unfortunately, the day of the show my Galaxy phone got stuck on a massive OS update that couldn't finish downloading due to spotty Wi-Fi. Therefore I was unable to take pics and hoped someone would have responded to my calls for their show photos to include in the MCB. Guess most have already seen them on FB groups and BoobTube compilations...

That is all for now, see you all on Thursday!

From John Heyer

I will come to the meeting with lots of kits for sale. Tons of leftovers from NNL East! Not only will I bring some into the center, I will have my van filled with dozens more for sale at 6:15 in the parking lot for the early owls buyers!

See you then!

John,

Hobby industry launches national campaign for targeted tariff relief

By [Mitch Horner](#) | May 5, 2025
| Last updated on May 6, 2025



A hobby industry campaign calls for targeted tariff relief to “protect American small businesses, STEM education, and community-based creative industries.”

[The Hobby Industry Coalition](#) represents a wide spectrum of the American hobby and toy industry, including model railroading, among others. Per the Hobby Industry Coalition, [the industry supports over 600,000 U.S. jobs](#) and includes thousands of small and family-run businesses.

“Trade Policy at a Crossroads: Safeguarding the Toy & Hobby Industry,” a position paper released by the coalition, outlines how current U.S trade policy, and specifically the 145% tariff on Chinese imports, poses a danger to the American toy and hobby industry.

Per the paper, “the toy and hobby industry (...) is facing collapse,” with tariffs “escalating into an existential threat.”

In a press release shared with *Model Railroader*, the Coalition, which describes itself as nonpartisan, states that they are calling for refinement rather than repeal of the tariffs imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. The refinements the coalition has called for includes “reinstating past exclusion processes” and “creating a transparent review mechanism.”

“We’re offering a policy solution that respects enforcement goals while correcting unintended harm” said Stacey Walthers Naffah, CEO and President of Wm. K. Walthers, Inc. “This is practical, precedent-based, and pro-small business.”

More tariff coverage:

Bringing vintage cars to life in 1/5 scale requires full-size talent

Howard Koby

20 July 2021



Courtesy Jorge Sordelli

In the early 1950s, Jorge Sordelli was an eight-year-old boy in Argentina. After seeing a movie in which a patrol officer pursued a car in the middle of the desert, he became fascinated with the world of cars. “I could see that its wheels were shaking violently. I became intrigued as to what was underneath the body of the vehicle to allow its wheels to shake at such high speeds without ripping off the axle,” Sordelli says.

He started searching for toy cars with proper suspensions but quickly learned that they did not exist. Even at that age, Sordelli was undeterred, and he began modifying model cars with small metal notebook spirals that functioned like coil springs. That diligence, creativity, and inventiveness would lead him down a road that’s included a career in automotive design, as well as a passion project producing exquisite 1/5-scale cars.

At 10 years old, Sordelli was waiting eagerly every month for *Popular Mechanics* and *Automundo Corsa* (published in Argentina). He began contacting Ford, GM, Volvo, Saab, and Mercedes, requesting car brochures to use as reference for a project he had in mind. From the pamphlets, he selected vehicles that appealed to his sense of design and commenced drawing and painting them to fulfill his artistic hunger. At 11 years old, he attempted woodcarving and completed a scale model of a 1959 Valliant.

“This,” Sordelli says, “began my process of evolution and refinement, the incorporation of new materials, how to obtain all necessary information from a single photo, learning to create and complete surfaces and volumes, and to develop drawings and sketches in order to achieve the 3D reproduction of each design.”



Courtesy Jorge

Sordelli

Two years later, Sordelli began attending ING Huergo, a technical school in Argentina, to further his technical knowledge. As a student he developed his own design style, building his first scale model, a 1961 Ferrari 250 GT SWB that he sold to one of his classmates. In Argentina, Ford offered young students the opportunity to visit its industrial center, and Sordelli jumped at the chance. He was drawn to the product engineering and development division and spent many days devouring product design information.

Model Kids: Decades Ago, GM Put a Call Out For Young Car Designers. Thousands Answered

[Aaron Robinson](#)

10 April 2024



Cameron Neveu

This article first appeared in Hagerty Drivers Club magazine. [Click here to subscribe and join the club.](#)

Once upon a time, industrialists and educators came together to form a national organization for the advancement of artisanal craft skills among young boys. It was heavily promoted in high schools, youth groups, auto shows, and car dealerships across the country. It annually paid out thousands—and then millions—of dollars in college scholarships, and it grew to become second only to the Boy Scouts of America in membership. Its board of directors included the most powerful and influential industry leaders of the day, and invitees to its annual awards banquet in Detroit were flown in first class and chauffeured around in limousines.

And all a kid had to do to take a shot at securing his educational future was to build a miniature model. Not a plastic job out of a box, as most of us have attempted at one time or another, but an exacting replica of an ancient carriage or a wholly unique creation of their own design, conceived, sketched, measured, clay-modeled, and then constructed entirely from scratch. No help from Dad allowed.

From 1930 until 1968, the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild, so named for the coachwork firm that became a General Motors division in 1926, ran an annual nationwide talent search disguised as a model-building competition. The goal was to identify from among America's teeming ranks of teenage youth the truly exceptional, the kids who had the artistic eye, the crafting skills, and the stick-to-itiveness to complete a phenomenally rigorous craft project.



Three

Lions/Getty Images

Regional competitions fed winners to a national finale in Detroit, where a four-day pageant culminated in the awarding of scholarships that topped out at \$5000 for

the overall winners, a mighty sum in the era. The event also exposed the top echelon of young model builders to the wonders of the American auto industry at a time when it was at its imperial zenith. Naturally—and in accordance with the plan—many of those kids returned as college graduates to work in that industry.

It's hard to imagine in the modern age when most people spend their day tapping keyboards or swiping screens that at one time, there were enough boys aged 11 to 19 in America willing to create thousands of model cars every year entirely from scratch. "When I look at my model today, I think, 'How the hell did I do this?!'" said 1961 junior national winner Tony Simone, now of Bartlett, New Hampshire. "I have to give the Guild credit for giving us skills to use in life. Even today, that attention to detail is still with me."

"The people who won had mastered discipline before the age of 20," said Robert Davids, who was a 19-year-old Venice, California, pinstriper and surfboard shaper when he won the 1963 senior national award and a \$5000 scholarship by carving a dramatic three-seat bubble-top coupe out of yellow poplar wood. For a year, Davids said, there was no girls, no dates, not even haircuts, only work during the day and then the model at night, typically until 3 a.m. "Every single disciplined person who entered was going to do OK in life, but the winners excelled at an early age."



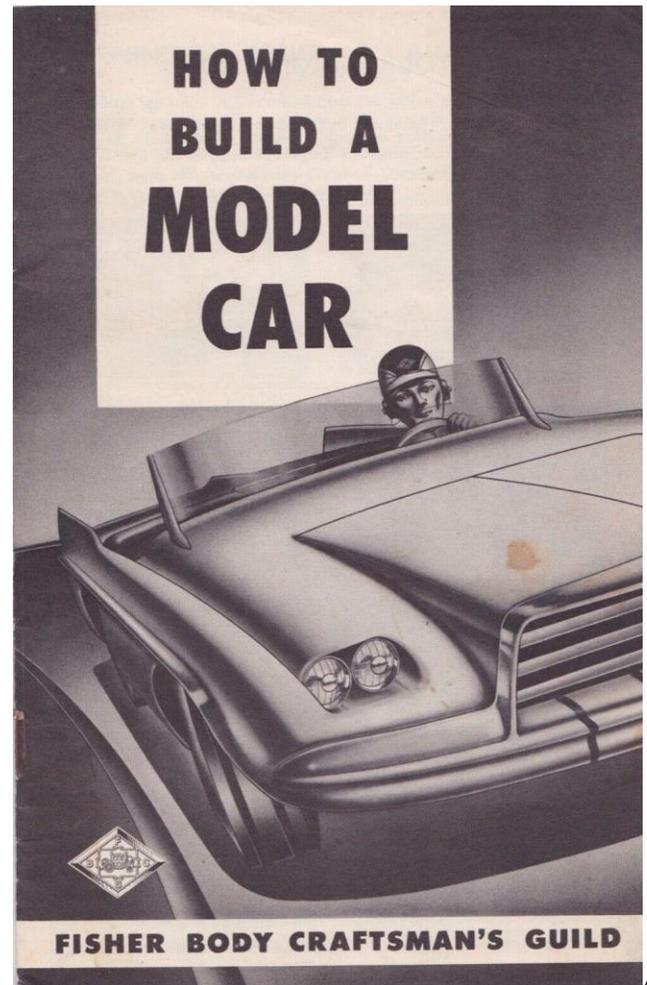
Cameron Neveu

Then, as now, there was free money around if you could throw a ball or converse in mathematical theorems. Sports and academic scholarships have long been familiar avenues for teenagers from disadvantaged backgrounds to access the realm of higher education. The Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild stood apart by being a scholarship program based mainly on manual skills of the type one learned in the

shop classes that were once commonplace in high schools.

“Here was a take-home, industrial arts aptitude test that identified teenagers with innate artistic ability, creativity, imagination, spatial relationship acuity, manual dexterity, aesthetic eye, good taste, a propensity for perfection, and high intellect,” wrote John Jacobus, a Guild member in the 1960s whose later historical research for the Smithsonian Institution resulted in a book on the subject, *The Fisher Body Craftsman’s Guild: An Illustrated History* (upon which our story is heavily dependent). The skills that the model competition prioritized, he added, “were all qualities sought after by the auto industry.”

The inspiration of William A. Fisher, one of the seven Fisher brothers who had transitioned the family carriage business into a hugely successful vehicle-body supplier, the Fisher Body Craftsman’s Guild launched on August 25, 1930, with radio and print ads and large posters plastered to the windows of Chevrolet, Buick, Viking, Oldsmobile, Cadillac-LaSalle, and Oakland-Pontiac dealerships. The posters as well as promotional booklets lured boys with the promise of a share in the unimaginable sum of \$75,000 (about \$1.3 million today). Nearly 150,000 signed up the first year, just over 400,000 the second, records Jacobus.



1957 booklet produced by GM (above) gave aspiring entrants tips on how to design and construct a 1/12th concept car entirely from scratch (wheels were provided to those who wrote in for them). “Don’t let the word ‘design’ scare you,” read its introduction. “Anyone can learn to draw, if he is willing to practice.” *Fisher Body*



About 33,000 models were produced over the nearly 40-year span of the competition. *Three Lions/Getty Images*

The need was great. The Great Depression was already beginning to grip the country following the October 1929 stock market crash. The ranks of the unemployed were swelling, and fewer and fewer families had the means to offer anything more to their children beyond a life of hardscrabble toil from the earliest age. Amid the bread lines and the whispers of worker revolt and

communist revolution, big ideas floated around about the very nature of work and the role of individuals in societies that were rapidly urbanizing and industrializing. “It is the sincere desire of the builders of Bodies by Fisher,” extolled a 1930 ad for the Guild in *The Saturday Evening Post*, “that tomorrow shall see this country peopled by men to whom honor can be given for their ability to design well and build soundly whatever their generation may require.”

The competition’s challenge was as daunting as the prizes were lavish. Early competitions required entrants to produce a detailed wood-and-metal replica of the ornate Napoleonic carriage that appeared in the “Body by Fisher” logo (ubiquitous on GM cars produced from the 1920s through the 1980s). Builders had to construct an 18-inch-long, 10-inch-high scale model complete with metal filigree, opening doors, and upholstery-lined interior using only blueprints and a 25-page instruction booklet that the Guild provided. It’s believed that two master models were produced over six months by craftsmen at Fisher’s Pennsylvania-based Fleetwood Metal Body division and that their time estimate to make a copy from the plans was 1600 hours.

Which helps explain why out of the millions of boys who signed up to the Guild in those early years, receiving their free pamphlet, membership card, and diamond-shaped Fisher Body Craftsman’s Guild pin, only a few thousand coach models were ever actually produced. Enterprising model companies developed kits to speed the builds, but even those were crude by today’s standards—just a few blocks of unshaped wood and some metal—and they still required enormous skill and patience to turn into viable entries. By the time the coach idea was dispensed with entirely in 1948 (the Guild paused its activities during World War II), it’s thought that only around 7000 carriage models had been built.



Examples of Guild models from the Gilmore Car Museum in

Michigan show the high standard of finish and exquisite detail that their teenage creators achieved. *Cameron Neveu*

As it happened, the contest that replaced it wasn’t much easier. It asked entrants to build a 1/12th-scale concept-car model entirely of their own design.

Believed to have been heavily pushed by GM’s first and renowned styling chief, Harley J. Earl, the concept category debuted in 1937 and the Guild fully pivoted to it in 1948. According to the late Charles E. “Chuck” Jordan, who won the 1947 competition and went on to become vice president of design at General Motors, the coach project was handicapped by the fact that “no individualized characteristics or personal creativity were sought—the coach was in the strictest sense a craft project, with no variation sought or accepted, saving excellence in detail or finish.”

That was fine in 1930 when, as the author Jacobus notes, car bodies still employed lots of timber as well as hand-finishing. Originally, the Guild was created to ferret out promising pattern- and toolmakers. But as the industry evolved, stamped-steel mass production took over and styling rose in importance. The talent need shifted away from an increasingly low-skill and automated production floor and toward the newly created styling studios, where designers and clay modelers were tasked with envisioning tomorrow’s vehicles. It’s no mere coincidence that the Fisher Body Craftsman’s Guild turned its attention to futuristic concepts almost at the same time Earl unveiled the industry’s first concept car, the 1938 Buick Y-Job.



The culmination of the contest was a four-day pageant in Detroit to which the finalists were invited at GM’s expense. *Three Lions/Getty Images*



A panel of industry judges awarded the scholarship prizes, then GM photographers meticulously photographed each model so that designers could study them later for inspiration. *Three Lions/Getty Images*

In an age before the time sucks of television and computers, when more families made their living doing manual labor in factories or on farms and college seemed like a faraway dream, plenty of kids were willing to gamble their free time and their sweat on a long shot like the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild. And it was indeed a long shot. Though the posters advertised the riches available to winners, fewer than 400 scholarships were awarded over the 34 years the Guild was active (though smaller prizes were distributed at the regional level). During that time, 10 million American boys signed up—girls were allowed only in similar programs run by GM's European and Australian subsidiaries—from which about 33,000 models were produced.



Cameron Neveu



Cameron Neveu



Cameron



Neveu

Cameron Neveu

Despite the odds, it was worth it to kids who saw little opportunity elsewhere. “My father was a machinist and a toolmaker during World War II,” said Tony Simone, the '61 winner. “One night, he came home and told my brothers and me to come to the dinner table, and he said, ‘I can put a roof over your head and food on the table, but I can’t afford to send you to college.’ [The Guild] was a lifeline, and I’m just one story out of thousands and thousands.”

Dauids, the '63 winner, was born the son of a soybean sharecropper in Franklin, Missouri. “My mother told me, ‘You don’t have a chance. People like us don’t win things like that.’”

Keenly aware of the challenges facing its members, the Guild produced a booklet called “How to Build a Model Car” with illustrated step-by-step instructions, starting with the basics of vehicle design. Cartoons showed readers how a low, curved roof and a long wheel-base was more aesthetically pleasing than a short wheelbase under a tall, boxy roof. It encouraged doodling of headlights and taillights, of fins and windshields and different types of exterior decoration such as hood ornaments and faux jet exhausts. It gave instructions on how to make a clay model, a wood model, or a plaster model from your drawings, how to get the wheel-to-fender clearances right, how to curve a piece of translucent plastic to make a windshield, and the best ways to apply paint. It included plan drawings of coupe and sedan/wagon cockpits, giving builders an accurate size template to sketch around.

In addition, a bimonthly newsletter, called the *Guildsman*, was full of tips as well as profiles of working designers and interviews with past winners. Typical headlines: “Four Hundred Pleasant Hours of Work: How Ken Kaiser built a \$2000 Winner.” And, “Use Proper Plaster—Avoid Breakage; Hydrocal and Dental Plaster Good.”



Cameron

Neveu

“Headlights can be made from the ends of small, inexpensive screwdrivers,” read one how-to column from 1959. “The end of the handle is sawed off, filed, and mounted. The parabolic shape of the end looks much like an actual headlight.” To make things easier, aspiring builders could send to the Guild for a free set of prefinished wheels (sans hubcaps, of course, as those were up to the builder). The newsletter reminded builders not to forget rule No. 7 of the 13 compulsory rules, which required the models to have provisions for license plates front and rear.

David Courtney, now of Lomita, California, remembers as an aspiring car designer in small-town Illinois reading in the *Guildsman* a tip that taillights could be cut from the ends of toothbrushes there were made out of transparent red plastic. “I had those red

toothbrushes for years,” he said. But like a lot of aspiring entrants, Courtney never completed the two models he began, one of which, an attractive Camaro-like roadster crafted from wood, he still has. “I had a handsaw, a file, a drill, and a 4-inch vise. That was it. As a result, my designs were pretty limited, and how to go about making it, I had no idea.”



Cameron

Neveu

Dauids, the '63 winner, attributes at least part of his success to knowing some past winners personally, and to obtaining a mailing list of others so that he could write them. Thus, he learned before starting the high standards that were expected. “One of the things you heard was detail, detail, detail. And you had to be authentic; you can’t polish aluminum until it looks like chrome. It has to be chrome.”

Most kids didn’t have ready access to chrome shops or much else that was needed to build a winning model from scratch, so the Guild encouraged its teenage members to be resourceful. Dauids knew he wanted to put a fully enclosed bubble-top roof formed from 1/16th-inch-thick plastic over a fully finished interior, a feat that had never successfully been attempted in the competition. Not only that, but in his design, the car’s rear had a dramatic duct-like channel molded into the roof that carried through the rear glass into the trunk, an absolute showstopper—if he could pull it off.

To make a roof from his hand-carved molds, Dauids needed a vacuum former, but having no money, he hit the scrapyards and salvaged an electric motor from an old refrigerator and a surplus vacuum pump from a B-52 bomber, kluging a working machine together. “I made 20 to 24 attempts to make the roof, from which I got two, one that was perfect and one that was almost perfect. I put the perfect one on the shelf and used the almost perfect one to build the model around. When I was ready, I finished the model with the perfect one.”

Ron Pellman, who entered four competitions from 1956 to 1960, the final year taking second place and a \$4000 scholarship, remembers scouring his native Buffalo, New York, for materials. A local lumberyard

was willing to plane him some 7/16th-inch-thick poplar boards into which he cut, piece by piece, the rough outline of his car in sections. He then glued the sections into a multilayered sandwich, dripping india ink into the glue so that the seams would help act as guides as he began chiseling, planing, and sanding the model to its final form.

Cameron Neveu

Finding a chrome shop willing to finish Pellman's tiny bumpers to competition standard proved fruitless.

Finally, a tradesman in a shop down by the Niagara River that did hard-chroming of engine parts for Great Lakes freighters was willing to give it a try—and spent a solid week chroming, filing, filling, and re-chroming the parts until they gleamed with smooth perfection.

Recalled Pellman with a chuckle, “I asked him what I owed him, and he put his hand on my shoulder and said, ‘Son, you could never afford it.’”

The Guild had a few family dynasties, including Simone's who, with his two brothers, entered a total of 15 models, winning a combined \$10,000 in scholarship money. He credits part of his win to getting insider intelligence from his older brother, who was treated to a tour of GM's design studio while attending the 1959 awards. “He came home from Detroit and said, ‘Forget the tailfins—they're gone.’”



Cameron Neveu

In order to ensure a geographic and age distribution of winners, the Guild divided the nation into regions and its entries into junior (11–14) and senior (15–19) divisions. In order to be eligible for the national scholarship competition, you had to do well in the region, then box up and mail your model to Detroit—instructions were included in the newsletters on the best way to safely crate it for shipping—to be judged for the national competition on a points system that split the criteria between the quality of the design and the workmanship of the execution.

Special telegrams notified the 40 finalists for the scholarships—20 each in the junior and senior divisions—who were invited on an all-expenses-paid trip to the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild National

Convention and Banquet. Parents were not allowed; the Guild members traveled from the far-flung corners of America on their own, with GM personnel detailed as escorts to help the kids transit at layover airports and train stations.

Simone vividly remembers his trip in 1961 from his home in Rhode Island. “I have to admit, I was in shock. I didn't know nothin', I was 15 and had never been out of Providence before.” He flew in a small plane to the old Idlewild Airport in New York, where a GM representative met the wide-eyed teen and walked him to his next flight. “The Boeing 707 had just come out, and they put me on a brand-new 707 jetliner—and here's the kicker: We went first class.”



Cameron

Neveu



Cameron Neveu

Following a dinner of filet mignon, they flew to Detroit, where Simone was directed to a Cadillac Fleetwood limousine that whisked him and some other arriving Guild members to the downtown Book-Cadillac Hotel. There, the group was intercepted by a team of tailors that measured the kids with military efficiency. “Overnight,” remembered Simone, “they made me a whole suit with the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild logo on the jacket.”

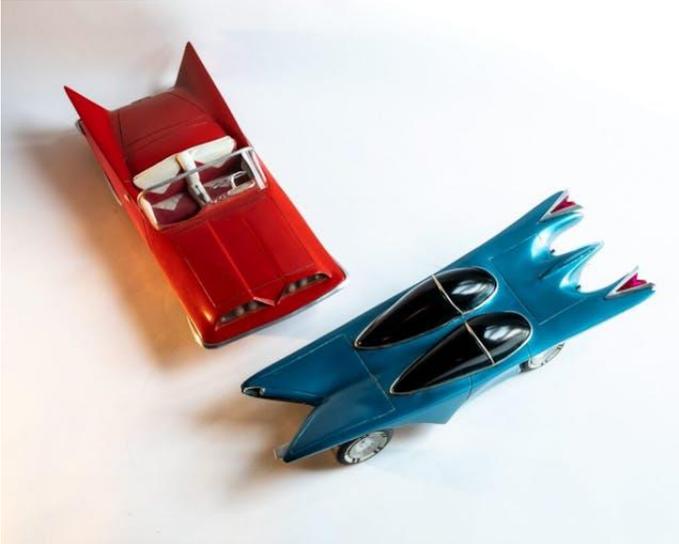
The next day, after a sightseeing trip around Detroit, the finalists were ushered to the banquet hall where Fisher Body gathered around 800 managers from GM's vast design, engineering, and manufacturing

organizations as well as top scientists, newspaper writers, politicians, and celebrities. Guild members in their matching new jackets sat in rows on a long, terraced dais while the event was presided over by emcees who were luminaries of the day, including *Father Knows Best* actor Robert Young, broadcaster Lowell Thomas, and TV newsman Walter Cronkite.

Seated in the crowd were typically some of the towering figures in GM history, including Alfred P. Sloan and Charles F. "Boss" Kettering. Judges included Harley Earl, his successor Bill Mitchell, Chrysler design director and tailfin czar Virgil M. Exner (a Guild winner himself), and rising young design star Chuck Jordan. The evening culminated in the scholarship awards for the top three models in the junior and senior divisions plus five honorable mentions each, usually announced by the president of GM or his second-in-command to uproarious cheers from the audience.



Cameron Neveu



Cameron Neveu

For the next few days (as GM photographers quietly snapped detail photos of every model to be studied

later for possible inspiration), the young Guild members were squired around the region, visiting GM's gleaming Technical Center, touring its design studios, and seeing and touching the dream concepts they had only read about in magazines. Dinners were lavish affairs at local country clubs. Pellman remembers going to a furniture factory and taking a Detroit River cruise to the Boblo Island Amusement Park. There were informational presentations by officials from the FBI, visits to Fisher Body assembly plants, and trips to the nearby Selfridge Air Force Base to sit in jet fighters and meet their pilots. "If you won, you were on a roller coaster ride for a week," said Davids. Winners were interviewed in newspapers and on the radio, and even appeared on TV talk shows. Their high schools received their own towering trophy, and their models went on a national victory lap of dealerships, corporate offices, and exhibitions, at times aboard GM Futurliners that once roamed the country touting the corporation's industrial exploits. Many builders didn't see them again for two years.

"It opened up a lot of doors for me," said Davids, who went on to live a number of lifetimes, including fabricating body panels for Craig Breedlove's 526-mph Spirit of America land-speed car, earning several college degrees, doing a stint running GM's experimental design studio, operating a casino, launching a company in the late 1970s to design and manufacture some of the first hand-held electronic games sold in toy stores, and starting a winery specializing in pinot noir.

Other Guild alumni, like Jordan, Exner, Richard Arbib, who worked for years at GM as Harley Earl's right-hand man, and Pontiac, GMC, and Hummer design chief Terry Henline, forged long and successful careers in the auto industry, often after Guild-funded degrees from the famous ArtCenter College of Design in Los Angeles. Still others went to work in aerospace, academia, product and packaging design, and varied pursuits in engineering and manufacturing. William A. Fisher's plan to seed the American economy with capable, tenacious, hands-on thinkers had worked brilliantly.

However, even in 1963, the end of the Guild could be predicted. "It was a happy moment," said Davids, "but the Beatles came out the year after I won, everything was changing, and kids were getting kind of crazy. There just weren't enough who were disciplined." Entries dropped precipitously through the 1960s, records Jacobus, from more than 4000 in '63 to fewer

than 2000 in 1967. Model quality also declined. Besides the social changes, which included more distractions and time demands on young people, GM was eyeing the multimillion-dollar costs of the program as new safety and emissions regulations threatened to squeeze Detroit in a financial vise.



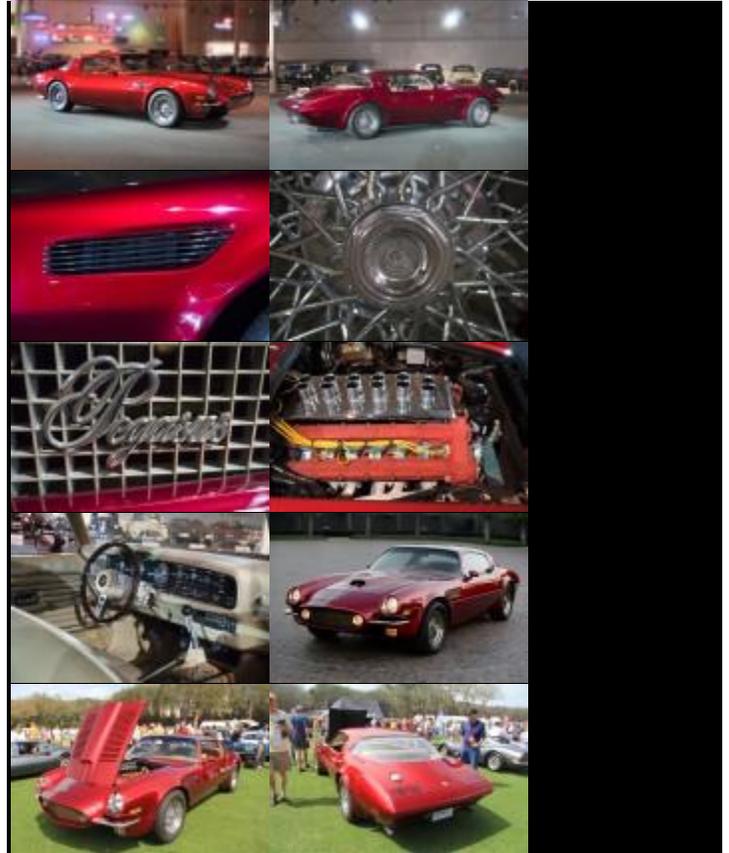
Cameron Neveu

And so, along with the fading of the program's originator and patron, William A. Fisher, who died in 1969, the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild expired as well. A reunion of Guild members at the ArtCenter College in Pasadena in 2016 led to an effort by former members to conserve as many models as possible, and there are now permanent displays in several museums around the country (see below).

As time thins the ranks of the Guild's surviving members, it's worth remembering an era when so many teenagers dreamed of a career designing cars. And when the auto industry was clever enough to devise a productive scheme to harness and focus that youthful energy, simply because it recognized that its future, as well as the nation's, depended on it.



photos



A Firebird With a Ferrari V12 Under the Hood: The Story of Pontiac's Epic Pegasus Concept

Published: 22 Feb 2023, 14:03 UTC • By: [Vlad Radu](#)

In the world of vehicle customization, an American car with a Ferrari engine swap is nothing new. That being said, the Firebird Pegasus was no ordinary custom car, but an official Pontiac concept developed with the blessing of the Italian carmaker.

It's been almost twelve and a half years since General Motors was forced to discontinue the Pontiac brand. Sadly, the name doesn't mean much these days for the younger generations who mockingly associate it with Walter White's atrocious Aztek.

But, for older folks and car fanatics of all ages, Pontiac lives on as one of the brands that thrived during the original muscle car era. Four-wheeled legends like the GTO or the various V8-powered Firebird versions remain some of the most exciting rides built on U.S. soil throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

Throughout the years, these cars have been covered in thousands of articles and, if the Aztek is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear Pontiac, I suggest you do some reading. Regular GTOs, Firebirds, or Azteks aside, let's take a look back at probably the most incredible concept car ever built by the now-defunct brand, the 1-of-1 Firebird Pegasus concept.

How it all began



Photo: General Motors LLC

Though the exact date when this insane endeavor actually started is still a mystery, multiple sources state that 1970 was the year when Chevrolet designer Jerry Palmer drew the first sketches of this wild concept.

The initial idea was to come up with visual improvements for the newly-introduced, second-generation Camaro, so Palmer decided to add several cues (most notably the front end) from a

1958 Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa to the existing design.

As weird as the combination might have sounded, the sketches looked awesome, catching the eye of styling chief Bill Mitchell, the man remembered for greenlighting some of the corporation's most iconic designs.

Mitchell thought that the sketch should be transformed into a real car but, rather than giving the project to the Chevy team, he took it to Pontiac and tasked the engineers with transforming a production version of the Camaro's platform-sharing sibling into a fully functional concept.

Adding a genuine Ferrari V12 to the mix



Photo: General Motors LLC

The Pontiac engineers went to work on what was called the Pegasus project, but the designers opted to modify several aspects of Palmer's original work. The bulging, Ferrari-inspired fenders as well as the swopping rear end with its wraparound glass, that would make it into production in 1975, were retained. Yet the front fascia received cues from the standard model like the grille divider and squarish headlights. Apart from the visual refinements, Mitchell told the engineers to swap out the Firebird's stock motor

with something that would match its new Ferrari-inspired looks. Rather than spend time and money on developing a new engine or beefing up an existing unit, he gave them a genuine Ferrari V12 to work with.

Legend has it that Mitchell spoke about the project with Enzo himself and surprisingly, the Ferrari boss gave his blessing. While it's unclear if the GM Vice President of Design had to kiss his ring or do anything of that nature, he did receive a brand-new engine straight from Maranello.

The unit in question was a 365 Colombo with dual overhead cams and a dry sump lubrication system. With an output of 352 hp, the 4.4-liter was originally used in the 365 GTC/4 "Daytona" grand tourer. Mitchell wanted a Turbo-Hydramatic transmission, and the engineers tried their best to make it happen, but the powerplant proved too much for the three-speed auto, so the car ultimately received a five-speed manual.

With four more cylinders than what American cars were usually accustomed to in the 1970s, the V12 didn't exactly fit like a glove inside the Firebird's engine bay, requiring several modifications. Lengthening the chassis was considered, but, in the end, engineers took a less drastic approach, moving the firewall nine inches back and modifying the engine's exhaust headers.

More subtle Italian flair with a touch of flashy Americana



Photo: General Motors LLC

With the exterior enhancements and the Ferrari V12 sitting snugly under the Firebird's hood, the Pegasus team could have called it a day, and no one would have complained. However, they didn't stop there and put a decent amount of work into refining the unique car even more.

The first example of this desire to achieve perfection is the interior, where the dash was modified to house Veglia Borletti gauges borrowed from the Daytona. Everything else was relatively stock inside, but the abundance of fine, light-colored leather made the car feel more Italian.

Like many iconic European exotics of the era, the Pegasus Firebird sat on a set of Borrani wheels hand-build in Italy, which were wrapped in chunky Goodyear Eagles made in the U.S.

Completed in 1971, it was painted with an eye-catching shade of red and decorated with what seemed like miles worth of gold pinstripes.

Further modifications under Bill Mitchell's stewardship



Photo: ROGERIOMACHADO via Flickr

The GM VP was so impressed with the result of what had become his latest pet project, that he decided to keep it. Mitchell didn't exactly drive it daily, but he used to often take the Ferrari-powered Firebird to car shows and racing events. He didn't race it either, but rather took it around the track for a few demonstration laps, then parked it in the pit area with its hood up, leaving everyone speechless.

After one such event held at Road America in Wisconsin during a weekend plagued by heavy rain, Mitchell ended up crashing the one-off into a bridge abutment. After this incident, the car's front fascia was rebuilt following Jerry Palmer's original design.

Mitchell retired in 1977. But he kept the Pegasus all to himself, continuing to drive it regularly. Several years later, its front end was subtly redesigned one more time, followed by a full restoration.

The legendary designer passed away in 1988, and the astonishing concept car was returned to GM. It underwent another complete restoration in 2012 and, while no further modifications were made, it was repainted without the original pinstripes.

Those that want to see Pontiac's most outrageous concept can visit GM's Heritage Center in Sterling

Heights, Michigan, where it currently resides. For those who are nowhere near Michigan, the YouTube video below by Tonys Car Parts takes you on a virtual walkaround.

The Visible V8, the Most Popular Model Engine Kit Ever, and Other See-Through Model Engine Kits: Part 1

[Ronnie Schreiber](#)

24 September 2024

Children don't really change much from generation to generation, which explains the evergreen appeal of many children's toys, games, and amusements that were created generations ago and are still popular today. Despite the ubiquity and easy availability of video games and toys based on high technology, you can walk into just about any store with a toy department and still be able to buy a brand-new version of [Barbie](#), Monopoly, or an Etch-A-Sketch. It shouldn't come as much of a surprise, then, that you can also still buy and build the Visible V8 model engine kit, first sold by Renwal in 1958 and one of the longest-selling plastic model kits of all time. I have bought one, in fact, and plan to assemble it with my three grandsons.

Before we begin to build, let's start this three-part series with a little bit of history.

To understand the origins of [plastic car models](#), we must go back to the history of models in general. In 1931, Jerry Aronson and Joe Eisendrath bought the assets of a company named Banker's Thrift Corp., a well-known maker of cast-metal coin banks, and renamed it Banthrico. Banthrico's main market was actual banks, which would give away the coin banks as promotional items, often commissioning them as replicas of the bank's building. Banthrico eventually expanded the line to include celebrities, political leaders, animals, college mascots, and vehicles. Like the coin banks sold to banks, the vehicles were often used as promotional items by automobile manufacturers and car dealers.

The development of polymer plastics in the late 1930s and during WWII opened up a world of opportunities for manufacturing. After the war, brothers Ed and Paul Ford started the Product Miniature Company (PMC) to compete with Banthrico's car-shaped coin banks, only the Fords' banks were made of cellulose acetate plastic, not a zinc-metal alloy.

Some model makers went a step further in their promotional efforts and worked directly with the companies that built the real-life vehicles. In 1947, John Hanley, a tool and die maker in Detroit, started a company making promotional advertising specialties, model aircraft, and industrial models. After making Chrysler a model that training mechanics could use to service the company's then-new fluid-drive automatic transmission, Hanley got a contract to produce promotional models of vehicles for the automaker. Hanley eventually renamed his firm Jo-Han due to a trademark dispute with a large toy company. By the 1950s, just about every car company was giving away 1:25-scale promotional models of their cars to the children of car buyers. (My older brother and I got a model of our grandfather's 1963 Oldsmobile 98.) Not until the '50s were modern model-making processes developed. In 1948, a Detroit lawyer with family connections to the Ford Motor Company, West Gallogly Jr., started a company named Aluminum Model Toys to exploit that market. Gallogly hired George Toteff, a pattern maker with an inventive bent, to run the company. Toteff switched to plastic and developed a process to injection-mold complete bodies in one piece. He also developed a method for vacuum deposition of a mirror-chrome-looking finish on plastic that is still used today for automotive trim. Toteff also changed from cellulose-acetate to styrene-based plastic, which could be both molded in finer detail and assembled with solvent-based glues, allowing for more complex models. Later, Toteff would start his own firm, Model Product Company (MPC).

Now we have set the stage for the origins of Renwal, the original makers of the Visible V8. Irving Lawner, the company's founder, started out making plastic kitchen utensils in Manhattan in the late-1930s. Soon he also was making plastic toy airplanes and automobiles under the Renwal brand name—Lawner, spelled backwards. After WWII, Lawner added plastic dollhouse furniture to his line as well as transparent plastic dollhouses, which Renwal sold to toy stores, doll hospitals, and toy soldier shops to display their miniatures. Eventually Lawner sold Renwal, and the company moved to the NYC suburbs, in Mineola. With its relationships with high-end retailers solidly

established, Renwal introduced a line of highly detailed "Blueprint" military models, aimed at a higher price point than competitors like Lindberg.

The sources don't say what inspired Renwal's most enduring product in 1958 (it has survived the Renwal company itself). Perhaps it was the company's experience with clear plastic displays, or possibly the success that AMT and Jo-Han were having with their automotive lines, or maybe a combination of those factors that led to Renwal's introduction of the Visible V8 plastic model kit, a 1:4 scale replica of the overhead-valve pushrod V8 design that became popular in the postwar era. While it is rather generic and not based on any one engine, it bears some resemblance to the Cadillac and Studebaker V8 engines of the kind produced in the 1950s, when the model V8 was being developed at Renwal.

Described by Renwal as "a transparent, operating auto engine assembly kit," the Visible V8 used clear plastic for molding the cylinder block, heads, and valve covers, allowing builders to view over 100 moving internal parts, including the crankshaft, rods, pistons, pushrods, valves, and even the fan belt. It was powered by two C-cell batteries and a "Powerful Per-Mag" electric motor. The motor and its reducer gears were all cleverly hidden in the starter case. Little light bulbs, wired from the spinning distributor and lighting up in the proper firing order, replicated spark plugs. "Parts are perfectly timed just as on a real engine," the box proclaimed.

The Visible V8 model was accurate enough to be used in science and auto shop classes in high schools, playing into the model company's slogan "Renwal turns science into hobbies and hobbies into science." It may not be coincidental that the Visible V8 model kit was introduced a year after the USSR launched the Sputnik satellite, which spurred a significant interest and increase in science education in the United States. Toys became "educational."

The transparent model engine kit was so successful that Renwal followed the V8 with the Visible Man and the Visible Woman. As those models were made for children, while they were anatomically correct, they were not anatomically complete. Similarly, in light of the sensitivities of the 1950s, parents were assured on the box cover that the "The Miracle of Creation" feature, a kit of alternate parts modeled on a woman who was seven months pregnant, was completely optional. Those parts had their own individual box and a separate instruction sheet.



eBayeBay

Speaking of boxes, one of my favorite features of the original Renwal Visible V8 kit was the art on the box top. A father with graying temples, a button-down shirt, a suit jacket, and a pipe looks proudly over the shoulder of his young teenage son at the son's completed Visible V8. I think it's a classic of mid-century commercial art.

eBayeBay

In 1963 Renwal also introduced a companion model kit to the Visible V8, [the Visible Automotive Chassis](#), a somewhat less mellifluous and less alliterative name than that of its predecessor, which could be mounted onto the chassis. It was also electrically powered and had a transparent transmission and differential. When built, builders could shift gears and operate the steering and brakes.

eBayeBay

While I haven't been able to find the original retail price, sources say that the Visible Automobile Chassis was rather costly. It was also, like the Visible V8, in 1:4 scale, which made it a fourth the size of an actual car chassis, or about 3 feet long. Expensive and large when new, like the [GI Joe USS Flagg](#), it is highly collectible today, selling for over \$1,000 when new-in-box and unbuilt. Unbuilt, vintage Visible V8 model kits in the original box are a more reasonable \$100 to \$200.

Eventually, Renwal offered an extensive line of Visible models, including the Visible Head, the Visible Horse, and the Visible Dog. There was even a Visible model of the nine-cylinder Pratt & Whitney Wasp rotary aircraft engine, also motorized.



Keeping up with changes in automotive technology, in 1973, Renwal introduced the Visible Wankel kit, a working, motorized 1:3 scale model of a two-rotor rotary engine. As it is much rarer, the rotary kit is more expensive. Renwal's wasn't the first transparent rotary model kit, though. In the 1960s, Japan's Gakken model company introduced a motorized, 1:5 scale model of Mazda's Wankel, which has subsequently been reissued by Entech and later by Minicraft. In the 1970s, AMT made a 1:4-scale, transparent Wankel that was not motorized.

eBay. Revell eventually replaced the "Per-Mag" motor with a crank. eBay

In the mid-1970s, the Revell company bought out Renwal. Injection molds can last a very long time, so when model kit companies go out of business, their models don't disappear. When molds are bought, their models are either reissued from time to time or they just stay in production, like the Visible V8, which you can buy today and build yourself for less than \$100. Revell originally made the Visible V8 just as Renwal had, but in 1993 they switched from electric power to a hand crank and there are no longer spark plugs that light up. Surprisingly, though the revision required molds for the new parts, Revell did not invest in new molds to update the '50s-era generator to a more modern alternator.

To give you an idea of how popular the Visible V8 was to both model builders and car companies, in the early 1960s, when Chrysler got wind that Revell, one of Renwal's competitors, was planning on introducing a model of the small-block Chevy V-8 to compete with the Visible V8, the automaker persuaded the model company to instead make a working, cutaway version of the [Slant Six](#), with some

Four decades later, in 2005, the Testor's company introduced its own competition for the Visible V8, another Mopar mill, a see-through, motorized 1:4 scale model of Chrysler's [legendary 426 Hemi engine](#). Appropriately for the 21st century, in addition to

motorized motion, the plastic fantastic Hemi includes an “Authentic Hemi Sound Chip.”



Today, in addition to vintage model kits on eBay and Revell’s reissued Visible V8 kit you can buy a variety of “visible” engine model kits, ranging from generic inline-fours to V-8s. The [Franzis](#) company in Germany makes a line of factory-licensed, see-through model engine kits for the 289 Ford, as well as a variety of air-cooled Volkswagen and Porsche motors. They appear to be a bit more detailed, and more expensive, than the vintage models covered in this article.

This article is planned as the first in a series wherein I will be building a vintage Renwal Visible V8, a Minicraft Wankel, and a Testor’s 426 Hemi with my grandsons. At six, nine, and 12 years old, they have fairly advanced Lego-building skills—their father is a master Lego builder—but this will be a challenge, as they’ve never built a plastic model from a kit before. Of course, I’ll be doing most of the work involving solvent glue and X-acto knives, but they should learn something about engines and model building in the process.

Contact **John Heyer** at oldie383@gmail.com or his cell phone 631-575-6923.

WANTED: CAR MODEL Magazine May 1974 issue. Will pay \$20 for it in excellent condition.

WANTED: AMT 1969 LINCOLN unbuilt kit. Will buy or have many vintage kits available for trade.

Contact Gary Weickart at 631-581-5834 or gweickart@aol.com.

WANTED: Large diameter wheels, tires, and disc brakes from Revell/AMT/Tamiya/Aoshima/ect. kits. 1/24th and 1/25th scale. ()

WANTED: Modular and modern motors like LS1s, HEMIs, DOHC 5.4 Cobra motors, import motors like Toyota 2JZ and Nissan Skyline RB. 1/24th and 1/25th scale.

WANTED: Vortech style superchargers, blower superchargers from 2007/2010 Shelby GT500 and Revell Ford Mustang Mach III concept car, and turbochargers. 1/24th and 1/25th scale.

Contact Richard Manri @ 631-589-6876 or his email picorro93@gmail.com to negotiate price or trade for the three above.

April 2025 Meeting pictures

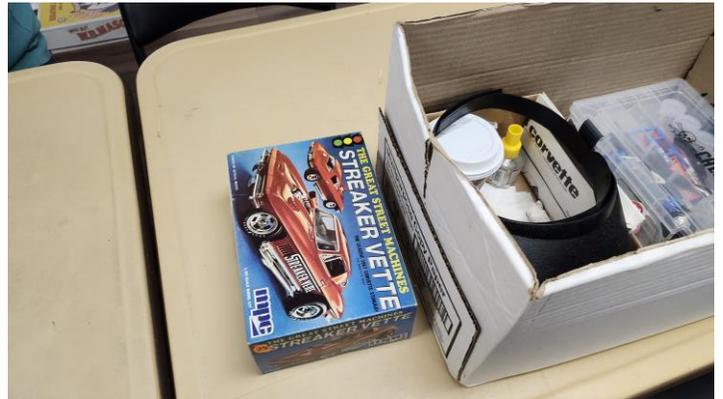
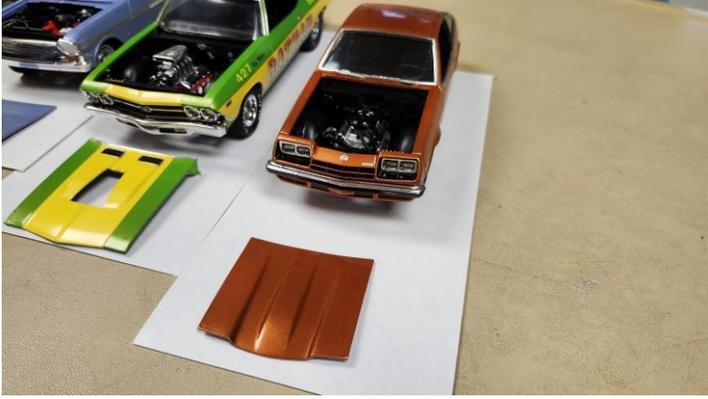
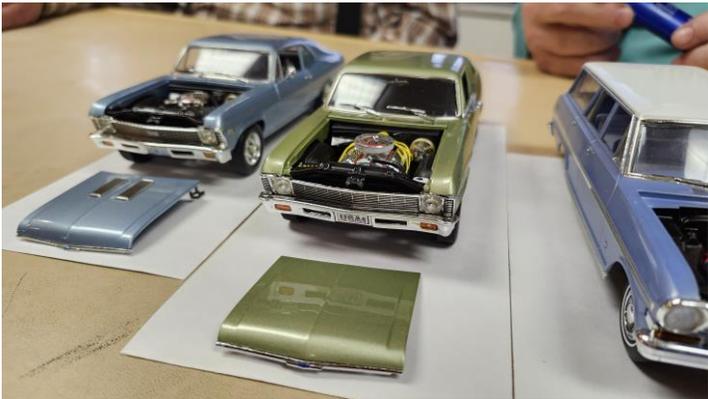
Model Mercantile Market

"Wanted or For Sale" section...

WANTED: Stock wheel and tire for AMT '64 Chevrolet Covair annual kit or promo.







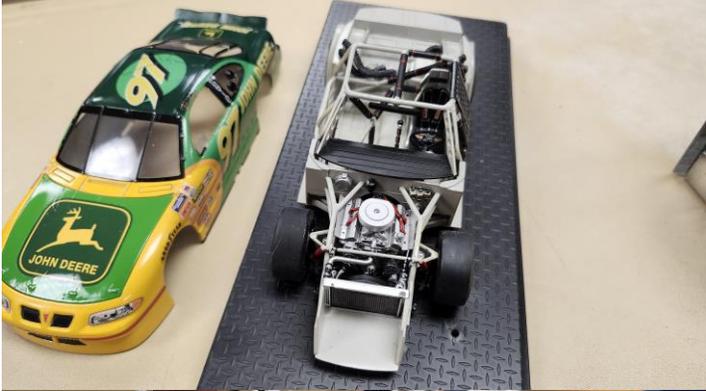


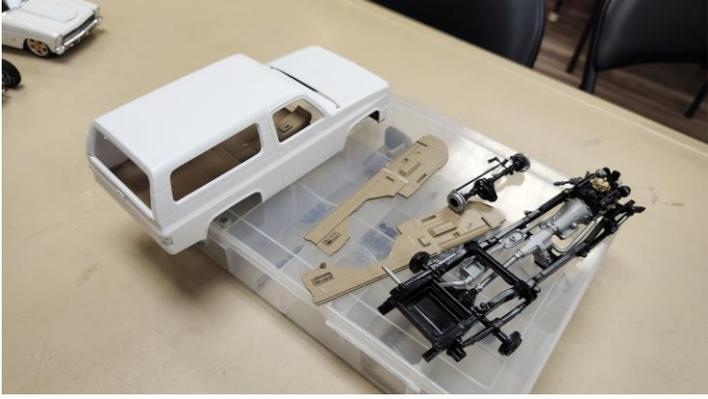
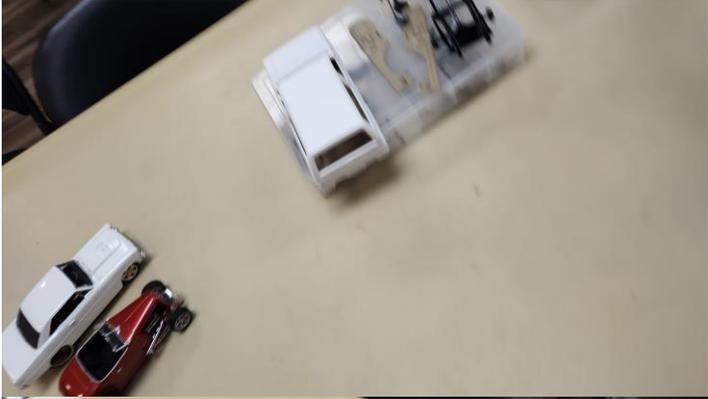












***Hope to see you all
at the mtg!***



LIARS Annual (2025) INPUT AND PROFILE SHEET:

Here is your chance to have some input into this club without having everyone know where it came from. If you have a suggestion, an idea, or a problem you would like to discuss please put it in writing on this sheet and it will be discussed at the next meeting. Please bring your filled out sheet with you, or you can email it to your editors email address on the first page header. ALL subjects and suggestions will be brought up in front of the club.

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO SIGN THIS SHEET.

LIARS Profile: (name) _____ (Can be your LIARS nickname or anonymous panhandle...)

- How long have you been building models? _____
- How long have you been a member of LIARS? _____
- What do you usually build? _____
- Where do you usually build? _____
- How many models do you have? _____

- Have you ever had any failed builds that were scrapped or recycled for other projects?

- Have you ever parted out old finished builds and recycled their contents for new projects?

- How many unbuilt models do you have? _____
- What are your favorite 3 models you have built? _____
- Have you ever won an award for building a model? _____
- What 3 models should win an all time kit of the (last) century award? _____
- What 3 models are so horrible that you would buy them just to protect others from having to build them?

- What was the dumbest, most boneheaded mistake you've made in the past? (Can be model or general related)

- Was there any kit you regretted ever purchasing?

- What do you drive now? _____
- Are you bitter about anything? _____
- Are you saving your pennies for something fun to drive? _____
- With an unlimited budget, what 10 full size cars would you have in your garage?

- What (if any) person (living or dead) in the 1:1 automotive world would you like to meet? _____
- Do you go to model car shows? _____
- What are your favorite model car shows and why? _____
- Do you have kids & if so, do they share your passion? _____
- Did you build models with them? _____

***LIARS MODEL CAR CHALLENGE COMING
NOVEMBER 2025. DETAILS AND FLYER
TBA.***
