

## MARYLAND AUTOMOTIVE MODELERS ASSOCIATION

*Volume 14, No. 2, October, 2000*

by: "GTO"

(The *Maryland Automotive Modelers Association* is a chapter of the *IPMS*)

Well gang, the *September meeting* had about 40 members in attendance. The hot topic of conversation was early plans for a *Special Guest Appearance* for our *NNL show* in May of next year. Our own *Ron Bradley* is single-handedly responsible for signing none other than "*Jungle Pam*" ("*Jungle Jim*" *Lieberman's sidekick*, and *one-person show*, to those of you unfamiliar with drag racing in the late 60's and early 70's). She will be signing autographs at our show, and will be pressed into service to make a special award in the Drag Racing class as well! So, drag (*pun intended!*) out those straight-line models!

The club also observed, with *Mike Hemp's* assistance, the Anniversary of our formation. Thanks for the cake, Mike! Another topic of conversation was the *impending nuptials* for club Prez *Lyle Willits* (*He's gettin' married!*). Congrats to Lyle and the lucky lady (?) Lee. May you have much happiness together and long life to boot (*especially you, Lyle!*)

The raffle raised \$60.00 (as well as \$30.00 from the box). The club would like to thank the raffle donors listed below: *Brad, Mike Hemp, Ron Bradley, Ron H, Bill Kilby, Phil Jones, Bob Waudby, Fred Cady Decals, and Replicas and Miniatures Company of MD*. As always, special thanks also go to those listed below:

Tom Walsh,  
The ERTL Company  
Highways 136 & 20  
Dyersville, IA 52040-0500

Ed Sexton/Bill Lastovich,  
Revell-Monogram, LLC  
8601 Waukegan Road  
Morton Grove, IL 60053-2295

## Double Zero (Y2K) MEETING SCHEDULE

Well guys, here it is, just as I promised ya! Ain't it great when things work out like they are supposed to? Thanks to Matt Guilfoyle for his hard work in ensuring that we have a place to meet every month next year! Yup, we are back at the *Greenbelt Community center* multipurpose room for the dates listed below. As usual, the meetings start at noon, and last until 3 or 4 P.M. (*and maybe even later, depending on what is going on!*).

January 15th  
February 19th  
March 18th  
April 15th  
May 20th  
June 17th



July 15th  
August 19th  
September 16th  
October 21st  
November 18th  
December 16th

**From the Baltimore Beltway (RT 695):** Take Exit 7, Route 295 (*Baltimore-Washington Parkway*) south towards Washington approx. 18 miles to Route 193 (*Greenbelt Road*), and exit. When on the off-ramp, stay to the right and merge right onto Southway (see below).

**From the Washington Beltway (RT 495):** Take Exit 22 north, towards Baltimore. Stay in the right lane and take the first exit onto Route 193 (*Greenbelt Road*). When on the off-ramp, bear to the right and take Greenbelt road west, towards College Park. Stay in the right lane and immediately after passing over the Parkway, make a right (*at the light*) onto Southway (*see below*).

**Once on Southway:** Go straight to the second (*2nd*) STOP sign. Make a left onto Crescent road. Go to STOP sign and make a right into the parking lot behind the Greenbelt Library. Once in parking lot, look to right. The large, white building is the Greenbelt Community Center. Enter building using doors near fenced tot lot. The multi-purpose room is on the second floor. There is an elevator to the left of the entrance.

## *Seminar Listing*

*Bare Metal Foil*-Ron Hamilton ✓  
*Gold Foil application*-Matt Guilfoyle ✓  
*Fear of Photoetch*-Lyle Willits ✓  
*Interior Detailing*  
*Panel Opening*-Bill Geary ✓  
*Engine Detailing*-Norman Veber  
*Paint Polishing*

*Airbrush Technique*  
*Restoration of a Built-up model*  
*Decal Application*  
*Scratchbuilding small details* (acetate windows, antennas, etc.)  
*Building a resin kit/conversion*  
*Tire Detailing*

## *SNEAKIN' A PEEK!*

This column appears as frequently (or infrequently!) as new releases from the manufacturers. The idea behind it is to give a "thumbnail review" of the releases as they hit the shelves with a more detailed review to follow at a later date (hopefully!). We'll see how it goes! How about this, gang? To better identify possible kit reviews, at the end of the item on the kit, the words 'Available' or 'Not Available' will appear. Obviously, a club member may reserve any kit that is available with a simple call to the Editor. Conversely, a kit which is 'Not Available' was either already reserved by someone, or was something new inserted by yours truly, and paid for with my hard-earned moolah! (Ed. Note: *The kits are listed in no particular order*):

'32 Ford Lincoln Mint Ultra Metal Series (Testors #7121): Incredible packaging!....Skill level 3, w/100+ pieces....18-piece small block V-8, w/a pre-wired distributor....choice of '32 or '34 grille shell, w/a photoetch '32 insert....steerable wheels....two-piece exhaust....seven-piece rear suspension....pre-flamed metallic blue body w/opening doors and trunk....flocked tan interior floorpan....choice of shifters....big and bigger rubber mounts slotted wheels...3 full chrome trees!....photoetch grille, dash, and outside rearview mirror included....accessories include a floor jack, jackstands, four-way lug wrench, and a fire extinguisher (Not Available).

## *Soap Opera Series 1*

It all started out well enough, *Don Landy*, president of *Shelby American (S.A.)* had nudged Shelby for a couple of years to build a "*Cobra for the nineties*." Shelby finally agreed, and in April '94 the new Cobra was announced. It was to be a carbon-fiber monocoque with a *500 h.p. Dodge twin-turbo engine with intercoolers*. The goal was to make a car that would *beat the Viper*. It would have a *6 speed trans*, maybe an automatic and sell for *\$200,000*. It was hoped to have 75 h.p. more and weigh up to 1200 lbs. less than the Viper. From the outset there seemed to be disagreements between Shelby and Landy as to how much power and how heavy the car would be, but the car was thought to be deliverable by late '95. Shelby felt it was time to show the world that all the imitations of his Cobra weren't worth anything compared to a Shelby.

In November '94, S.A. announced at the SEMA show that the car would use a high performance version of the *Olds Aurora engine*. In March of '95, Landy "retired" and things seemed to stagnate until Sept. of '96 when a deal with John Rock of Olds was signed. The car was to be known as the *Series 1*, would have a 350 hp engine and weigh 2400 lbs. There would be *500 cars* built within 3 years, *coupes* to start with to be followed by the *roadsters*. It would have a carbon-fiber body with a chassis made of either steel or aluminum. The car was designed by *Peter Bryant*, who had worked with other projects at S.A. for many years. The first cars would be delivered in 9 months at a price of *\$75,000*.

By January of '97, the body and interior were completed on the prototype, but no running gear. It was now claimed that the first copies would be in selected dealers by early '98, yet there was no decision as to whether the chassis would be aluminum or steel. Now the soap opera aura seems to have started with reports of major staff reorganizations at S.A. in late '96 and changes in the power and price of the car. Carroll Shelby felt that a \$200,000 price tag was too high for the market. It was decided the Series 1 would have a 6-speed trans-axle made by *Richmond Gears*, a *200 watt stereo*, *8 speakers*, *solar-controlled glass* and *PPG centennial silver paint to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Oldsmobile*. In July of '98, *Playboy* announced its *Playmate of the year Karen McDougal*. A Series 1 was to be part of her prize package, and yet as of May '99 no cars had been delivered. It was claimed that there were still many bugs to be worked out, but the price was to be *\$113,975*. To help finance the car buyers would have to put *25% down in advance*. As their car started assembly they would pay another *25%* and *50%* on delivery. The only good news was that there were *2 running prototypes*, but they had lots of problems to overcome. The shifter had no feel and the steering was "numb". The stereo sucked, the seatbelt retractors didn't work, and it took 2 men to erect and collapse the soft top. The air conditioning system didn't work, there were no side windows or sun visors, and to top it off, the tires rubbed the chassis when turning sharply. But it had been finally decided that the frame would be aluminum. However, there were problems with warpage when they were welded together. To date, *300 cars* had been *pre-sold* with no *real delivery date* in sight. It was mid '99, no cars were ready, and all had to be substantially built by December 31 of '99, or face new government tests. Shelby American had obtained an exemption from the air bag law. It was now explained that the Aurora engine, which produced 250 hp in stock form, would produce 320 hp in S.A. form. It was also

claimed that was the best that could be done, and still pass emission tests. The *weight* had grown to **2650 lbs.**, but the power to weight ratio was still quite respectable at 8.28 to 1. The Acura NSX's was 10 to 1, Corvette's was 9.14/1, only the Viper could claim 7.38/1, but wasn't that the car they hoped to beat? The transmission, the rack and pinion, and the brakes were all borrowed from the Corvette.

It was now December of '99, crunch time, and only **3 cars had been delivered**, with one of those going to " 'Ol Shel hisself ". **Did the Playmate of the Year get one of the other two?** S.A. announced that new delays had been caused by a rejection of faulty body panels made by a sub-contractor.

By January of 2000, some 4-5 years past it's original start of delivery date, **12 cars had been built and delivered**. It was now claimed that **20 cars per month** would now be coming off the assembly line with all built by late summer and the soft-top had still not been addressed.

In late March of 2000, *Venture Industries (V.I.)* bought a 75% controlling interest in S.A. Venture Industries was the sub-contractor that made the body panels. Carroll Shelby was still CEO of S.A. and **25 cars had been built to date**. Production was now at **1 car per day**.

In April, Venture Ind. released a picture of its assembly plant showing 14 cars near ready for delivery. *Customers* who had now been waiting **over 3 years** were told **the total price** they were expected to pay would be **30% higher** at **\$129,750**. It was also announced that a **supercharged version** would be available with **425-440 hp**. When **dealers and buyers complained about the price hikes**, V.I. announced that **deposits could be returned if so desired**, but **those cars would then sell for \$135,975**. It was now claimed by V.I. that John Rock leaving Olds to retire had caused millions of dollars of problems. When Olds had delivered the 500 engines, V.I. had to pay \$4000 per engine on delivery. In mid-May, Olds publicly disputed any breach of contract claiming they had supplied engines and 2 1/2 years of technical support. A New Bern, North Carolina dealer filed complaints with that states attorney for unpaid profits on a delivered Series 1. Venture Ind. Still had no idea when the soft tops would be ready. Customers were getting more upset at the rising price of their cars and were demanding that the original price be honored.

By late April, thorough tests showed the car to be greatly improved. It now demonstrated world-class handling and performance. All of the problems of 2 years earlier were cured. The seatbelts worked, as did the stereo. The car now had roll up windows and working air conditioning. The shifter and steering now had decent feel to them. On top of this good news, it was announced that **the original price would be honored after all on only those cars that had been pre-sold**. All **other buyers** would have to **pay much more** to cover loses. The **price** for the **unsold cars** now stood at **\$160,000**. Car number 65 was currently being assembled and engineers were finally working in earnest to develop a soft-top. It was announced that some soft tops would be brought to owner's homes to be fit. By **May**, the price had risen again to **\$174,975** and deliveries had stalled due to soft tops. Dealers were complaining about the excessive price and were refusing to sign agreements, despite their **\$20,000 profit** being retained.

By mid June, cars were being delivered again, **35-40** even had **soft-tops**. The **price** for the **blown version** was announced at **\$205,000**. It would seem that this version would finally meet the **original goal set forth 6 years earlier**.

Revell's kit of this car seems to have had its own problems as well. It seems like it has been 2 years in coming, but the wait was worth it. On opening the box, I am reminded of the AMT/ERTL Viper kit, but there are no sink marks to fill anywhere. It's even hard to find ejection pin marks. However, the that few I found are out of the line of site on the finished model and very manageable.

The **engine** is a 20-piece affair and very detailed. The block, torque tube and trans-axle are split lengthwise in two pieces, but they are very well engraved. The shifter rod is even included.

The **interior** has the two piece bucket seats and separate pedals we have come to demand in these new generation kits.

The **chassis** builds up like an F-1 car. The engine assembly goes in first, then the front and rear suspensions surround and engulf it. The A-arms are delicate but to scale and look perfect. The battery consists of two pieces, while the gas tank is four pieces, and the radiator is 3 pieces. The wheels are gorgeous but too shiny. I guess we've come to expect that, tone them down as you choose.

The **body** consists of only 5 pieces, and 4 of these are the quarter panel louvers. The taillights are clear plastic, but so are the rest of the lights - no chrome lights here. The exhaust system is short and sweet with two-chromed tips that are deeply drilled out. The windshield fits from the outside with separate wipers, and the mirrors are two pieces with chromed faces. The decals are quite complete with dash gauges and identification, Shelby scripts for the seats and all 8 speakers are decals as well. There is a decal for the master cylinder, as well as one for the chassis. The intake cover has three decals, one being a carbon-fiber decal. There are two sets of stripes, red and blue, that seem to have a metallic cast to them. The center brake light is a decal also.

Despite all the problems, I like both the real car and this kit as well. It is highly detailed and is done correctly. There are tons of nice parts for kit bashing for street rods or whatever. I know of several people who feel the car is over styled and they are entitled to their opinion. The problem here lies in the fact that the public has come to think of **Shelby autos** as **brutish** and almost **impossible to handle** because of **excessive power**. The Series 1 has neither of these characteristics; it is almost candy sweet. The **continual delays** haven't helped public acceptance either. But remember almost 40 years ago the Cobras, GT-350s, and GT-500's were hard sells as well. Look at **them** today!!

[Ed. Note: For those of you who may be considering the purchase of one of these 'bad boys, check out the November 2000 issue of Motor Trend magazine. In it, they performed another of their Top Speed Shootouts, this time including a Pontiac Firehawk Trans Am, a Ford SVT Cobra, Dodge Viper ACR, Z06 Corvette, Qvale Mangusta, Porsche 911 Turbo, Ferrari 360 Modena, BMW Z8, and last but certainly not least, a Supercharged Shelby Series 1. 'Ol Shel has made available a Vortec centrifugal supercharger with specific cams, a larger throttle body, and recalibrated engine management software. The hardware pumps the Aurora's engine output up from 320/290, to around 450/400 (horsepower/torque)! This extra power doesn't come cheaply, though. The tab hovers just south of \$175,000!]

Rich Wilson

## **Baldwin-Motion Drag Cobra**

[Revell # 85-7664; 1/24th scale; 120 pieces; molded in white, chrome, clear, transparent red, vinyl tires; 1 version ]

After a few seasons of successfully campaigning a 289-powered Shelby Dragonsnake in NHRA stock classes for sports cars, *Joel Rosen's Motion Performance* crew kicked it up a notch in 1966 and put their special touch on a 427-powered version.

*Shelby American* is believed to have constructed *approximately sixteen* of the 427-powered *Dragonsnakes*. While these cars were stout drag cars as delivered with extra heavy-duty rear suspension components, NHRA approved safety gear, and performance enhancing extras, the Motion team felt they could make it even better. They started by *fully blueprinting the powerplant*. Shelby had already clearanced the engine for high-rpm use, but Rosen and his crew finished the job. Then they went after the rear end. The Motion team selected a new *final drive ratio* that promised to work even better with the Goodyear drag slicks than the *factory-supplied 4.54 ratio*. Other rear suspension components, such as the shocks, were modified in light of Motion Performance's extensive racing experience.

Key to drag racing success with the Dragonsnake's independent rear suspension (*IFS*) was preventing it from going into negative camber which would allow some of the slick's tread to lose contact with the pavement, reducing traction. In a lightweight car with an over abundance of torque, you need every last iota of traction you can get. Many of the rear suspension modifications were directed at maintaining or improving traction as well as the more obvious goal of durability.

According to Rosen there wasn't a whole lot more to it than that. Being that the car was targeted at a stock class, they were very restricted in what they could and could not do to prepare it for racing. For example, NHRA at that time prohibited polishing the ports and combustion chambers in the cylinder heads of cars used in stock classes. Fortunately, Shelby American delivered aluminum heads with lightened competition valves on the stock vehicles. Shelby American also factory balanced all of the moving parts in the engine, including the entire valve train.

On the car's *first outing*, all of the *Motion team's* effort paid off – big time. They *busted the national record by two full seconds* with a *10.27 ET*. You can just imagine all the talk that went on that day. What makes that feat appear even more spectacular was the fact that they *drove the car two and a half hours from their shop to the track*. Their preparation at the track was little more than *swapping the rear street tires for a set of slicks* and installing a *fresh set of spark plugs*.

Some people recall the car having the stock-type rear suspension and others recall it having a solid Ford 9" rear in it. Well, it never had a 9" rear. The small block powered Dragonsnake was the one fitted with the 9" rear when it was campaigned in a modified class during its later years. Both cars had stock-type rear suspensions when they were raced in the stock classes - the rules required it.

Seeing as how this kit is a modified reissue of two previous Shelby Cobra kits that were released under the Monogram banner, this review will concentrate on the differences that make this kit unique.

A well-done tubular frame, which still carries the 1988 copyright from the original 427 Cobra Street incarnation of this kit provides a sturdy platform for this version as well. It mounts the same four-piece rear suspension and five-piece front suspension that have graced the previous releases. What we find new on the chassis are the *mounting holes* for the *tailpipes*. These holes are located on the outermost flat areas at the rear of the frame. To preserve the original appearance of the frame piece, these holes are added to the side of the frame that is unseen when the model is assembled and they are not molded through. You must drill them out or ream them out with a hobby knife.

If the mounting holes for the tailpipes are new, you'd probably guess that the *exhaust system* is new, too. You'd be correct. NHRA required that cars competing in stock classes carry full exhaust systems *including* mufflers *even though the cars ran with open headers*. Worse yet, 427 Cobras didn't come with such systems; they used big header-mounted side pipes. To satisfy NHRA's rule that it carry a stock exhaust system and to run with open headers, the 427 Dragonsnake had to have an exhaust system added. Each of the dual pipes originates at the header collectors and runs underneath the car to the mufflers. From the mufflers, the pipes run to the rear of the car and let out just beneath the rear bumper. The police departments between the Motion Performance shop and the drag strips to which Rosen drove the King Cobra probably appreciated the muffled system as long as the car was on their streets.

The logo for 'KING Cobra' features the word 'KING' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Above the letter 'I' in 'KING' is a small crown icon. To the right of 'KING' is the word 'Cobra' in a stylized, black, cursive script font.

### Engine:

The *twenty-piece 427 cubic inch engine* appears exactly as it did in the original issue with dual four-barrel carburetors and plain chrome-plated valve covers.

### Interior:

The cowl ID tag decal seen in both of the two previous versions is missing from this issue. An all-new, non-plated, *NHRA-spec simple hoop roll bar* has been added. This bar differs from the plated one in the 427 S/C version in that it is centered in the interior rather than mounted directly behind the driver's seat. Unfortunately, Revell made no attempt to positively locate the bar. The instructions simply direct you to stick it in the interior between the seats. Mounting holes in the floorboard would be a big help.

A brand-new *chrome plated tachometer* is also provided in this issue. It too suffers from a lack of positive location. It is intended to mount on top of the cowl, inside of the windshield, where the rear-view mirror typically would be mounted. The instructions show it centered on the cowl, but without so much as a dimple to guide you, good luck hitting your mark. Your best bet will be to determine the mounting locating before painting the body and drilling the cowl and tach for a mounting pin.

### Body:

The body in this reissue remains unchanged from that of the previous two issues. Notably this version uses the scooped hood from the 427 S/C version and the bumpers from the 427 Cobra Street version. You'll have to remove from the windshield frame the mounting tabs for the wing windows of the previous issues, as the wing windows are not used for this version. Unfortunately, doing so will leave the sides of the frame a mess, as it is a plated part. With judicious use of *Bare Metal Foil* or *Detail Master Krome Foil*, you should be able to satisfactorily cover your work. Other wise you may want to fully strip it and send it off to your favorite chrome plating facility.

The hoop portion of the front bumper can and for accuracy should be removed, leaving the two separate bumperettes. You'll have the same problem as with the windshield frame, removing a portion will screw up the plating and you'll either have to have the bumperettes re-plated, or do some fancy metal foil work.

If you look carefully at the box art model, you'll be able to see where the builder hid the modifications to his windshield frame and bumperettes with paint work. Silver covers the sides of the windshield frame and blends with the silver frame around the side windows. Gloss black covers the marks on the bumperettes and is almost unnoticeable as it acts like a reflection of the car's nose.

Two mounting holes adorn each rocker panel. In previous issues, these were used for mounting the Cobra's distinctive sidepipes. This issue uses only the most forward of the mounting holes to mount the short drag headers, so you'll want to fill the rearmost holes before painting the body.

Unique to this issue is the *removable hardtop with framed side windows*. Having a smaller rear window and a boxier shape, it is distinctly different in appearance from the hardtop used on the 289-powered cars. Fitted to the top is a set of *sliding side windows* that represent the aluminum-framed units Shelby American provided for the 427-powered cars. These are molded with the rear half-pane in the open position.

### Wheels and Tires:

This current issue uses the same *Halibrand wheels* that were introduced in the 427 S/C kit. The front set of wheels mount the same Michelin TRX radial tires that disgraced both of the previous issues. The rear set of wheels mount a plausible pair of Goodyear Blue Dragon racing slicks.

### Decals:

Rosen says the decals are right. He'd know, he worked directly with Revell on designing them. What better authority is there?

### Instructions:

The instruction sheet in this kit is superior to those in the previous issues. It starts with a brief essay on the subject and a paint guide. Painting instructions are provided throughout. Each assembly is broken down into easy to follow steps. The final section shows decal placement. As they have been for some time, Revell includes a toll-free phone number, street address, and website address for their Consumer Service Department, in case you should have questions, comment, or problems.

### Conclusion:

Take the Monogram 427 Cobra Street kit (*the original issue*), add to it the Halibrand racing wheels and scooped hood from the Monogram Shelby Cobra 427 S/C kit (*the second issue*), change the soft top into a hard top, shorten the sidepipes, add "stock" exhaust pipes with mufflers, create new decals, and toss in a pair of Goodyear slicks and you have this kit. It was a natural move to an interesting subject on Revell's part. And a welcome move at that.

It seems the only mistake Revell made with this kit was in referring to Baldwin Chevrolet in its title (*on the box and the instruction sheet*). It should have been titled as Motion Performance Drag Cobra. Can you imagine a *Chevy dealer* sponsoring a *Ford-powered Shelby Cobra*?

Thanks to Revell-Monogram for the review sample and special thanks to Joel Rosen for taking the time to provide invaluable assistance with this review.

By: Tim Powers

## ***BJTS & PIECES***

- **New Goodies!** This time from a local company by the name of *Replicas & Miniatures Company of MD (a.k.a. RMC of MD)*. First off, Norm has released RM-108, a *triangular air filter*, which was mastered by *Wayne McKee*. It is a *Weiland Lynx style unit*, made of a very fine wire mesh, a chrome-plated resin base, and wire clamps to hold it all together (*Ed. Note: Lemme tell ya, I saw one of these puppies on a Firebird at a show recently, and it looks as though someone had their shrink ray working on this one!*). Next up is RB-8, a *1/25th scale '29 Ford Model A Roadster hot rod w/a narrowed '32 Ford frame and a '32 Ford grille shell* which was mastered jointly by *Jack Davis* and *Norm*. Jack narrowed a R-M '32 Ford frame to fit the '28 body. The frame will still accept suspension components from the R-M '32 Ford. The '32 grille shell and hood were also so modified. Also included is a tuck 'n roll interior, consisting of door panels and a seat. A floorpan, two-piece firewall, traditional and modern radiators, and a modified center crossmember, windshield frame/dash, and (*new*) door handles also come with it. I all, the kit consists of 18 pieces, clear acetate for the windshield, sheet styrene for an interior firewall, and instructions. An added bonus- no mold lines, and rescribed panel lines! And finally, RH-911, a *1/25th scale 'Hallock' style Veed windshield w/custom dash and cowl trim* for RMCM B-8 '29 Ford Model A hot rod conversion kit, or AMT '29 Ford Model A Roadster kit. Mastered by *Rik Hoving*, this frame represents a frame made by Duke Hallock in California in the mid 40's. A smooth dash w/steering column post is provided, and cowl trim and acetate complete the kit. The smooth dash will accept a number of gauge treatments, including RMCM photoetch gauge panels w/acetate gauges. RM-108 retails for \$10.95, while B-8 retails for \$33.00, and RH-911 sells for \$6.50. So many projects, so little time! Replicas and Miniatures Company of Maryland can be reached at 210 Roosevelt Avenue, Glen Burnie, MD 21061. *Stay tuned for future announcements!*
- **New MCG!** Well folks, the *1960 Ford set* is now available from the gang at *Model Car Garage* for the recently released AMT kit. And, if the crowds at the Toledo swap meet are any indication, Bob and Tim have another winner on their hands! This one sold out pretty quickly. Bob could have easily sold twice the number of these sets if he had them available! I understand that the *Mr. Norm's Dart* and *Dodge Charger* from Revell are not too far behind. *And I hear some big things planned for next year as well from 'The Garage, so keep yer eyes peeled!!*
- **'For the Birds!'** Remember the plug I had in last month's newsletter about that new *Hemmings publication, 'Hemmings Rods & Performance' magazine?* Well, I just picked up a copy to see what it was like, and there are some real *boneheads* I there! Take for example the guy with the *'real' 1969 Trans Am convertible (one of 8)* who claims it to be both *'real and restorable'*. The asking price? *\$350,000 (firm!)* I guess at this rate, the guys with the *documented 1962 (\$22,000) and '63 (\$134,500, restored and documented!) Super Duty Catalinas (the '63 car is also a 'Swiss Cheese' model, meaning the frame contains lightening holes, making it look like the cheese of the same name) are 'WAY underpriced! Get a life, dude!*
- **Rear-drive hot rods making a comeback?!** The success of *big European and Asian rear-wheel drive luxury sedans* has finally reached *back across the ocean to American manufacturers*. New rear-wheel drive models are reportedly on the drawing boards from *Cadillac, Lincoln, Chrysler, and Dodge*. And, future product plans show *more than 10 rear-drive sedans are likely to show up between the years 2002 and 2004!* Daimler-Chrysler, word on the street is that the front-wheel drive LH sedans (*Chrysler 300M, LHS, Concorde, and Intrepid*) may end up *rear-drive vehicles* in 2004! *Stay tuned, hot rodders!*
- **Kudos!** The latest *Scale Auto Enthusiast Contest Annual* has hit the shelves, and includes *MAMA's BoyZ Chad Shapiro, Bill Geary, Ron Hamilton, Max Wolfthal, and Matt Guilfoyle. Congrats, guys, and thanks to MAMA's Boy Steve Strauss* for the scoop!
- **Avanti returns to the living!** The first of the *2001 models* rolled off the assembly line two weeks ago in *Villa Rica, Ga.*, making for the *third rebirth* of the car. The new company, *Avanti Motor Corp.*, has firm orders for about *60 cars*, and could build as many as *150 cars* in this model year. *Michael Kelly, company chairman* believes that the market is there for up to about *300 cars a year*, but no more. They intend to keep the pace slow and easy, in order to maintain the car as a *hand-built automobile*. There are two models - a *convertible*, which sells for *\$83,000*, and a *coupe*, which sells for 'only' *\$69,900*. The cars feature a General Motors platform beneath their fiberglass skin.
- **New T-Bird sets record!** The *latest Nieman Marcus Christmas Book 2000* includes a *2002 Ford Thunderbird*, for only *\$41,995*. But don't try to order one, because the car *sold out* in *only one hour and 45 minutes*, after being released in late September! Photos reveal a *black coupe*, with a *removable silver hardtop*. A 3.9-liter V-8 engine powers the car. Sadly, *Christmas delivery is not guaranteed!*
- **The Rich get Poorer!?** An *Internet millionaire (a.k.a. a 'Dot.com' millionaire)* was recently *caught and ticketed* for driving his *Ferrari* in downtown Helsinki. His ticket was for *excessive lane changing, endangering other traffic*. His fine? *\$44,100!!* You see, in Finland, there is *no limit on traffic fines* - the *higher an offender's income, the higher the fine!* Jaakko Rytola, 27, is quite obviously fighting this one! The *previous unofficial record* was held by *NHL star Teemu Selanne*, who was fined *\$40,200* in June. Thanks to *Matt Guilfoyle* for this bit of humor!
- **SMART in Japan!** *Daimler Chrysler* says it will begin selling the *SMART car* in *Japan* next year, in hopes of increasing its sales there. The car, equipped with a *693-cc engine*, will be sold at 293 Mercedes-Benz and Mitsubishi

Motors Corp. domestic dealers. D-C owns a 34 percent stake in *Mitsubishi Motors Corp.* The hope is to sell about 500 of the minicars this year, and between 7,000 to 8,000 in 2001. D-C is set to release a *convertible* model in 2001, and a *right-hand drive model* in 2002. Thanks to *the Washington Times*.

- **Less is More!** Looks as though the US may see a *totally new Mini Cooper* as early as 2002. Introduced in 1959 under the *Austin and Morris* brands, the *Mini* arrived in the US a year later, with a price tag of only \$1,295 in 1960. New *safety* and *emission concerns* drove the car from the US after *only about 10,000* had been *sold* between the years of 1960 and 1967. When *BMW* bought the *Rover group*, which also makes cars in the U.K., BMW decided to revive the Mini in America. They moved production to *Oxford*, where state-of-the-art production processes were put into place, allowing as many as *100,000 Minis* to be *produced the first year alone*. The new Mini will be somewhat larger than its predecessor, having a 1.6-liter 4-cylinder for power, and a price reported to be well below \$20,000. Coincidentally enough, *130 representatives of the world automotive press* recently *voted the Mini* as the *European Car of the Century (the 20th, that is)*.
- **More on Minis!** The *'Toddler'* ceases production. The tiny *Polskie Fiat 126* finally ceased production after 27 years! Known as the car that put the Polish on the road, the car - also referred to as *'Maluch'*, it was also referred to as a *tin matchbox on wheels*, or a *roller skate for elephants*. The *first one* was sold in 1973, and cost the equivalent of *two years' salary*. A *joke* goes that the car, just *four feet wide* and *four feet tall*, was *so small that it earned a blessing from the Vatican because it was too small for teens to have sex in!!* Sales of the car, priced at \$4,300, fell about *20 percent last year to fewer than 29,000 cars*, while sales of the *more spacious* - and *twice as expensive Daewoo Lanos (made in Poland by South Korea's Daewoo)* rocketed to 40,000 cars from 8,000. Farewell!
- **Joysticks for future cars!** Again, from the boys at D-C (*Daimler Chrysler*) - after careful study, they propose that the steering wheel can be replaced by a *joystick control*, just like that found in *jet fighters!* It would be mounted in the center console, almost where the shifter is located. A push forward would put the car in motion; a pull back would reverse direction. And, left and right motions would steer the car. The benefit here could be a larger airbag in the absence of the steering wheel, to protect the driver in an accident. The center mounting would even allow the front seat passenger to drive if the driver became incapacitated for whatever reason. Again, thanks to *The Washington Times*.
- **Fast on Grass!** Remember some time ago, when this newsletter ran a story about *lawnmower racing*? Well, it's back, and bigger than ever! Witness the *Sixth Annual STA-BIL East Coast Regional and 18th annual Race Car extravaganza*, at nearby Harford County Airpark in Havre de Grace, MD! Better than *30 racers* made the trip from as far away as *Illinois* and *Wisconsin* to compete in one of four classes - *Stock*, *IMOW (International Mower of Weeds)*, *Prepared*, or *Factory Experimental*. Stock mowers are unaltered single-seat riding mowers with *blazing top speeds* between *8 and 10 mph*. *IMOW* mowers can travel up to 20 mph, and the *granddaddy* of 'em all, *Factory Experimental (or, simply, FX)* can reach speeds in *excess of 60 mph!* Lawnmower racing has become popular enough to warrant a *23-date national circuit*, and a *13-week series next year on Speedvision!* *Never fear, just like NASCAR, there is a sanctioning body to watch over the rules and deter* those who would stretch them - the *U.S. Lawnmower Racing Association*, or simply, *USLRA* for short. Again, in a similar fashion to NASCAR, I guess when speeds get too great, they'll bring out the *restrictor plates?! P.S. No blades of grass is safe are harmed - all competitors remove their blades prior to competition.*
- **Monkey Business!** Motorists traveling *Interstate 95* recently received the shock of their lives as they were *pelted with bananas and crab apples*. The twist here is that the *culprits* were *monkeys!* Obviously, state troopers had a hard time believing several witnesses until they witnessed the scene for themselves. They believe that the monkeys had possibly made good their escape from a traveling circus. *No word on whether or not they were recaptured*. So, watch for *flying bananas* if you are on Interstate 95 south!! Thanks to our own *Tim Powers* for this *'Kodak' moment!*
- **The e-car!** Electronic gadgetry coming out on cars in the near future is set to include: *'ReverseAid'*, an *obstacle detection warning system* with a range of about 20 feet, which would *aid in reversing* and *parking maneuvers*, without hitting anything; a *lane-change assistance system* on today's thicker A, B, and C-pillars would *aid in detecting cars in blind spots*; From Chrysler, we can expect *tiny cameras* that would replace *rear-view mirrors*, that would display traffic around you on a *small dashboard screen*; *adaptive cruise control*, which would *automatically sense vehicles around you*, and *change the vehicles speed to compensate*; the *Jeep Grand Cherokee* will soon sport an *infrared sensor* which would *'feel' your body heat*, and *automatically adjust the climate control* for front-seat passengers; and, finally, an *automated service*, which, by *remote control*, would control several of the vehicle's functions, such as *opening and closing doors*, *retracting the sunroof*, or *disabling the engine* in the case of theft! Computers can be wonderful things, when they work correctly!
- **More Club meetings.** Mark Wheeler, founder of the *"Our Model is Christ" model car club*, has announced their *2000 meeting schedule: January 16th, February 20th, March 19th, April 9th, May 21st, June 11th, July 9th, August 13th, September 17th, October 22nd, November 12th, and December 3rd (Christmas gift exchange and Christmas party as well!)*. Mark's club meets at *Fork Christian Church, 6908 Sunshine Avenue, Fork, Maryland*

21051, (410) 592-2292. Meetings will be held from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. on Sundays. For further info, call Mark at (410) 551-4230.

## COMING EVENTS

- ❑ Oct. 22nd- 3rd Annual Cancer Cure Cruise, Car show, & Parade at Meriweather Post Pavilion, in Columbia, MD. For info, call (410) 531-6737.
- ❑ Oct 28th- TAMS Eighth Annual Model Car/Truck Contest and Swap Meet, hosted by the Tidewater Automotive Modelers Society, Hungate's Hobbies/Hobbytown USA/Phillip's Oldsmobile at the PARC, 5301 Princess Anne Road in Norfolk, VA 23502 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Entry fee is \$7.00 for all unlimited adult entries, teens 13-18 are \$3.00, and juniors 12 and under are free. Show Theme - "Y2K Production Name" (Ex: Buick Skylark). For info, call Paul Baxter at (757) 474-1581, Jerry Quick at (757) 468-6854, or Jim Sottile at (757) 431-1488.
- ❑ Oct. 29th- 51st Pennsylvania Model car, Diecast, & Kit Collector's meet at the Gilbertsville Fire Hall in Gilbertsville, PA from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Admission is \$4.00, children 12 and under are free. For info, contact John Carlisle.
- ❑ Nov. 5th- 61st Capitol Miniature Auto Collectors Club Show from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Dunn Loring Volunteer Fire House Community Hall, in Dunn Loring, VA. For info, contact James William Brostrom, 6632 Cardinal Lane Annandale, VA 22003.
- ❑ Nov. 11th- Modcon 2K Third Annual Model Show and Contest sponsored by the North Central West Virginia Scale Modelers at the Ramada Inn [(304) 296-3431] in Morgantown, WV. Trophies for 1st through 3rd, 10+ "Best of..." Awards, 45+ Contest categories, and room for 75+ vendor tables! Last year's show had over 500 models in competition. For info, E-mail Tom Gilpin at [tgilpin@wvu.edu](mailto:tgilpin@wvu.edu), Chip Wamsley at [chip@wamsleycycles.com](mailto:chip@wamsleycycles.com), or Gary Kulchock at [gkulchock@aol.com](mailto:gkulchock@aol.com), or visit their website at <http://wvnm.wvnet.edu/~tgilpin/home.html>.
- ❑ Nov. 11th- 2000 NNL Southern Nationals hosted by the Atlanta Car Model Enthusiasts (ACME) at the Smyrna Community Center in Smyrna, Georgia. Themes are Box Stock, and Car of the Century! For Vendor info, contact Paul Wehner at 2459 Jacks View Ct. Snellville, GA 30078, (770) 985-5953.
- ❑ Nov. 25th- 2nd Delaware Model Car, Diecast, & Kit Collector's meet at the NUR Shrine Temple on Rt. 13 and Rt. 40 split, just off I-95. For info, contact John Carlisle.
- ❑ Nov. 26th- 19th Annual Greater York Toy, Train, & Doll Show in the Memorial Hall from 9a.m. to 3 p.m. at the York Expo Center in York, PA. Last year's show contained over 800 tables! Admission is \$4.00 per person. For info, contact Barry Skelly at (717) 845-2458 (daytime), or (717) 225-1481 (evenings), or Mike Skelly at (717) 755-7448 (evenings).
- ❑ Dec. 2nd & 3rd-11th Annual Street Cars of Desire Car Show at the MD State Fairgrounds, in the Cow Palace at Timonium, MD.
- ❑ Dec. 10th- 1st Annual DC Motorsports Expo at the Capital Expo Center (North building) in Chantilly, VA. Factory displays, Vendors, collectible show.

## CLASSIFIEDS

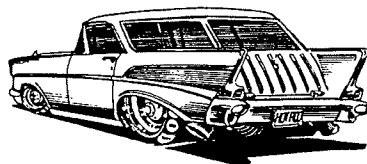
**FOR SALE** – 1968 Pontiac 455 HO bored .060 over, with an extra set of heads for \$600. E-mail Dan Chicorelli at [danchic@netzero.com](mailto:danchic@netzero.com).

**FOR SALE** – Assorted kits, ranging from Street Rods, to Exotics, to Pickup trucks. Thinning collection, not quitting. See me at a meeting for a list. Tim Sickle (Or, E-mail me at [gtoguy@mindspring.com](mailto:gtoguy@mindspring.com)).

**WANTED** - Back issues of Motor Racing Replica News and/or Motor Racing Models. Contact me by E-mail at [thereckners@erols.com](mailto:thereckners@erols.com), or see me at an upcoming meeting (J C Reckner)

Anyone having an item for the newsletter, whether it is a Bit, a Piece or even a Classified, it can be included by contacting one of the individuals listed below:

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