

My 1941 Chevy ¾ ton Truck

By Todd Schimmel

When I was young my friend's dad had some cool cars that inspired me. My favorite was a baby blue mid '70's Chevy truck. This probably explains why I've always been a truck guy. After all, my first vehicle was a 1969 Chevy stepside with a 250 straight six and "3 on the tree."

When I started at my current job, I became friends with Bull Run Region member, Tom Potter. I got a little envious over Tom's small fleet of collector cars and told him I'd like to have a truck: A '47 - '53 Chevy would fit the bill. He followed up and periodically sent me leads. Meanwhile, I scoured the classifieds.

One day, while visiting his father, Nelly, in York, PA, Tom found out that a Street Rod show was going on. Driving around, he stopped when he saw the '41 wearing a "For Sale" sign. *This might be the one for Todd.* Tom and Nelly went to speak with the owner, Joe Sarcone. After a test drive he told me I should get it. It was cool!

That next weekend, my wife, Doris, and I drove up with our dog in tow. The dog was to keep her company on the ride home if I bought the truck. Turns out it was a good idea. A really nice guy, Joe told me this was his knockaround shop truck. He had a couple of show cars and wanted to use the money from this sale to fund a GTO build. He also had a Model A street rod that was featured in a couple of magazines.

I looked the truck over and crawled underneath to check it out. It had the same patina on it as it does today and there wasn't any rust on anything important. It even had the original wood in the bed and still does. Joe started it up and it sounded good. I then took it for a short test drive. Joe told me there wasn't an e-brake (still isn't one) and that the transmission kick-down wasn't hooked up (but it is now). Sitting in the driver's seat, I was pretty enthralled with everything. I was soaking it all in, the dash, the exhaust note, the rumble, the cushy seat, the one windshield wiper - all of it. Before starting out, Joe reminded me to put my foot on the brake before putting it into reverse. As I backed out of his driveway, I was hooked. I was going home with this truck that day.

After a short test drive, we went over some particulars. The truck was originally from North Dakota. Joe didn't tell me how he stumbled on it, but he told me about his modifications. The paint (what's left) is original except for the right front fender, which was replaced at some point and wears a primer coat. The headlight buckets are off a '46. You can tell because of the running lights. I will change those running lights back to the '41 style soon. All the gauges are original and work. The steering column was replaced with one from a '90's Chevy truck with tilt wheel. The seat was reupholstered, but the original headliner needs to be replaced soon. The period aftermarket heater works well and as Joe put it, "will run you outta there."

Here are some facts that pertained when I bought my truck:

Engine - 305 V8 from an 86 Firebird with Edelbrock intake and Holley 650 4bbl.

Trans - Turbo Hydramatic 400 from an early '60's car and Locar Shifter.

Rear - Ford 9" 3.335 ratio from a Thunderbird

Front End - Mustang 2 (real Mustang 2 - not a kit).

Wheels - Steel rims with mid '90's police small diameter hubcaps.

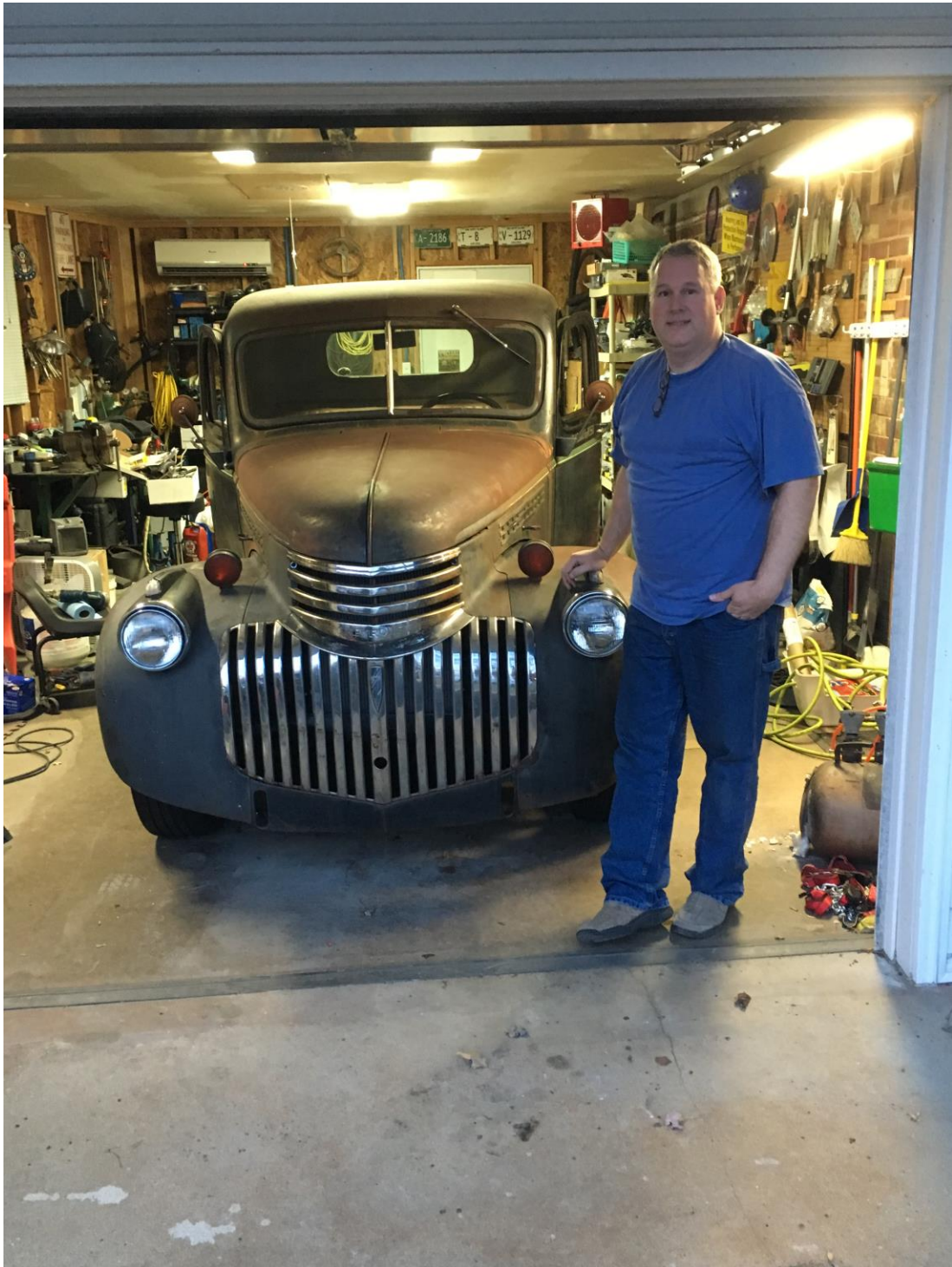
After I started to drive and enjoy the truck, I discovered the engine had a low-end knock. This was heard after it warmed up and was running at highway speeds. On my early Saturday morning drives to Great Falls for Cars and Coffee, I could really hear the sound bouncing off the jersey wall. I got nervous that I would get stranded at some point. I continued to drive the truck, but sparingly and easily, while I looked for a suitable replacement engine.

I found a complete 400 SBC that came out of a '70 Impala. It was complete from pan to the original 2bbl carburetor. I thought this would make a neat combination, '41 with a 400 and TBH400 - triple 4.

I completely rebuilt this engine from crank to intake, adding some mild performance items in the build. I had a local machine shop go over the block and bore it 0.030" over. Then I assembled the engine myself - from crank to intake all in my garage. With Tom's help one weekend, we dropped it in the truck. I didn't want to fuss with a carburetor, so I decided on a throttle-

body fuel injection unit. I bought an early FI-Tech system at Carlisle, but it proved very fussy. So I replaced it with a Holley Sniper and haven't had a problem since.

I've thoroughly enjoyed the truck and get lots of compliments about it. The most common question I get is do I intend to restore it? I don't think anytime soon. The original lettering on the doors is just too cool for me to mess with. Anyway, it lives in an air-conditioned garage, which should keep it from degrading any further. You may see me out and about in it. Maybe at one Saturday at Katies Cars and Coffee, Alexandria Cars and Coffee, or the Burger King in Manassas. Or at one of the many other shows including the Rohr show.



Todd Schimmel with his pride and joy 1941 Chevy ¼-ton pickup truck. That beautiful art deco grille sure looks vulnerable.



Note the “poverty” or “dogdish” hubcaps on the original wheels.



Note the single windshield wiper and the lettering on the doors that Todd wants to preserve.



The truck is really transformed by bright new mag wheels.



Katies Cars and Coffee always attracts an eclectic group of vehicles at Great Falls on Saturday mornings.

