

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

# No Transfer Case



## Series TGIF

Fred Nelson  
www.frednelsonracing.com

Over the years, most car guys continue to build project vehicles. As newer and better things come along, we end up with something more streetable and user-friendly – but overkill in the power department.

Al Mikl seems to like Jeeps. His first buildup was a 1948 Jeep CJ-3A. Yes, they came out in 1949, but this early-production one came to him registered as a '48. The first and last year of a production-run are always the most sought-after.

It was all-original right down to the Autumn Brown paint, and after 33 years, it was pretty ugly.

In the restoration, the color was changed to period-correct Harbor Blue. The tired little 134 cubic inch four cylinder "Go Devil" engine was upgraded to a Buick V6, along with the rest of the drivetrain.

Oh, and it had to have 36-inch Swampers and an 8-inch lift kit; top speed was 60 mph either on or off-road. It required a stepladder to climb in.

In 1979 Al bought a new Jeep CJ7 Golden Eagle. After many years of faithful service he restored it to showroom condition.

It was really nice...but even the guys in the local Mopar Club barely took notice, even though American Motors had become a part of Chrysler. And the Jeep guys, well, the

more trail-ready mods, the better.

One thing we have observed is that, whether consciously or subconsciously, most car guys will eventually end up with a street rod.

A lot of unique designs begin with the words "what if..." In Al's case, three years of careful planning went into his latest creation.

Odd body styles have been hot lately. A Jeep CJ is not that odd, but what if it had way too much power, handled like a sports car, and instead of reaching for the sky, sat real low? You know...



Attitude, not Altitude.

What had begun as a resto-mod hit the first snag when Al discovered the third crack in the frame. Time to rethink things. Even the most careful plan is subject to change.

A call to Scott's Hot Rods in California assured him that a custom chassis could be built



to specifications. Those specs had to be precise, however.

Since a complete new steel body tub was now available from Willys Overland in Toledo, Ohio, this sounded better than a lot of bodywork. Plans included a custom paint job, so all the spotwelds were filled.

When the Scott's chassis arrived it featured their tubular A-arm suspension with rack & pinion power steering and a beefy Moser 9-inch posi diff with 4-link.

Air bags are on all four corners, as are big Wilwood disc brakes. Rather than huge

off-road wheels and tires, Cobra 17 x 8 and 17 x 10 mags with knockoffs mount 40-series speed-rated radials.

From one of his connections in Spokane, Al ordered a balanced 420-horse Chevy 355 aluminum-head engine. It has all the right stuff and bolts up to the Stage II Turbo 350 tranny.

A custom-built one-piece fibreglass front end was ordered, complete with fender flares that match the rears. All that's needed now is a fake winch.



The exhaust called for chrome side pipes, so that would seem like one of the easier jobs. Nope.

On his sixth round-trip (14 miles) to Mopac, Al found a set of Chevy Suburban headers that would work with minor mods...and re-ceramic-coating.

A suggestion was made to powdercoat the entire chassis, but Al is glad he decided against it. And lucky. The last-minute relocation of the motor mounts and transmission crossmember would have been a disaster otherwise. After three years and with everything trial-fitted a dozen times, Street Heat was chosen to paint the body Plum Crazy Purple, with the chassis and accents Panther Pink.

These are two of the most radical Mopar colors. We'll see if anyone, anywhere fails to notice it now. In the recent World Of Wheels, it was well-received and picked up it's first batch of hardware. You can see it on our website.

The only thing left to do

now is get the little beast dyno-tuned and then comes the roadtest. Until the roads have had all the little gravel swept up, that will have to wait. With this kind of



power-to-weight and that short wheelbase, it is easy to swap ends without warning.

Al is a low-key kind of guy. This Jeep...not so much.

Fred Nelson is an accredited Calgary auto appraiser who owns and operates Fast Car Appraisals and Nelson Racing. He has no credentials whatsoever as an Automotive Journalist, nor does he have any inclination to acquire same. However, you can reach him at 403-242-3856 or frednelsonracing.com



403-242-1575 • 425 58th AVE. SE

The Mustang  
& Classic  
Specialists

Spring Thaw  
THIS  
WEEKEND