



THE *Skyliner*

April 2021 Issue 403

Celebrating our 50th Year



Issue 403 - April 2021

The Skyliner

Published by the International Ford Club

Celebrating our 50th Year

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INSIDE:

4 Board Reports

Reports from our officers

6 Comments, Quips and Other Chatter

News from our members

8 Skyliner: a Design Triumph

Car collector, Dave Dunlavy, on his 1959 Skyliner

12 Speaking of Fords...

Dave Dunlavy talks about his collection

13 Welcome New Members

A list of our newest members

14 Tech Advice

Dave Owens on deck lid jack bearing replacement

20 The Future of the Hobby

Dave Owens talks about inspiring the next generation

22 Board Meeting Minutes

Important minutes from two email meetings

24 Convention Registration

25 Retractable Registration

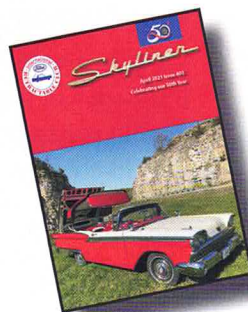
28 Classifieds

ON THE COVER:

Dave Dunlavy was so intrigued by the design of the Skyliner, that he just had to have one.

Dave and his wife, Bev, have enjoyed many road trips in this car, as well as in the many other cars in their collection.

Story begins on page 8.



The Skyliner: a Design Triumph

Collector of vintage cars sets his sights on the "modern" Skyliner

BY DAVE DUNLAVY

When I graduated from high school in 1957, one of my classmates got a new 1957 Skyliner. It ended its life on its top near the drive-in movie theater. Miraculously, no one was killed. He replaced it with a new 1958 Skyliner.

As a collector, I had not been interested in later model cars until I realized the Skyliner was a major design accomplishment. This engineering marvel was designed long before computers.

I happened to see a rough 1957 on an open trailer in a Walmart parking lot. After seeing it, I became seriously interested in getting one to restore. Fortunately, the owner of that one turned down my over-generous offer.

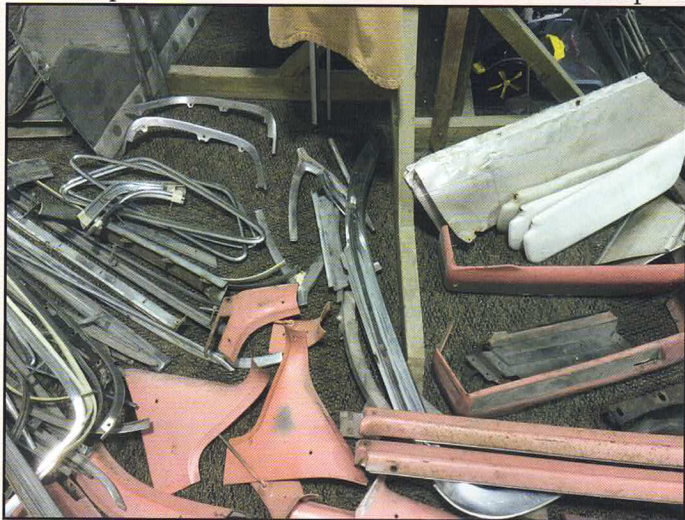
A friend of mine told me about a man who had tens of retractables just 65 miles away from us. I was lucky to meet Rudy Busche and get a 3-hour tour of his collection. My attempt to buy a restorable car from him was in vain, but the experience was invaluable.

After looking at many ads for cars to restore, I found a car on Craig's List with 19 pictures of it. They were exactly the kind of pictures you would want to see when buying a car.



The car didn't have much rust. It would run and had a title.

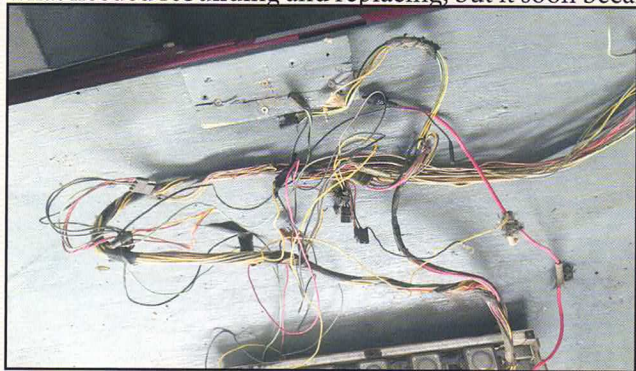
When I showed the pictures to my mechanic friend, another fellow also looked at the pictures and said, "that's a 292 Y-block with a 2-barrel carburetor." Since I would not know a Y-block engine if it bit me on the ankle, I got to know the onlooker and arranged with him to help me. He knew most of the important stuff I did not know and wanted to help with



the project. I bought the car.

The windows, stainless trim, and most of the chrome were off the car also. The 600 feet of top wiring had been removed and was in a pile. Lucky for me, about 50 pounds of bolts, nuts, and hardware came with the car. Hours of ultrasonic cleaning and sorting were necessary.

My goal was to have a reliable car that could be driven safely anywhere on tours and shows. My new friend and I agreed on what needed rebuilding and replacing, but it soon became



a huge project.

The car had been a frame-off restoration, but it was so long ago most of it needed to be redone. We rebuilt the front suspension replacing everything with the slightest wear.

After alignment, the car drives straight, and the brakes will throw you through the windshield. We replaced the rear springs, the brake cylinders and lines, shoes, turned the drums, and installed power brakes. Shock absorbers were replaced with gas filled modern ones.

The engine had been replaced with a 292 Y-block with a 2-barrel carburetor with reportedly 37,000 miles. The speedometer is from the donor car, also. I was told Y-blocks are noisy and leak-prone, but this engine is quiet and smoke-free. After more than 1500 miles, it has performed very well. The transmission is 3-on-the-tree with overdrive. After connecting the overdrive, it works great.

When we worked on the top mechanism, all 22 bushings were replaced. The gearboxes and motors were rebuilt by myself and two lads I mentor. Re-assembling the top mechanism with the six motors, ten solenoids, and more adjustable switches than I care to count was not easy.

Using Ford manuals and schematics, we made the operation reliable. I built a switchbox with lights showing the motor operation to aid in adjusting all the top functions. A wireless top-up & top-down control was added. When I show the top operation by saying "Alexa Top Up" and press the remote control hidden in my pocket, whole families are entertained. This is the first retractable hardtop they have seen in action.

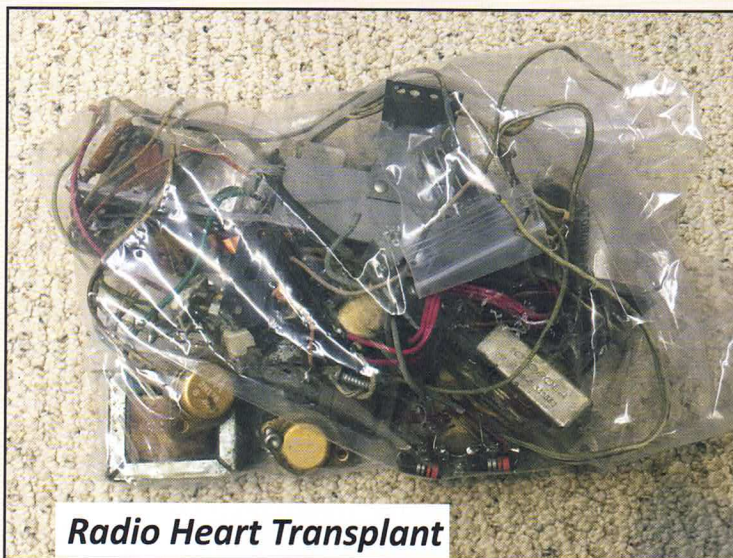
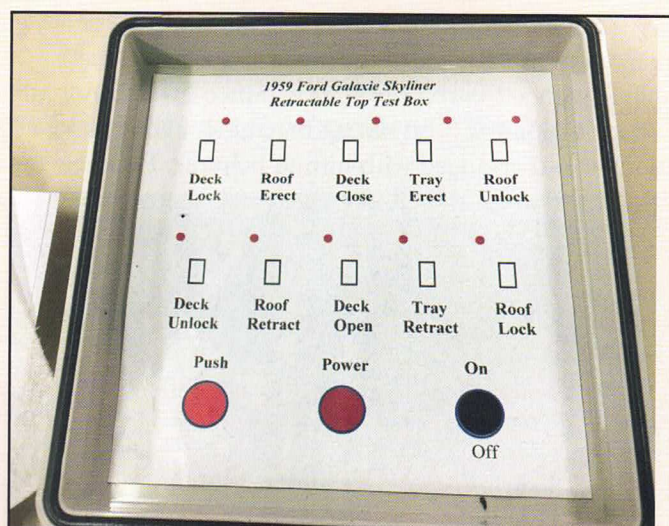
The AM Town & Country radio with station seeking had a heart transplant to add FM and four 40-watt channels, but the faceplate is original. S&M Electro-Tech, Inc., Blaine, MN, removed pounds of old tube style electronics but kept the motor driving the seek function. The Aurora Design Products printed circuit makes the original controls to all the modern functions of signal seeking, balance, fader, and AM/FM selecting.



Some of the chrome had pits that had to be filled and then re-plated. The stainless-steel trim was straightened and polished to an unbelievable shine. All this was done by Iverson Restorations, Minnetonka, MN. This model has more bright work than any other car I've ever worked on.

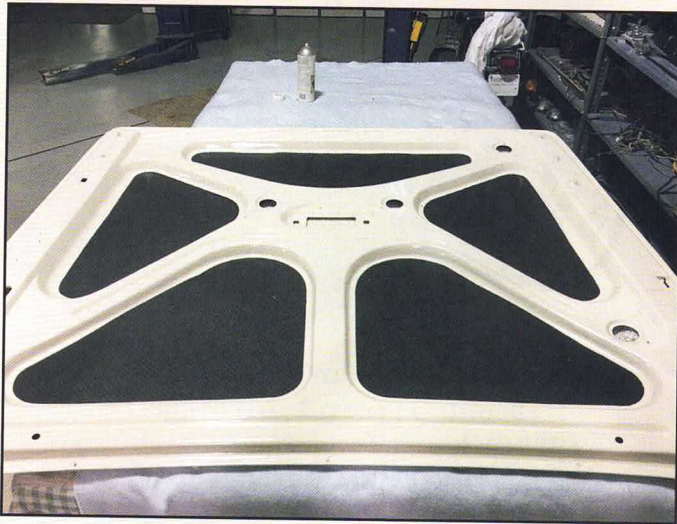
Rob's Auto Body, Ridgeway, IA, did a great job making the panels fit and then painted the car with water base Torch Red and Colonial White paint. The clearcoat makes it vibrant in the sunlight.

Our family has enjoyed watching the progress over the last four years. Now Morgan (granddaughter 16) and Brady (grandson 15) have started to drive their first car with a clutch.





“When I show the top operation by saying "Al-exa Top Up" and press the remote control hidden in my pocket, whole families are entertained.”



We now have a beautiful '59 that drives like a modern car that we can drive anywhere in the USA reliably. It is comfortable and drives well at modern speeds.



Speaking of Fords . . .

BY DAVE DUNLAVY

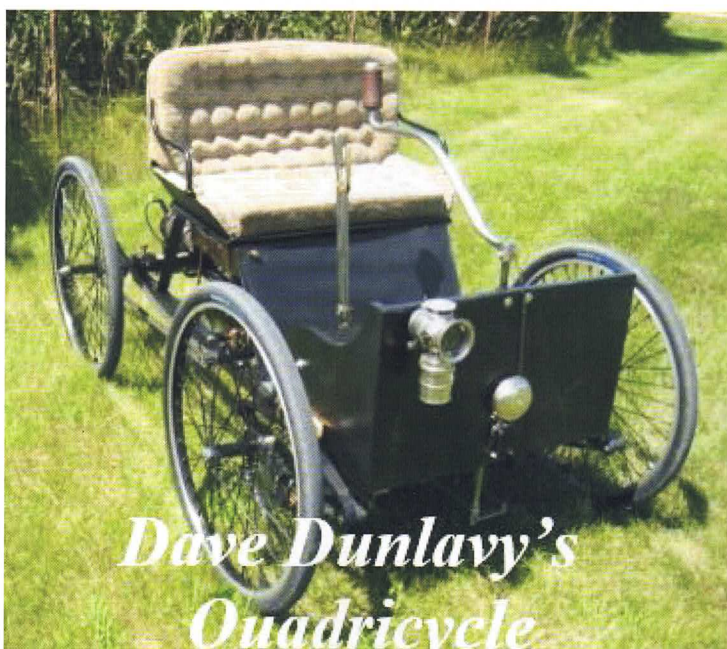
I chose a new hobby after many years of working on and flying light airplanes. An old car man I met suggested that, since it was his opinion the Model T Ford was a much better car than the Model A Ford, it is what I should have.

He sold me a 1927 Model T Ford Touring car. It was a good candidate for restoration.

By this time, I had gone on a couple of Model T tours in a modern car. I saw they were a lot of fun. A national tour was coming up in several months, so I realized I didn't have time to do a complete restoration of the touring car. After much book research, I decided to build a speedster with a home-made wood body. Bev and I drove it thousands of miles on many tours and made many new friends.

After the first car, I restored a 1910 Ford Touring car and built a 1914 Ford Model T Depot Hack in the next few years. Again, thousands of miles were enjoyed with those cars.

I became intrigued with early Ford History and learned about the cars before the Model T. I restored a 1908 Ford Model S Roadster from a pile of parts and toured it many years.



*Dave Dunlavy's
Quadricycle*

Henry Ford never had any written plans for his first car. I heard about a man who drew plans for Henry's Quadricycle. I built one from his plans and became friends with him. During his last days, we had an agreement. He collected the money for the plans, and I delivered them electronically.

The plans have now been donated to the 1903-1909 Early Ford Registry, Inc., of which I am one of the founders. More than 100 folks have driven my quadricycle to date.

My last early Ford project was a 1905 Ford Model F. I started with an original Ford 12 hp two-cylinder engine and pounds of rough castings. The engine had the motor number stamped on the flywheel, which I needed to get a title. Several restored Model F's were documented with pictures. A man from Tasmania sent me full scale templates for the body on brown wrapping paper. Quite a few drawings are available from the Benson Ford Research Center. The body is constructed entirely from wood. We have now driven this car over 1500 miles. The most famous tour is the New London New Brighton Run in Minnesota, which covers 120 miles in one day.

