

# Auto buffs' pride rests in creations

By Jean Adamczak  
staff writer

Farmington Hills resident Clark Kibler likes to get together and "kick tires" with people. To the average person that may sound strange, but not to car buffs like Kibler who belongs to the Michigan Roadster Club, an affiliate of the National Street Rod Association.

"It's a very un-club club," Kibler says of the 15-member roadster club. "Kicking tires" happens when old-car enthusiasts gather to talk about building and restoring old cars. A lot of that will be happening this weekend, when nearly 1,600 street rods will be on display at the 8th Annual Street Rod Nationals North at the Michigan State Fairgrounds, Sept. 14-16.

Kibler will be there with his 1934 black Ford roadster, a car he built during his spare time over a two-year period.

"I'm not going to sell this one," says Kibler, patting the car affectionately. "This one is my favorite." Kibler, 42, has built more than 35 cars, most of them pre-1935 roadsters. A roadster is distinguished from other cars in that it has a top that comes off and does not have roll-up windows, says Kibler.

An engineer with Mobil Oil, Kibler grew up in Southern California and moved to Farmington Hills four years ago.

When he was 11, Kibler says his older brother gave him an old flathead, V-8 engine to practice his building skills.

"My brother told me I had to practice on that first, before I could help him work on his cars," Kibler laughs.

He builds cars from scratch, from pieces he finds "here and there," doing everything except the upholstery and the chrome fittings.

Kibler says he found a couple of pieces used on his roadster hanging on a barn in South Lyon.

"It's sort of like a grapevine," Kibler says of searching for car parts. "Someone hears you are looking for a certain piece and they tell someone else, and so on, until you get the particular part."

Building old cars can be an expensive time-consuming hobby. Kibler estimates he has spent \$8,000 to \$30,000 averaging about 10 hours on a weekend and three or four hours during the week in building his cars.

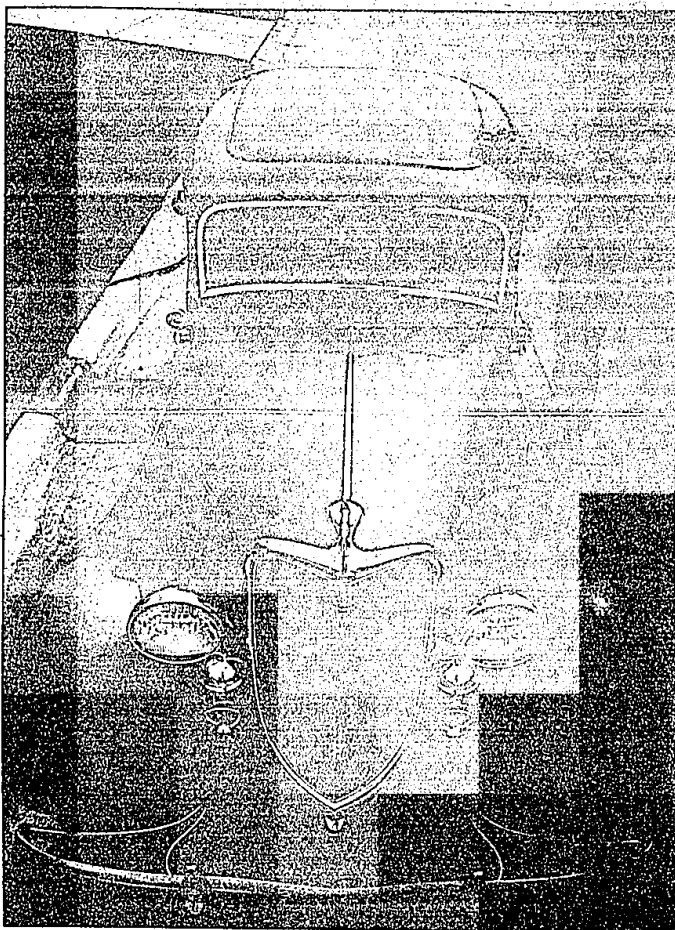
"I usually end up selling them because someone gives me an offer I can't refuse."

His latest creation though, is his favorite.

"This one has all the little extras in it I've ever wanted," he says. "This one is pretty much it."

ANOTHER FARMINGTON HILLS resident, Richard Mueller, is also interested in historic cars and is the proud owner of a 1934 two-door Ford sedan.

"I was interested in cars before I could even drive," said the 41-year-old car enthusiast.



Richard Mueller takes meticulous care of his 1934 Ford sedan. A Sunday drive can result in two weeks of cleaning time for Mueller.



Clark Kibler tinkers with his four-cylinder, 270 horsepower Ford engine.

# His Ford is better idea with help of GM parts

By Doug Funke  
staff writer

Jim Gobart, of Troy, owns a 1923 Ford — sort of. The car looks like a 1923 Ford but virtually all of its mechanical parts were scavenged from General Motors products, cleaned, then attached to a frame and an aluminum body fashioned by Gobart.

The car will be displayed with nearly 1,600 others this weekend at the fifth annual Street Rod Nationals North show at the State Fairgrounds in Detroit.

Gobart, 34, modestly admits that his car will get some special attention because it's one of the few in the entire show which is completely handmade.

The gold two-seater with a removable top and a rumble seat was built over a four-year period in the mid 1970s, Gobart said. It's probably worth \$40,000, but he has no intention of selling.

"I did it for a lot of reasons," he said. "I enjoy working with my hands a great deal. I like anything with a motor in it. I've always been fascinated with old cars."

"I WAS always a car nut when I was a kid," Gobart said. "I had an older brother who had some-

thing to do with it. I wanted a street rod as early as junior high."

All of the work was done in the backyard and garage at his house. The engine — a 330 cc V-8 — came from a '73 Chevy. The rear suspension is from a '68 Corvette, the steering column from a '78 Pontiac.

Gobart bent one-sixteenth-inch aluminum for the body on an English wheel, and did his own assembling and painting. It was a labor of love.

"As far as actual money spent, it wasn't much because I did all the work myself," he said. "If you figure man hours, it would be a tremendous amount."

Gobart, an engineering technician, concedes that his work background served him well during the project. "You don't learn doing this job," he said. "You better know what you're doing when you start."

A Street Rod National isn't a competition, as such, with judging, Gobart said.

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The 350cc engine with eight cylinders provides plenty of power for Jim Gobart's Street Rod.

## Anne Klein II

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