

10 YEARS GEAR-HEAD GAZETTE

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Saturday, August 21, 2021

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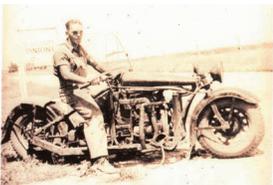
Mitch Gordon will kick off the Music on the Main Stage.



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Hlousek Special

A bike built entirely out of car parts dubbed the Hlousek Special can be found on Gear-Head's 10-year anniversary T-shirt



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Gear-Head Map & Swap Meet

Your key to the Gear-Head Get Together is in this handy map.



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Gear-Head Get Together set for August 21st

"American Wall of Death" Coming to Maple Lake!

By Brenda Erdahl

Maple Lake's Gear-Head Get Together turns 10 years old on Saturday, August 21 and boy has it grown.

What started with a couple dozen old cars on display by the creamery in downtown Maple Lake has morphed into the community's largest event of the year and one of the most unique "car shows" in the state and perhaps the country.

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Gear-Head's philosophy of no plaques, no trophies, just a bunch of mechanical-minded folks getting together to talk about common interests and see something they don't see every day has led to large crowds gathering into downtown Maple Lake for the past 10 years. This Annual event is now one of the largest events of the year!



Daring and talented riders will wow spectators as they race on the American Motordrome Company Wall of Death at Maple Lake's Gear-Head Get Together, Aug. 21.

Wall of Death will entertain crowds

Motorcycle thrill show must be seen to believe

By Brenda Erdahl

Folks may remember from their childhood at the Minnesota State Fair the sights and sounds of motorcycle daredevils as they defied gravity, traveling at break-neck speeds along the vertical walls of a silo-shaped wooden cylinder aptly called, the Wall of Death.

In days gone by, the thrill show was a regular at the state fairgrounds in St. Paul

but hasn't been around much since, said Gear-Head founder Scott Chantland. In August, it returns to Minnesota, this time to little ole' Maple Lake as part of the big-time fun that is the Gear-Head Get Together.

Every hour from morning to late afternoon the American Motor Drome Company will perform daring and

- Continued on page 10-

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BUFFALO LOCATION

Mitch Gordon

kicks off the live music on the Main Stage

By Brenda Erdahl

Maple Lake's own country sensation Mitch Gordon will headline at this year's Gear-Head Get Together, Saturday, Aug. 21.

Called a "country music fan's dream," Gordon and the Unleaded Band will appeal to fans of Waylon, Merle, Turnpike Troubadours, Alan Jackson, Aaron Watson and more.

Gordon grew up in Maple Lake as Mitch Elsenpeter and started performing when he was just 16 years old, making it difficult but not impossible to book venues that were 21 and older.

His dad Mike Elsenpeter was his musical inspiration. A one-man-band, Mike plays the concertina and it's like having a five-piece band playing behind him, Gordon said. Mike favors country western and old-time music and he passed that love down to his son. Gordon is known for playing a mix of cover songs from Merle Haggard and Buck Owens to Brooks and Dunn. He'll even play a Luke Combs song, he said.

Making the play-list at every concert are also some of his home-grown originals like the purely country and always popular "Beer Joint" which debuted on his most recent album "Better Place." Gordon has released three studio albums in all. The other two are called "Top Shelf," and "All In." He also has two singles, "One Go Around" and "The River."

Gordon has spent the last decade touring in 14 different states and putting on shows at big venues like Winstock and Lakes Jam.

Fans have said listening to Gordon and the Unleaded Band play "is like traveling in a time machine through the great genera of country music; how it started, what got us here, and of course the modern country you hear on the radio today."

Described as a cross between George Strait classic country and Justin Moore, "He is sure to appeal to both hard core classic fans and the modern generation of country music lovers."

Gordon and the Unleaded Band will lead-off the main stage entertainers, per-



Mitch Gordon and the Unleaded Band will perform on the main stage at Gear-Head Get Together from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Gordon hails from Maple Lake and has been performing in front of audiences since he was just 16 years old.

forming from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Following Mitch Gordon and the Unleaded Band is Pullstart Diesel. Pullstart Diesel is a familiar face at Gear-Head. They will take the stage from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m. The main stage is located at the hub of all Gear-Head activity in the City Lot downtown Maple Lake. But the entertainment doesn't stop there. Performing in the Community Park on Division Street from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. is the Everett Smithson Band. This group was formed in 2005 and includes Everett Smithson on harp and vocals, Phil Schmid on guitar, Jeremy Johnson on drums and Bill Black on stand-up bass.



Mitch Gordon

10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Main Stage



Pullstart Diesel

2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Main Stage



Everett Smithson Band

11 a.m. - 3 p.m.



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TAKE A STROLL DOWN Birch Avenue

By Brenda Erdahl

Strolling down Birch Ave. N. near the old creamery at the Gear-Head Get Together is like entering the pages of a history book, a history book that is all about motorcycles.

Each year 100-plus bikes of all eras, makes and models turn up at the event for bike enthusiasts to study, ogle and admire. It's no wonder, really, that bikes are such a big part of Gear-Head with event founder Scott Chantland very much a motorcycle enthusiast himself.

For some, motorcycles are a hobby, for the Maple Lake resident, they are a lifestyle. An antique dealer



A pair of antique motorcycles draw the eyes of passer-byes at a previous year's get together. Each year 100-plus bikes of all eras, makes and models turn up at Gear-Head.



when he's not organizing extravagant get-togethers for other gear-heads, the older machines are among some of his favorites.

"Antiques are technically 100 years or older," Chantland said. "We have modern stuff and old stuff that show up." The history of the motorcycles goes back to the second half of the 19th century.

Ernest Michaux, son of a Paris blacksmith/bike maker, was the first to attach a small steam engine to a modern bicycle. That was in 1867. The very first commercial design for a self-propelled bike was a three-wheeled bike called the Butler Petrol Cycle built in 1884 by Englishman Edward Butler.

The rear wheel of the Butler was driven by a flat twin four stroke engine equipped with rotary valves and a float-fed carburetor with Ackermann steering,



Motorcycle Enthusiasts will find bikes of all eras at Gear-Head, from antiques, bottom left, to vintage, classic and modern, right. Photos from Messenger archives

state-of-the-art mechanics at the time. It was started with compressed air and speed was controlled by a throttle valve lever. There were no brakes, the rider stopped the machine by raising and lowering the rear wheel using a foot-operated lever. The weight of the machine was then born by two small castor wheels.

In the late 1880s dozens of designs and machines popped up throughout Germany, England and eventually America. In 1894 Holdebrand & Wolfmuller's design became the first to be called a motorcycle. The

- Continued on page 6-

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Hlousek Special

is one-of-a-kind bike

By Brenda Erdahl

Eighty-two years ago, a man named Hlousek wanted a motorcycle really bad. At least that's the opinion of Sid Chantland, owner of the 1939 motorcycle hand-built entirely out of car parts that he's dubbed the Hlousek Special.

It was the winter of 1939. The United States was emerging from the Great Depression and the world was on the cusp of war. Hlousek was a farmer in Belle Fourche South Dakota. Chantland doesn't know much more about him other than he had a son-in-law and together, with a bit of mechanical ingenuity, they built this motorcycle from scratch using only car parts.

"It doesn't have a motorcycle part on it," Chantland said. "He must have had a lot of junk cars and he must have wanted a motorcycle real bad."

A Ford Model T supplied most of the bike's parts including the frame and headlight. The engine and transmission came from a 1928 Chevy, the rear wheels are from a 1935 Ford and the front wheels are from a mid-30s Chevy.

The story goes that the son-in-law rode the bike to work for about a year before the U.S. got involved in the war. Then the bike was put on blocks and the tires reclaimed for other purposes since rubber was notoriously hard to come by during the war, and tires were nearly impossible to find.

"I'm sure he couldn't afford a motorcycle, but he had all these old car parts," Chantland said.

Chantland first heard about the

bike from a friend who found it at a junk yard in South Dakota in the early 1980s. It wasn't running, but it was intact. His friend owned it for many years before selling it to Chantland at an auction in the late 1990s. His friend had got it running, but by the time Chantland acquired it, the engine needed some work again.

"It's crude, crude, crude but (Hlousek) was some kind of engineer. It's not very polished, but he got the job done," Chantland said.

The Hlousek Special is the second home-made bike Chantland owns. His other bike has a car engine and wheels, but a blacksmith made the frame.

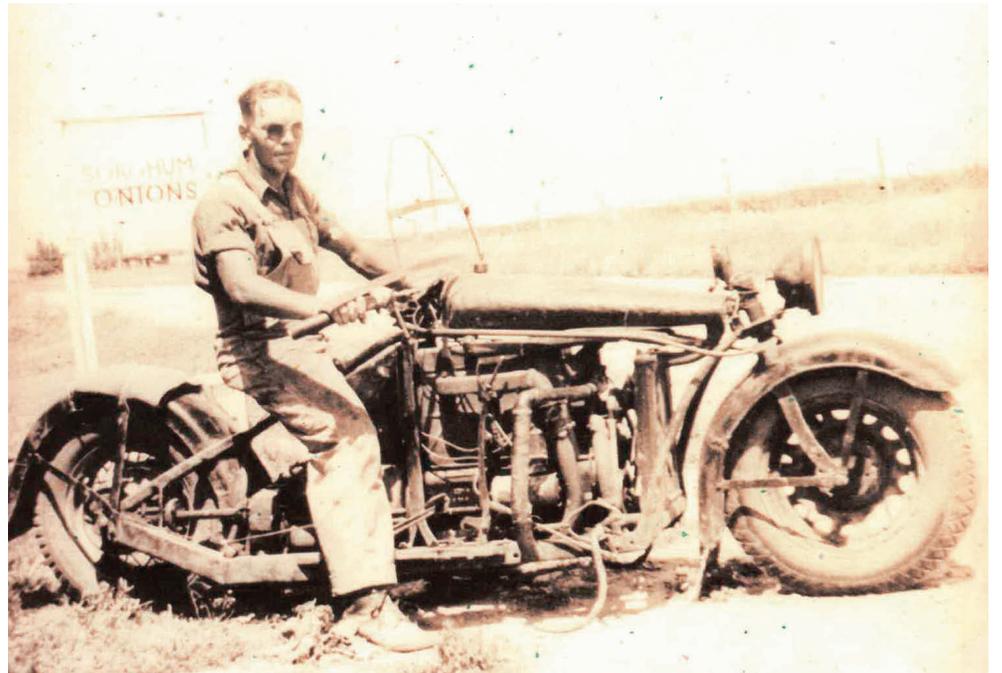
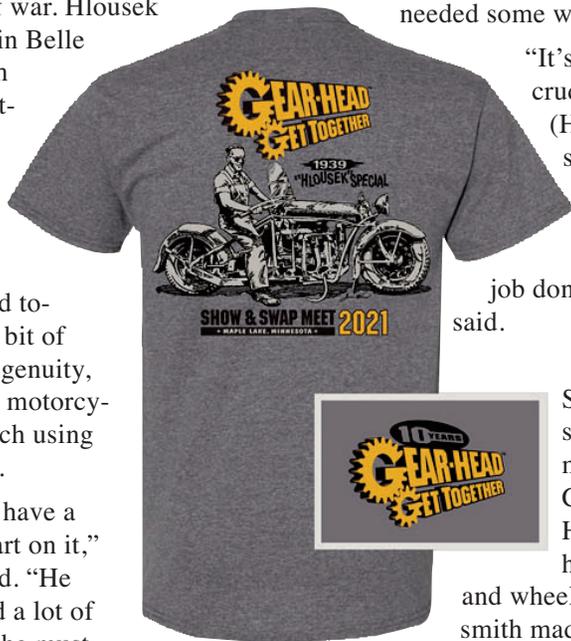
The Hlousek Special is definitely one-of-a-kind.

"It's a piece of folk art, for sure," he said.

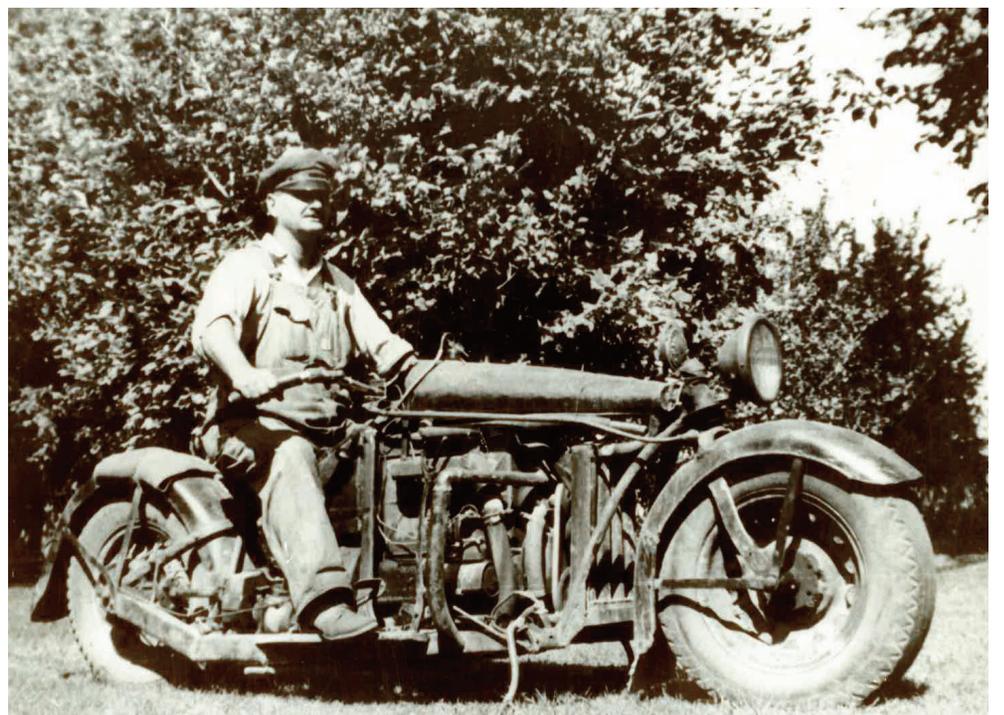
Chantland plans to get the bike running again for the Gear-Head Get Together and put it on display. He said he's ridden the bike, but he dares not take it out on the roads. Mostly he's ridden it at fairgrounds and airports. He said he's had it going up to 40 or 45 mph and it feels like he's going 100 mph.

"If you want to stop or turn, you have to plan way ahead," he said.

The Hlousek Special is so unique that it has earned a place of honor as the graphic on this Year's Gear-Head Get Together t-shirt. Watch the website at www.gearheadgettogether.net for purchase information.



Built in 1939, this one-of-a-kind motorcycle has a frame made from a Ford Model T, a 1928 Chevy engine and wheels from a 1935 Ford and mid-30s Chevy.



Not much is known about the man who built this motorcycle other than his name was Hlousek and the machine is made entirely out of car parts.

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Birch Avenue

(From Page 4)

first production motorcycle in the US was the Orient-Aster built by Charles Metz in 1898 in Waltham, Massachusetts. By the turn of the century motorcycles were being mass produced.

In 1902 English bicycle-maker Triumph produced its first motorcycle and a year later it was the largest motorcycle-manufacturer. Indian Motorcycles and Harley-Davidson made their appearances around the same time. By 1914 motorcycles had developed from a bicycle with an engine to something entirely unique.

WWI created a new use for motorcycles. They proved to be an effective means to communicate with front-line troops, replacing messengers on horses. Motorcyclists performed reconnaissance and acted as military police. By the end of the war, Harley-Davidson was devoting over 50 percent of its factory output toward the overseas effort. Triumph Motorcycles sold more than 30,000 Type H model or "Trusty Triumph's" as they would become known, to allied forces.

By 1931 Indian and Harley-Davidson were the only two American manufacturers producing commercial motorcycles. Their rivalry remained until 1953 when Royal Enfield took over the Indian name. In 1951 the BSA Group purchased Triumph Motorcycles to become one of the largest producers of motorcycles in the world along with the German NSU. In 1959 Honda could make that claim. Today Harley Davidson and Honda remain among the top manufacturers of motorcycles.

Chantland's passion for bikes started as a kid on the drag-race track where his dad raced Twin Engine Triumphs.

His first motorcycle was his brother's hand-me-down Honda Z 50 mini bike and is still in the family. His first collectable was a 1947 CZ 125 CC. In the 1980s and 1990s his family drove around the country collecting motorcycles. Today it's a family business and between himself, his dad and brother, the Chantlands have a "substantial collection," he said. His dad and brother call it a "hobby turned hay-wire."



Motorcycle Enthusiasts may also find unique one-of-a-kind bikes that may only be found on the grounds at Gear-Head.

Photos from Gazette archives



Members of the local Vintage Glamour Group pose with vintage rides during previous Gear-Head Get Togethers. Rachel Waddell (left) and Beckah Pipenhagen with a cherry red 1932 Ford Coupe owned by Jerry Hanson of Buffalo

Photos from the Gazette archives

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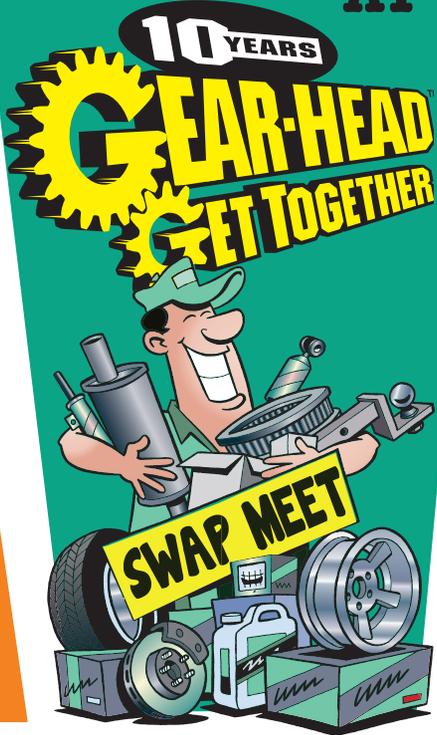
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GEAR-HEAD GET TOGETHER



The men and women who make up the Gear-Head Get Together Committee deserve all the credit for the success of the Get Together. **INSET.** Gear-head committee members, Hans Melgaard (left) and Scott Chantland (right) enjoy the good weather and large crowds at the 2019 Get-Together.

History of Gearhead

(From Page 1)

In 2019, at its largest, the Get Together drew 1,000 cars, roughly 150 motorcycles and 92 swap meet vendors. Thousands of people filled the streets that were closed much of the day to accommodate an eclectic collection of classics, hot rods, boats, and bikes that stretched past the Community Park where even more vehicles took over the ballfields and grassy areas.

“The first year we filled up the City Lot with cars that day and I thought ‘this is awesome.’ Then it doubled and doubled,” said founder Scott Chantland.

Chantland, a self-proclaimed gear-head himself, had the idea of building a car show into the City’s summer celebration, Taste of Maple Lake. The event was sponsored by the Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce and was your typical, smalltown summer festival, he said. The car show was extremely small to start, just a few of Chantland’s friends with old cars parked by his business, Olde Town Creamery. Eventually Taste of Maple Lake evolved into Days of Old, and the car show was its centerpiece. When the Chamber cancelled Days of Old, Chantland presented an idea to continue the car show under a separate subcommittee, and the Gear-Head Get Together was born. That first event in 2011 attracted enough car enthusiasts to fill up the City Lot, and when those numbers doubled the next year and the year after that, that’s when they knew they really had something great here.

- Continued on page 9 -

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2019 - Division Street



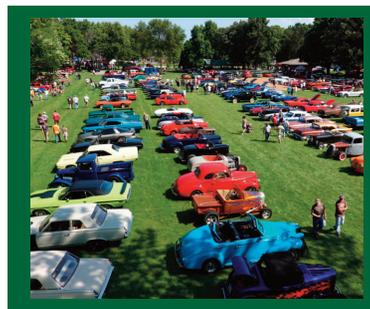
2019 - Tools for Teens -Youth Interaction



2019 - Birch Avenue



2019 - The Swap Meet



2019 - City Park

What makes the Get Together so remarkable is its philosophy of no plaques, no trophies, just a bunch of mechanical-minded folks getting together to talk about a common interest and maybe see something they don't see every day.

"The idea of no plaques, no trophies really struck a chord because that's what car shows had been built up to be, all about awards," Chantland said. "We were part of the next generation. To me our name says it all. Anything gear-head is welcome and just getting together to enjoy it. I don't think we could have come up with a better name."

The committee didn't initially plan on including a swap meet with the event, Chantland said, but a few weeks before that first Get Together they decided to work it in. It seemed like a natural fit and had been on the back of everyone's mind, he said. The first swap meet was set up in The V's parking lot. It started small but grew enough that it had to be moved to the parking lot by the ballpark. A couple

years ago the committee decided to move it again. Today vendors sell their wares on City streets south of the railroad tracks with public parking available in the stadium lot.

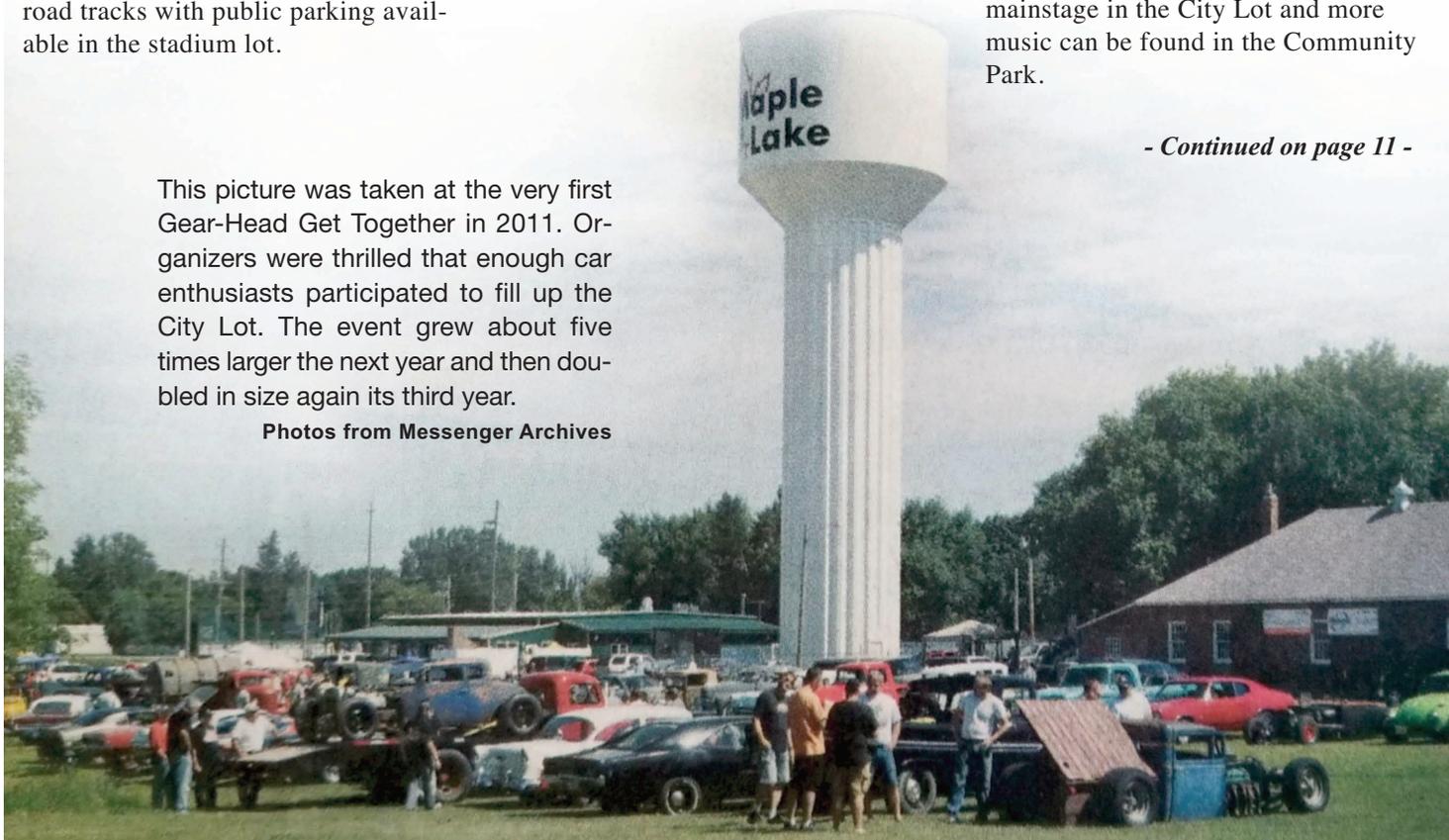
Music was another part of the Get Together that was included right from the get-go. A variety of musicians have

entertained the crowd over the years and set the soundtrack for the day. Today, multiple acts perform on the mainstage in the City Lot and more music can be found in the Community Park.

- Continued on page 11 -

This picture was taken at the very first Gear-Head Get Together in 2011. Organizers were thrilled that enough car enthusiasts participated to fill up the City Lot. The event grew about five times larger the next year and then doubled in size again its third year.

Photos from Messenger Archives



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Wall of Death

(From Page 1)

death-defying feats. Held up by centrifugal force, it will appear as if the motorcycles are stuck to the wall as they race 25 to 30 mph around and around. The show features antique Indian and Harley-Davidson motorcycles and 4-wheeled racing machines and sometimes, machines and riders will tackle the wall two at a time.

“There is nothing like it in the world. It has to be seen to be believed,” said Corinna Mantlo, a member of the America Wall of Death crew.

Motor Dromes got their start on the midways at carnivals and fairs across American back when entertainment was live and in person. They started out in the early 1900’s as mile long board racetracks with turns that went into long, steep, almost vertical sweeps around the racetrack. The long straight ways allowed the riders to reach very high speeds while riders fought for position. The sport was very dangerous and was eventually outlawed. The solu-



Not only do riders race around on vertical walls, they perform tricks like the one being attempted by the rider pictured above.



The Motordrome will be set up on the north end of the City Lot in Maple Lake and will perform 20 minute shows every hour throughout the day.

show as it would have been 100 years ago. Some of their most recent stops include Georgia, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Ohio.

Spectators will get a thrill as they look down from the top of the 14-foot board wall where they will smell the rubber burn and feel the wind as the motorcycles race past them mere inches away.

Each show will last about 20 minutes and will take place on the north end of the City Lot in Maple Lake during Gear-Head, Saturday, Aug. 21.

tion was to take out the straight ways and make the track 90 degrees perpendicular to the ground. Riders then worked together instead of competing to entertain crowds.

According to Wikipedia, the very first carnival motordrome appeared at Coney Island amusement park in New York in 1911. The following year, portable dromes began to appear on traveling carnivals. By 1915, the first

“silodromes” with vertical walls began appearing and were dubbed the Wall of Death.

Today there are only four motordromes traveling the U.S. Built in the traditional drome style, the American Motor Drome Company is the largest of the four. The company strives to keep its history alive by traveling all over the United States, from April through November, performing the



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BRANDS WE CARRY

Can-Am Maverick



History of Gearhead

(From Page 9)

Entertainment has evolved and grown as well. The 2019 get together featured a car-crushing performance by Everett Jasmer's USA1 Monster Truck. This year America's original extreme motorcycle thrill show, the American Motor Drome Company Wall of Death, will wow crowds with shows every hour.

Although it has grown and changed over the years, in the end the Get Together is still primarily about the gear-heads and their collections, creations and passions. Over the years the Get Together has seen a lot of oddball items from the fire engine that was turned into a car to the 1939 motorcycle built entirely out of car parts. A working aircraft engine made for a loud spectacle one year and it's not uncommon to see an assortment of rat rods put in an appearance. Gear-heads come from all over the state and beyond to see some of these mechanical oddities. Chantland said he knows folks who have flown in from as far away as Tennessee, Indiana, and Florida.

"No one ever thought it would be this huge. It's our committee that's really behind it all and it's nice to have a chamber and city so accommodating," he said.

After having to cancel last year's event because of the pandemic, Chantland is expecting their 10th anniversary to really bring in the crowds.

"People are ready to get out and look at cars again," he said.



Tractors found their way through crowds in 2018.



If it has gears and steers bring it to this Annual event in Maple Lake.



Bring your appetite, food and beverage will be available throughout the event.



This view from the roof of the Olde Town Creamery shows some of the vehicles on display at the 2012 Get Together.

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DAN THE FIRE TRUCK MAN



ARCHIVES-2016

Maple Lake's Gear-Head Get Together, acclaimed by many as the most unique "car show" in the state and perhaps the entire country where mechanical minded folk get together without the pressure of trophies or ribbons and show off their one-of-a-kind creations. Dan Koehler was featured in the 2016 Gear-Head Gazette and we bring his story back for our 10-year Anniversary edition. The Get Together has played host to a little bit of everything over the past 10 years and the stories are just as wondrous today as they were back then.



Dan Koehler with his specialty, the V-12 gas engine that is found in 1940-60 fire trucks.

Dan Koehler's love of vehicles and their restoration goes back to his school days.

"A high school friend sold me a 1947 Seagrave - V-12 chassis-less for \$600. I added a Chevy pickup chassis and a 1938 Buick convertible body - I still have that car today," said Koehler. "V-12 gas engines are my specialty and are found in 1940-60 fire trucks.

I grew to love roadsters, open top vehicles, on a trip to California where hot rods and roadsters are popular back to the late '40s."

According to Koehler, many fire trucks, up to the 1950s, had no roof over the cab of the vehicle. "A St. Paul, MN fire chief around 1950 ordered the tops of fire trucks to be cut off because of his old school



The restoration of older model fire trucks, like this model that simply says north St. Paul, are a passion of Dan Koehler.

Photos courtesy of Dan Koehler and the Gazette archives

him. "Gear Head welcomes everything with a motor - no trophies - my kind of show," he said. "The unrestored, traditional, rat rod, resto rod movement is popular because perfect paint and upholstery and chrome are not necessary to enjoy the hobby. Many enjoy the creativity of building a vehicle you like and can afford. Many also enjoy looking at the patina decades of use and weather elements cause- which create unique, one-of-a-kind vehicles. This movement brings young people to the hobby, which will form the future of car activities. The growth of the Gear-Head Get Together proves that by welcoming everyone to the show/swap creates a festive party!"

Happily for Koehler, his wife of 35 years, Deb, is very supportive of the 'car nut that she married', and the couple have two sons that join in the hobby and have done restorations themselves. Together they do design, mechanical, electrical, paint and upholstery.

ways," said Koehler. "He said when you arrive at a fire you need to see the whole fire, hence removal of the roof." Koehler also mechanically restored a 1968 Pirsch fire truck from South St. Paul that is now used in parade activities.

Two possible future projects for Koehler- "A V-24 detroit in a 1955 American LaFrance Model 700 fire truck, or a 1955 Peter Pirsch on an International air ride chassis. This would make it look like a pick-up on steroids!"

Koehler learned about the Gear-Head Show from the Minnesota Street Rod Club and knew it was for

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Gravestone found

at St. Cloud salvage yard belongs to Civil War Vet

By Brenda Erdahl

You never know what treasure you might discover in the back of an abandoned vehicle when you work at a salvage yard. That's what employees of Midway Iron in St. Cloud found out earlier this summer.

In Mid-July Wright County Veteran Services received a call from an employee at the salvage yard stating he had found a 4-foot tall, 350-pound, granite grave marker for a Civil War Veteran in the back of a recycled car.

After recovering the monolith, Veteran Services set out to find the deceased's family. The marker indicated Lorenzo D Johnson was a Civil War veteran born May 6, 1846, who died May 30, 1909, at the age of 63. An initial search through the National Memorial Service generated no positive results so they thought to entreat the public's help by posting the finding on Facebook.

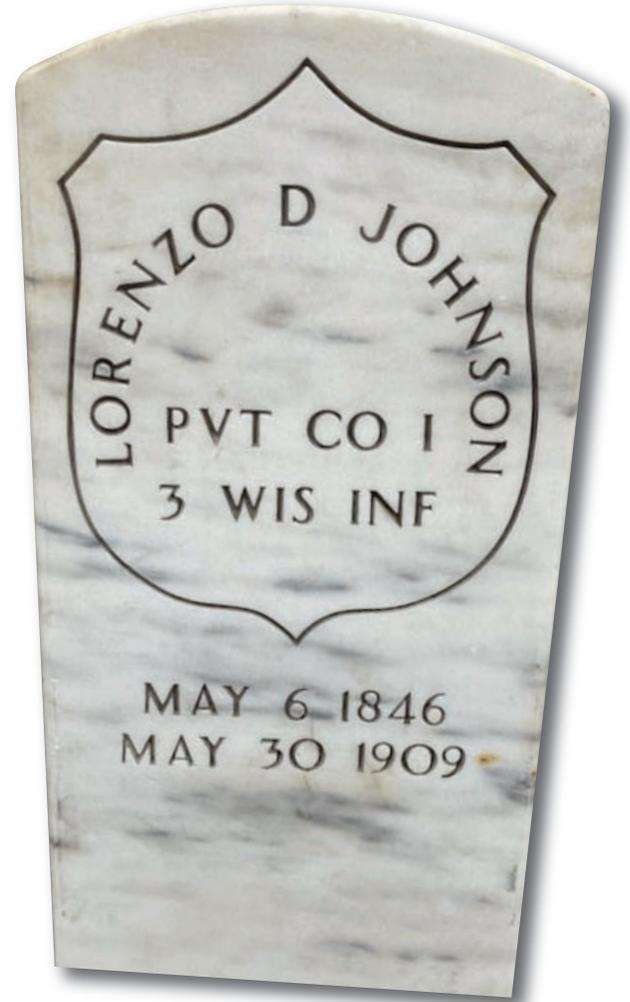
It was through social media that Veteran Services was made aware of the website www.findagrave.com and www.ancestry.com which turned out to be very helpful. Using those sites, they

were able to track down family members from great grandchildren, to great, great grandchildren and so on which led them to a living relative in Pillager. It turns out, Lorenzo Johnson was from Wadena County and is buried in Marshal Cemetery. It is assumed the stone is a replacement or private monument.

While the stone is being returned to living family members, it is still uncertain how it came to be inside the trunk of a car at a salvage yard. Greg Pickard, Director of Veteran Services, revealed he might have a lead on that question, but wanted to wait to share it until he had done a little more research, which means those following the story on social media will have to wait a little longer for an ending.

A 4-foot-tall granite marker found in the back of a car at a St. Cloud salvage yard earlier this month. With the help of social media, the Veteran Services Office tracked down the man's descendants.

(Photo submitted)



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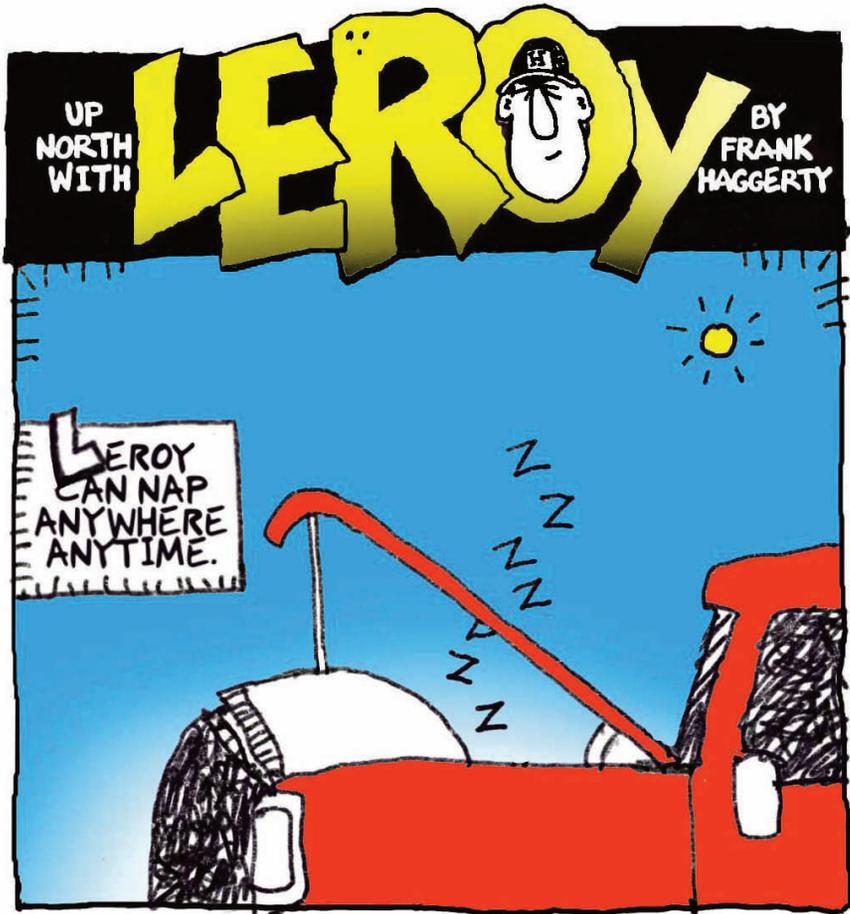
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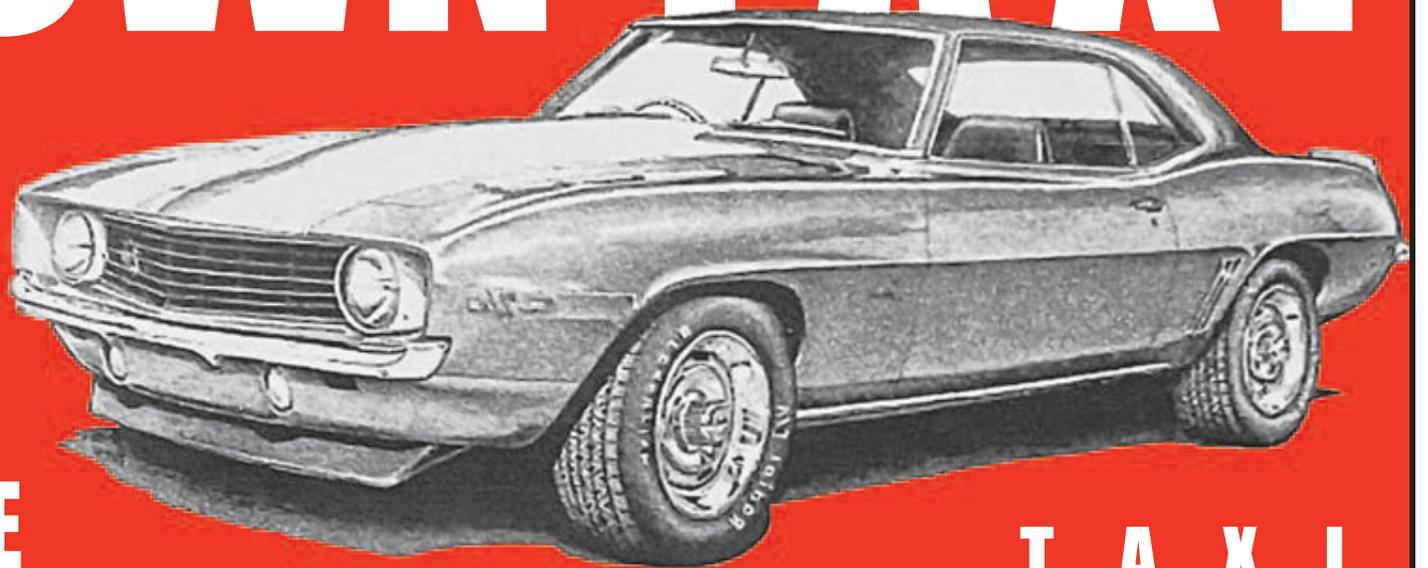
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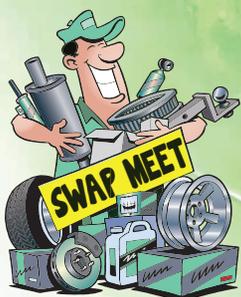
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