

10 PAGES OF AMAZING BARN FINDS & SURVIVORS



HOT ROD

86 ROAD-PROVEN
READERS'
RIDES FROM
POWER TOUR

SPECIAL LOW-BUCK ISSUE



MORE BUDGET STUFF
● FATHER/DAUGHTER
FIRST-CAR OVERHAUL
● 383 MOPAR BUILDUP

BODYWORK MAKEOVER

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HOT ROD WHERE IT ALL BEGAN



LOW-BUCK SECTION

64 PURPLE PACER GIRL

Of all the cars at Power Tour®, the one that had us hooked was this budget-built, father/daughter project. It's a Mopar-styled fishbowl with 4.0L Jeep power.

104 BUDGET BODYWORK

We can hardly type, our fingers are so raw. But that's a small price to pay instead of, well, paying. Because bodywork is expensive. Do it yourself. If we can, you can.

112 THE POWER OF 6

"Bye-bye, little buddy." An adieu for a 200ci Ford, with pistons held together by nothin' but rings, as it made its last nitrous pass. It was the final engine to scatter at LACR.

ON THE COVER

This car rolled out of the paint booth exactly four hours before Wes Allison shot it for the cover, then the mag went to press the next day. Rob "It'll Only Take An Hour" Kinnan is in the running for the Guinness World Record for lateness.



FEATURE STORIES

38 POWER TOUR®!

This time we ran from Cleveland to Little Rock on what was, yet again, the biggest Power Tour® ever. Here are 22 pages of highway-proven rides from HRM's annual road-trip party.

72 TURBO SLEEPER

Part sleeper, part beater, part slide-rule creation: It's a Pontiac Tempest loaded with a 427 Chevy up front and a couple of turbos ... out back. The 9-second lap times answer why.

80 BARN FINDS & MORE

Here's Part Two of the action we started last month. It's all about long-lost hero cars and glorious survivors. Know of one yourself? Tell us! We're sure we'll be doing this again.

92 THE GOLDENROD

At long last, the wrapup on the restoration of the Summers Bros. land speed race car, one of America's most glorious hot rodding accomplishments.



> Here's the Power Tour® lineup departing Memphis Motorsports Park last June. See more rides starting on page 38.

MOPACER

Equal Parts AMC and Jeep, This Little Pacer Makes a Perfect Low-Buck, Dare to Be Different Power Tour® Project.

By Christopher Campbell

Photography: David Freiburger, Rob Kinnan, Harrel Lamkin



Low-buck and Dare to Be Different often go hand in hand. When it comes to finding a low-buck project, always look toward the road less traveled—especially at cars that need real vision to bring out their potential. Pacers have long suffered the slings and arrows of the automotive community, frequently referred to as fishbowls, moonbuggies, and pregnant roller skates, along with a few other choice monikers that shall go unspoken. Though “automotive oddity” is often the highest recognition that the Pacer gets for its contribution to history, Harrel Lamkin saw potential in the little

rolling greenhouse, mainly as a serious drag car.

Harrel had campaigned a Monza and a Vega previously, so he was no stranger to stuffing large engines into cheap little cars, but for his next project he decided to do something even more unusual—a 10-second, 455 Pontiac-powered Pacer drag car. Harrel raced an orange and black Pacer for several years in the '90s until someone made him an offer to buy the car that he couldn't refuse—a decision he later regretted.

As she grew older, Harrel's daughter Anna Beth began to show an interest in hot rods, with posters of musclecars lining the walls of

her bedroom and car magazines covering the floor. When she competed in a local teen pageant, she quite atypically told the judges about her love of musclecars and her plans to build one with her father. Harrel took notice and saw the perfect opportunity for a great bonding experience and the chance to pass on his Pacer passion.

After the sale of his race car, Harrel had been pondering building a nice street car and had been steadily stowing away parts, waiting for the right Pacer to show up. Eventually he got wind of a complete '76 Pacer X that had been sitting neglected in a nearby backyard for 18 years. Like most of Harrel's



“When we cruised through small towns people would stand on the side of the streets and yell out ‘Wayne’s World!’ It was so much fun.” — Anna Beth Lamkin

make the Pacer one-of-a-kind, and it still wasn’t ready for her special day. The Pacer project languished on the back burner, but a moment of clarity would put it back in front.

Harrel had met John Glorioso, a hot rodder who had been diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, or Lou Gehrig’s disease), on the ’05 HOT ROD Power Tour® and hung out with him on the ’06 Tour as well. When they saw each other at the ’07 World of Wheels show in Shreveport, Louisiana, John inquired about the Pacer project and Harrel responded that he thought he and Anna Beth might be able to finish it to make the Power Tour® if they could just find the time. John asked, “What do you mean *if?*” Everyone got the point immediately; you can’t always put things off assuming you’ll have time later. From that moment on it was full speed ahead to get the Pacer ready for Power Tour® ’07, which was a tall order since the car still needed everything and they only had five months to get it

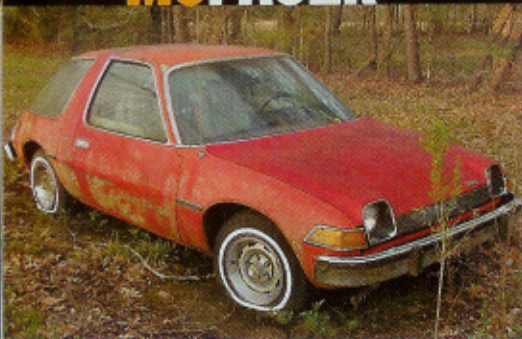
► Yeah, it’s a Pacer. What are you going to do about it? ► Using nearly 100 percent OEM Chrysler and AMC parts makes the modern six-banger swap look factory and helped keep the cost of the conversion way down.

other AMC acquisitions, the car was practically given to him. Though the X status gave the car a decidedly sportier flavor, it initially looked as if it would only be another parts car to add to the stash. But the drivetrain appeared healthy, and when he and Anna Beth tossed in a battery and a new starter, the little 258ci straight-six sputtered to life and ran remarkably smoothly. They’d finally found the right Pacer project car to make a great driver for Anna Beth.

Originally intended to be finished by Anna Beth’s 16th birthday, which was six months away when they bought the car, the project kind of snowballed with plans to



MOPACER



> The Pacer pre-rescue, in the spot it had occupied for 18 years.



> Eighteen years of Louisiana weather aren't kind to unprotected steel, and the quarters showed their neglect.



> Even worse, there was some fairly extensive structural rust that had Harrel and Anna Beth wondering if they picked the right car. The Mopar specialists at Delaney Auto Design reassured them it was fixable.



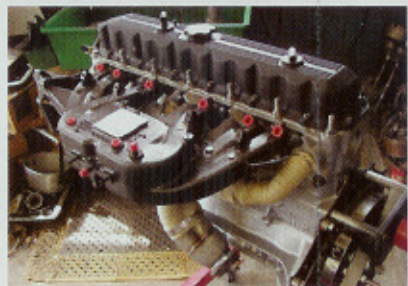
> Anna Beth got plenty greasy on the project. Here she's helping pull the engine.



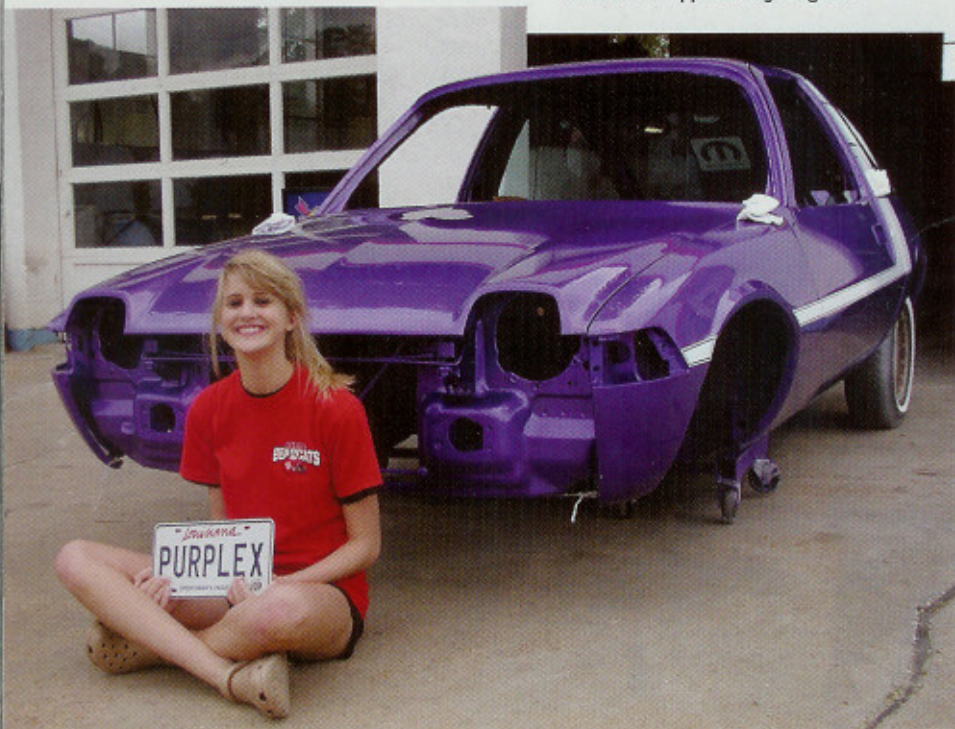
> The plastic used in most '70s cars is notorious for deteriorating, and years in the sun certainly didn't help. Luckily Harrel's parts-scrounging had rounded up all they needed, so Anna Beth stripped everything out.



> It's off to the body shop.



> The 4.0L Jeep six-cylinder bolts right into a Pacer—Jeep Cherokee header and all. Luckily the engine was assembled and almost ready to drop in when the body came back since there were only eight weeks till Power Tour®.



> Delaney Auto Design fixed the sheetmetal and laid down the '70 Mopar Plum Crazy paint with a custom stripe Anna Beth designed based on a factory '73 Road Runner graphic.



> To mate the GM 700-R4 trans (which Harrel rebuilt in his Shreveport, Louisiana, transmission shop), Harrel had his friend Dan Swain at Humble Equipment cut an adapter plate using a plasma pantograph cutter. This allowed him to use the late-model flexplate with the notched ring for the crank-position sensor. It's still considered low-buck since Harrel leaned on a friend for help.



> This is the custom crank-position sensor Harrel rigged up to provide the ignition signal to the Chrysler EFI.



> Harrel holds a B.S. in electrical engineering and has several restorations under his belt, and it was still frustrating grafting the Chrysler fuel injection and the Pacer's factory wiring together.



> While Harrel handled most of the drivetrain and wiring, Anna Beth laid insulation and sound-deadening over every interior panel.



> That's the smile of a frustrated man running on lots of caffeine and little sleep. Harrel spent hours going over his wiring looking for problems when the engine refused to stay running. Thankfully an unidentified ECU supplied by Chrysler mechanic Jerry Ledford turned on the fuel-pump circuit and solved the problem.



> Above: Anna Beth also reinstalled all the exterior trim. > Below: With just a couple of days left before they had to leave for Power Tour®, the Pacer was mechanically ready but still lacked an interior.



> Above: They could have just thrown it together at this point, but Harrel and Anna Beth figured they might as well do it right the first time and sleep later. > Below: With literally hours before they had to leave, the nearly finished MoPacer was finally rolled outside. Harrel and Anna Beth finished the details, went home, got cleaned up, grabbed their gear, and hit the road to make the start of Power Tour® way up in Cleveland, Ohio.

together.

The rusted floors, quarter-panels, and upper fender support threatened that the Pacer might be too far gone to fix, but once they had it stripped down and in the hands of Delaney Auto Design, the body took shape and was bathed in Plum Crazy in short order. When the Pacer returned home, there were only eight weeks to assemble the entire car before the start of Power Tour®. Luckily, one of the things Harrel had found time for was building a new drivetrain to replace the reliable but lackluster 258ci AMC six. A boneyard 4.0L from a wrecked '95 Jeep Grand Cherokee received a crank and rods from a 258ci Jeep engine for an honest bolt-together 275ci stroker, and it was backed by a GM 700-R4 utilizing a custom adapter plate. Daunting still was the lack of a fuel system and a completely stripped interior.

With no time to spare, father and daughter spent weekends and late nights thrashing to get everything together. Anna Beth worked on assembly, while Harrel struggled to get the drivetrain installed and make old AMC wires communicate with new Chrysler ones. With eight days to spare they were finally ready to start the car, only to have it fire briefly and die repeatedly. Jerry Ledford, a friend who worked at a local Chrysler dealer, informed Harrel that it sounded like he was up against the anti-theft system in the Chrysler ECU, which cannot be bypassed. Jerry offered an old ECU that he had tucked away in his toolbox. With nothing to lose, Harrel plugged it in, and the engine fired and ran without a hiccup. Good news, especially since there were now only 48 hours until they had to leave for Power Tour® and the dash, seats, exhaust, and A/C still needed to be installed. Can you say all-nighter?

In a last-ditch effort, Harrel and Anna Beth finally had everything finished on May 29 at about 2:00 p.m. Two hours later they were on the road headed for Power Tour®



> Harrel and Anna Beth say they've got about \$9,000 total in the MoPacer. At 80 mph on the freeway with the A/C cranked, they averaged 24 mpg on the '07 Power Tour®.



with only 25 shakedown miles on the car. So what was the final reward for the lack of sleep and frustration? During the 2,600 miles they covered on Power Tour® the MoPacer didn't give them a single hitch, and it attracted more attention than any Pacer we've ever encountered. But perhaps the greatest return from the whole experience, Harrel and Anna Beth told us, is that the build and Tour were some of the best things they've ever done together and provided them with a lifetime of memories.

You still not sure why there's a Pacer in HOT ROD? It's just the kind of tale we love to hear: unique car, built in a unique style on a budget, and assembled in a mad thrash to go on a father-daughter adventure. Now that's a hot rod story.

“Pacers were never strange cars to me; they were always around while I was growing up.” —Anna Beth Lamkin

> Pretty much everything is original save the radio, steering wheel, and shifter knob, but Harrel and Anna Beth went for a more striking color combo than any stock Pacer X was offered with.



Quick Inspection: '76 AMC Pacer X

Anna Beth Lamkin • Ruston, LA

POWERTRAIN

Engine: The unique hybrid AMC engine began as a 4.0L H.O. out of a '95 Grand Cherokee. Internally the sixer sports the crank and rods from '85 258ci AMC and stock 4.0 pistons to yield 4.5 liters and about 9.75:1 compression. The cam is a Crower Baja Beast with 0.448 lift and 208 duration at 0.050. Up top the stock 4.0L head was port-matched. Injection duties are handled by a '91 Chrysler ECU controlling 24-pound Ford blue-top injectors mounted in a '99 4.0L intake. Exhaust flows through a stock stainless tri-Y-style header from a '95 Grand Cherokee.

Power: The sixer puts out a robust 295 hp at 5,200 rpm and 330 lb-ft of torque at 3,200 rpm.

Transmission: Harrel's transmission expertise came in handy for swapping in a GM 700-R4 using a custom adapter plate and converter pilot sleeve with spacers, all fabricated by Dan Swain at Humble Equipment. Since the 700-R4 and the original 904 trans are the same length, the original drive-shaft was reused.

Rearend: The stock Pacer rear still lives despite the extra power, and its 3.08 cogs provide easy free-way cruising and killer mileage.

CHASSIS

Suspension: Getting the right stance on a Pacer has a surprisingly simple recipe; just cut one coil out of the stock front springs and call it a day. Other than that and some Gabriel shocks, the suspension is stock.

Brakes: The original manual front-disc/rear-drum layout was found to be satisfactory during the 2,600 miles on Power Tour®, so stock it stays.

Wheels: Since the Purple Pacer looks like it could have come in a little plastic package it's only fitting that it runs 17x8-inch Hot Wheels-branded wheels by KMC.

Tires: Kumho 215/45R17s fit nicely up front and 245/45R17 plant the rear.

> The MoPacer is a father-daughter project that will no doubt be a lifelong memory. The shirts were printed up just in time to be their official gear on Power Tour®. They're a great way to start a conversation, too.

STYLE

Body: The egg-shaped body is as AMC birthed it with only rust repair in the floors, quarters, and upper fender support needed, plus hours with a sanding block to get the curves smooth. Delaney Auto Design in Shreveport, Louisiana, is responsible for getting everything better than original.

Paint: The MoPacer's purple is Plum Crazy supplied by Sherwin-Williams and sprayed by Robert Stackowitz at Delaney Auto Design. The stripe was designed by Anna Beth to mimic one she spotted on a '73 Road Runner.

Interior: Ruston Upholstery recovered the stock seats in white Ultraleather and installed a modern foam-backed headliner. The steering wheel looks like AMC installed it, but it's actually a Grant piece. The shark fin on the dash is the antenna for the XM radio receiver that's connected to a Pioneer head unit and amp. Hidden Proton and Rockford Fosgate speakers provide the thump. The rest of the showroom-new interior is the result of having a good stockpile of N.O.S. Pacer parts and a few good parts cars on hand.



> Other than hosing off the mold, this is how Harrel and Anna Beth found the Pacer. Despite the neglect, a new battery and starter shook off 18 years of stagnation and brought it back to life. > Of course the brakes are one of the must-do items on any car that's been sitting in a moist climate for years. Anna Beth rebuilt the system to stock spec before the Tour.

