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Vern Tardel Enterprises

Summer Issue

June 2013

In This Issue

[Build of the Month](#)

[Vern's Collection](#)

[Signs of the Past](#)

[Around the Shop](#)

[Who Was Spotted](#)

[Tips & Tricks](#)

Quick Links

[Shopping](#)

[Newsletter Archive](#)

[More On Us](#)



One Year in the Tardel Shop

Below are a few photos from the Tardel Shop over this last year.



Dear Hotrodder and Vintage Car Owners,

Well folks, we have come to the end of our newsletter run. Mark and I agreed we would try the newsletter for one year and that year is up. I want to thank all of you for your great comments on our newsletter. It seems that the newsletter was a big hit. We are glad that we brought a little more hotrod and vintage car into your lives. I also want to thank Mark for the newsletter. I think we all agree that he created a great newsletter and his descriptions of what we do here at Tardel Shop was right on.

I am turning 70 in a few months and have decided to dedicate more of my time to family and writing books on what I know and love...hotrods. I will be scaling back my custom build operations over this next year and updating the Bishop - Tardel book, writing some new books, and creating some new online stuff. I will be working with Mark in the future to see what we can develop for the online readers. Check back in with us by going to our website periodically and see what's new.

Tardel Enterprises will still be here and still working on hotrods and vintage cars/pickups. But full builds will now be turned over to my son Keith. For those of you who do not know, Keith is a master builder in his own right. Keith owns [Rex Rod & Chassis](#) which is also located on Pleasant Avenue in Santa Rosa, California.

Hotrods are in my blood and I will continue to work on them well into the future. If you are needing parts or repairs to your hotrod...don't hesitate



to contact me.

Thank you again for your great comments on our newsletter. We will keep all the newsletters from this past year on our website for you to look back on.

Take care and stay safe.

Vern

Build of the Month

The build of the month is a vehicle that I tried my best to acquire while it was in the queue at the Tardel Shop. This 1929 Model A Roadster pickup calls to me. But alas, the owner has decided to go ahead with the build.



This beautiful Model A is owned by Tim King from Santa Rosa, California. The plan is to make this build in the style of an "antique" restoration. That is, the engine and running gear will be rebuilt to a better-than-new condition. Of course it will be a frame-off restoration.

Here are a few more before shots of the build. I will work with Vern and Kevin to periodically put photos of the build on the Tardel website for you to check out. This is my my kind of build. I can't wait to see this Model A completely restored, running like a top, and maintaining the rustic body. Now that will turn heads for sure!



This build will have a custom '49 Mercury Flathead V8. It will have a '39 transmission and '40 differential. Vern will add hydraulic breaks and a '49 pickup steering system.



The Roadster will have a dropped axle and will run 16" wheels and tires.



I can see Jed Clampet, Grannie, Jethro, and Ellie May driving down the avenue in Beverly Hills. But in truth this build will be pristine under that faux exterior. Everything will be rebuilt to Tardel standards.

As you can see, this build is starting with an excellent condition Model A. The steel is all in very good shape. Just imagine this Model A with great running gear, finished wheels, great interior, a Tardel built '49 Merc V8, and the antique looking body. This Model A Roadster pickup will be a fun ride for sure!

Vern told me that this '29 Model A Roadster pickup will be a dependable driver. But we all know that it will be a whole lot more than that.

Vern's Gearshift Knob Collection

One of the things that has been a tremendous honor for me has been to get to know Vern well enough to go inside his home and see the special "treasures" he has collected over the years. These treasures include a gearshift knob set that is really cool.

Vern recently bought this collection at a swap meet. It is a pretty cool find. These gearshift knobs are yearly commemorative knobs from the National Convention of the National Ford V8 Club. There are 60 knobs in the collection and represent all the Ford V8 Chapters from around the country.



Below is a close up of the knobs. You can see each knob is an original piece of



art.

Signs of the Past

I will start this section with a picture of a comic book titled *Hot Rods and Racing Cars* I found around the Tardel Shop. The cost...10 cents. How many of you saved your old comic books? I am one of the many whose mother cleaned them out when I moved out of the family home and did not take them with me. I still kick myself for not keeping the baseball cards that I scrimped and saved to buy a package when I had enough money...and that was not too often.



There are so many items around the Tardel Shop that take me back in time. Some are the enameled metal signs which Vern has saved and mounted around the shop. The grouping of signs you see below shows a few of the hundreds of such signs found around the shop. I especially like the Mail Pouch chewing tobacco thermometer. It brings back many great memories of

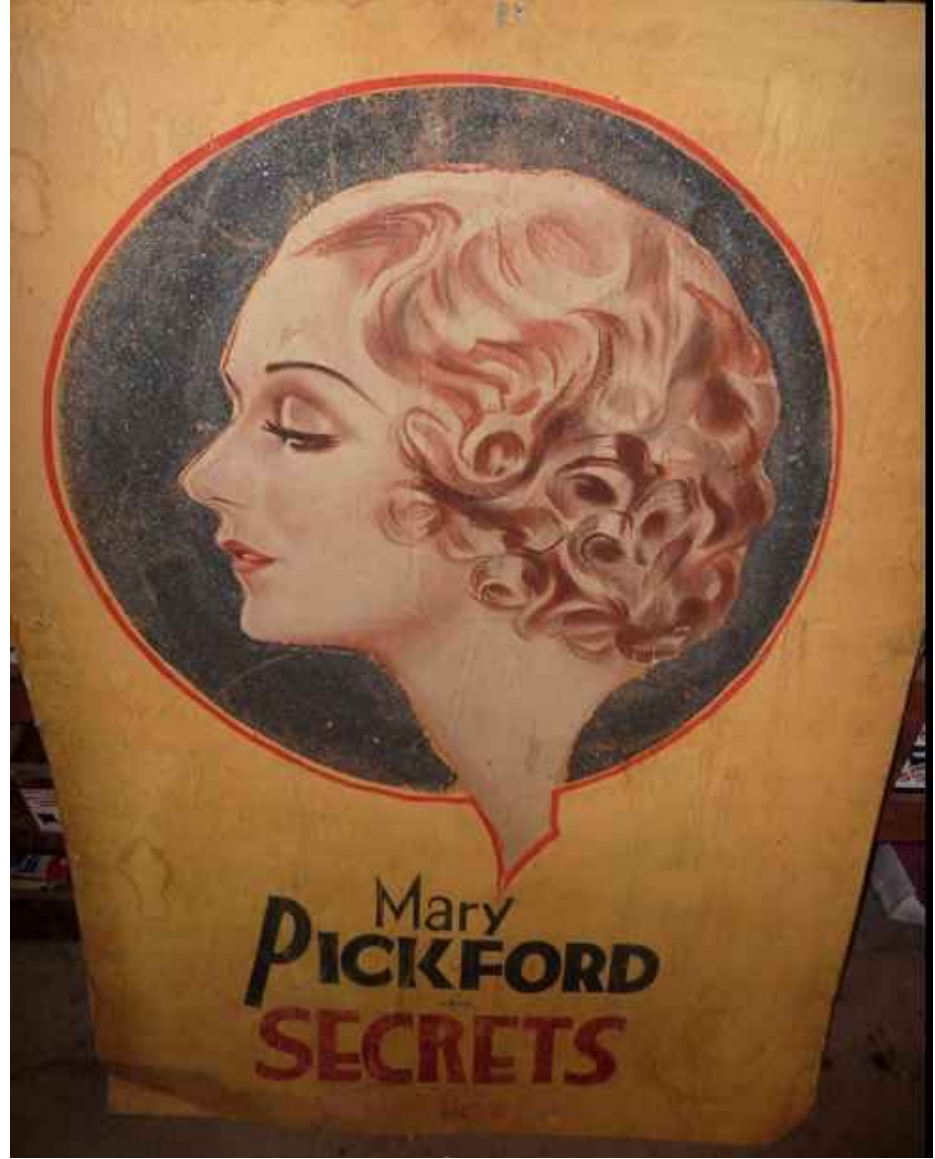


times gone by and old friends. And the promise of "clean restrooms," that still is a one in a hundred shot.

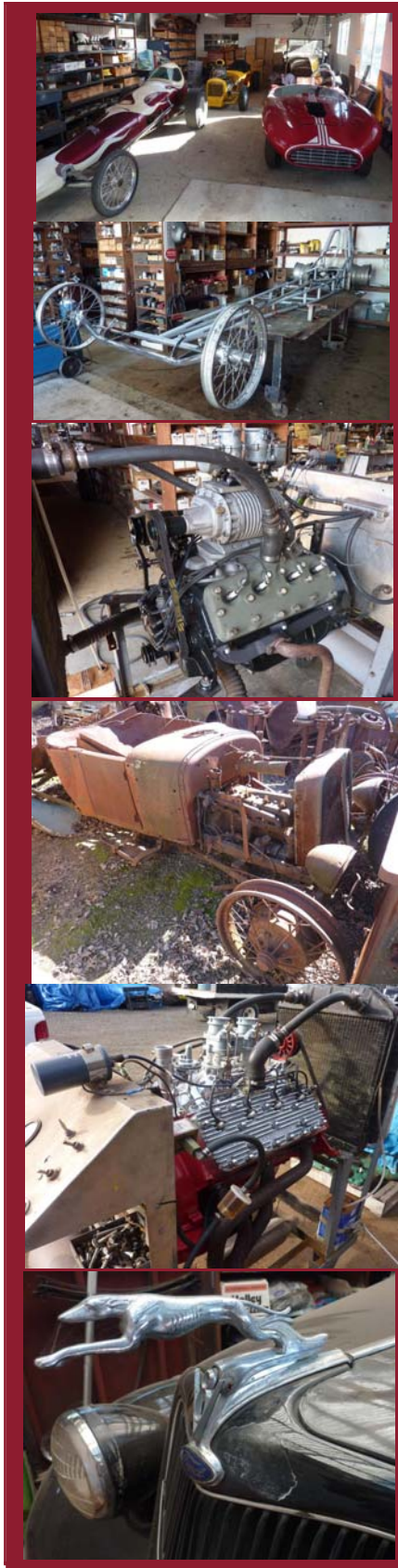


How many folks have an original poster of Mary Pickford from the 1920's and 1930's around their garage or shop. Vern found this poster at a garage sale. The movie *Secrets* (made in 1933) was Mary Pickford's last movie and was a talkie. You can see a few clips of Mary and this movie by clicking on this link:

[Mary Pickford in Secrets \(her final movie and this was a talkie\).](#)



Something you have not seen from the Tardel Shop yet, is Vern's player piano. Of course it works, and all the music cylinders you see in the boxes atop the piano are classics.



Vern has literally hundreds of enamel signs throughout the shop. Many of these signs are automotive related like these, but not all. You will find some very interesting signs from the past throughout the various shop buildings.



I had to take this one. There are a number of great "tin toys" scattered throughout the shop. But this Army truck with a World War I helmet on top of it...that's just cool.



I had to include Vern's banner of the Henry Ford School. I think we will all agree that we can call that "old school."



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Now a clown's face painted on a small engine cylinder head was too interesting not to include in this last newsletter. It's just another example of the uncommon things that are common at the Tardel Shop.



Photos from Around the Shop

I am always surprised with what I find both inside and outside the shop. Items go from the whimsical to the sublime. In past issues you have seen photos from the boneyard showing boxes of cranks and other Ford parts. Below is a stack of manifolds which are sitting out back. This pyramid of exhaust manifolds was just too great a picture not to share.



Below is a picture of one of the early dragsters built in the North County region. This full aluminum body skinned dragster (engineless at this time) was brought to Vern in hopes that it could one day be rebuilt for show or for the vintage dragster races.



You will also find a number of unique cars in the Tardel boneyard. Below you will see just one example.



And what would a last edition be without the picture of the iconic Bigboy holding a Ford flathead in his left hand. If you come to the Tardel Shop it is certainly worth having your photograph taken beside the Bigboy.



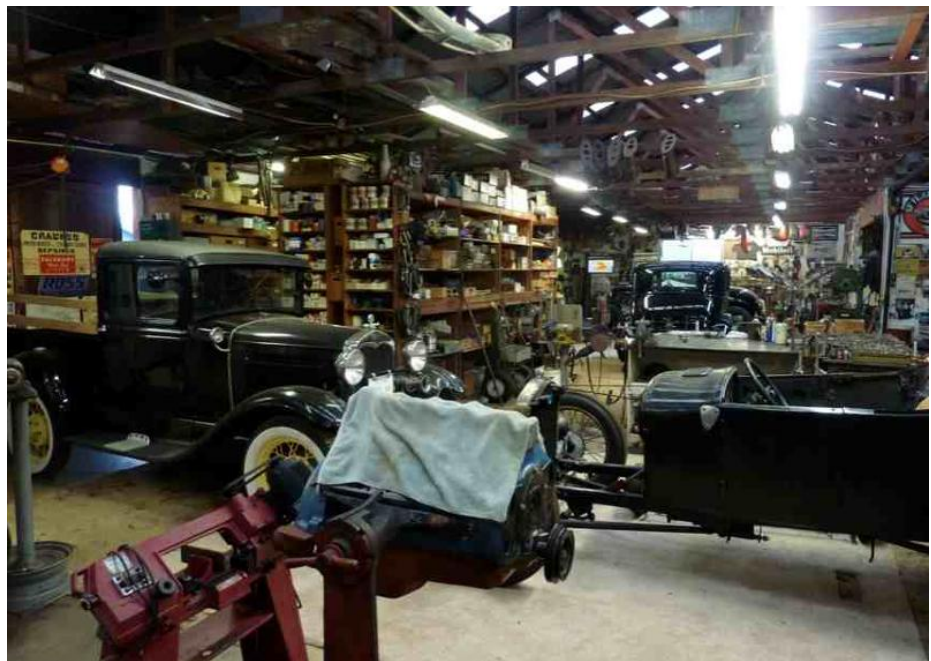
As I have mentioned in the past, if you get to the Tardel Shop, look up! In every part of the shop you will find interesting parts or objects in the rafters.



Below is another photo of the Tardel boneyard. Parts, parts, and more parts...



Below is an early morning shot of the shop. This is the quiet time before the grinders and air guns get going. It's quite surreal with these wonderful builds sitting in the shop at different stages.



Sometimes walking in the boneyard feels like I am walking around in an gallery. The pieces in the photo below caught my eye.



I hope you have enjoyed the pictures from around the Tardel Shop. They should have given you a glimpse of the amazing things that hotrodders and vintage car owners/builders find interesting.

Who Was Spotted in the Shop?

Vern and I have been asked by some of you, who is that guy writing the newsletter? Since this is the last newsletter, Vern thought it would be good for me to introduce myself. It feels a little awkward, but here goes.



I have been married to a beautiful wife, Colleen, for 45 years and we have two children and two grandchildren. I am a lifetime educator and academic administrator. I started teaching at the 3rd grade level in Colonia, Oxnard, California in 1970; I taught high school in San Andreas, California (near Angels Camp in the Mother Lode) for 16 years, I was a professor at Oregon State University for 20 years, I was an administrator of the Ecampus at Oregon State for 6 years, and now serve as the Dean of the School of Extended and International Education at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, California.

I have been interested in hotrods since high school (Camarillo, California). Back then I built a 1957 Chevy bel air and modified it to run a 396 Hemi and Torqueflight transmission. But as things go, I blew the transmission and there it sat in my parents yard when I went away to college. Unbeknownst to me, my father sold it and poof...it was gone. I also owned a '62 Ford Fairlane and a beautiful 650 Triumph motorcycle.

Fast forward to three years ago. I was itching for something to do when I got home from a stressful day working at the university. I had been longing to buy a pre-1950 Ford pickup for many years and one day I suggested to my wife that I get a project truck for me to work on. After a short while she agreed and helped me find a pickup.

I found a 1946 Ford 1/2 ton pickup for sale on Craigslist. The pickup had been parked outside a barn north of Willits for the last 10 years. It was in pretty bad shape but looked like it had good steel. I made the purchase, got it home, and then began to think about what had to be done to get it on the road. That is when it hit me, like I am sure it hits everyone who is going to self-restore an old automobile. What hit me was that I was way over my head. I had some past wrench memory and enthusiasm, but I soon found out that those two were not nearly enough to do the job!

I found that tearing the pickup apart was not that difficult, but it was reconstructing the pickup that gave me fits. I often found that I did not have the right tools for the job. On occasion I found myself completely stuck. For those of you who know the older Ford pickups, that damn window access plate in the door is way too small. Fixing the door handles and window glides was more than I could figure out, so I contacted Fred Stokes (another hotrod legend in the Santa Rosa, California area) who lived down Old Redwood Highway from me. It did not take Fred too long to know that I was going to be a pain so he sent me to see a man named Vern Tardel. He told me that Vern was the guy who knew old Fords.

My first meeting with Vern was amazing. I asked him if I could look around before asking him questions and he was kind enough to invite me in. After being there a while, I asked him if he could help me with my pickup. I didn't realize that Vern Tardel was a master builder of Ford hotrods and builder of Vintage Ford cars and pickups. Over time I guess

Vern took a liking to me and helped me with my '46. Today I fully understand that the 1942-47 Ford pickup is not the classic collectors' truck. The '46 is known as the "jailbar" because of its grill bars. Personally, I love it and the bars look more like the Jeep front end to me.

Over the last couple of years Vern has taught me a great deal about rebuilding classic cars and hotrods. But my talents lie more in the use of technology. So it came to pass that I suggested to Vern that I write a newsletter for 1 year in trade for work on my '46. That year has come to an end and I have appreciated the opportunity to write this newsletter for Vern.

I have met many great friends while producing the Tardel Enterprises Newsletter over this past year. These are some of the greatest people you would ever want to meet, and who are adding their own special talents to the Tardel builds. To Anita, Ross, Kevin, Rory, Keith, Frank, and the many others who have added their special talents to Tardel Enterprises...thank you for your help in putting the Newsletter together over this past year.

I have truly enjoyed writing and shooting photographs for the Tardel Newsletter. I hope that you have enjoyed watching what has been going on in the Tardel Shop. Things will not change in the Tardel Shop; new builds will be starting and builds will be finished and turned over to their owners to hit the streets. Vintage cars and pickups will be in the shop for engine rebuilds, body repairs, new drive-trains and more. It is worth your time to visit the shop, and if you want a classic hotrod built there is no better builder of classic Ford flathead Highboy Roadsters in the world.

My '46 is now done...*if they are ever done!* It has a 6 cylinder G-series flathead 226 cubic inch 90 HP motor and a 3-speed transmission. I restored it to "farm chic." As my brother puts it, it is a 6 footer. You know, looks pretty good from 6 feet. We love our '46. We call it a cartoon truck because it looks like Roger Rabbit should be driving it.

It is a driver and I try to drive it to the university (20 miles from home) as often as I can.

Thank you Vern for the opportunity to capture just a little of your work and life.

Mark Merickel



The Merickel's '46 (Viejo'46).

Tips & Tricks by Vern

Domed Screen Filters

Making those cool looking domed screen filters for your hotrod can be a very easy process.

Over the years Vern has learned how to make these good looking screen filters quickly and easily.



The key is to use the correct size spherical do dad. You can use anything that is rounded to the correct size, but Vern always has a number of items he can use. In this demonstration, Vern is using an old door knob to shape the screen over.

The picture below shows an old screen filter from a '50s hotrod and a cylinder sleeve for a V8 60 motor. I guess over the years you find different items or tools that can be used for various jobs around the shop. In this case the cylinder sleeve for the V8 60 is a perfect fit to perform the job we are about to do. You should use the same sleeve or riser that you will be using to shape the screen. But that's up to you.



Below are the tools you will need to make the domed screen filter. Not in the shot are scissors and a marker.



Step 1. Precut the screen bigger than the carburetor air intake, and big enough to account for the doming.



Step 2. Push the riser over the screen and knob. Push down until it sits level on the carburetor intake shelf.

Step 3. Use a magic marker to show where to cut the screen.



Step 4. Cut the screen to size.



Step 5. Install the screen and riser. You may need to re-cut the screen if any excess is hanging outside of the riser.



Like everything Vern does, take your time in stretching the screen to the desired dome size. Stretching the screen too quickly will cause the pattern to unravel. These domed screen filters will be easy for you to make and replace whenever you need them.

Featured Tardel Products

In this last issue we decided to feature a number of Tardel products. I am very proud to wear the Tardel gear. Often the logo is recognized by fellow car buffs and it starts a great conversation about hotrods and vintage cars.



[Stromberg 97 Mug](#)
\$13.50



[Vern Tardel Stromberg 97 Ca...](#)
\$11.95



[Vern Tardel Logo Baseball Cap](#)
\$9.95



[Vern Tardel T-Shirt](#)
\$18.00



[Vern Tardel's "Let Me Help ..."](#)
\$69.95



[Vern Tardel Sweatshirt](#)
\$29.95

If you do not have the Stromberg mug you should get one. They are great and I use mine in my shop for pens and pencils. I picked up a couple of the "Let me help..." books when I was rebuilding my '46 pickup. They made rebuilding much easier for me to understand and complete. The clothing gear is great quality. I do recommend that you order the t-shirts and sweatshirts at least one size larger than you normally wear. The hats are great...I have three of them and wear them everywhere.

Don't forget that we are 6 months away from Christmas and these items make great gifts for your buddies.

To order these featured products or other items that Vern Tardel carries, click on the quick-link below.

[Tardel Products Website](#)



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Early Ford Parts, Repair, and Builds**



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Have a great summer everyone!

Mark Merickel

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