

F E R R I G U S

FEATURES

Member Newsletter ♦ Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc., Lewistown, MT ♦ www.ferguselectric.coop

Ford Heaven

Touring Larry Carrell's dream garage

Story and photos by
Charlie Denison,
Contributing Writer

For the past 25 years, Winnett native Larry Carrell has had an addiction: buying sports cars.

"It all started with this one right here," he told me, pointing to a 1971 Javelin while we toured the shops at his home. "I bought this from my sister here in Lewistown. I started getting more soon after. I guess it's a disease."

By the time he retired from petroleum engineering in 2004 – a career that brought him good fortune – Larry went full-speed ahead with this new hobby. He was in a unique position: he could afford the dream cars he craved.

He was his own genie, and he could grant himself more than three wishes.

What car do you want, Larry? Ask and you shall receive.

Larry didn't have to think too hard. He'd always been a Ford guy.

"My first car was a Model A Ford," he said. "It was given to me when I was 15 in return for hauling the garbage for a friend. The first car I bought was a 1951 Mercury. I had it for about a year and a half – until I blew the motor up."

His passion for Fords – Mustangs in particular – has never left. This is clear to anyone who stops to see his shops south of town. There are two full buildings, one appropriately called "Ford Heaven."

In "Ford Heaven" you'll find Larry's most prized possessions: the Mustang Twister trio, two Boss 429s (the most highly sought after Mustangs, he said), two Boss 351s, a Boss 302, a pair of '68 Shelby Fastbacks, a GT350, a Boss 302 Cougar Eliminator, a 428 SCJ Courage and a '68 Eliminator GT-E.



Larry Carrell is a Mustang man. He especially takes pride in his collection of all three Grabber Orange Twister Special reincarnations from R & A Motorsports.

The list of hot rods goes on and on for Larry, who has bought cars from all over the country, mainly from people he's met through shows.

"The only car I bought at auction was a 1970 Plymouth Superbird," he said.

There is a little bit of everything in Larry's garage, including a 1974 Australian Falcon known best from the "Mad Max" films.

"They are kind of like kids," Larry said of his cars. "Once you get them, you kind of want to keep them."

Larry's obtained more than 30 cars, including 15 Mustangs. However, he doesn't anticipate that number growing. If anything, the number will diminish, as family tragedy recently changed everything. In May, his son Wesley died of cancer.

For Larry, Wesley was more than a

son – he was a partner. They shared the passion for cars, and even worked on customizing vehicles together. Perhaps the one they enjoyed working on the most was the 1954 Ford F-100 "White Lightnin'."

"We showed this highly modified truck at the ISCA show in Salt Lake City and the SEMA show in Las Vegas," Larry said. "There are two or three others we did quite a bit of work on, including the Javelin."

An electrical worker, Wesley did all the wiring for his father's shops. He also helped design them with some of his woodworking, and by displaying his extensive diecast metal model car collection.

Walking past Wesley's "American Graffiti" models, Larry was suddenly

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MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Scott Sweeney

Congratulations to Guy Johnson

On January 25, 2020, Staking Engineer Guy Johnson will officially retire from his labor of love staking job. He will be hard-pressed to give up his favorite transit and stake-driving hammer!



Guy Johnson

Guy began his career at the co-op in April of 1987, and has been an integral part of our engineering team ever since. Guy has been responsible for staking power lines since his first day on the job. For a period, he worked in Roundup helping the co-op transition between supervisors. More recently Guy took over the job of talking to members about high power bills and visiting their homes or businesses to help members understand where their power was being consumed. Guy enjoyed this challenge and did a very good job explaining power usage to the members who had questions.

I thank Guy for being dependable and willing to step up in any situation. In addition to his job as staking engineer, during lengthy power outages, when all hands are needed on deck, we could always depend on Guy to cover the base to truck radios in the office to communicate with the line crews, or to help the line crews in the field by patrolling power lines. Wherever he was needed, Guy was always willing to do the work — and I thank him for that.

Recently, Guy has become mentor to his fellow less-experienced staking engineers, Melanie Foran and Scott Olson, and I think he has enjoyed teaching Melanie and Scott about the various aspects of the job, and introducing them to co-op members.

When Staking Engineer Melanie Foran was asked what she liked most about working with Guy, she said that Guy knows Fergus Electric Cooperative's service territory well, and

when they traveled down the road in any direction, Guy could give a history lesson about the area, which made the trip interesting, and she got to know the countryside. She went on to say that, beyond the pavement and gravel, Guy's experience and ease of working with co-op members will definitely be missed in the engineering department. Melanie said that she's been very lucky to glean experience and knowledge from Guy these last few years.

We will certainly miss you, Guy. Through the years, we have kidded you about having a glass half empty viewpoint on nearly every topic, which you did in good fun, hoping to spark a debate, and we will miss you reading something humorous or quirky to us from one of the newspapers during breaks. We have enjoyed your easy-going nature. Not much rattles you. I have enjoyed working with you and will miss you. Thank you for your dedication to the co-op. Speaking on behalf of the employees, membership and the board, we wish you the very best in your retirement! It's been a pleasure!

Cold weather and higher power bills

As we move into the new year, 2020, historically, at this time of year we get colder weather and use more electricity to keep our tractors, pickups, cars and trucks starting on below-zero mornings. More electricity is used to heat our homes and to keep livestock waterers open and free of ice. The co-op is pleased to furnish all your electrical needs.

I want to encourage all members to use electricity wisely in order to keep power bills as reasonable as possible. For example, a vehicle may only need to be plugged in for three hours to help with cold weather starting. Livestock water tanks can be insulated and covered to minimize heat loss. Electricity is a wonderful energy source and the co-op encourages all members to wisely use electric power for all your energy needs.

Employees working to provide the best service

I want to provide an overview of all the superb employees at Fergus Electric who work hard to provide top-notch electric service to the membership. This month, I am putting the spotlight on the supervisors of the co-op's line crews, engineers and mechanic.

Don Criswell is the Roundup assistant line superintendent. Don started work at the co-op in 1992, as a lineman in Roundup, and after a period was promoted to his current position putting him in charge of the Roundup line crews.

Dale Rikala is the line superintendent and Bret Ophus is the co-op's assistant line superintendent. Both Dale and Bret began working at the co-op in 1992 as linemen, and eventually were promoted to their current positions. They oversee the Lewistown line crews, engineers and mechanic.

These three supervisors work very hard to coordinate engineering and construction so our crews can construct new services in a timely manner. Also, they make sure power outages are restored as quickly as possible while keeping our members and linemen safe. They are responsible for the maintenance of our power lines, i.e., pole replacements, tree trimming, etc., and they are also responsible for the co-op's trucks, pickups, trailers, backhoe, and all other fleet equipment.

I applaud and thank Dale, Bret and Don for the excellent work they do to provide great service to all the co-op's members!

Happy New Year!

All of us at Fergus Electric Cooperative want to wish each of our members a very healthy, happy and successful new year!

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Let the sunshine in! For additional warmth, open drapes over windows that receive sunlight during the day. Close them at night, which can reduce heat loss from a warm room up to 10%.

Source: energy.gov



Ford Heaven

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saddened.

“I created this mess and my son was supposed to clean it up. Now it’s flipped on me,” he said softly. “I am considering selling the cars. I’m looking into it. I respect the cars and the collection enough that I want to see them end up somewhere they will be well taken care of.”

Be that as it may, Larry still intends to finish the projects he’s started, including a 1934 Ford he’s restoring at the highest level in hopes to compete for one of the most prestigious awards in the custom car business.

“I’m either going to kick somebody’s butt or get my butt kicked,” he said. “I still enjoy the competition. It’s what keeps me young.”

Larry is also involved in building an electric-powered dragster, and is in the process of customizing an orange 1951 Mercury, one of few cars he has that he plans to drive. Almost all of his cars are strictly for show.

Going to the shows is one of Larry’s favorite parts of being a collector. He has many memories from the events, and has had some unforgettable encounters with well-known collectors’ automotive designers.

Larry’s favorite automotive designer and racing driver was Carroll Shelby, who was best known for his involvement with the AC Cobra and Mustang.

“I have a shrine to Shelby,” Larry said, “which includes a Carroll Shelby autographed shirt, as well as shirts of his team members, which came from a museum in Boulder, Colorado. I also

have a 1967 Shelby GT500 with the lowest mileage of all ’67 Shelbys in existence. It has around 5,200 miles.”

Larry said he’s particularly proud of his Shelbys.

“The Shelby is the epitome of Mustang,” he said.



Larry Carrell’s garage has the nickname “Ford Heaven.” Those who visit are discouraged from drooling on the cars, Carrell joked.

Larry understands he’s a lucky man, and he doesn’t take it for granted, especially now, having lost his son and brother this year. He’s always been a bit of a philanthropist, but this summer Larry really made a splash when he donated \$5 million to the Petroleum County Community Center, an act of generosity that came shortly after his return to his old hometown for an all school reunion.

“It was one of those things,” he said. “The right place, the right time, the right circumstances. My wife Kathleen and I have been very fortunate in life, and it feels great to be able to do something like this and see the good come out of it. It feels good to make other people feel good.”



Larry is with his Boss 429 Ford Mustang, aka a 1970 Ford Torino Cobra Twister Special.



’71 Javelin SST bought locally by Larry’s sister, Doris.



Left: Larry Carrell stands by a sketch of the future Petroleum County Community Center in October, shortly after his generous donation of \$5 million to the cause was announced.

Editor's note: In the November 2019 Fergus Features, Fergus Electric Cooperative employees Brian Godbey and Melanie Foran were recognized for their rescue efforts in a story titled Right place, right time by Charlie Denison, Contributing Writer. The following is an email from the Plochl family providing Melanie and Brian with an update on the rescued pilot's condition and thanking them for truly being in the right place at the right time! Fergus Electric's staff sends their best to Mr. Plochl and wishes him a full and speedy recovery!

Deepest gratitude

To Melanie and Brian,

Our family owes a great deal to Melanie and Brian. If it weren't for them spotting the plane and taking the time to investigate, I don't know where my father would be today or what his condition would be. My dad has been flying planes since my sister and I were little girls. He has two planes and a hangar in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Flying airplanes is my dad's world. On Monday, July 29th, my dad left Oshkosh, Wisconsin, to return home to Vancouver. He had spent two weeks away at an airshow. For unknown reasons my dad's plane crashed 0.25 miles from the Roundup airport that evening. He spent the night clinging to life. In the morning hours, Melanie and Brian were on the road commuting for work when Brian spotted my dad's plane. They drove to the site and found the plane and my dad. He suffered 13 broken ribs, a broken sternum, two broken arms, a broken pelvis, a broken hip, a collapsed lung and his liver was pushed up into his diaphragm. He spent many days in the ICU and when he was stable, he was airlifted to Vancouver. He has had over 20 hours of surgery and is waiting for one more. He has been bed ridden in the hospital since the accident, but after this next surgery we know that he will continue his recovery, start rehabilitation and finally come home.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to both of you. You both mean so much to our entire family and we will always have a place in our hearts for you. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for giving my dad the opportunity to one day fly again.

Midori Monan (daughter), Sakura Plochl (daughter) and Atsuko Plochl (wife)



Top left: Brian and Melanie with their Lifesaver Awards from MECA.

The pilot who was rescued by Melanie and Brian is in the other two photos.

Identify Account Number* Win a \$32.50 credit

If one of the following account numbers is yours, call Fergus Electric (406-538-3465) and identify yourself and your account number.

**Account 319769 • Account 317374
Account 394631 • Account 394724
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You will receive a \$32.50 credit on next month's statement.

Gray Pennell of Lewistown and **Marlene Haack** of Hobson were last month's winners!

**Numbers are drawn monthly.*



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

FOR OUTAGES

First: Check the fuses or breakers in the building in which the electricity is off.

Second: Check the breaker below the meter.

Third: If electricity is still out, call a neighbor to see if they have electricity.

Fourth: Call 406-538-3465 day or night or:

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Melanie Foran	406-462-5650

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