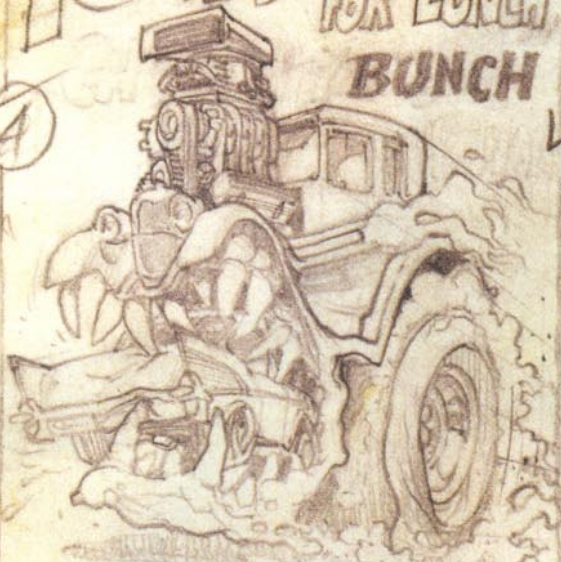


FORDS EAT CHEVYS FOR LUNCH BUNCH

4



WANTED: CHICK TO SHARE FRONT SEAT!
(..MUST HAVE HAIR)

'56 CHEVY

FORD
STOMPER

3

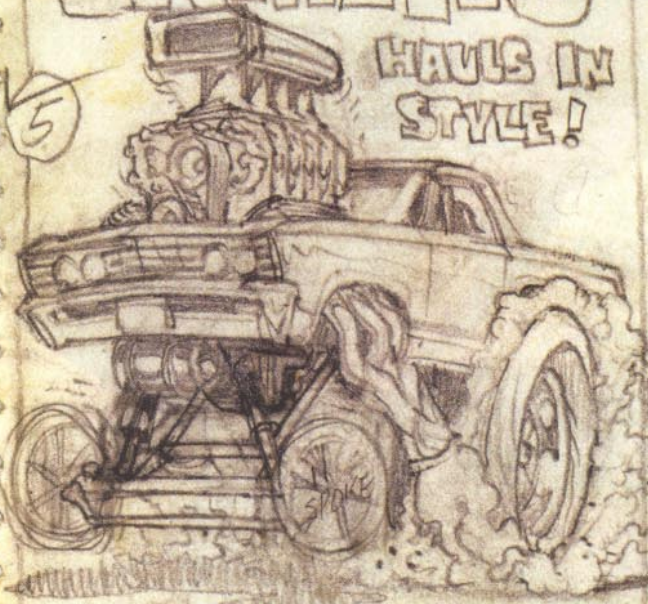


IF IT'S A FORD... KILL IT!

CHEVY CAMINO

HAULS IN
STYLE!

5

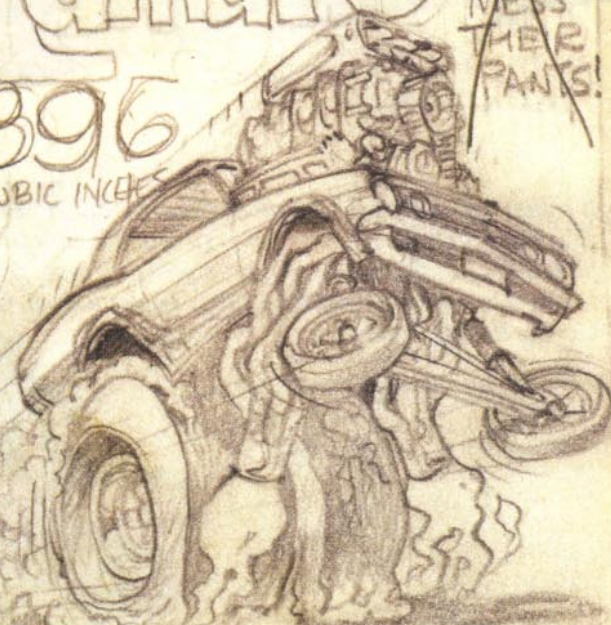


LOAD CAPACITY: 1 DOZ. CHOICE BEAVER!

Camaro

396
CUBIC INCHES

~~MAKES
MUSTANGS
MESS
THEIR
PANTS!~~



GARBAGE IS FORD'S SPELL
SIDEWAYS

FROM ROTH TO ROACH TO RESIN MODELS, ED NEWTON HAS BROUGHT MORE ART AND KAR KULTURE TO THE MASSES THAN PROBABLY ANYONE. BY JEFF KOCH

When you think of Ed Newton and car culture (or is that kar kulture?), you may picture him making monsters and airbrushing T-shirts with the gang of wild-eyed crazies at Roth Studios in the heart of the '60s. Perhaps you would associate him with the Roach Studios shirts of the '70s, at the height of the heat-transfer T-shirt fad, or dreaming up some of the wildest themed custom cars of all time. The truth is that Newt is a more serious artist than some of his career choices might lead you to believe.

Walking into his home studio, the first thing you notice are the spheres. Great, transparent globes—the largest of them the size of a bowling ball, the smallest ones comparable to a Magic 8-Ball—have been gathered in clusters on top of cabinets, bookshelves, and on nearly every flat surface that doesn't have a piece of in-progress art or a toy car on it.

What does it mean? Is it symbolic of Newton's futuristic car sketches? Is it a political one-world statement? Neither, in fact: Newton credits his admiration for MC Escher and the famous self-portrait where Escher draws himself holding a mirrored globe for their appearance here, attracting special attention to the "illusion" aspect of the print. It is a straight portrait, the Escher piece, but diffused through the globe, the picture naturally distorts at the edges. It puts the ordinary into a new, different, exciting perspective.

Though Newton insists the fascination is nothing more than that, the numbers and placement of these items are telling. Spheres, of course, are more than simply round—they are three-dimensional. They say that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, but anyone who's ever flown to Europe knows that the quick way to get there is a northern arc over Canada and Greenland. Spheres are all-encompassing, and shatter long-held basic beliefs about what is both true and possible. Newt has tried to shatter many of the same preconceived notions with his cars and his art

during his 40-year affair.

Though he retreated to the quiet, rolling hills of Ohio three decades ago, Edward Allen Newton spent his early years in San Jose, California. He was youngest of three, with a sister, Marlene, and a brother, Jack, older by eight years. Jack was "my inspiration, a child prodigy—he's why I got into

violations before I was old enough to legally have a permit. I had to bring my mother with me to Juvie for the second one... she didn't drive, so I drove her there and back. He helped me buy my first car, a '41 Chevy coupe. He used to take me to the drags at the old 'Little Bonneville' strip in San Jose—long gone now.

and I always thought about style. He had a natural ability and could do anything artistically—architecture, sculpture—but when he got out of the Navy, he just dropped it. Never touched it after that, and he won't to this day."

Newt was already well on his way by then. His proficiency in drawing (especially cars) led Mark Briggs, his high school art teacher, to introduce Newt to a graduating student from Art Center College of Design (now in Pasadena), who taught him a couple of more advanced techniques there in class. Later, he was accepted to Art Center, but soon discovered that he had also

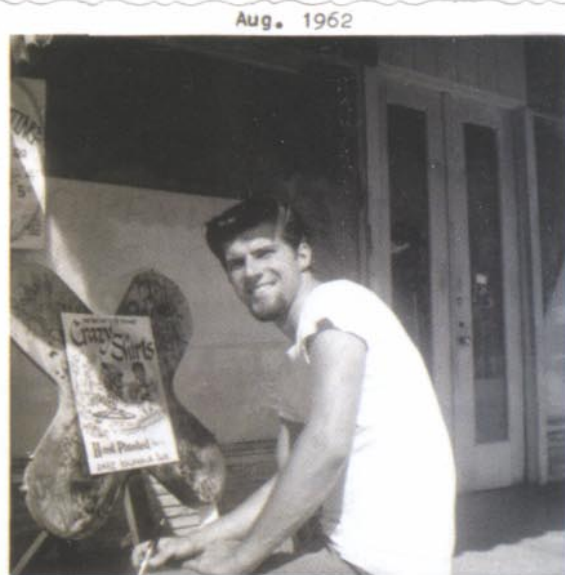
NEWT!

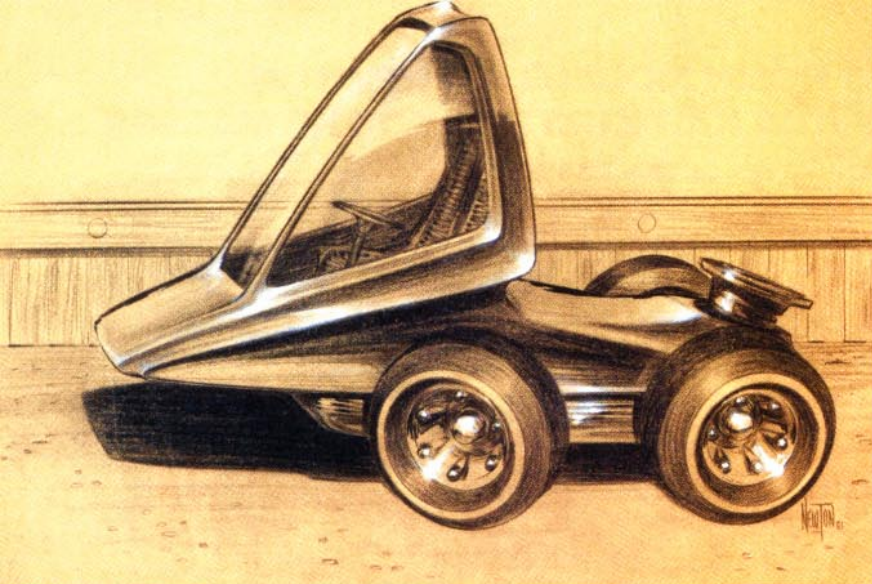
art in the first place. He introduced me to everything that has stayed with me." Jack turned a preschool Ed on to certain Donald Duck comics with stories and art "far superior to any other children's comics at the time. It wasn't until years later that anyone knew that Carl Barks wrote and inked those stories. He elevated the genre beyond anything that it was ever meant to be." When Jack was in the Navy, he wrote letters to a pre-teen Ed. "I still have some of his ink drawings from when he was overseas. He used ballpoint pen, with no correction or erasing." While Jack was overseas, Ed was advised to find *Mad* comics at home, which eventually led to the younger Newton "discovering" Frank Frazetta.

Jack was into cars, and for Newt, cars were part of the mix from the get-go—both drawing them and driving them. "Jack had a '31 Chevy Coupe, and I hung with him and his pals. He taught me how to drive when I was 10, and I had two moving

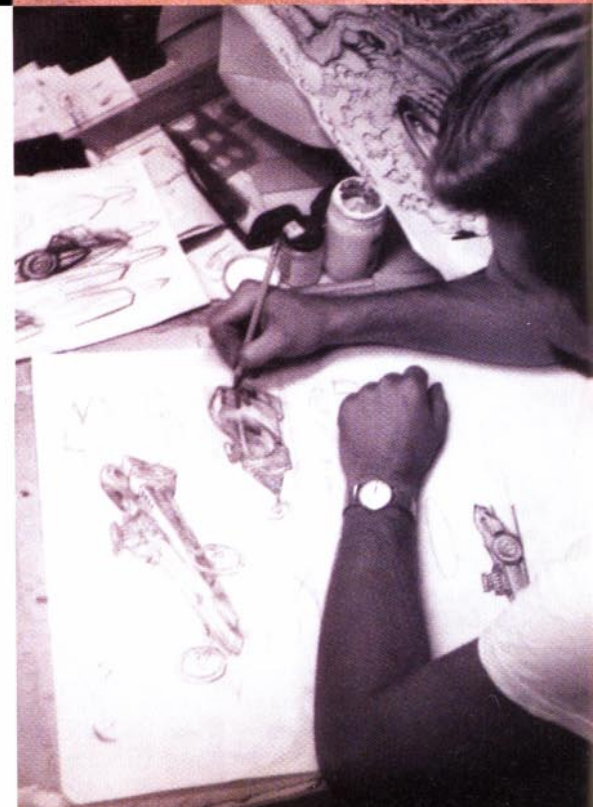
"So we were always drawing and designing cars. He would do cars with 360 degree wraparound bumpers, and put all the operations in the middle of the steering wheel before anyone thought of it. He thought about practical things,

been accepted at UCLA on a two-year scholarship. "Without my knowledge, Briggs submitted my portfolio. They were only offering five scholarships nationwide to kick off their design program. It covered tuition, plus extra money to live





Clockwise from above left: Original Art Center Transportation class assignment "truck concept" carbon pencil drawing that later spawned the Surfite. Newt traded this design for a custom set of deep dish wheels for his '55 Nomad. Pink Panther: steel body formed over an Olds Toronado chassis. Redd Foxx Wrecker. Freelance top fuel dragster designs for a race car builder in Washington state. The finished car won awards for design as well as holding its own at the drags. '66 Monkeymobile Concept was submitted to Universal Studios, with Roth's bid, for their upcoming TV show. In the booth at the Oakland Roadster Show, '65.



on. Couldn't pass that up."

Cars continued in college, of course; Newt ran a '58 Plymouth Savoy, with a LaSalle transmission and Chrysler 300C driveline. "It was a real sleeper. I still had the pushbutton tranny cluster lit up, so when I'd race a new Ford 406 or something, I'd push the disconnected low range button as I would clutch into First with the floor shifter. I surprised quite a few people in that car."

Though he went on to Art Center after two years at UCLA, Newt was glad that he spent time at a university. "I learned life drawing, and I developed the organic line style that I used with my Roth designs. UCLA gave me the basics, and by the time I was at Art Center, I had a legitimate art style. I took art history at UCLA and am glad I did; it gave me a great foundation for the motifs, movements, and methods of the whole art movement as it proceeded through our cultural history. Once I knew about lines, I learned all the ways to fill in between 'em at Art Center."

Some of Newt's Art Center classmates were equally prodigious. Larry "Mr. Hot Wheels" Wood (Nov. '99) was a contemporary and pal, as were Ken Eberts (head of the Automotive Fine Arts Society), Chuck Hance (who owns Coast Corvette in Southern California), and Andy Jacobsen (head of Ford Truck Design in Dearborn)—clearly a car-crazy group. His roommate at Art Center was Rick Ralston, a part-time T-shirt airbrush artist. "Rick made enough money painting T-shirts during the summer on Catalina Island that he paid his way through school. He wanted to go to Hawaii, and talked me into going, though I knew nothing about airbrushing shirts. Rick said he'd coach me. So we got set up. A guy had a request. I ask Rick, 'How do you do it?' He told me, 'Sit here, face that direction, point the airbrush at

the shirt, and go to it.' That was my training. For an hour and a half I struggled with that first shirt, but the guy was hap-

NEWT!

py with it. The next one took 45 minutes, the one after that was 30 minutes, and I kept knocking time down bit by bit after that.

"Soon I developed my own systems. Most guys would use fluorescent Dayglo paint they'd add arbitrarily—colored lines around b&w drawings. I created viable 3D images in the most primitive way—with 16-ounce cans of Krylon. I'd do the sky tone and a reflective ground tone, then do the outline of the car, fill it in over the paint that was already there, and fog it in black. I also learned that if I'd save the best working spray nozzles to use on fresh paint cans, I



Sand Draggin' featured a '66 Olds Toronado FWD unit in rear.

could maintain excellent control shirt after shirt.

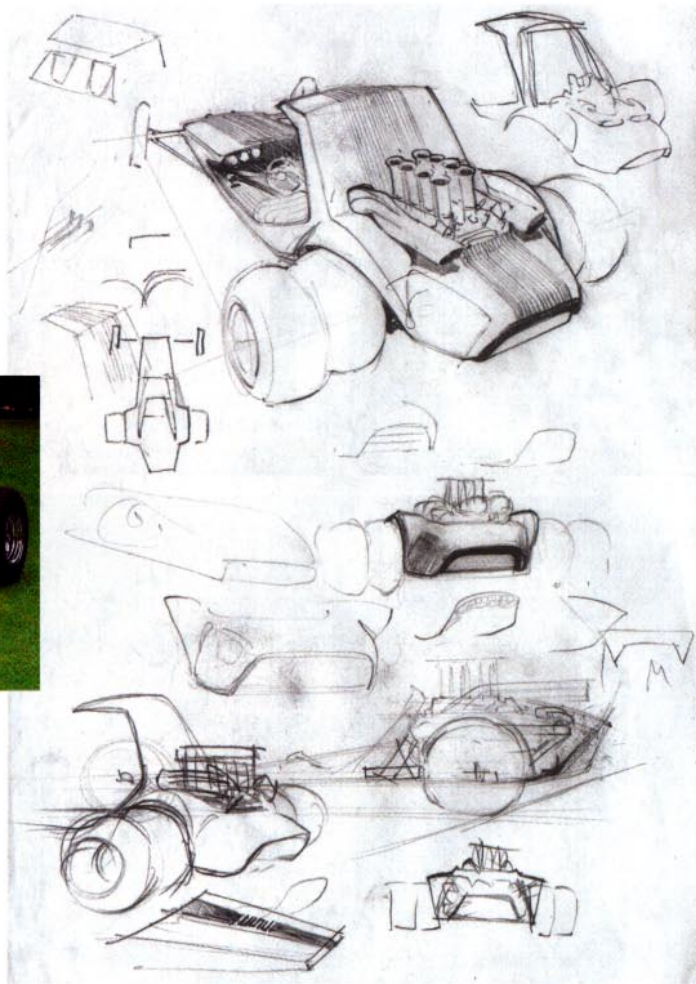
"At the end of the summer I went back to school. Rick thought I'd kiss it off and stay since it was just a matter of time before things took off, but I wanted to continue with Transportation Design. He stuck it out, and now his Crazy Shirts has a bunch of locations in Hawaii, and more in California. Rick is worth millions."

Differences with the Art Center administration convinced Newt to depart after two years there. He floated from car show to car show painting shirts and making a fine living. Newt's artistic talents weren't always appreciated by his patrons, however. "One guy said to me, 'I got a new Pontiac Grand Prix—can you put it on a shirt?' So to make it shine like the illustration in the brochure, I'd

put in reflective ground tones and swirly reflections of trees... I had a rude awakening when he said, 'but my car is black.' I told him it *was* black—that the other colors mirrored the sky and ground tones. 'No,' said the guy, 'my car is black.' So I loaded my airbrush with flat black and colored in all the reflections. It looked like a black blob. The guy looks at it, smiles and says to his buddy, 'That's my car!' I learned a lot about people that summer."

the weirdness that was later adopted by the shirt painters. I can't think of anyone, including Dutch, who would have predated him with that style.

"In the '50s, Dutch started doing characters on grilles and side panels of competition cars, and photos would show up in HOT ROD or people would see 'em at the drags. Back when the altered roadster class required a stock-type radiator shell, racers would put a blank sheet of aluminum in the open-



Monster mania was spreading at that time and was popularized by Ed Roth and the like. Newton actually credits a *Life* magazine spread that Basil Wolverton did in 1946 or '47 with the genesis of the classic bug-eyed monster we find so quaint today. "Basil drew these faces and heads of whacked-out characters with wrinkles and bug-eyes, all the hairs popping out of the warts, the rolls of skin around the eyeballs, gaping holes, ragged teeth, and all

ing. Racers would have Dutch do a monster or some striping on it to set the tone. When enough people had seen that stuff at the drags, or El Mirage, or Bonneville, folks thought about using those images elsewhere.

"Shirt imagery came in later, originally with felt-tip markers. Cam grinders especially would sell or give away shirts. You buy a cam, you get a shirt. In the pits, on the back of the racer's or crew's shirt, you'd see the

name of the cam grinder. I think younger kids who couldn't afford cams (or even cars) saw these and copied the logo onto their own plain shirt, thus having one for free. That was the beginning of the personalized T-shirt. The story goes that one of these guys approached Dutch and asked if he could do one of his illustrations on a shirt. Dutch got his airbrush out and painted an image on the shirt with the airbrush using sign-painter's One Shot [ink]. It was a natural progression, but that was the big step-up the genre needed.

"Soon after, Roth, Mouse, and other early pioneers applied their own style to that concept. I think Richard Ash and Conners should be counted with the original guys. Jeffries had his hand in early on, even Pete Millar. Then Ralston and the Crazy Arab were on the heels of those guys." Modestly, Newton discounts his own oft-regarded pioneer status. "I don't feel like a pioneer; at the time I started, it felt like it had been going on all around me for quite a while. The most I could do was develop my style and technique and knowledge and schooling as a springboard to make shirts that were better than average.

"The first shirts were like black and white cartoons, but once I developed my technique, it was like a colorization process. Probably two-thirds of the stuff I did was

cartoon-like. In '62 and '63, the Roth/Von Dutch/Mouse influence was getting really big, and public awareness was high. If someone saw a guy in a car show with a Mouse shirt, a customer would come up to you and say 'I want one like that guy's, but with a '53 Chevy instead. With great big slicks—bigger than the ones on his shirt!'

NEWT!

Newton actually credits a *Life* magazine spread that Basil Wolverton did in 1946 or '47 with the genesis of the classic bug-eyed monster.

They'd also want a car with engine features that were bigger, wilder, with more flames. That whole style was immediately popular with the car show crowd."

Newton, who had been freelancing at car shows for a couple of years, met Roth in '63 at the San Mateo show. Big Daddy was introducing the Road Agent and had the "x" (exclusive) on airbrushing shirts there. "As it was explained to me by the show promoter, 'when you build a feature car and bring it in, you can have the x, too.' So I showed Roth photos of my shirts, and he seemed quite taken, but he locked on to a photo of a 1:8 scale clay model I had done at Art Center. I took the photo from ground level, so it looked like a real car. I told him it was

just a clay model, but it didn't seem to deter him. He told me to put the photos away—he didn't want anyone else seeing them. Little did I know that he was in need of that kind of service at the time."

Roth invited Newton to a string of shows to paint shirts—shows that Newton would never have been able to get into otherwise. "While we were painting, he'd try to get me to come down to the shop in Maywood and

work for him full-time. After months of Roth working on me to come on board, and upping the ante each time we met and did shirts, I finally accepted. It wasn't as much as I could have made on my own, but it allowed me to design wild cars that would actually be built. Seeing my designs turned into running vehicles was an incentive for me."

Newton's first official car design for Roth was one that he had actually done in college: the Surfite, later made into one of many Revell model kits that the company had contracted Roth to do. "I had originally designed it as a truck tractor at Art Center. Before I even worked for Roth, he expressed interest in that rendering and would have done the Surfite even if I hadn't gone to work for him. Roth moved the wheels under the cab, and put the slice in the side to hold a board. He had wanted a surf woodie theme vehicle for a while, and after he saw the tractor, he thought it could be adapted." An early lesson for young Newton came when certain aspects of the original illustration weren't brought to life. "My drawing gave Surfite flotation-type tires, but because of supplier and advertiser constraints, Roth used what was available through his sponsors, Kelly tires and Astro wheels. Still, Surfite's only real drawback was that it was a single-passenger car."

When Newton officially came on board, Roth was finishing the Orbitron. "It was already in plaster, and it didn't turn out to be a successful design. I was brought in to help try and 'fix' it. There were some compromises from the original concept, and I thought it was a questionable effort... certainly not one I consider part of my work, as I was not in at its beginning."

Newton cranked out the Wishbone design his first week of employment at Roth Studios. "The sketch showed an extreme wedge look with front wheels and tires ahead of body. The object was to create a void between front wheels, and I had devised a way to do the mechanicals. **HR**

Source

Ed Newton
Dept. HR11, Box 1034, Dublin, OH 43017

To Be Continued

Newt on Von Dutch

I was tremendously impressed with Dutch. His originality was something that came naturally. I believe he was a true creative genius. Beyond inventing the airbrushed shirt, he was the first to do freehand car striping. He would approach it like an artist, too. He would tailor the striping motif according to the way he felt with the car. I was always amazed at his versatility; he could build vehicles, do paint jobs and striping, but he could also do oil paintings. He had a self-taught style, but it had a beauty in its simplicity. He wouldn't just do automobiles, either. He would do surrealistic, multi-level artwork.

Dutch was always one step ahead. He wouldn't just build a gun, he'd build a Derringer that could shoot a 10-gauge shotgun shell. He did a knife that was designed like a machete, but in the handle there was a gun and a crank like a fishing reel, so the knife could fire off a single round.

Everything he did, he excelled at—in terms of ideas and ability. He did an art showcase for the Cars of the Stars museum by building fullsize dioramas for his Chamber of Horrors exhibition. He rebuilt giant machines: fullsize guillotines, million-volt Tesla coils.... He depicted the epitome of every child's fear of the dentist. That diorama had a boy in a dentist chair; the doctor had four eyes (one pair on top of the other), and he was operating a standard size drill with a giant bit, coming out the boy's cheek. Another was a diorama copy of DaVinci's painting "The Last Supper," except it revolved around the devil and 12 demon disciples. A speech balloon floating above the devil's head said, "Everyone Picks Up Their Own Check." Some old lady actually fainted when she saw it, and that's when the disclaimer sign went up. Now that I think about it, I can't remember any of those dioramas that actually included a vehicle.... they were all social statements. They caused a lot of trouble. Dutch got a big kick out of that.