

Horsing Around

The Voice of the Early Bronco Registry

EDITOR'S "BS" (Bronco Stuff)

Steve Sampson, Editor

Well Bronco folks, as usual I'm working at the last moment to construct these stories for you. Two weeks ago I was doing business at the Pentagon. Last week I was on a cruise along the Mexican Riviera. Right now I'm trying to type this while watching the Super Bowl. Meanwhile my Bronco sits outside, long

overdue for an engine swap. Like most of you, I'm always trying to find a proper balance of work, family time and recreation. Since my wife, boss and Bronco all are suspicious that I have my priorities wrong... wait a minute, here is the kick-off... let's see if we have something here that will make your next few reading moments enjoyable.

A Salute to Parnelli Jones

by Bruce Bolander, Steve Sampson & Todd Zuercher

Our first report is about a recent evening in Los Angeles spent with Bronco racing legend Parnelli Jones plus 600-700 of his best friends. Two of these friends were EBR members Bruce Bolander and Todd Zuercher. In addition to having a wonderful evening, they had two jobs to accomplish on behalf of the EBR; (1) deliver two photos of Parnelli and Bill Stroppe taken during the Bronco's 20th Anniversary (yes, 20 years ago), and (2) to get Parnelli to sign the 40th Coast-to-Coast log-book. Here are their comments and photos from the evening.

Bruce's comments:

Steve, we were able to present Parnelli with the 20th Anniversary picture, take a photo of him with the flag and had him sign the book at the entrance before the festivities started. A few of the highlights:

The evening was a who's who in racing. Present were Al Unser, James Garner, Ivan Stewart, Phil Hill, Carrol Shelby, George Follmer, Dan Gurney, Joe Leonard, Walker Evans, Linda "Hurst Shifter Girl" Vaughn, JC Agajanian Jr. and the list goes on and on.

Parnelli recognized me right away when I presented the 20th photo and explained to him what was in it. He said "And we had the 40th



Bruce Bolander presenting Parnelli Jones a 20th (not 40th) Anniversary photograph. Parnelli was one of the many attendees 21 long years ago.

this year too". I told him how much we've enjoyed having him with us this year and I particularly enjoyed seeing him race Big Oly over to the photo shoot. What a cool guy he is. All kinds of important friends around, but still took some time with us.

I gave the 20th ANNIVERSARY picture to Willie [Stroppe] and he was thrilled to get it. He hadn't seen it before.

After Parnelli restored a Mustang and realized when driving it that the technology was kind of old, he went to Steve Saleen to get a new Mustang painted like his original Mustang Trans Am car. That led to them producing a new Saleen/Parnelli Jones Limited Edition Mustang (500 units) that are now in production. It has a 302 (5.0) 400 HP and big brakes, he said. They had several of them there. Some are in the pictures. Big Oly was there too.

They showed a great video of Parnelli's racing history, and there were a couple of clips of him bouncing around in a Bronco.

They auctioned off some Parnelli memorabilia and the crowd didn't flinch at bidding things up. I think you should have been there to get the racing helmet with all these guy's



Parnelli's dinner was the last official event for our 40th Coast-to-Coast flag.

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left to right: George Follmer, Willie Stroppe (barely visible), Dick Guldstrand, Al Unser Sr., Phil Remington, Page Jones, J.C. Agajanian Jr., Linda "Miss Hurst" Vaughn, Dan Gurney, Walker Evans, Joe Leonard, Hila Sweet, Jim Dilamarter, Frank Arciero Jr., Ivan "Ironman" Stewart

autographs on it for \$3100.

Sandi Badgett [Our key Ford contact for Fabulous Fords Forever] came by! She was seated at a reserved table up front and we were in the back row in open seating, but she came by a couple of times to chat. She's a great Bronco friend!

In his closing remarks when asked about which car was his favorite, he said it was usually what he was driving at the time. But he did say that he really enjoyed the off road racing since it was recreation and FUN. He told the story about Ray Harvick telling him that he'd tap him on the leg when he was going to fast and ended up with a hammered leg before the race in the Bronco was over. [You can see this story on video soon. We are finishing a DVD of the "Evening with the Legends" soon. Check the EBR web site for details.]

Todd's comments:

Steve, after seeing James Garner there, I can understand how we could not have possibly had him in Victorville [40th Anniversary]. He is extremely limited in mobility and appears to be in very poor health. It's sad to see, frankly.

I thought Al Unser's story about riding with Parnelli in one of the early Mint races was great and he did a great (and kind) job of making light of PJ's infamous temper. Gurney's comment about calling him "Parnoily" after the '63 Indy win was humorous as well.

Parnelli's 1970 Trans Am Mustang sold for nearly \$500K to a collector a year or two ago. I was thrilled that it was there. I really like the green Lotus - such sleek cars. PJ finished 2nd at Indy in '65 with that car. His #98 car, "Old Calhoun", is a replica of the '63 Indy winning car. Bruce - as I'm sure you can attest, the movie clips they showed from Indy were something else. I can only imagine what drifting a car like that at 150 mph was like - those guys truly were made of stronger stuff than most of us. 🐾



#98 Agajanian Willard Battery Special Watson Roadster was driven by Parnelli Jones to a win in the 1963 Indianapolis 500



Driving this Ford-powered Lotus Parnelli just missed winning the 1965 Indianapolis 500 behind A.J. Foyt in a similar Lotus.



A Bronco Owner Returns

by Steve Hum

Recently we had an email dialog with new EBR member Steve Hum trying to sort out a database problem. In the process we learned that Steve had owned a Bronco long ago and after years of absence was just in the process of buying one again. His story about coming "full circle" was interesting, and he happily allowed us to share it with you here.

Bringing the story full circle involves my wife, Gloria and my two kids, Mariah and Walker (a partial nod to Walker Evans, the off road racer). We are a close family, camping and traveling all over the world together, loving it and each others company. That's why there are really two Broncos that need to be a part of this new chapter. The first one, if all goes well, should be in the garage by Sunday night and I will send on a picture or two. The search for the second one continues. As for "photos from any of this history" (now that makes me feel old, ha ha), yes they do exist, but finding them..... I will dig around, would love to see them myself.

In 1969, my last year of high school, one of my friend's father had a Bronco that we used to pop little wheelies with in the senior parking lot (such abuse) and cruise the "boulevard" in on Friday and Saturday nights. It was a cool ride back then when the norm was 57 Chevys and 32 Fords, and then again maybe we were just dorks and didn't know any better.

After high school I went to work at the VW/Porsche dealer (San Diego area) twisting wrenches and became pretty good with suspension systems, eventually building front ends for Baja 1,000 racers using VW suspension. That put me in Baja working a check point for the 1,000 in the early 70's. I'll never forget James Garner blasting into the check point, middle of the night with a kazillion candle power of lights in a crazy, jacked up, out of place 442. Punched his race card and got his autograph. That trip down to La Paz was in a Bronco and I was really impressed by it. Lost one night in the middle of nowhere (this was before the road was paved) we stumbled on a Mexican truck full of 55 gallon drums of fuel that was stuck in the sand. We hooked up the Bronco to it and pulled it right out, I could not believe it! Right there I was sold.

Spent more years dialing in Porsche racers and hanging out in the desert playing with buggies. Eventually made more trips into Mexico in a Land



Steve's daughter has plans to make this her "first Bronco" also.

Cruiser (72 vintage) then life went off into other directions.

I have never forgotten the old Bronco, time just wasn't right until now. I have a teenage son and daughter that have put the bug into my ear so off we go back onto the dirt with a new generation. This is the unedited and off the cuff version of the story, but maybe a little insight into the why of the story. Of course, the process of finding a Bronco and selecting a Bronco is an altogether different story. I go this weekend to pick up my first Bronco!

[We will take a brief pause while Steve takes delivery of his new machine . . . OK, he has it now, keep reading.]

The Bronco is in the garage now with the radiator out for a little refreshing of the cooling system, a power steering upgrade, and a detailing of the engine compartment. How did it come about that this Bronco was the one? Well, it has been a journey and a couple of good ones got away while I became comfortable enough with all things EB to pull the trigger on this one.

I have always envisioned a red Bronco with white flares and a white canvas top, full cage, and a winch up front. Of course, the nice throaty rumble of headers and a free flowing exhaust was a given. You could not have convinced me that I would end up happily so very far and wide of that image. The very first Bronco that I seriously looked at came close, with the simple exception of being uncut. That one got away while I asked endless questions of the owner (a great gut who was very, very patient with me and my questions, I learned a lot). During the course of that experience (and since) I continued to search the country via the web for early Broncos, I was willing to go anywhere to bring in just the right one. The definition of "the right one" evolved as the search lengthened. The retro look of the uncut rear fender really started to grow on me after a few months of seeking. Eventually the criteria sharpen in focus to uncut, no rust, original paint and manual transmission. Original paint because as you know what you see is what you get, and actually with the right photo documentation I was flexible in this area. Now, I have nothing against an auto trans, it was just a case of wanting the new drivers in the family to learn what a clutch was and how to use it from the get go. Simple as that. At this point the field became very small! The search grew into months. During that time I found three vehicles that filled the bill, the first happened too early in the hunt, the second got away over a couple hundred bucks (stupid on my part), and the third was the one we bought. And

even then there was some comprising to be made.

What we found was advertised as all original, always garaged, and with only 39,000 miles. After numerous phone conversations and a 500 mile drive what I found was close but not exactly as stated. Yes, it was uncut and the transmission was a manual, and even the mileage seemed actual. The car was bought new by an auto shop owner in Fresno when he retired in 1971/72. He kept the car until his death in 1995, driving it very very little, and then it passed onto his grandson who drove it back to S. Ca. and parked it in his garage. He only drove it to keep it running, not wanting to add mileage to it. The Bronco held real sentimental value and he had a hard time letting it go. He believed the car to be all original with only a "slight" scuff on the right front fender that was "hardly noticeable". What I found was a pretty good scrap/dent from a gas

station safety pole. Ok, I thought, I don't like it but I can live with it. Closer inspection then discovered that the tailgate had also taken a pretty good lick from the spare tire when the old guy backed into something. The third "issue" came when upon looking really close it was obvious that the front half of the Bronco had been repainted at some point very early in it's life. What I have since decided is that the right front fender (the one with the dent) had been replaced sometime really early in the truck's history and for some reason they then repainted the whole front half. I also believe the grandson really was unaware of truck's history and so a re-negotiation took place until we arrived at a place that we both could agree on.... we had our first Bronco!

A couple more words just to clarify. Although I was at first a bit disappointed that the Bronco had been repainted in the front, the fact that it is a very old paint job made it OK. In fact it has been a bit liberating. We had not set out to find a "show" car, we intend to put it on the trails. A friend of mine has a pretty rare model Shelby Mustang that is beautiful, but so valuable and nice that it sees very little daylight as a result. A great investment for him, but not what I wanted in a Bronco at this point in time. The interest for me and my family is to go exploring in the back country (growing up in San Diego in the 50s & 60s with desert rat parents it has been a way of life for me), let the young drivers taste some dust behind the wheel, meet some great people, and swap some "story" around a camp fire... basic stuff. Given my long ago affection for the early Bronco, the choice of vehicle was a given this time around; I just love em... So this truck seems very right for us: it looks great as is, but not so perfect as to preclude using it. Having spent more than a few years twisting wrenches for a living, I really appreciate the low mileage and the fact that no one has messed with anything and nothing is worn out. Leaving it in basically stock form will of course limit which trails it gets used on, but I can accept that and will focus on driving skill with the kids for now. If down the road that feels too limiting, there are other Broncos out there.

Above is a picture of "my first Bronco" and I have already lost the driver's seat to my daughter (so she thinks). I got your note on the Fabulous Fords Forever event [April 22nd at Knott's Berry Farm] and will try to make it down for the weekend, great chance to connect with folks in the Bronco community.

Time to head out to the shop and put this thing back together. 🍷