

World of Wails by Bob Found 1987 Mustang

The problem with Hard Luck Awards is that it's usually an award given to an exhibitor BEFORE the show, and not after, because after all, the show's over. Who knows what happens after a car show?

Thus begins my tale of the trauma I was subjected to after the World of Wheels in Calgary. Instead of World of Wheels, it was more like World of Wails!

In order to fully pity me, let me take you back to the spring of 2006 and the list of 80 things to do on my car.

The car first went to Aero-Tech Welding to get two locking lug-nuts removed from the front wheels. In my attempts to remove the nuts without a key (lost), I mucked up the wheel and lug nut holes royally. I took the car back there later for a couple days to get the blower intake made out of stainless steel, instead of the 4 inch sewer pipe I had installed. I didn't want anyone to say that the pipe looked like the material it normally transports.

Next it was to Cascade Vans who did premier work on interiors of other rods but less than stellar work on my car, resulting in my taking the car back 3 times! A guy named Terry created the tonneau cover and aluminum console from my cardboard design and the old plastic console. In order to facilitate his work I had to take the car, twice, to Sundre by trailer and drop it off at his shop. Terry had some health problems which put the project behind schedule. I was really concerned about his health, because who would finish the car if he died?

I didn't drive the car most of the summer because it was in the shops I mentioned. Between my frequent work forays across 3 provinces, I managed to deliver the car to Wrinkles in November. Around Christmas time Wrinkles' manager quit, forcing Lawrence to work in the office and after Christmas, 3 employees quit. So I wasn't very popular when I started whining about getting my car painted! Lawrence and Corey pulled out all the stops working long hours and weekends to deliver the car to me Jan 31, as promised. As usual, great work for the agreed-to price.

It was -20C outside and all I had for heat in my un-insulated garage was a small construction space-heater, and the warm feeling in my heart for my car. I pulled the interior and stereo apart, rewired the doors and windows with relays so I could control them by remote control. I put in a new stick and a whole lot more chrome and aluminum parts inside the car and engine bay. The week of the show, I had to take holidays to ensure that I would not get called in for work. I got called anyway, but I told them I could "not partake in the events they requested". In other words, piss off!

Like many others, I got the car to the Stampede grounds early but had to wait 1-1/2 hours in the line-up before getting to the Round Up Center parking lot. Pumped up full of excitement and coffee, I had to make two trips to the "bushes". Approaching the entry I drove out of the line-up to take the car off the trailer and drive it in, rather than unload inside. The car wouldn't roll back to take up the winch tension, even by raising the hitch, so I decided to just drive the car off. In my attempt to do so, the trailer bounced, causing both ramps to fall off just before I got my back tires on to them! Fortunately a bystander and Barbara saw this and ran to my car yelling at me not to move. They put the ramps

back on and I got the car off without issue after that. (It's the only time I didn't mind Barbara yelling at me.)

Entering the building I was following the guide-guy when I had to reverse the car but I didn't HAVE a reverse gear! What the hay? (Okay, okay, I didn't use the word "hay".) I shifted it about 6-7 times before it finally engaged, but when I tried to put it back in first, I now had no first gear! Arrrgggghhh! I sat there cursing "What the hay! What the hay!" and shifting, trying to get it to go, while the guide was wondering why the hell I was taking so long to move 10 feet! (I've raced the ¼ mile in less time than it was taking me to go one car length!) Eventually I got it moving and parked in my spot only to have my better-half tell me the car wasn't straight. I was staring daggers at her but I had to agree being 4 inches off alignment looked bad. After 289 shifts, I got it lined up. I was glad everyone was so busy they didn't take notice of the idiot sitting in a non-moving car, cursing at the steering wheel and slamming his right arm into the dash. Maybe they thought I didn't like the music on my stereo.

I wanted to keep the gauges and speakers lit up, so I had brought a computer power supply, rated for twice the current that I was going to be using but I didn't account for the wonky cooling fan in the power supply. It ran for 4 hours before it gave up the ghost so I put in a 10 amp battery charger for the 6 amp current draw but it also got too hot and started cutting out. The next day I brought a portable "muffin"-fan (and no, I did not buy it at Tim Horton's) and stuck it on top of the battery charger. This worked.

The rest of the show was uneventful, except in tear-down when I stuck my finger in the muffin fan, but worse, I was dreading leaving the building with a useless shifter. Consider how popular I would be holding up a line of performance cars that can't idle and anxious to get out! My fears were realized when I had to back the car up but couldn't. This time I jumped out of the car, pushed it back, drove forward, jumped out, pushed it back, jumped in, searched for first, and went. I was getting "clutch-leg", 'cause even though I have a centrifugal clutch, at low rpm the spring-pressure is horrendous.

It was snowing when we left the building. The top was down and I couldn't put it up because I had the fancy tonneau cover installed. I also couldn't see where I was going because of the headlight covers so I had to ask a bystander coming out of the Saddledome to remove them for me. Driving around the Dome to the parking lot where the trailers were, I got the trailer hooked up to the truck and proceeded to get the car loaded. I checked my watch because I figured since it was only 7:30, I could be home by 8 PM.



That was before the car fell off the trailer.

The right rear-wheel spun the ramp out and the car came down hard on that side, falling onto the trailer with the wheel just touching the ground. Not having many tools with me, like a tall jack or any drink like Jack Daniels, I called AMA for a tow truck.

The tow truck got lost (who doesn't know where the Saddledome is?) and didn't show up for over an hour. When he eventually arrived, we tried ½ dozen scenarios to get the car lifted safely so we could get the ramp underneath the wheel without damaging the car.

It started to snow heavily and it was getting into the car. I had put the top up as far as I could (storing the tonneau in the truck) but the vinyl wouldn't stretch in the cold so the top would not lock down. Since my back windows didn't work, a testament to my great electrical wiring technique, I put the flannel car cover on while we worked on the off-the-trailer-issue. Around 11 PM Barbara and I were dehydrated and hungry with nothing to

eat or drink. She had been ill most of the day in the first place and this was only exacerbating the situation. I ate the snow off the trunk of my hood and though it wasn't yellow, it still tasted funny. I had two migraines in a row and the two migraine pills I took (the \$12 ones) did not help. What a waste of \$25 bucks! Shoulda bought a bottle of whiskey instead.



We got the car lifted but couldn't remove the tow-bar so we used a bottle jack to jack IT up. Then we couldn't get the jack out and had to use a pry bar to lift the car the half-inch required. (Reminds me of the song, "The leg bone's connected to the hip-bone, the hip-bone's connected to the..."). Finally the ramp was put on and the car winched onto the trailer. I brought the car home with the top cinched down with bungee cords and drove slow so I wouldn't lose the top or turn the car into a sail-boat.

We got home at 12:30 AM.

The next day I took ANOTHER day off to get the car off the trailer and into my garage. Once again I anticipated problems with the ramps, the winch that didn't work initially, the sheer ice in the alley and the fact I have to drive *uphill* into my garage.

Well, the winch worked and I got the car off in minutes. I jumped into the cockpit, put the car in reverse, lined up, put it in first, and drove right into the garage. No problemo!



I'm beginning to think this is a younger man's job, so next year, I just want Norm Johnson to come and get my car. Don't ring the bell, I'll be in bed! Let me know if I win anything.