

BONNEVILLE



Superbirds and Daytonas were designed for racing, which we all know, but we typically think of them racing on the big NASCAR tracks for which they were designed. For two years, 1969 and 1970, we briefly had a war-within-a-war, the “aero war,” where Ford and Chrysler were constantly trying to one-up each other and gain an advantage on the superspeedways where Americans had firmly fixed their attention. Stock car drivers, thanks primarily to television and heavy magazine coverage, had finally become akin to rock stars in popularity, even if the payouts at the

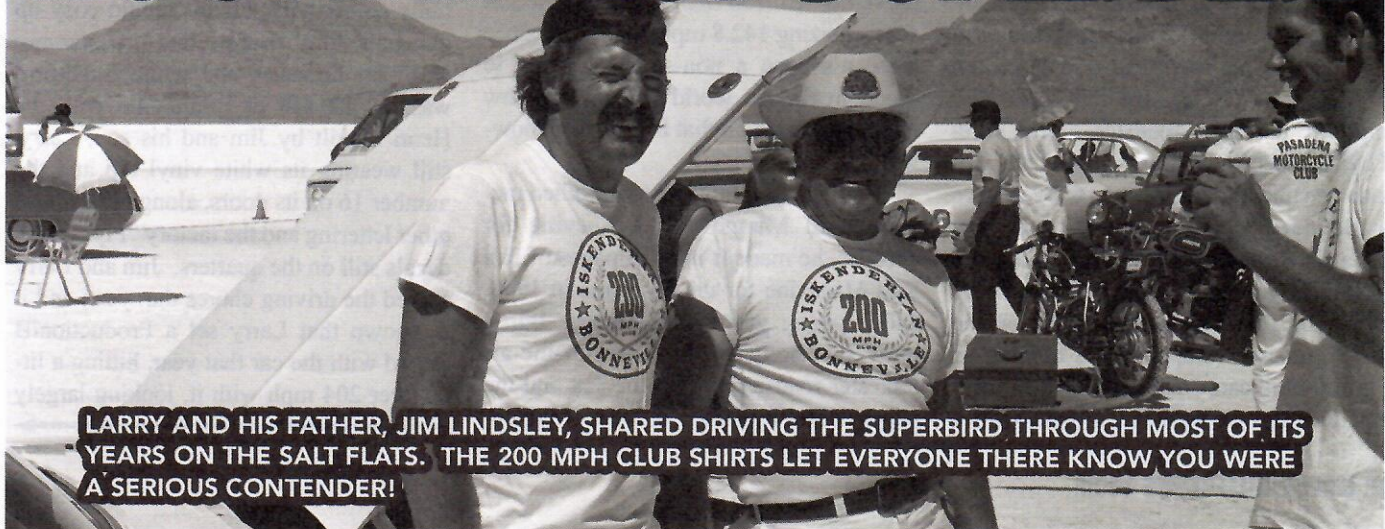
tracks back then were nothing to speak of compared to racing today. Richard Petty, Buddy Baker, Bobby Allison, Bobby Isaac, Cale Yarborough, David Pearson; they were all household names known then even by people who didn’t follow racing, and it was largely the result of the incredible speeds being achieved by Chrysler’s winged cars and their drop-nosed Ford counterparts. However, the aerodynamic lines of the Superbird and Daytona didn’t go unnoticed by people in other forms of racing, and this white Hemi ‘Bird is living proof of that. This is perhaps the fastest Superbird ever built, not as viewed here, of course, but back in

her heyday, if she was moving, she was seldom moving under 200 mph.

It all begins with a man named Jim Lindsley in Southern California. Jim Lindsley is the kind of guy they make movies about (or should). In 1938, he and a few others, namely the legendary Wally Parks, formed the “Gear Grinders” car club, which met at Jim’s house, and Jim’s house became the holding area for all sorts of racing equipment and was ground zero for what became the Southern California Timing Association – better known today simply as the SCTA. They brought old traffic signal lights and cones



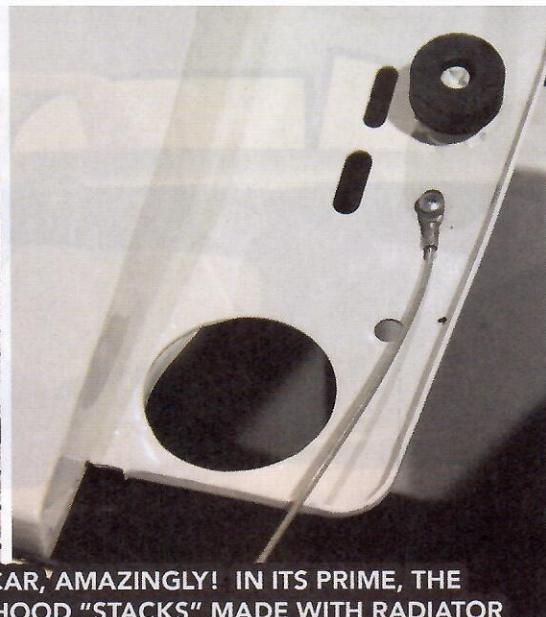
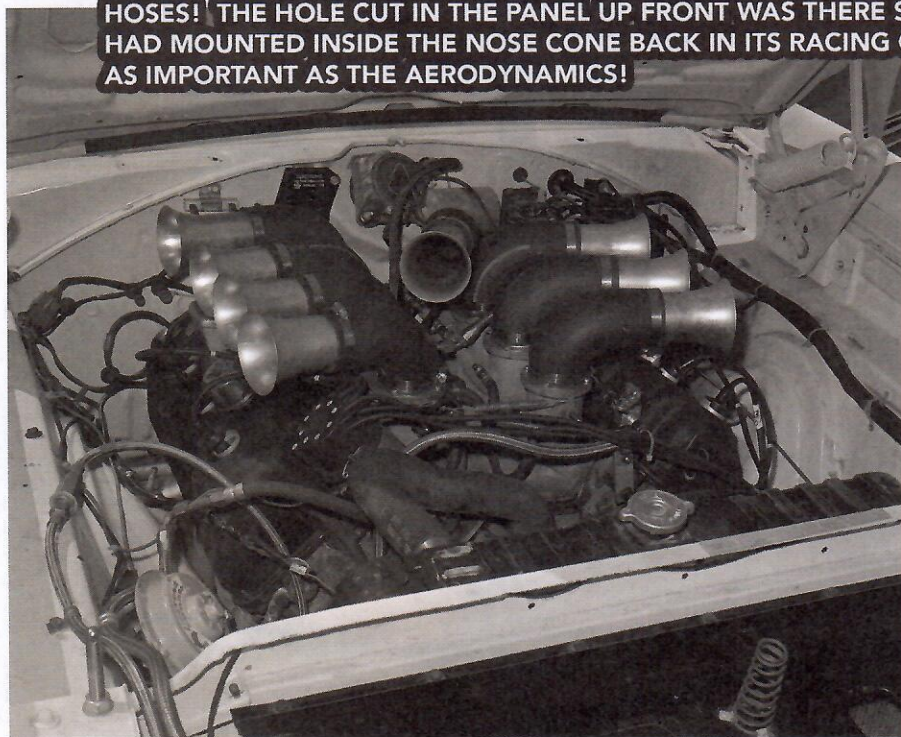
200MPH CLUB SUPERBIRD



LARRY AND HIS FATHER, JIM LINDSLEY, SHARED DRIVING THE SUPERBIRD THROUGH MOST OF ITS YEARS ON THE SALT FLATS. THE 200 MPH CLUB SHIRTS LET EVERYONE THERE KNOW YOU WERE A SERIOUS CONTENDER!



THE NUMBERS MATCHING ORIGINAL HEMI IS STILL WITH THE CAR, AMAZINGLY! IN ITS PRIME, THE CAR WAS RUNNING A RADICAL INJECTED HEMI WITH UNDER-HOOD "STACKS" MADE WITH RADIATOR HOSES! THE HOLE CUT IN THE PANEL UP FRONT WAS THERE SO THEY COULD FILL A GAS TANK THEY HAD MOUNTED INSIDE THE NOSE CONE BACK IN ITS RACING CAREER! WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION WAS AS IMPORTANT AS THE AERODYNAMICS!



out to El Mirage, California, and set up the first racing there, long before any drag strips existed in California, where Jim's first race car was a '32 Ford highboy roadster. He built his first streamliner in 1947 out of a narrowed and stretched Model T, and he was the first to hit 200 mph in an open roadster. His wife, Phyllis, was Wally Parks' secretary, and also became the first woman to ever drive at Bonneville. She took one of the cars for a test drive in 1949, and only pushed it up to 117 mph, but she made history by being the first lady to ever drive on the salt. Jim had campaigned a number of custom-built cars on the salt in Utah; forty square miles of hard flat ground with a

twelve-mile-long straightaway that's been home to countless land speed records dating back to 1914, when Theodore Tetzlaff drove his "Blitzen Benz 2" across the salt at an amazing 142.8 mph! And ever since then, it's been a non-stop challenge to speed freaks the world over to see how fast they can go on that big strip of snow-white salt.

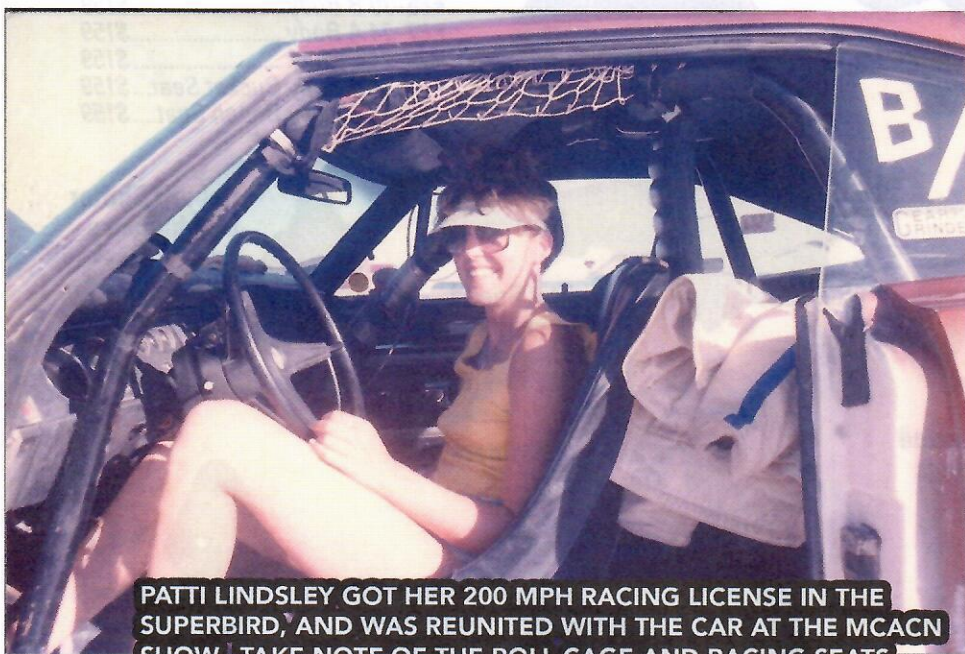
Jim had built custom-bodied racers for El Mirage and Bonneville for decades, he made it into the pages of Hot Rod Magazine for the first time in 1948, and a young guy named George Barris built the body of his state-of-the-art Lakester roadster that hit the salt and the pages of Hot Rod back in 1953. To docu-

ment all of his achievements would take a book in itself, but moving on to 1969, as soon as Jim Lindsley saw the winged cars, he knew this was a ready-made machine for setting records, but it wasn't until early 1970 that Plymouth took notice of his family's prowess at going fast and knew they could give the new Superbird some publicity. Fittingly, a pair of Alpine White Hemi Superbirds were shipped west, one with bucket seats and a four-speed and one with an automatic on the column, that he bought at a Los Angeles dealership, and thanks to the paperwork which survived with the car, we know he financed it for 36 months and made payments on it all along! There are a lot of stories on the web about Plymouth "giving" these cars to the Lindsleys, but if the paperwork is to be believed, they bought them, and they definitely weren't gifts from Chrysler! From day one, both were intended to be all-out race cars. Interestingly, according to family members, Jim wanted the bench seat car initially so his wife, Phyllis, could cozy up alongside him! Before that first summer was out, however, the white Superbird was on the salt at Bonneville with the Hemi rebuilt by Jim and his son, Larry, still wearing its white vinyl top and the number 16 on its doors, along with sparse other lettering and the factory "Plymouth" decals still on the quarters. Jim and Larry shared the driving chores that year, and it is known that Larry set a Production/B record with the car that year, hitting a little over 204 mph with it, looking largely



Lindsley and Larry Lindsley, but there may have been a Keith Black-built engine in there along the way at times. The Hemi sometimes wore a tunnel ram, sometimes it had tall Hillborn injector stacks (both of which required a rather tall hood scoop attached to the original hood) and ultimately, it was powered by a very ingenious Hemi sporting a Hillborn injection unit that Jim and Larry devised that used rubber radiator hoses to make the intake runners. These rubber "stacks" faced outward and forward, connecting to short conventional aluminum Hillborn stacks, but this setup allowed them to put a flat Superbird hood back on the car, thus it aided greatly with the car's aerodynamics. The column-shifted TorqueFlite eventually gave way to a built four-speed, and the rear-end gearing, obviously, changed often depending on where she was racing.

There was a little clique of Superbirds and Daytonas that raced in the SCTA events at Bonneville and El Mirage by the late seventies, and at one time, there were four or five of these cars out there on any given weekend, so everybody got to be one big happy winged car family, but Jim Lindsley was the first, and arguably, the most successful. The Superbird that had been initially thought of as a target of opportunity almost became part of the family. Other cars were being campaigned by the Lindsley family, streamliners, Lakester, you name it, and most of those came and went after a few seasons, but the Superbird remained, kept getting updated, and it kept getting driven every year. Interestingly, it was also driven, at speed, by just about every member of the family. While Jim and Larry were initially the primary drivers, as time went on, his other son, Gary Lindsley, drove it quite a bit, and finally, Patti Lindsley got her SCTA license driving this car, and even Phyllis drove it on occasion. An entire family grew up around this car, each one pushing it well past 200 mph at every event it went to, and all of this was just their normal life — work all week at their normal jobs, take a week off every so often to go to the salt flats and spend all that time blasting across the flat earth at 200 or 300 mph, depending on what they were driving, have some hot dogs, and do it all over again. Just your typical all-American family.



PATTI LINDSLEY GOT HER 200 MPH RACING LICENSE IN THE SUPERBIRD, AND WAS REUNITED WITH THE CAR AT THE MCACN SHOW. TAKE NOTE OF THE ROLL CAGE AND RACING SEATS, BUT THE STOCK DASH AND INSTRUMENT PANEL REMAINED THROUGHOUT.

as you see it here. The four-speed car proved to be a little slower, so it was returned to largely street use and limited racing activity, while the family went all-in on the white bench seat car.

In 1972, it was decided the white car on the white salt, and on the sandy desert at El Mirage, was entirely too hard to see, so they painted the whole thing in metallic copper paint, stripped off the vinyl top, and the #16 and lettering gave way to a much bolder paint scheme with the family name painted along the flanks and the car's number was changed to 484. Thus began a myriad of nearly constant changes that took place pretty much year-to-year throughout the Superbird's extremely long career of going fast in a straight line. In fact, this car ended up

being the car that Jim Lindsley and his family campaigned longer than any other car he'd ever owned. As the Superbird became faster, a lot of changes were necessary to keep things safe and were needed simply to comply with ever-changing rules about safety. The bench seat gave way to lighter-weight bucket racing seats finally, and the car would have several different sets of these before it was retired. A roll cage was installed in the mid-seventies because let's face it when you're going over 200 mph, you want something in there to give you a little protection in case things get sideways, or upside down. The original Hemi was transplanted in and out of the car several times, sometimes giving way to bigger Hemis, most of which were built by Jim



THE FIRST "RACING" SEASON FOR THE SUPERBIRD SAW BLACK NUMBERS AND LETTERING APPLIED TO THE FACTORY WHITE PAINT. WITH JIM AND LARRY SHARING DRIVING CHORES, THE CAR HIT 204 MPH LOOKING LARGELY STOCK. AND CHECK OUT THAT CAR CARRIER!

The Superbird changed from copper metallic to silver for a while, then to a very unusual brownish and black metallic paint scheme, and it may have been copper again somewhere in the intervals, as the family kept a fantastic record of the car's career in photos and documents, but some of the timelines get a little jumbled up. Regardless, the fastest (known) times it ever ran were one-way passes at 221 mph, and she averaged 217 mph to set a class record that stood for quite a while. And amazingly, through all this, the car never suffered any major mishaps other than occasional engine hiccups and drivetrain issues. In the mid-eighties, however, the family did meet with near disaster as their Dodge dually club cab tow vehicle suffered an engine fire not long after leaving Bonneville, and the fire quickly spread into the cockpit. The family bailed out safely, but the big copper Superbird was on the trailer behind the burning truck, and they managed to push it off the trailer with only

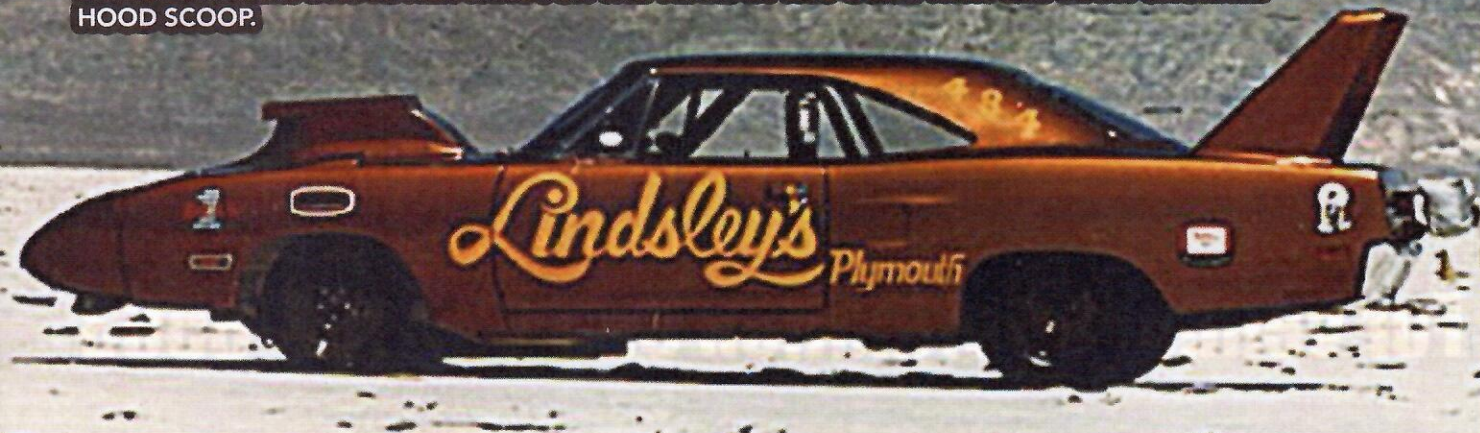
some minor damage as the truck became a giant piece of toast and the fire spread to the front of the trailer as well. It was a setback to be sure, but the Superbird was back on track the following season, primarily with the Lindsley children driving it by that time. So, this Superbird you're looking at right now was an active Bonneville and El Mirage SCTA race car, all its life, until the later part of the eighties when it was finally retired because they'd done just about all they could with it, and to go faster, they needed something a bit more modern. The Superbird was sold off in 1989 and they bought a late eighties Firebird, and sure enough, Larry Lindsley went on to set a bunch of records with that car as well.

Initially, with muscle car prices being what they were at the time, and the popularity of winged cars already on a fast incline, they had no trouble selling the Hemi Superbird to a California collector; especially since the car's original Hemi had managed to survive all those

years and was still with it. That collector restored the car to stock original "as delivered" condition, receiving a top-notch restoration by the standards of 1989/1990. It traded hands again, and eventually, East Coast collector Pete Veight ended up with the Hemi Superbird, and for the better part of twenty years, the Alpine White 'Bird lived the life of luxury as one of the centerpiece cars in Pete's collection. Enter Troy Hawkes of Houston, Texas.

Troy's been a lifelong Mopar devotee and aficionado of aero Mopars. He has a gorgeous Hemi Orange Daytona he's owned for a long time, and while it was a factory 440 car, he's managed to scrape together enough money to stick a Hemi in it and it's been a regular driver and frequent flyer at events all over Texas and some of the bigger Mopar shows. Years ago, he landed a Hemi Charger 500 that needed a lot of work, and using the tightly knit network of winged car enthu-

THIS COPPER/BROWN PAINT SCHEME IS PROBABLY THE BEST-KNOWN COLOR COMBO FOR THE SUPERBIRD, AS IT REMAINED IN THIS GUISE FOR MUCH OF ITS RACING LIFE. PRETTY MUCH ALL OF THE LINDSLEY FAMILY MEMBERS DROVE HER THROUGH THE YEARS IN THIS GUISE WITH THE GIANT SNORKEL HOOD SCOOP.





siasts, he was in the process of acquiring parts for its restoration, when his longtime friend, good old Pete, mentioned he was thinking of selling his white Superbird while they were talking about trading some parts for the Charger 500. Troy knew the Superbird's history, and after assurances that Pete was serious, the game plan changed entirely. Troy sold the Charger 500 and used that money, and everything in his piggy bank, to buy the historic white Superbird back in December 2021. The 'Bird traveled south to Houston, and immediately, infatuated with the car's history, Troy was able to get in contact with members of the Lindsley family, particularly Patti, who now lives in Colorado, and the photos began flowing into Houston along with tons of entertaining stories of the glory days. Once that connection had been established, there was no question in Troy's head; the car had to look like it did back in 1970 again when Tim Lindsey first started rac-

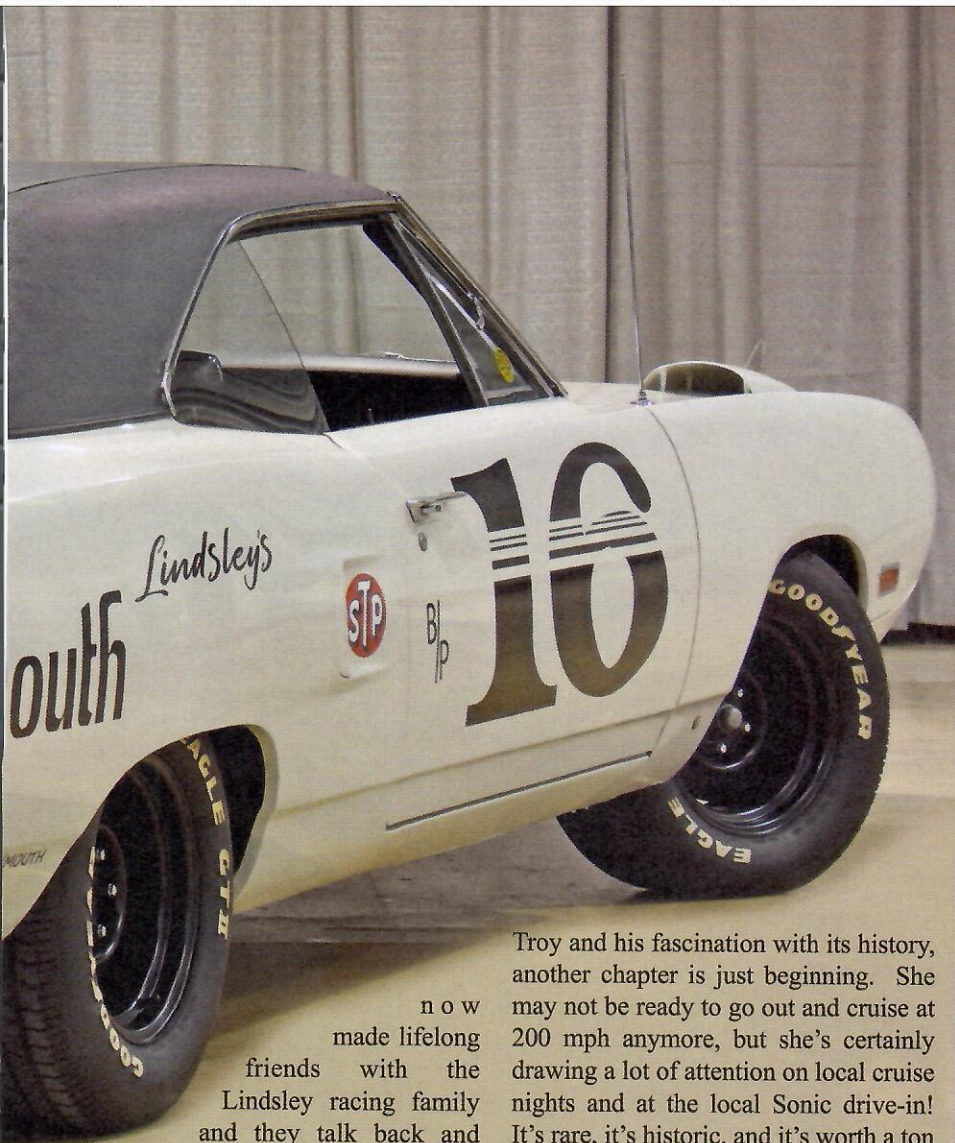
ing it.

Troy found a local company that usually does vehicle wraps to reproduce the car's graphics in vinyl decals, duplicating the numbers and logos that had been painted on, back in 1970. The original numbers matching Hemi is still in the car, amazingly, and he confirmed this with Larry Lindsley. The original Rallye wheels were removed and replaced with a set of black Wheel Vintiques 15x8" steelies, shod with Goodyear Eagle GT II radials, which not only provide a comfy ride, but they look similar to the racing tires it wore back when. Troy left everything else stock and just did some refreshing on the older restoration, and interestingly, he left some of the unique touches the car acquired during its racing days, such as an odd hole cut in the inner fender. On inquiring with the family, that hole had been cut to feed a small gas tank they'd mounted in the nose cone back in the late seventies, using that to help spread out the

car's weight equally! You gotta admit, that's a pretty cool touch, and this is probably the only Superbird out there that once had a fuel tank hidden in the nose!

With everything completed, Bob Ashton invited Troy to show off the historic Superbird at MCACN for 2022, but in typical MCACN show style, having the car there wasn't enough. Patti Lindsley also made the trip to Chicago to be reunited with the family's Superbird, the car she'd driven numerous times well over 200 mph across the salt! She was delighted seeing it lettered and numbered again, as were the majority of winged car fans present, and she spent the entire weekend telling everyone countless stories of growing up with the car and eventually racing it herself. Troy couldn't have asked for a better weekend.

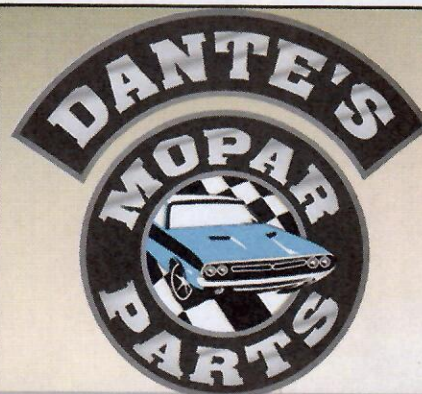
Troy's garage now has an orange Daytona in it and this wild and wooly Superbird, both of which he drives on a fairly regular basis, and better still, he's



n o w
made lifelong
friends with the
Lindsley racing family
and they talk back and
forth all the time about the
'Bird they have in common, and
they've sent him just about every little
piece of documentation they still had
and countless vintage photos of the car.
We're hopeful the Superbird will make it
to several of the major Mopar events in
2023 and equally hopeful that Patti
Lindsley can be there with it to share her
tales of adventure on the wide-open tun-
dra of Utah, holding onto that steering
wheel at 200+ mph while that big Hemi
up front was wrapped up past 6,000 rpm.
This wasn't something for the faint of
heart, and looking at Patti, you'd never
expect that she was (and still is) such a
maniacal speed demon!

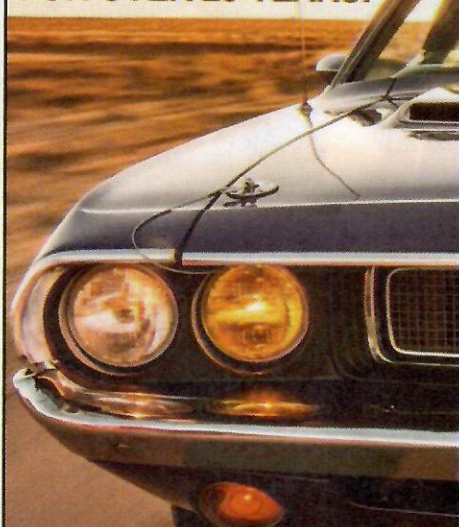
So, while in a quest for parts,
Troy Hawkes ended up owning an
absolute dream machine, and possibly
the fastest Superbird on the planet. It set
a whole lot of records in its day, it was
seldom seen moving at less than 100
mph, and it lived a life most of our cars
never dreamed of. One chapter of its
history is in the books, but thanks to

Troy and his fascination with its history,
another chapter is just beginning. She
may not be ready to go out and cruise at
200 mph anymore, but she's certainly
drawing a lot of attention on local cruise
nights and at the local Sonic drive-in!
It's rare, it's historic, and it's worth a ton
of money, but Troy's an average middle-
class guy, and like us, he knows it's no
fun to have a hobby car if you can't
drive and enjoy it. And thanks to Jim
Lindsley liking the idea of a bench seat
back in '70, Troy's now enjoying the
same perk – the wife can snuggle over
next to him while they're cruising
around. And somewhere up there, the
late Jim Lindsley is looking down and
smiling, we're quite sure, because his
winged beastie is back in action, his
family's re-involved with it, and while it
may not be racing on salt, Troy admit-
tedly has leaned into the throttle a bit on
the outskirts. It may not be as famous as
Richard Petty's #43 Superbird, but old
#16 here has a new lease on life, and
she's serving as a rolling bit of living
history to remind us that not all winged
cars achieved their fame on NASCAR
ovals. Well done to Troy for giving the
hobby back this amazing bit of history,
and well done to the Lindsley family for
preserving all the history that goes with
it. ✕



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