

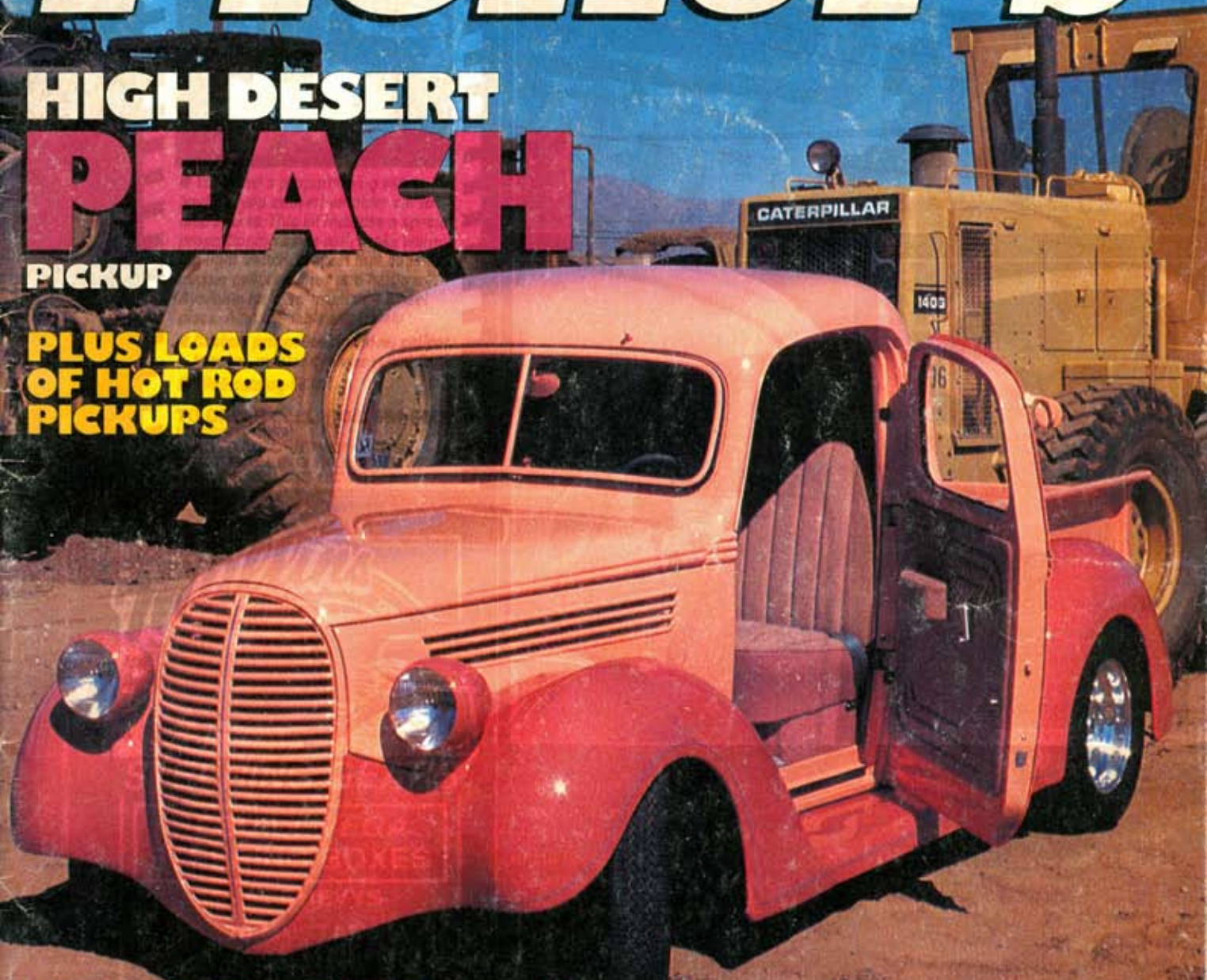
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# BIG SKY FORTY 4x4

**N**o you're not reading *OffRoader* or *4x4* magazine! This is *Street Rod Pickups*, and this story began eight months ago with what I thought was a wrong phone call or somebody's practical joke.

"Hi. My name is Gerry Carlson of Carlson's Classics. I live in Kalispell, Montana, and I restore Jaguars. I was reading *Street Rod Pickups* magazine."

I think to myself, "Did I hear right? He does what? And he reads hot rod magazines too?"

"I'm going to build a truck for an out-of-town client, named John Kane," Gerry begins. "This truck must meet John's unique criteria. First, it must look like a hot rod. You know, sit right. Next, it has to perform on command on and off-road. I'm considering an 5-10 chassis, with a 400-cubic inch Ford." Now Gerry has my full attention.

## PART I

Written by  
**Jon Gobetti**  
Photographed by  
Therese Maloney

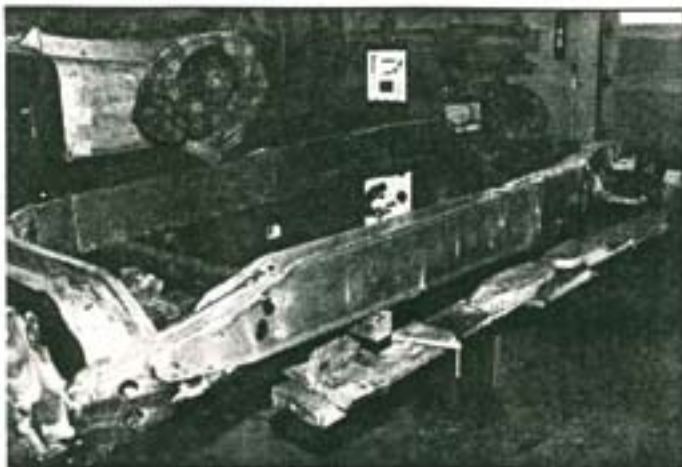
## BIG SKY FORTY 4x4

Well, there have been several additional phone calls since then, regarding John Kane's pickup truck. The restorer and the hot rodder continue to talk about the Big Sky Forty 4X4. If you were to eavesdrop, you couldn't tell the restorer from the rodder. I get lots of photos and videotaped progress reports.

This Forty Ford pickup, wrapped around a modified '85 Chevrolet S-10 Blazer four-wheel drive chassis, will be the result of 2300 hours of estimated



The frame is cut and extended 12". Small square tubing is welded in place temporarily, to keep everything square. The frame rail in the background shows the complete stretching. Once the center of the frame was stretched the appropriate amount, Gerry turned his attention to the suspension mounting points.



The frame, front to back and upside down. The 12" extension received new sides and top plates. Gerry is measuring for the bottom frame extension. The existing 5-10 cross member shown will be lowered 1-1/2 inches to retain a decent hot rod stance. Note: there are few vertical welds; most of the welds have rounded edges. This elevates cracking due to vertical stress. If you haven't seen a stock 5-10 Chassis, you wouldn't know how extensive the frame modifications are.



The extension for the torsion bar on the lower A arm.

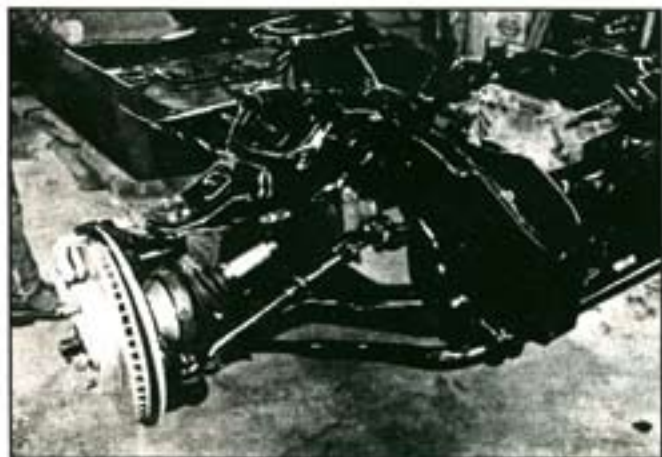




Engine and body are mocked into place for a trial fit. Much attention was devoted to the placement of the engine relative to the front differential. The engine is offset 1-1/2 inches to the right of center (passenger side). At this point Gerry gives initial thought to the firewall and its placement.

labor. Stretching the 5-10 frame twelve inches and narrowing it a bit just behind the front wheels accommodates the '40 pickup cab. The stretch required the front torsion bars to be extended at the point where they connect to the lower A arms. Another of John's requirements is on-the-fly four wheel drive, which lets him go from two- to four-wheel drive from the cab while cruising.

In keeping with the hot rod theme, Gerry replaced the 5-10's V6 with a mighty 400-cubic-inch Ford big block. B&M Machine Shop of South Dakota built this beauty. The block was square bored to the crankshaft and balanced to within 1/10 of a gram. The heads were



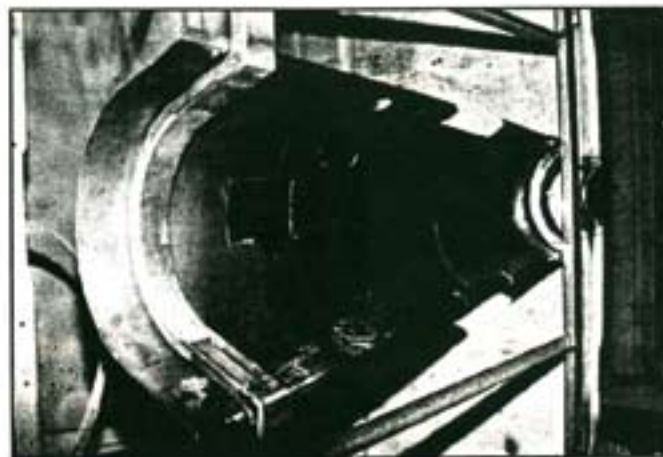
The completed frame and front suspension. The front frame rails were shortened to conform to the original dimensions of the '40 body. With all the extensive frame modifications, it came as a bit of a surprise when the steering box remained in its original location. Gerry went to great lengths not to change much of the original 5-10 chassis geometry. The tall shock towers, seen above the upper A-arms, also double as front fender mounts.



From this angle you can see the body with its own new sub-frame. The square tubing stiffens the body and provides new mounting points. A new trans tunnel has also been formed.



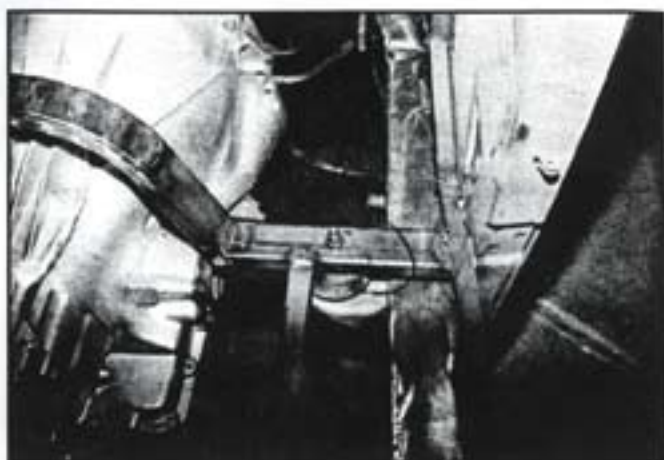
Close-up of the initial trans tunnel and body sub-frame.



## BIG SKY FORTY 4x4



Rear rubber body mounts.



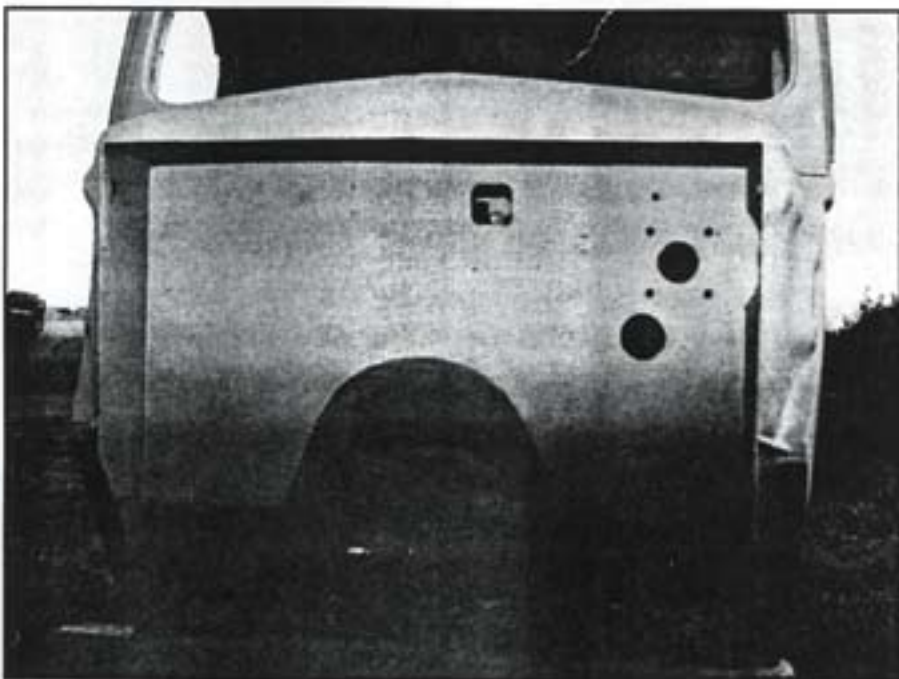
Front rubber body mounts.



Underside of the body with the new floor and trans tunnel complete.



View of the floor, trans tunnel and firewall from inside the cab.



The firewall and complete floor were constructed from 16 gauge cold-rolled steel.



Gerry tends to one of many minute details. Note that the mock engine has now been replaced with the B&M Machine-built 345 hp @ 4500 rpm powerplant. The radiator core support also supports the inside front fender wells.