



10 Questions With...

Wisconsin Hot Rod Radio Hosts

Captn' Bob & Arlo

1. Why did you choose to work with The Milwaukee Masterpiece?

The Milwaukee Masterpiece has tremendous respect in the car community that we serve. For us it is a great honor to be a part of this great tradition.

2. Why was it important for you to introduce a Historic Hot Rod Class to the Masterpiece Concours d'Elegance?

Hot Rodding grew out of American culture where the automobile was not just a vehicle to travel back and forth to work, but a way for everyday people to be "backyard" mechanical and electrical engineers. It was a lifestyle dedicated to figuring out how to get more horsepower out of an engine where the big automakers failed. There was a sense of pride when rummaging through different auto scrap yards and borrowing parts from a variety of cars, and sometimes even tractors, to make them all work in harmony; sometimes on a shoe string budget.

What grew out of this hot rodding culture were automobiles with a unique "Folk Art" style. Those hot rod teenagers who built these cars never realized the impact they had on the automotive industries when it came to engineering solutions, custom styling and innovative safety regulations. In fact, those same teenagers of yesterday provided family vehicle inspections for local police departments and were one the first to hand out seat belts to unsuspecting parents.

So it is important to document and recognize the automotive contributions from the Hot Rodding community.

3. Where did your interest in classic cars begin?

For both Capt'n' Bob & Arlo it was growing up with family and friends who were living the Hot Rodding lifestyle.

As a kid Capt'n' Bob began building automotive models. Being the true hot rodder that he is the instructions were thrown out and several model modifications became the norm. Everything was about finding out how things worked and how can they could be improved. In his teenage years, he and his buddies would hang out at the local diners to swap stories and share ideas to improve power and speed. And of course being able to stay competitive at the traffic light was always necessary. Since then, everything Capt'n' Bob does have been automotive related. He helped create several of Milwaukee's charitable cars shows and has been instrumental in providing council for local municipalities regarding car safety. That includes the creation of a commemorative park dedicated to the late NASCAR legend Al Kulwicki in the Milwaukee County area.



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Arlo grew up with a father who was a mechanic (and suspected hot rodder) that owned and operated a service station. His mother, whom gave birth to 7 children, worked as a gas pump jockey, bookkeeper and lube tech. In his teenage years Arlo grew up in the station working alongside his parents. All three of Arlo's brothers worked there in their younger days and have continued on in other automotive fields. It was the oldest "Fonz"-like brother who would hop up the old cars and let Arlo drive them. Arlo's brother would build hot rods with unique designs and engineering know-how. As a teenager, Arlo was influenced by the artwork of the car culture, which continues to guide him today. It was always about the design of the automobile for him; the way each part of the outer shell works together to transform a moving vehicle into a piece of art.

4. How did Wisconsin Hot Rod Radio (AM 1340) get started? / How did you become hosts?

There was a great need, in the collector community, to find out where the car shows were at. Car enthusiasts wanted to drive their vehicle to a destination and hangout with others who had similar interests; much like those days at the drive-ins. However, finding a car show was almost impossible. The promoters of these shows relied on "word of mouth" or printed hand bills dropped off at various locations by volunteers. Many of these shows were benefits that relied on the generosity of those who attended. If attendance was low so were the receipts.

It was in late 2006 that Arlo had lunch with a friend who was the weekend programming director for one of the local radio stations. The conversation centered on the station's need for a one hour program opening in 2007. Seeing an opportunity, Arlo pitched an idea for a show about area car shows. Later that afternoon Arlo's friend called him and said the station was interested in his show idea. Many of them were car lovers and were having difficulty finding shows themselves. After meeting Capt'n' Bob earlier that year Arlo knew who to call for help. Capt'n' Bob's reputation of car show knowledge and his enthusiasm for automobiles was legendary. After a brief phone conversation the two created Wisconsin Hot Rod Radio. They convinced themselves, and their wives, that running into the station once a week to do a one hour show wouldn't require much time.

It is because of the great working relationship between Capt'n' Bob and Arlo that this one hour radio show has grown into a large, informative hot rod company. This includes a popular radio program with listeners from around the world, a high traffic website with listings and maps to car show locations, an educational series on the history of hot rodding, a governmental advocate that monitors effects on the collector, a traveling exhibit that puts on over six-thousand miles every summer and a weekly award-winning email newsletter listing car events.

It's obvious that it takes a lot more than one hour a week get this all done. Capt'n' Bob and Arlo couldn't do it all without the help of their wives.



5. *What will listeners hear when they tune into Wisconsin Hot Rod Radio?*

The primary goal of the radio show is to give the listeners information about hot rod and classic car shows and events. The show is broken into four segments. The first segment is dedicated to current affairs. The second and third segments are about future car shows, interviews with high profile guests or educational topics. The fourth segment might be a continuation of car shows (which could reach over 40 per week during the summer months) or a discussion about items in the Swap Stuff listings on the website.

One unique thing about this show are the interviews with the car show promoters and the nationally recognized stars like Jay Leno, George Barris, Adam West and more. Wisconsin Hot Rod Radio has been on the forefront of hot rod education as well. Currently, the show is involved with Wisconsin governmental affairs, like the DOT's newest administration rules impacting the collector and hobbyist vehicle registrations.

6. *What's the latest buzz in the vintage car collecting world?*

There is a continued effort by the transportation departments of most states to curtail the sale of specialty, collector and modified vehicles. They are not allowing the registration of these vehicles to the current or potential owner, even if the vehicle was home built, properly sold or given as a gift. Many states have submitted and approved multiple restrictions to such vehicles. Everything from emissions, engine swaps, tire pressures, paint containment, metal scrapping and storage restrictions are being proposed.

The State of Wisconsin recently curtailed the use of vintage military vehicles and started moving towards the limitation of historic import cars. This law was labeled "Trans 123." This matter involved what state officials were calling an "administrative rule" which meant public notification and input would be very limited or non-existent. During a period of time the DOT would be given the authority to interpret these laws without regard for previous rulings, putting many owner's collections in jeopardy by not allowing them to either sell, buy or donate their cars.

Recently, this law was retracted and dismissed by the Wisconsin legislative body thanks to the efforts of Wisconsin Hot Rod Radio interviewing a key legislative representative as well as nationally recognized spokespeople. Knowledgeable car activists also contacted their legislator and presented case studies at various assembly meetings.

7. *How does Trans 123 affect concours exhibitors and spectators?*

If you appreciate the contributions of any historical vehicle, you must join the vigilant watch for government laws that restrict the transfer of registration therefore making a person's ability to drive these cars unlawful. This recent attack on vintage foreign cars is just the beginning. There are known efforts by transportation departments to restrict all domestic and foreign classics. Currently, in Wisconsin there are reports of builders and collectors unable to register their vehicles. The reasons given are inconsistent with the language of current laws and contradict national laws.



8. *What is your definition of 'Hot Rod?'*

The definition of a hot rod will vary depending on whom you ask. However, there is a consensus that a hot rod is any vehicle modified to increase horsepower or driving performance. For many it's about making the car of your own design and not something stamped out of Detroit.

9. *How do you research the vehicles invited to take part in the Historic Hot Rod class?*

To call a vehicle a Historic Hot Rod you must know of its past and pedigree. This can be difficult because the vehicles weren't manufactured, they were shaped and formed in someone's backyard garage. Most builders were self-taught and created these cars because they had a passion for something different. When you couple that with so much time passing, it makes finding these cars very hard.

However, finding a car is about following the stories being passed down to younger generations of hot rodders. Everyone remembers that "one car" so it's a matter of tracking down the story, finding those that were there and then collaborating the story - hopefully with photos.

10. *What can guests expect to see in this class?*

People can expect to see vehicles that are one-of-a-kind. They aren't limited editions built in a factory. They were made from forging through piles of different car manufacturers' parts and configuring them to work in concert. If that wasn't an option then the builder would make something from bending, welding, pounding and shaping metal. The metal and parts could have been confiscated from cars, tractors, military vehicles or airplanes. The Hot Rod is truly an American concept that finds its origins in backyards and garages across the U.S.