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Noel Hamer is an antique car buff

By ROXANNE REVELER
 What started as a childhood obsession has, over the years, developed into a hobby and finally a successful business for Brooklin entrepreneur Noel Hamer.

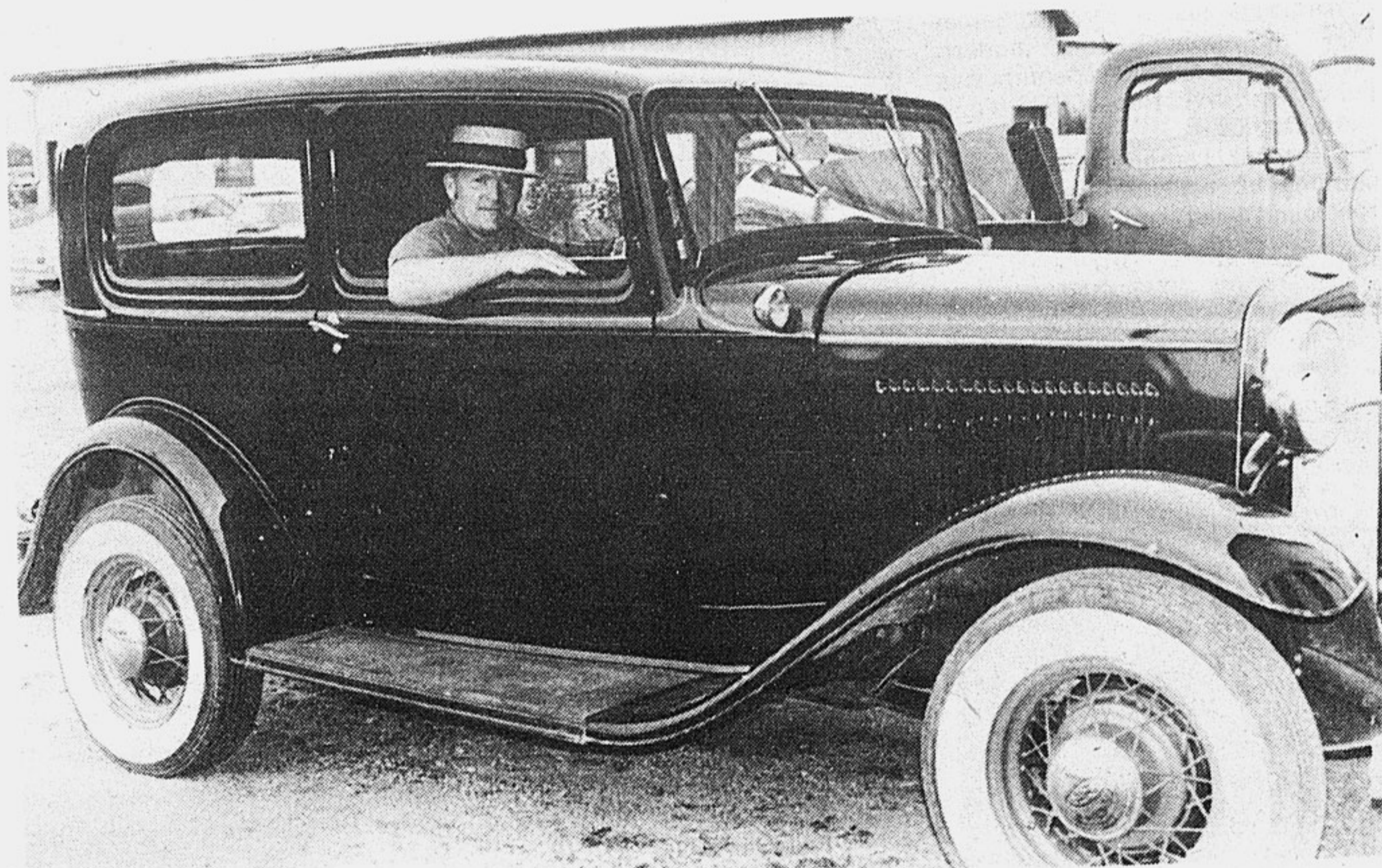
The owner of Hamer Auto Clinic at Highway 12 and Brawley Road, on the northern perimeter of Brooklin, is not just another car garage owner. He is a specialist, with people coming from across Canada and the United States to avail themselves of his knowledge.

To say Hamer specializes in old cars is as ridiculous as saying rain is wet. He does more than that. Thanks to many years of making friendships, and connections in the industry, Hamer now finds antique car buffs coming to him when they need a part for one of their vehicles.

They know that Hamer not only restores and sells vintage cars for himself, but will do work on their cars, as well as finding those almost impossible parts needed to turn a piece of junk into an operable vehicle.

Hamer has been interested in antique cars since he could remember. He shows a well-worn scrapbook full of pictures he cut out of such magazines as National Geographic when he was eight years old. In his early teens, he had saved enough pocket money to purchase his first antique car, a 1930 Ford Model A coupe. Although it only cost him \$15, it was a considerable amount of money to a youngster in 1960.

Three years later, he purchased another 1930 Ford Coupe, this time for \$350, and the business started from there. Both vehicles were "fixed up" and sold, as were many others over the years.



ANTIQUE CAR buff Noel Hamer of Brooklin drives his 1930 Model A Touring Car all year round as his personal mode of transportation. He built

the car using a frame riddled with 72 bullet holes, and pieces from 20 other vehicles. See story for more details.

Free Press photo

Most of the cars purchased by Hamer have been in "rough shape" when originally purchased, including one that has turned out to be his favorite. This is a 1930 Model A Ford Touring Car which he still owns. This particular car was bought in pieces in New Brunswick and according to Hamer amounted to about half a car when all the pieces were put together.

Over the course of a few years, he

worked at buying a piece here, and another piece there until it was finally completed. Hamer now has about eight cars that he considers "keepers." They range from a 1909 Ford up to the most modern, a 1957 classic Thunderbird.

"The most fun is finding all the pieces and putting them together," admits Hamer.

He has found parts for his various cars all over Ontario, the United States, Quebec and the Maritimes.

"You get to meet people from all over," said Hamer. "It's amazing how many friends I've made over the years."

He recounts that in a certain area of Nova Scotia, he will meet and be greeted by as many people as he walks down the street as in his native Brooklin where he was born

and raised. Hamer also noted that there is great co-operation between antique car collectors with one referring a friend to another.

"I've had folks phone me up here saying they were passing through the area and were recommended to me by a mutual acquaintance...we all try to help each other," said Hamer adding it might be several months, or even years before the specific item needed shows up,

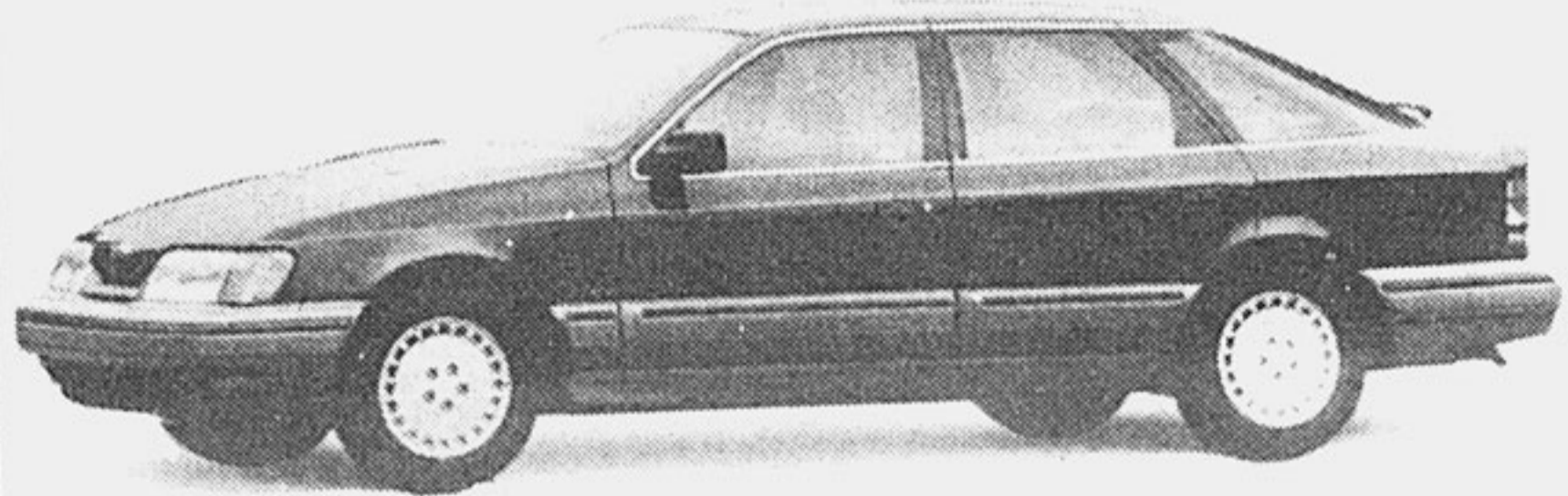
"but then you get a phone call from someone saying, 'Hey, do you still need that so-and-so you were looking for a while back?'...every one helps out."

Because of the extensive variety of vintage vehicles he has on hand, or can get his hands on through friends, Hamer is regularly called upon to provide cars for period movies being made in the area. Some of his cars were used in the film Hoover vs. Kennedy which just finished shooting on location in Oshawa, Port Hope, Newmarket and Toronto. For this film, the prized '57 Thunderbird was required. Other films that have made use of Hamer's cars were Davies and Hurst, shot at Oshawa's Parkwood starring Robert Mitchum, Kane and Abel, I'll Take Manhattan and the Arm, shot in Port Perry starring teen heart throb Matt Dillon and Don Francks, a personal friend of Hamer's since he was age 13.

If scouting up vintage automobiles was not difficult enough, Hamer engaged in another pursuit 20 years ago. Collecting vintage gasoline pumps and other memorabilia. According to him, this has since taken over as his main hobby. He now owns 145 different Canadian brands including White Rose, City Service, Cyclo Gas, Red Indian, Koo Motor, Imperial Queen and British American which became BA, which became Gulf, which now trades as Petro Canada. Those who have seen the antique gas pump at the McKee gas station on the corner of Baldwin and Winchester Streets in Brooklin can guess where they obtained

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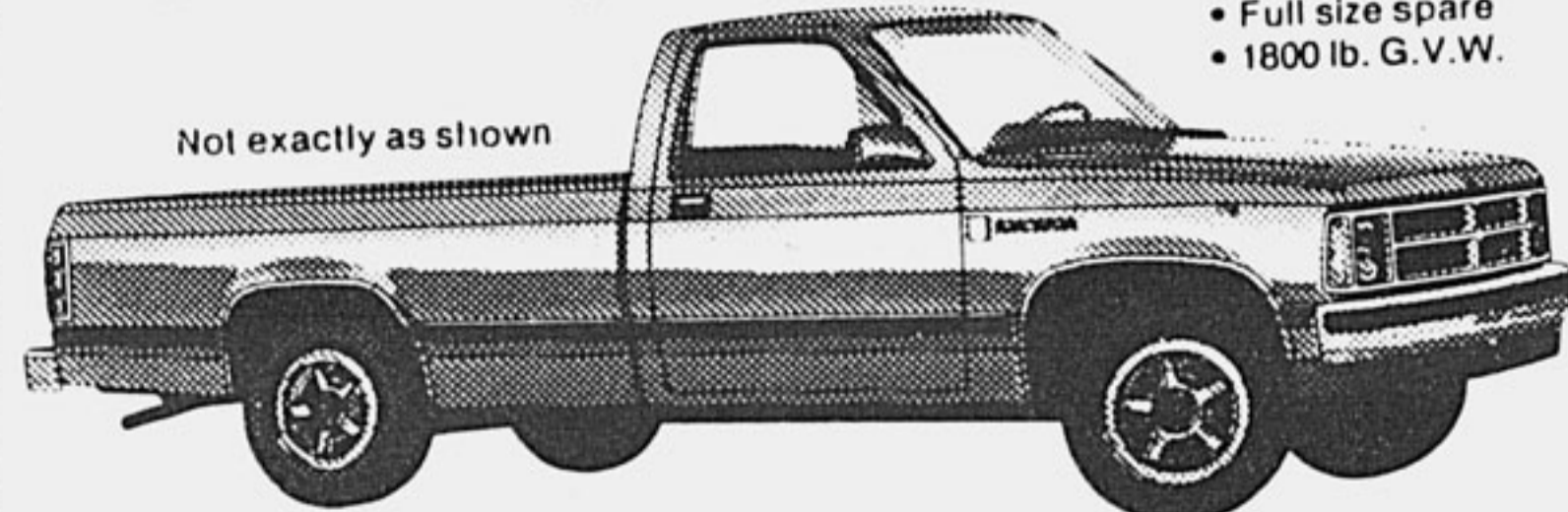
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