

## Red iron collection

## Al Smith collects International Harvesters

BY DAVE DEVENY

When Allan Smith was born in August of 1941, no one had any idea that he would be so badly afflicted with these terrible diseases: Tractoritis, Red Iron Syndrome and the Harvester Hives all at the same time. If you think that a Doctor of Medicine could cure him of his ailments, you would be mistaken. Allan Smith doesn't need a cure or want one, he is hooked on tractors!

His love for tractors began when he was a young boy. In 1953, Al's father brought home an International Harvester Super W4 Tractor. For a 12-year-old boy, the sight of the big red iron beauty must have been heaven. His life-long fascination with tractors has produced an award-winning collection of restored International Harvester machinery. Smith owns six different tractors and three Cub Cadets (lawn tractors). His collection includes the original Super W4 his father bought in 1953, a 1950 W6, a 1941 W9, 1954 Farm All Cub, 1941 Farm All "A," a 1955 Model 300 Utility and three Cub Cadets. Al's favorite is his Super W4 that he first drove back in '53. "The tractor was sold



at auction in 1965," he says. "I had no idea where the tractor had gone, but I started looking for it in 1977." In 1987 the man who owned it looked Smith up, called him and explained he had the tractor and asked if Al was interested in it. "Oh boy, am I ever!" was his reply.

"I drove the tractor back home from Fergus in a snowstorm in January 'cause I really wanted it." Smith rebuilt the Super W4 over two years and entered it in a tractor show wherein he won first prize.

Al Smith believes that restoring and collecting are "a disease."

"Thousands of people love them and restore them. Its huge!" When meeting fellow tractor enthusiasts at shows, he says, "We all have a common interest, so it's great to talk to people about Red Iron." Red Iron is what International Harvester tractors are called due to the red paint finish. But if you're looking for a vanity plate, you're too late. The license plate Red Iron is firmly fixed to Smith's truck.

About rebuilding the International Harvester Super W4, Al comments, "Mechanically it didn't need much; it had a few dents and needed paint badly. I rebuilt the starter, generator, put in new bearings, did the steering and the carb." Pleased with the result of his years of labor, Al says, "It's exactly the way it was when I first drove it." It seems that the judges agree.

People who share enthusiasm for farm equipment can visit the Country Heritage Park at 8560 Tremaine Road, Milton. The park offers 30 exhibit buildings and 20,000 artifacts. Included at the heritage park is an outstanding collection of antique tractors, steam engines and farm equipment. You probably won't have to look too hard to find Allan Smith. Just look for the Red Iron.



## William Band: Profile of a Georgetown artist and teacher

BY DAVID DEVENY

Writers and journalists are required to answer the questions who, what, where, when, why and how. In contrast, artists answer the same questions, but add a thousand details to a description, hence the saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words." In the paintings of William Band you will find another word: Passion. Each picture captures a scene so vivid that it cries out to be painted. William Band hears that cry.

Mr. Band has an unmatched ability to softly capture the essence of an image and display it in such a way as to evoke an emotional response. His house paintings capture the warm glow and security that make you feel like curling up and falling asleep on the porch swing or running in the yard with the dog. His other work is so incredible that Mr. Band can make a pencil drawing look like a black-and-white photograph. Some of his paintings are Batemanesque in that they capture the light in a perfect moment and preserve it on canvas. In other work, he haunts the soul with images of the past.

When William Band wakes up in the morning, it is unlikely that he will read the newspaper. William Band doesn't think in sentences, he thinks in pictures. He is likely to be looking for inspiration in the sunrise, the trees, his garden or his classic car. The Georgetown-based artist and teacher started his career in 1962. As a youth of 18 he left Windsor and headed to the Ontario College of Art (OCA). "I just up and left to be a starving student," Mr. Band recalled with a smile.

William Band was a driven art student. "Sometimes I see things that I just have to paint," he says. His passion for art often found him attending classes from OCA's renowned artists and teachers such as W.D. Lowe, Franklin Arbuckle, Alan Collier and Eric Freifield. "I



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used to skip my regular classes to attend their classes," he confessed. Before graduating with honours in 1966, Band married his sweetheart Betty in 1965. The couple has two children; Michael, 33, and Alison, 28.

His wide-ranging influences include Toulouse Lautrec, the famed poster painter, to Moulin Rouge, and a sophisticated observance of the Saturday Evening Post's Norman Rockwell. When Mr. Band set off for the real world of illustration and advertising he had three interviews for three jobs and landed each one of them. But years of advertising work took a toll on his life.

"I was driving down the road in my Volvo when I caught a glimpse of my eyes in the rear view mirror. What I saw were angry eyes. I really had lost focus. I was working 18 hours a day." There were times when he was so exhausted that he would sleep for ten minutes and then continue with his work in order to meet strict commercial advertising deadlines.

After a successful career in commercial art and advertising, Mr. Band returned to the thing he loved: Painting.

In 1986 he began to teach at Humber College including Design, Drawing and Rendering, Typography, Interior Design, Layout and Production, Watercolor Paintings and Techniques. When he begins a class of new students he tries to set everyone at ease. "I'm an artist just like the rest of you. I've just got more miles," he confides.

William Band's passion for art is often reflected in his teaching. He will challenge his students: "Who saw the sun set last night? Hey people, we're artists," prompting his students to produce a passionately painted sunset. Band recalled the work ethic of one of his teachers. "Burt Weir thought that 100 per cent wasn't good enough. One hundred and twenty per cent is what he wants."

Mr. Band is proficient in all forms of art media. He now works primarily with watercolors and is a noted automotive painter. He painted his first car more than 20



years ago. A member and veteran of the classic car club circuit, Band's first automotive painting was an old farm truck. "I wanted to paint it. Cars are art themselves." He now illustrates cars on a commission basis and has a number of limited edition prints available at his gallery at 320 Maple Avenue, Georgetown.

From elaborate full-colour paintings to small pencil or ink drawings, his work is so broad that it would take days to fully appreciate the scope of his efforts. Mr. Band's inspirations come from his love of the outdoors. He can often be found sketching in a canoe. "Painting is a stress release. It's like a disease; you just have to do it."

William Band's website is [www.williambandstudio.com](http://www.williambandstudio.com). For an appointment call 905-877-7537, or see him at the 2004 Art Show at the Halton Hills Cultural Centre, 9 Church Street, Georgetown from November 2 to 28, 2004.