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## Dart's the name, Mopar's the game

BY ROXIE MURPHY  
REPUBLICAN STAFF WRITER  
rmurphy@wardpub.com

Joe Jahnsen of Owensville happened to own his dream car back in the '80s during his high school years — a '69 Dodge Dart Swinger. Like many who owned their dream cars in their youth, he sold it and it took until 2017 to finally purchase another.

Like his first car, Jahnsen had to learn some skills and work hard to restore his first love.

"I had (a Dodge Dart Swinger) in high school and always had plans to get another one," Jahnsen said. "This one came up for sale on Craigs List up in Chicago. I lowballed the guy on the price, thinking there was no way, and he took it. It was a complete rust bucket."

Jahnsen has always been a Mopar guy by See **Mopar**, Page 3B

PHOTOS BY JACOB WARDEN

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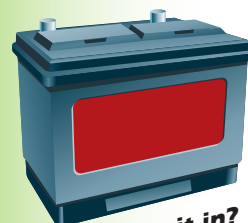
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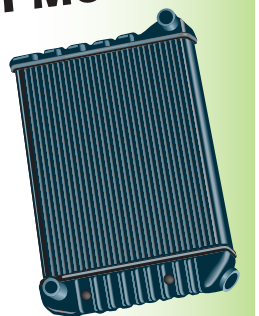
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## Mopar • from page 2B

his admission. Since Mopar defines itself as “the exclusive source for authentic original equipment parts and accessories for the millions of Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram, and Fiat vehicles” on the market, people who like their cars buy their parts.

While there are modern-day versions, when car lovers think or say Mopar, there is an emphasis on the classic or vintage versions.

“Other than the rust, it was just in bad shape,” Jahnsen said. “The interior was all out. It was basically a shell and the car was completely taken apart.”

Luck was on his side though, because his purchase included most of the parts that went with it.

“The interior wasn’t done, but the old interior was there,” Jahnsen continued. “The seats needed to be recovered. There was no motor or transmission — which was good because it was all rusted out.”

The quarter panels and floorboards needed special care too.

“I did all the bodywork myself,” Jahnsen said. “I put it all back to stock original, how it came from the factory.

The bricklayer by trade said that Youtube became his best friend during the two-year



**JAHNSEN WAS** able to find a 1969 Missouri license plate with the numbers ‘340’ for his ‘69 Dodge Dart.

restoration, along with Clay and Clayton Kossuth of Clay and Sons Mopar Salvage Yard in Catawissa.

“A lot of Youtube videos,” he said. “The hardest thing was putting the quarter panels on until I figured it out. Now it ain’t so bad, but that was probably the biggest challenge.

Getting the quarter panels lined up with the doors, keeping everything lined up, all the body lines.”

The Kossuths were there to answer questions and share ideas.

Determined to do it right, the novice researched until he felt he had enough in-

struction to make the work look experienced.

“That was the first car I’ve done since ‘86 when I done my old car in high school,” he said. “I haven’t done anything on a car since, but I just jumped in and got into it.”

See **Mopar**, Page 4B

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## Mopar • from page 3B

Once the bodywork was completed, Jahnsen focused on the interior.

“The paint color is F8-Green,” he said, describing what most would call the ‘70s green. “They are starting to bring the color back.”

With a new black hard top, upholstery, carpet and interior complementing the authentic black dashboard and imitation radio, the Dart is a parody of the more expensive ‘70s version, but cool nonetheless.

But how does she drive?

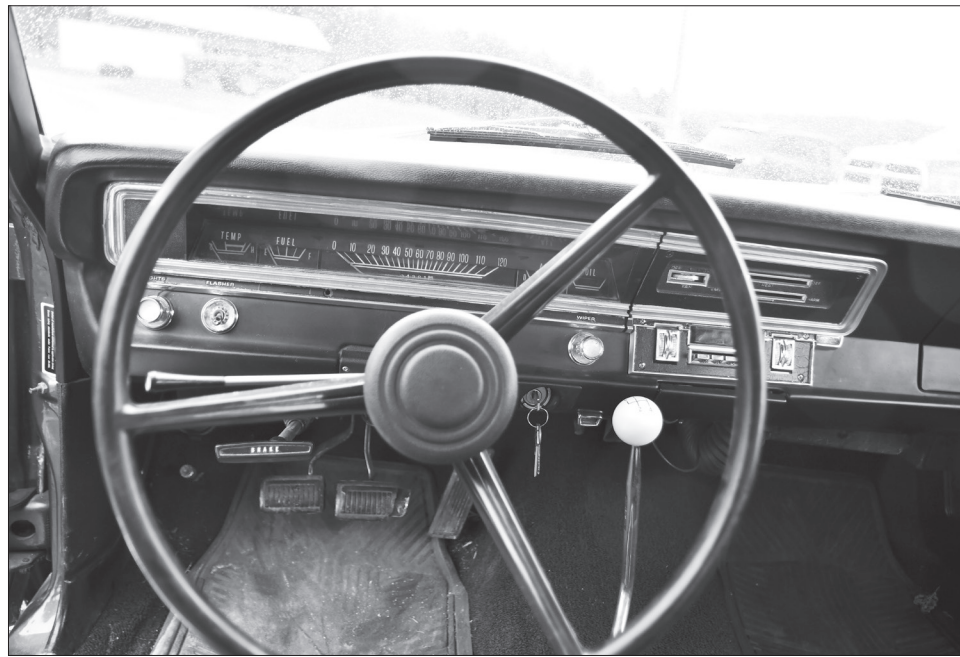
True to its factory release, the ‘69 Dodge Dart 340 sported its traditional 340 engine with a four-speed in the floor when Jahnsen turned the key for the first time.

“I put a bigger cam than was in from the factory, and new headers,” Jahnsen said. “It runs pretty good, pretty strong.”

The bigger camshaft allows more air and fuel into the engine’s cylinder, which makes the vehicle go faster. Bigger headers allow the exhaust gases more release, resulting in less back pressure. Less pressure equals a faster car with more performance.

“It was a stock motor,” Jahnsen said. “It ran 13.9 seconds in a quarter mile, got it up to about 100 miles an hour.”

Since the car’s restoration, Jahnsen and his wife Wonda Jahnsen have taken it to the



St. Louis Moparr event and ran it down the track. The Moparr Worldwide Technology event, in East St. Louis, is a favorite. The drive is a plus.

“Everybody is your friend when you are driving them old cars,” Jahnsen said. “Giving you the thumbs up. I just like the feel and it reminds me of the old days.”

The Jahnsens have been in Owensville for about 21 years, but they love driving in the car back to Cedar Hill to see their family.

“It’s about 60 miles, we take it for a day drive,” Jahnsen said. “Take off driving and spend the day. It’s brand new and there are no problems with it.”

The only other non-original item is the imitation radio. Jahnsen said it looks old, but it has blue tooth and other modern capabilities. And they only listen to old music. Old country. Old rock.

The ‘69 that Jahnsen fondly calls “The Dart” was fully restored by January 2020.

“I was done in November 2019, but the interior didn’t get done until January 2020,” he said.

After the car was finished, Jahnsen added one more unique touch.

“I found an original ‘69 license plate and registered it to the car,” he said. “They are basically historical plates, even though they don’t say that.”

He purchased the old license plate off the internet.

Since the Dart’s restoration, the Jahnsens have put 4,500 miles on the engine. In hindsight, the novice-turned-expert says the hardest part about the restoration may have been the wait.

“It may be months before you get the parts,” he said. “When I redone the Dart, parts was still high, but nothin’ compared to now. Every aftermarket part you buy, you have to go back through and refurbish because everything is made in China and what you get, half of it don’t work.”

Jahnsen also admits to catching the Mopar bug.

“Like most guys, I can’t settle for just one,” Jahnsen said.

The Dart didn’t get as much drive time in 2021 because Jahnsen was working on two other projects.

See **Mopar**, Page 6B

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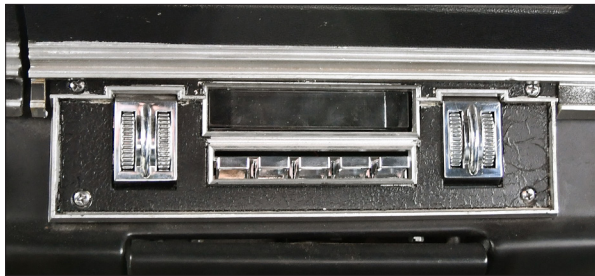
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**THE '69** Dart has a traditional 340 cubic inch engine with a 4 barrel carburetor. Jahnsen only plays old tunes on the push button radio in his Dart. The radio (right) is one of only two non-original items on the car. It's an imitation with blue tooth capabilities.



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**Mopar** • from page 4B

**JAHNSEN ALSO** refurbished this '67 Dodge Coronet R/T with a four-speed big block Hemi.

**PHOTOS BY JACOB WARDEN**

"I've got two other cars (in my shop) I am trying to get done," he said. "My plan was to sell it and do another."

Jahnsen just finished restorations on a '67 Dodge Coronet R/T with a four-speed big block Hemi engine.

Jahnsen said he traded the car from a man in Catawissa who had purchased it in 1972 from a man in Illinois who had an engine fire.

"Instead of fixing the hood, I am sure there was nothing wrong with the engine, he tore it completely apart like he was goin' to restore it — in 1972," Jahnsen said. "It has been sitting since '72 and there wasn't a nut or bolt on it. Fenders wasn't on it. Wasn't nothin' on it."

The parts were mostly still in boxes. Jahnsen traded another finished restoration

See **Mopar**, Page 7B

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THE '69 Dart sits on the trailer after being towed from Chicago in 2017.

Mopar • from page 3B

for the Coronet.”

“I drove a 1969 Plymouth Roadrunner to Catawissa and hauled the R/T back,” he said.

He added that the '67 Coronet is technically for sale and he has two more in the

works.

“I need two or three,” Jahnsen said. “I get more enjoyment out of fixing them than just driving them.”



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**JAHNSEN USES** a grinder on the back seat of the Dart Swinger(photo left). The bare metal (above) is ready for the primer. **PHOTOS SUBMITTED**

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## What to know when buying from a private seller

In recent years, more and more car buyers are considering pre-owned vehicles as the world continues to confront supply shortages related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Certified pre-owned dealerships may be the first place used car buyers go when looking to replace their current vehicles, but they might be able to find even better deals if they look at the private seller market.

Buying vehicles from private sellers was once relatively common but has fallen out of favor over the last few decades. In fact, the insurance comparison site The Zebra reports that roughly 61 percent of car buyers prefer to buy from a dealership. But that doesn't mean buyers can't still find great cars on the private seller market, especially if they keep a few strategies in mind as they begin their vehicle search.

- Get as much paperwork as possible. Many vehicle owners prioritize record-keeping, saving maintenance receipts for everything from standard oil changes to more significant repairs. When buying from private sellers, buyers should not hesitate to request a vehicle history report as well as all documentation of maintenance that has been performed on the car since sell-

ers have owned it. Consider it a red flag if sellers do not have any paperwork or refuse to provide it.

- Be patient. Patience is a buyer's ally when shopping for a pre-owned vehicle. Certified pre-owned vehicles at a local dealership have already been vetted and met certain standards to earn that designation, but buyers must do their own vetting when buying from private sellers. That requires patience as buyers peruse vehicle history reports provided by the seller (or gather them on their own) and don't rush to buy cars that could ultimately prove to be lemons if they're not vetted properly.

- Insist that a mechanic be allowed to examine the car. One of the biggest risks of buying from private sellers is that such vehicles are rarely under warranty when put up for sale, and sellers likely won't guarantee parts. That underscores the importance of having a vehicle thoroughly examined by a certified mechanic before buying it. Private sellers should have no issue allowing this, especially when buyers pay for the inspections. If sellers are unwilling to let mechanics inspect the car, look elsewhere for your next car or truck.



- Confirm the number of owners. There's no magic number of owners a vehicle can have before it's considered too risky to buy, but the more owners a car has had, the less likely buyers will learn its full history. In addition, if sellers were not the first owners, they won't know how the car was treated or driven prior to them buying it. That's another

potential red flag to consider before buying a car that has had more than one owner.

The private seller market can be a great place to find a reliable pre-owned vehicle. But caution and patience is of the utmost importance when buying vehicles from private sellers.

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## What certain noises may indicate about your car



Automobiles have come a long way since their introduction more than 100 years ago. Though modern cars and trucks still employ some of the same principles as their forebears, the vehicles people drive today bear little resemblance to those that made waves in the early part of the twentieth century.

Modern automobiles are technological marvels, which has made both driving and maintaining a vehicle much simpler. In regard to maintenance, built-in diagnostic systems can now alert drivers when something is wrong with their vehicles. Though that feature is undeniably useful, drivers can still benefit from learning to recognize issues by ear. Many issues that can affect a car or truck produce unusual sounds, and learning what certain noises may indicate can help drivers detect problems as soon as possible.

- **Rattling sound in a wheel well:** Most people have mistakenly placed clothing in a dryer without realizing they had spare change in their pockets. That mistake is immediately apparent once the dryer starts thanks to the unpleasant noise of coins bouncing off

the interior of the machine. Drivers may hear a similar sound when behind the wheel and wonder what's behind it. Such a sound is often indicative that there's a loose lug nut inside the hubcap. This issue can arise when drivers don't tighten the wheel properly after changing their own tire, or if mechanics make the same mistake when rotating or replacing tires during a routine maintenance session.

- **Squeaking sound:** The auto insurance experts at Geico® note that rear-wheel or four-wheel drive vehicles may produce a rhythmic squeaking sound when an issue arises with the universal joint. JD Power notes that the universal joint, often referred to as a U-joint, is part of the system that enables the rotating crankshaft in the engine of a vehicle to transfer that rotating motion to the rear wheels. U-joints get a workout whenever vehicles are driven, so they require maintenance, and a squeaking sound is one indicator that the U-joint needs to be addressed immediately.

- **Squealing sound:** A high-pitched squealing sound is typically indicative of worn out brake pads. However, Cars.com notes that if such a sound is only present when a car is first driven in the morning, it could just be surface rust being scraped off the rotors. After a few initial applications of the brakes, that sound might disappear. If it doesn't, the vehicle will likely need new brake pads.

com notes that if such a sound is only present when a car is first driven in the morning, it could just be surface rust being scraped off the rotors. After a few initial applications of the brakes, that sound might disappear. If it doesn't, the vehicle will likely need new brake pads.

- **Scraping on the windshield during rain:** The scraping sound on a windshield when the wipers are in use should not be taken lightly or be interpreted as a sign that the rain is only falling slightly. In fact, that sound indicates the wipers are worn out, which means they're not effectively clearing the windshield. In addition, the wipers could be scratching the windshield each time they produce this sound, ultimately necessitating a costly windshield replacement. Wiper blades can be replaced in a matter of minutes, so address this issue promptly.

Learning to recognize the culprits behind various vehicle noises can help drivers nip problems in the bud before they compromise the automobile and the safety of the people inside it.

## What to do after an accident

Car accidents occur every day. According to data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there are more than five million car accidents in the United States every year. Forty-three percent of car accidents resulted in injuries in 2020.

No one wants to get into an automobile accident, which can be stressful and even fatal. Even accidents that do not result in any major injuries can be traumatizing. Knowing what to do in the immediate aftermath of an accident may make such instances less stressful.

### Assess the situation

The insurance experts at GEICO® advise individuals involved in an accident to first determine if any of the involved parties suffered an injury. If you are injured, stay put. If not, check on the condition of the other driver. At this point do not admit any fault or reveal any policy limits.

Next, make a call to emergency services to request assistance from the police and an ambulance, if necessary.

### Move your vehicle

If possible, pull the vehicle over to a safe, well-lit public location. This is especially important if you believe you were the victim of a staged accident, says the Insurance Information Institute. If the car will cause another road hazard, it is best to move it over to the side and use flashers to alert oncoming

traffic. It is important that you don't leave the scene, according to American Property Casualty Insurance Association.

### Gather evidence

Have the police write up an accident report. You should take pictures of the damage to your vehicle, the other vehicle, if possible, and the scene of the accident, including any skid marks, debris and/or property damage. If there are any witnesses to the accident, get their names and contact information. You'll need this information when filing an insurance claim.

### Exchange information

Collect the names, phone numbers, addresses and email addresses of other drivers and vehicle occupants and exchange insurance information with all drivers involved. That includes the insurance company name, policy number and the name of the insured.

### Notify a friend or family member

Even if the accident is not serious, you may want to call a friend or family member to provide emotional support. If you've been injured, a friend or family member can meet you at the hospital and/or arrange to have your vehicle towed or returned home while you get the care you need.

Automotive accidents can be nerve-racking. Knowing the steps to take can alleviate some stress.

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## Performance issues that can affect older cars

Modern cars have much longer life spans than one may expect. Not too long ago, drivers often commemorated the milestone of their vehicles reaching the 100,000-mile mark. However, data from Car and Driver indicates the average vehicle now lasts around 12 years or roughly 200,000 miles. More advanced electric or hybrid vehicles may be able to go even further, with some capable of reaching as much as 300,000 miles.

According to a 2006 report from Consumer Reports, vehicles made in Japan and Korea have fewer problems per 100 vehicles than those made by American and European manufacturers, making them tops in vehicle longevity.

Thanks to advancements in technology, cars are more durable than ever, but that doesn't make them impervious to breakdowns or the need for repairs. A recent report from AAA found that more than two-thirds of service calls were for vehicles a decade or older. Here's a look at some of the problems that can affect older vehicles.

### Battery

The average car battery lasts between three and five years, according to Auto Zone. Batteries tend to show signs of wear



at the four-year mark on average. Corrosion or dirt on battery terminals also can affect battery performance.

### Electrical system

Electrical system issues can be caused by anything from burnt out car fuses to bad or faulty electrical connections and contacts. Corroded or loose screws, nuts and wires can cause electrical issues, which may be more common in older vehicles that have significant mileage on them.

### Suspension

The suspension system is comprised of springs, tires, shock absorbers, struts, anti-sway bars, and other parts that connect the vehicle to the wheels. Suspension systems regulate the amount of bouncing in the vehicle while on the road and make it manageable. Eventually, all suspension systems can and will wear out, and parts will need to be serviced or replaced.

### Evaporative emissions

The evaporative system consists of a network of hoses, canisters and valves.

It helps vent pressure in the gas tank. An older vehicle may end up with a cracked hose that can cause a fuel leak. Hoses also may be compromised elsewhere in vehicles, so these points should be checked during routine maintenance.

### Braking system

As with other moving parts on a car, the brake system wears down over time and parts will need to be replaced. Squealing, squeaking or a soft brake pedal are indicative of braking system issues and should be looked at by a mechanic promptly.

### Obsolete components

Modern vehicles are increasingly being controlled by computers. These computers handle a variety of features, including navigation and pairing to mobile phones, among others. Over time, systems may no longer work if there are no computer updates available. That means Bluetooth pairing may no longer function, or maps may not be current for GPS systems.

Cars and trucks have longer life spans due to technological advancements. However, age is still a factor in the deterioration of different vehicle systems.



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