



The Crypt—circa 1960

Story by Allan (Bunky) Garonzik

In the olden days, the car that we drove identified many of us. The vehicle reflected not only our personally, but often our social status, our ability to get dates, our priorities, and, put into simply terms, just how Kool we were, or were not! The cars were named—Joe Billy Swift, had the Bullet, Willy Riggs had the Skunk, Lucifer Smith had the Spider, Rendleman had the Mayflower, Mike Ellis had the Goat—well, you get the idea. You remember the drill. Many of us spent more hood time than windshield time. As the cars progressed in technology, this right of passing all but faded away. All cars now are pretty much the same—void of personality. Nobody knows how to work on cars. Most young kids today think a Phillips Screwdriver is Milk of Magnesia and Vodka! Kool nowadays means paying \$160 for a pair of Nikes that cost \$6.00 to produce in Bangladesh, or a pair of shorts that won't fit properly until you are a couch potato at 38 years old.

From those thrilling days of yesteryear (around 1960) Fred Yarbrough offers this story: (Fred was a young Jody, Military Science student, hard working, with an unusual 3.2 GPR seldom found amongst the drill team types.) James Carter was willing to part with his 1940 Buick Hearse. It had a straight 8 flathead, a manual 3 speed with really tall gears, similar to a Lincoln Zephyr, and those dreaded babbitted rods. None of this means anything to anyone born after 1960, but the point is that the babbit rod bearings had to be changed from time to time. Normally not a problem on a Hearse because, after all, it wasn't designed for high mileage, fast speeds, or radical driving. Guess what? General Motors didn't consider Chuck Molinda, Tommy Thomas, Yarbrough and Rendleman when they designed the Hearse. The Arlington Police and the Campus Cops hated the sight of the Hearse—with its graffiti painted all over it: "Why go around feeling half dead, when we can bury you for \$49.50", and "Come on in, its cool inside", and "You stab 'em, we slab 'em. You get the picture. So when the hearse needed an overhaul, what better place to work on it than the parking lot in front of the SUB with its concrete parking lot rather than the gravel lot of Davis Hall.

Off to what is now Deep Ellum for the two week wait for the rods to be remanufactured. All the while the Hearse is up on blocks, which some narrow-minded folks thought to be an eye sore. Electricity was needed to hone the cylinders, (Fred informs those who think a Spark Plug is a new brand of Chewing Tobacco, that honing a cylinder is the process of preparing the engine for the new piston rings to 'seat'). Naturally, the nearest source of power was in a classroom. Not just any classroom, but, by design, the classroom of Professor Doctor Barron White (as he insisted on being called). One of the guys involved in the overhaul, wearing very greasy cloths, strolled into the eccentric professor's classroom dragging an extension cord, and announced that he needed some electricity. Noting the agitation of Dr. White, this process was repeated for several days. (A Chinese economics professor who kicked me out of his class for laughing when he butchered the word "fluctuation" eventually replaced Dr. White—you may have to think on that one!) The big Buick ran like a top and was eventually was sold to a coffee house called the Crypt, but not before the ASC Student Handbook was modified to read: "There shall be no vehicles taken apart for the purpose of overhaul on campus".

As was often the case with these college antics, the players, more often than not, turned out to be contributors to society. Swift, Rendleman, Lucifer, and Riggs took their Senior Trip to RVN, and Yarbrough became a Captain on Eastern Airlines having successfully completing the exact same number of landings as take-offs over his 25-year career. It is no surprise that Rendleman, and Yarbrough are still building award winning street rods even though, at their age, they often forget where they park their cars!