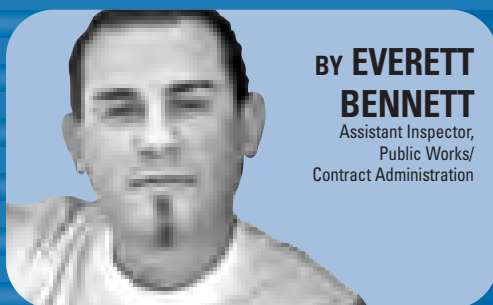


THE CAR CLUB



BY EVERETT BENNETT
Assistant Inspector,
Public Works/
Contract Administration

Perfectly Frank

Frank Gamboa's '39 Chevy is a stunner.



Another summer has come to a close. For me, June, July, and August are the best time of year. My major goal this year was getting my 80-year-old car back on the road after a two-year break from the blacktop. The thought of enjoying Southern California weather at dusk in a convertible consumed me. It drove me to ignore everything except working on it, taking a shower and brushing my teeth. I usually don't name my cars, but for the sake of this story, she will be known as Betty. Betty and I had some stunning drives, but she also likes to overheat and break down. I guess that is part of the fun in owning these types of cars, or at least that is what I keep telling myself.

But enough about Betty and me. The second highlight of my summer was meeting fellow City employee Frank Gamboa. Frank is a Motor Sweeper Operator (Division 231) with Public Works/Street Services and owns this stunning 1939 Chevrolet Master Deluxe Opera Coupe. Frank has 30-plus years with the City and even more years being involved in the car scene. I first saw Frank and his car at the Cops for Tots show this year. I remember standing around the car with a friend and just admiring the magnificent lines and exquisite attention to detail. This car just radiates craftsmanship to the tenth degree. There has not been a shortage of cars that have passed through Frank's hands, and

from the sound of it, there will be many more. This '39 coupe began its life in San Francisco and moved to the high desert area not too long after. Frank came across her on eBay and made the trek up to Victorville to possibly purchase the car he had been looking for for a long time. After a 15-minute inspection, Frank wrote the check. The car was soon in its new home in the suburbs of Los Angeles and being prepped for what would be a two-year restoration project.

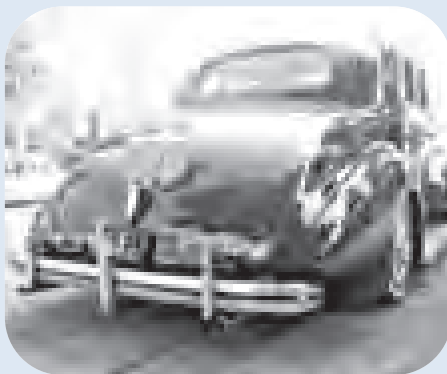
The 216 straight-six motor and three-speed transmission were pulled out of the car and sent to a well-known restorer of old cars, Joe Epstein. Joe tackled the motor rebuild, wiring and exhaust. If you are building a traditional "bomb," there is only kind of exhaust to have and that is glass packs. This project was equipped with 12-inch glass packs and Fenton headers, and was converted over to 12 volts. After the motor was firing correctly, suspension came into question and just like doing the Limbo, the question was, how low can you go? Well, Frank went low with the help of two-inch drop spindles and air bags, all done by The Bag Man in Santa Ana.

After further examination of the lacquer paint on the body, Frank handed the car over to Chito and Sons of East L.A. A year passed, and the '39 now gleamed like a star. Jet-black paint magnified this beauty that took many of its design features from the art

deco period. Now with only two tasks left, Frank drove the car to Mike Perez over at Area 51. Mike is a master stitch man and covered the interior of the car with tan mohair. Last on the agenda to complete Frank's dream was adding accessories. Accessories are huge on "bombs." They differentiate the boys from the men (or women from girls), but they sure do come at a costly price. Frank was able to find a GM compass; a banjo steering wheel marbled by Ingrid from Oregon; bug screens for the wind wing windows; a cigarette holder; an ashtray; and a 1948 Cadillac rearview mirror. To put things in perspective, the going rate for a GM compass like Frank's is \$6,000. Frank decided to cover his 15-inch rims with 1957 Cadillac hubcaps, but he also changes them up from time to time with the original wheels and tires.

With a garage full of first-place trophies for this car and others, Frank has proven he can build a show stopper. The coupe is currently for sale so Frank can fund his next build. I am not sure about the price, but with it equipped with accessories whose value are the same as a new car, I am sure it will take more than a box of rusty nails, a stick of gum and an old Home Depot card to pry it away from Frank. But, if that trade is possible, I just happen to have all three!

See you next time!



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Send us your information, too – name, title and City department, a phone number (we won't print it) and a paragraph or two about why you love your car, what kind of car and year it is, and maybe some fun details of how you got it, how you restored it, etc. Send it all to: talkback@cityemployeesclub.com



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page 7