

[The top 10 Hemmings Daily stories of 2014](#)

We look back at the sinkholes, collection dispersals, and rusted cars that made headlines throughout 2014.

by [Daniel Strohl](#)

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Futurliner No. 11. Photo courtesy Barrett-Jackson.

Auctions! Mayhem! Rusty cars! This past year, it seemed that the collector car scene got more mainstream media attention than ever before, and all it took was cubic dollars, cars left to rot, and one geological phenomenon. So, of course, many of those same storylines appeared in the 10 most popular articles that appeared in the Hemmings Daily over 2014, most of which you saw here first. So let's take a moment to see what resonated the most with you, our readers, this past year.



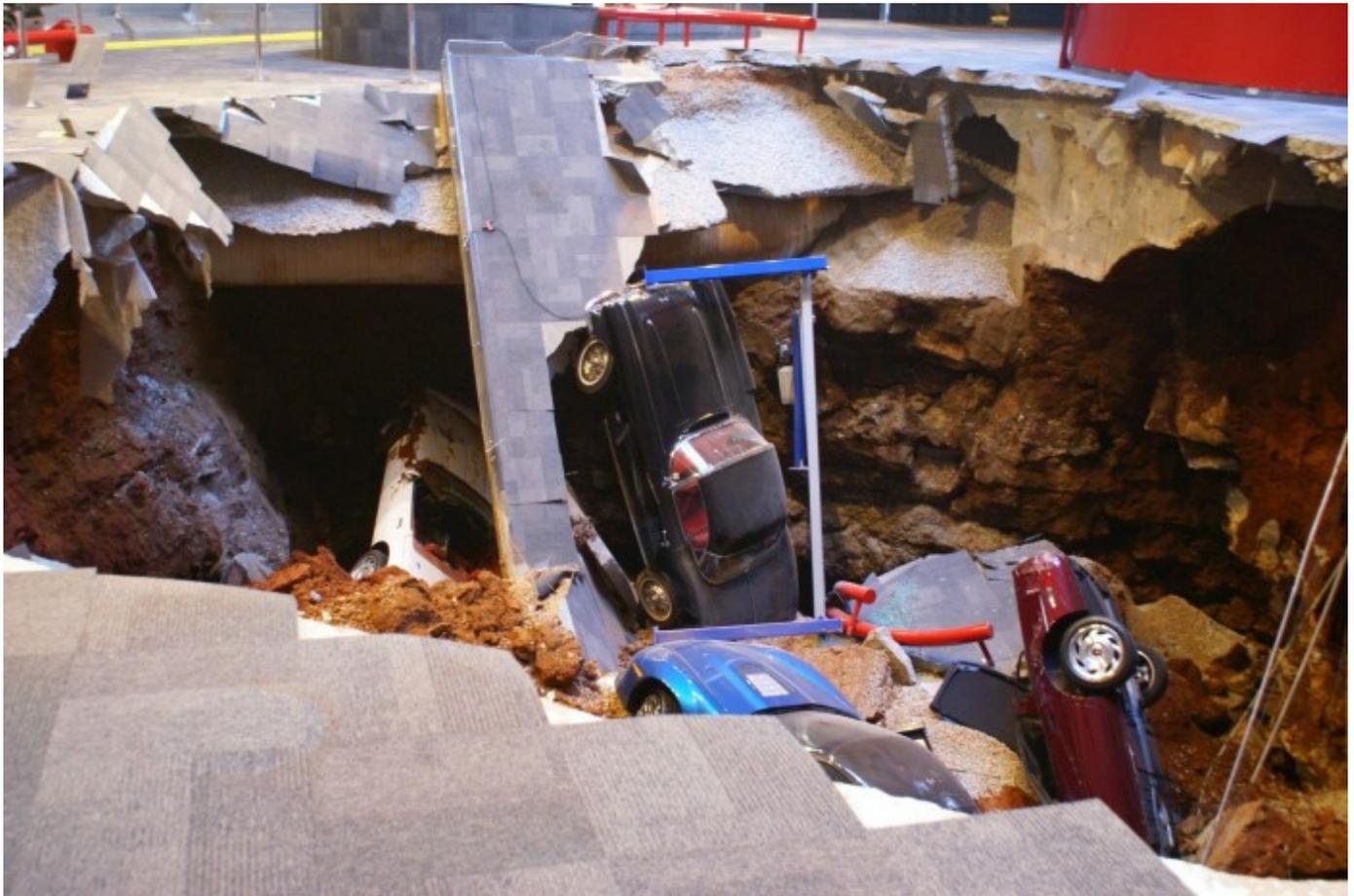
#10 – [John Wayne's Barris-modified 1975 Pontiac Grand Safari heads to auction](#). Celebrity cars never fail to impress, particularly when they were once owned by an icon like Marion Morrison. Add in the fact that George Barris modified this 1975 Pontiac Grand Safari for the Duke, and now you have a one-off car with some pretty awesome provenance. Ultimately, the wagon sold for \$71,000 at Mecum's Monterey sale – right in the middle of its pre-auction estimate – and it has since popped up for sale with [an asking price of \\$115,000](#).



#9 – [Acres of unrestored high-desert Mopars head to auction](#). Though a group of Swedish collectors had already cherry-picked Charles Kee’s 60-acre Mopar collection in Brothers, Oregon, plenty of ears still perked up when they heard that the rest of Kee’s cars were going up for auction following his death. Whether due to the remote location or the poor shape of most of the cars, though, the collection [sold for relative bargain prices](#) in May – the most expensive car from the collection went for \$6,500.



#8 – [Recovery crews lift 1962 Corvette from National Corvette Museum sinkhole](#). Following the sinkhole opening at the National Corvette Museum in February, old car and Corvette enthusiasts wondered what would happen to the eight Corvettes that the earth tried to swallow – would they be left in situ? Would they become a permanent exhibit in the museum? Or would the museum go digging for them? A few weeks later, we had our answer when the eight cars – including the oldest of the bunch, a one-owner black 1962 convertible – all started to emerge from the sinkhole.



#7 – [Eight cars damaged by sinkhole at the National Corvette Museum](#). Of all the stories that covered the ongoing drama with the National Corvette Museum sinkhole, the first – which broke the news of how one of Kentucky’s many karst formations, previously unknown, collapsed underneath the Skydome at the museum – garnered the most views. Thanks to the efforts of the museum’s public relations staff, we were able to bring you information and developments on the museum’s situation as it unfolded, just as we’ve continued to follow up with the museum since then.



#6 – [One man's collection of more than 600 vintage cars and trucks heads to auction](#). Much like the Kee collection mentioned above, Murray King's assemblage of old cars and trucks ran into the hundreds, was largely left outside for decades, and was dispersed to the four winds at auction this year. Unlike Kee's, it included a variety of makes from a multitude of eras.



#5 – [“Blood Muscle” highlights seized vehicle sale](#). Of the collections that came up for auction this year, David Nicoll’s was a little different: The U.S. Marshal’s Service put it up for sale on Nicoll’s behalf after Nicoll pleaded guilty to a little naughtiness – naughtiness that netted him millions of dollars, much of which he spent on big-ticket vintage muscle cars. [None of the cars in the auction went for cheap](#), either; the top seller went for \$575,000, and the nine cars in total sold for \$2.5 million.



#4 – [Though freed from a muddy gumbo, Miss Belvedere now mired in limbo.](#) Back in 2007, the world's eyes turned briefly to Tulsa, Oklahoma, to see whether a 1957 Plymouth nicknamed Miss Belvedere would emerge from its time capsule crypt intact or in pieces; it was more the latter than the former. Seven years later, we caught up with the owners and restorers of the Plymouth to see what's become of it, and found that, essentially, nobody wants it, nobody wants to restore it, and everybody's afraid to touch it.



#3 – [After a 25-year slumber, the VH1 / Peter Max Corvettes resurface](#). When VH1 decided to give away one Corvette from every year between 1953 and 1989 for a contest, nobody could predict that artist Peter Max would buy the collection from the winner or that the collection would go on to sit and deteriorate in a New York City parking garage or that 25 years later, Max would suddenly decide to sell the Corvettes after doing nothing with them. Unsurprisingly, since the collection came to light in October, [at least one lawsuit has been filed](#) over the ownership rights to the collection.



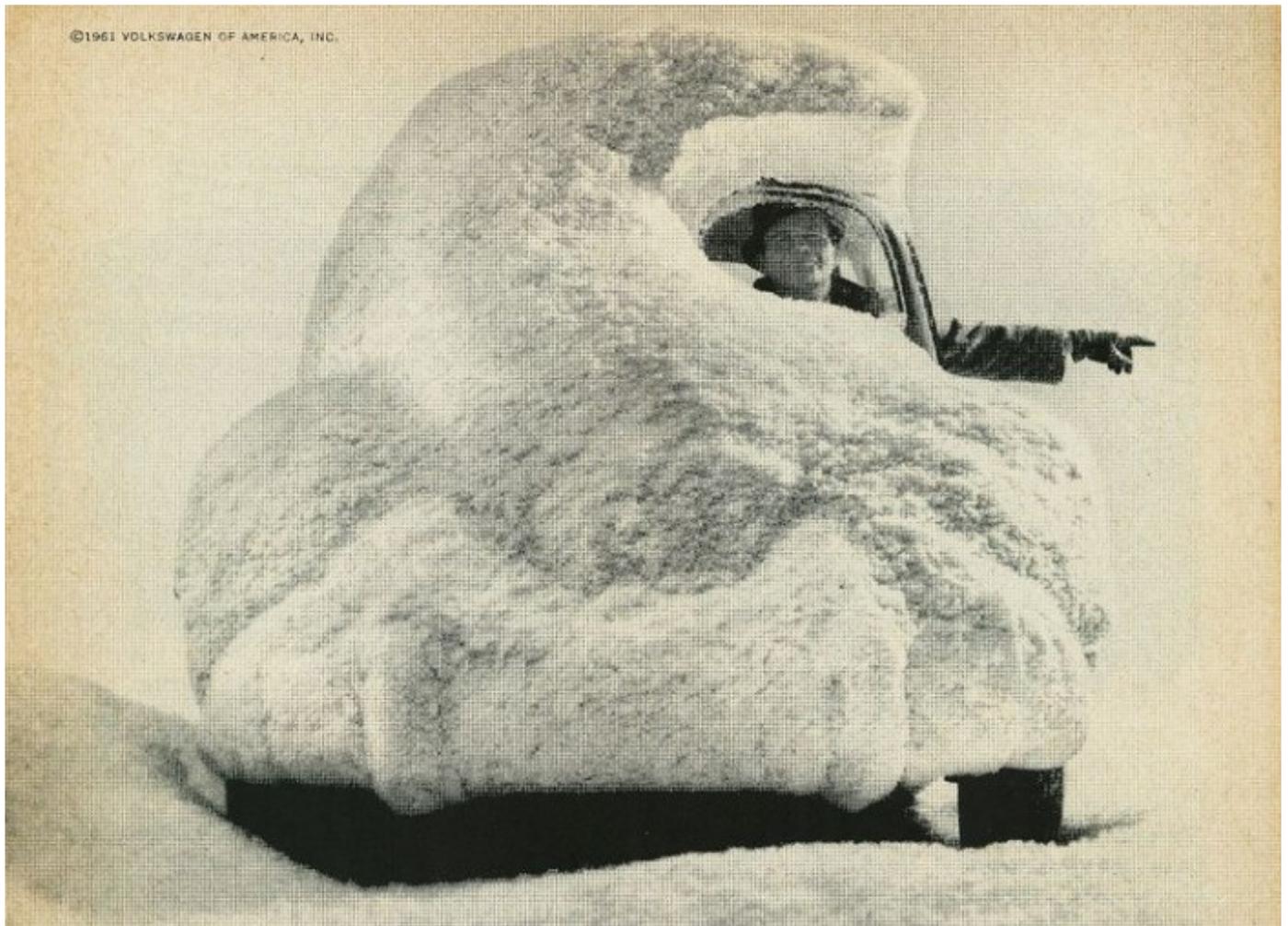
#2 – [Contents of salvage yard that closed in 1953 headed to auction](#). How does a salvage yard remain closed to the general public for more than 60 years? In the case of Oliver Jordan of Enid, Oklahoma, through sheer crotchetyness and a desire to antagonize the local authorities, it appears. However, Jordan's and his wife's deaths paved the way for the collection to head to auction this past June, where a [pair of Cord project cars sold for about \\$66,000](#). Presumably town officials in Enid can breathe easier now.



#1 – [Ron Pratte to sell off entire collection, including Futurliner](#). One of the most unexpected announcements in the collector car world came this past May, when Barrett-Jackson said it would be selling the entire collection of Ron Pratte, the man made famous by buying much of his collection – including Futurliner No. 11, a [1954 Pontiac Bonneville Special](#), [Howard Hughes’s Buick Roadmaster](#), and dozens of other high-profile vehicles – through Barrett-Jackson auctions. Pratte hasn’t said why he’s selling it all either, fueling speculation galore about his motives.



Honorable Mention #1 – Two more stories all came within a couple hundred pageviews of making the list, so in the interest of stuffing this article full of links, we thought we'd also mention [Tom DeMauro's interview with Steve Ames about his reasoning for buying the Chevrolet Cameo from 2013's Lambrecht auction](#) as well as last month's story about [Futurliner No. 10 going on the National Historic Vehicle Register](#).



Honorable Mention #2 – As for the most commented-on stories we’ve run this year, the Miss Belvedere, Ron Pratte, and NCM sinkhole stories got readers’ fingers flying, but so did two of our Open Diffs – the one asking [what was your best wintertime car](#), and the one asking [which automotive terms are facing extinction](#) – our article on Fiat Chrysler Automobiles [dropping the Pentastar logo](#), our list of [cars from the 1990 model year that will be newly eligible for AACA shows](#) in 2015, and our experiment into full audience participation – [Ask a Couple Truckers Anything](#).

Thank you all very much for making 2014 a successful year around here and for keeping your Internet antennae tuned to the Hemmings Daily for all your collector car and old car news. Stick around for 2015 as we bring you more good stuff, and make sure to [subscribe to our \(free\) newsletter](#) if you haven’t yet done so.

- See more at: <http://blog.hemmings.com/index.php/2014/12/29/the-top-10-hemmings-daily-stories-of-2014/?refer=news#sthash.4kDst5Of.dpuf>