

### The Creative Spirit and the Pride of Fatherhood

What I learned from my father is integral to my being. Though not an artist, he certainly was a person willing to work with his hands and appreciate the results of his efforts; if not the economic benefit of a "do it yourself", certainly from the feeling of self-worth that came from educating himself in an unfamiliar process. I started working with him at about 12 years of age and learned, as he did, that there is a joy in designing and building things. The DIY renovations he undertook in all of the houses we lived in as I was growing up, as well as the projects I helped him with to earn extra money during his summer breaks from teaching school, became natural guideposts for the way I shaped my life as a parent. My father's greatest gift to me was the feeling that I could build anything I had the creative mind to think about.

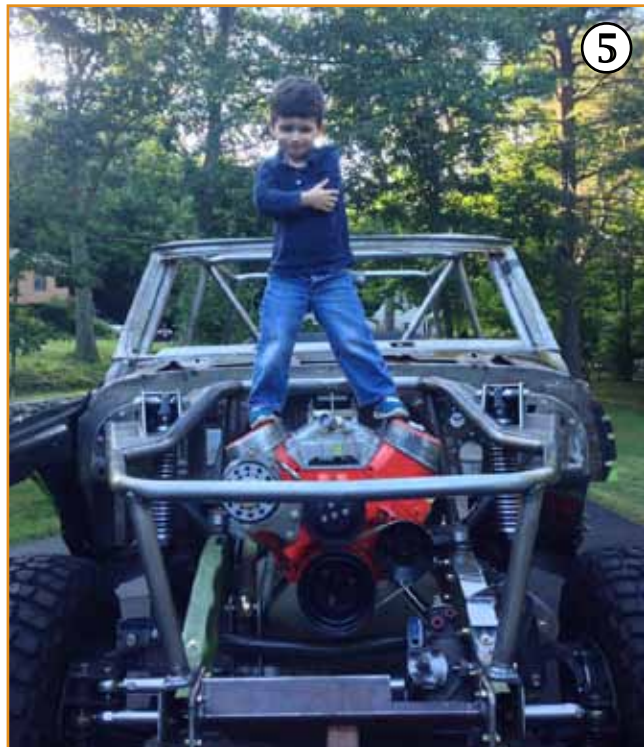
I have two children who I am very proud of. Both seem to have inherited the Blanchette DIY "gene" which means I don't have to crow about my specific contributions to their learning, but can simply take responsibility for passing the DNA on to them from from my parents' generation.

My daughter Kim Renée (Black) has never shied away from hard work, and can wield a hammer, chop saw, or a paint brush with equal skill. She is a talented interior designer, whose home is an example of style, sometimes using refinished furniture as a practical design approach for active family living spaces. She has a great sense of color, and pattern and there's not much she won't tackle. Now that her two daughters are in school, she is working for Yankee Restoration & Building in Westbrook, Me, which seems like a perfect fit for a daughter with "the gene"!

My son Gregory amazes me! Although he is very busy as an Engineering Manager at Toshiba America he has spent the last four years(±) renovating the Keene house he grew up in. Ironically, most of the changes he has made required total destruction of the work I put into the house 30 years ago... (it was time!) but, as an artist, what has impressed me the most is his garage project that he has been working on simultaneously since he moved back to Keene, NH from California. Greg has given me a new respect for automobile enthusiasts who, like passionate artists, spend a huge amount of time designing and creating custom versions of existing vehicles for the love of the process!

My son's project is well known to his friends at [www.CK5.com/might as well build](http://www.CK5.com/might as well build); who belong to a general discussion group for gearheads that love cars and all things related to the garage and/or workshop. Over the past year or so I've had the privilege of visiting Greg's garage [sculpture studio in my language] and I came to realize how similar our approaches are in making things. As much as his home DIY projects are professionally executed, this project to build an off road "rock slider" from his 1972 Chevy blazer is amazing to behold. Six years in process so far, Greg tells me that he hopes to complete it by 2016 (or was is 2018?) and take it to the pinnacle for off road driving in Moab, Utah. I hope to be with him as official photographer when that happens! If you want to see more than I have room to show you... check out the link above and feel free to plow through his 384 posts on the web forum since his project began!

#### Work In Process



1 - 1972 Blazer before Greg's project started in 2008.  
2 - Firewall of Blazer after engine removal.  
3 - New handmade parts required Greg to train himself in welding.  
4 - Big new V-8 engine. Roll cage tubing, and front axle assembly were designed and built in the garage.  
5 - Greg's 4 yr old son, Charlie, poses on the engine.(the next generation!)