



Searcy Arkansas

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Local News

Local car enthusiast Doyle Rainwater gears up for summer shows

By Pat Hambrick
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Doyle Rainwater of Searcy has worked on cars most of his life, but that hasn't diminished his enthusiasm. He has been a member of Kustoms & Klassics Unlimited for 18 years and has served as president of the antique car club four or five times. Billy Tedder is the current president of the group.

Kustoms & Klassics Unlimited members "like to show people what we've done" and will do just that with an antique car show at the 18th Annual Searcy Fest July 9 at Berryhill Park.

In addition to displaying their cars, the members compete in a poker run to raise money for Camp Quality.

"We try to make it a big event because of Camp Quality," Rainwater said.

Last year they were able to donate \$6,000 to Camp Quality and \$1,000 to the Bob Bloodworth Fund at ASU-Searcy.

In 2004 there were 171 antique cars on display at Berryhill. Rainwater said one unique feature of the show is that the local club gathers their cars around the flagpole and the public votes on the car they like the best, with the club winner receiving a trophy.

Cars from other clubs, such as Searcy's Illegal Concepts and Clinton's Vertically Challenged also participate in the show, he said.

Rainwater also organizes other car shows for benefits during the year, such as the recent antique car show during Bald Knob's Home Fest.



Car enthusiast and auto body instructor Doyle Rainwater shows off one of his classic Mustangs at his Searcy home. Rainwater and other members of Kustoms & Klassics Unlimited and other local car clubs will be showing their antique cars at the 18th annual Searcy Fest July 9 at Berryhill Park. (Greg Benenati)

"That's about the best overall display of cars I've seen in a long time," he said. Rainwater and his wife, Aunean Galloway Rainwater, organized that show in conjunction with the Bald Knob Chamber of Commerce and 56 cars were on display.

He participates in many things outside club shows, as well.

"I always drive in the parade at Pangburn. The last four years I've hauled the Grand Marshall in Searcy's parade, and I go to Bradford Fest," Rainwater said.

He also usually goes to Clarksville and has been in car shows as far away as California.

Rainwater learned his auto body and mechanic skills in the Army and worked at Boeing for 10 years before he moved to Searcy in 1964. He worked in the body and mechanic departments at Ford, Truman Baker, and Carder Buick before starting his own business.

"I've always liked cars," Rainwater said.

Rainwater, 74, is currently the auto body instructor at ASU-Searcy. He said sometimes he thinks he's getting too old for that, but he enjoys it and believes he has things to share with the students. Plus, they help keep him young.

Rainwater said at one time he had 25 cars and currently owns six Mustangs, which are his favorite. Three are completed and three more are close to completion.

"I'm always working on them," he said.

Rainwater has given five antique Mustangs or pick-ups to his grandchildren over the years. They often speak for a car or truck he is restoring far in advance of their high school graduation. One granddaughter chose the car she wanted when she was four, he said.

He'll be giving away more cars over the years since the Rainwaters have eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Rainwater helped start car clubs in Augusta and Clinton and said Clinton's Vertically Challenged has a close association with Searcy's Illegal Concepts. "

Both groups have a big time together," he said.

He said getting young people involved in cars was one way to deter drug use.

One event Rainwater especially enjoys is the Camp Quality fall reunion in Hot Springs. He said he loved seeing all the cancer survivors and seeing how happy they are.

"It's invigorating to mingle with them," he said.

Kustoms & Klassics meet the first Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at Western Sizzlin'. Anyone is welcome to attend.

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