



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Colby Rod Run has something for all

## Restored Rod Run brings a crowd

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Following a one-year absence, one of Colby's longtime community events was restored last weekend in Fike Park.

It was about 14 years ago when the idea of a Rod Run was brought to Colby by a group of friends, said Bill Biel, who co-directed the event for many years.

In addition to Biel, others such as Alvin Koenig, Dale Koenig, Leilani Thomas, Dave Wagoner, Chuck Wagoner and Paul Wagoner to name a few also helped get the event started in Colby.

"I've heard from so many people, 'Man, it's nice to be back in Colby,'" said Biel about people who missed the popular event removed from the calendar last year.

"They love it here. It's important to our community," said Biel's wife, Bev.

The couple were pioneers in making the Rod Run what it is today, but decided to take a backseat for this year and enjoy the event.

The couple registered a 1928 Model A and a 1929 Hi Boy roadster.

To make this year's Rod Run and all of its events happen, was an intense six months for volunteers to accomplish what normally took almost a year in the past, said Linda Taylor, who helped with registration and awards. Taylor met with the other volunteers once a week since January at Gambino's.

It's been a continuing tradition ever since its debut, bringing people from all over the country to the small community of Colby. Taylor said this year's registration saw 135 cars and motorcycles from Nebraska, Colorado, Oklahoma and

many Kansas towns including Colby, Hoxie, Oakley, Sharon Springs, Oberlin, Norton, Hill City, WaKeeney, Quinter, Grainfield and more.

And what's the motive for rod runners to drive so far?

"Most people drive in to get together with friends, interact with the community, and to show off their hot rods, of course, after pouring time and money into it so they can hear the 'ooh's' and 'ahh's' of all who walked by it," she said.

For Colby, the idea of having events like the Rod Run is a way to showcase the town, along with being a good economic boost to motels, restaurants and other retailers.

"Everyone is looking for something to bring people to town," said Biel, "and the public comes to Rod Runs to look at quality."

As for the name "Rod Run," Bev said she believes it dates back to when drivers of roadsters, bob trucks and model T's drove from one car show to another — literally running from one town to the next. It was exclusive to the classics of pre-1948, and no town was too small for them.

Although it has expanded to open class, she said, including all models for showing, the coined term, Rod Run, is a reminder of what it was and what it continues to be.



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

Brad Mullins explained the interior of his restored 1954 Chevrolet pickup to an onlooker Saturday during Colby's Rod Run.

## Pickup full of time and family

By John Van Nostrand

Free Press Publisher

While some younger drivers may be anxious back out of the driveway, one was patient with just installing the gas tank in his pickup.

Brad Mullins, 21, of Independence, Mo., brought his restored 1954 Chevrolet pickup to Colby's Rod Run. He was one of the youngest people to enter in the show last weekend. He said his pickup has taught him patience and respect.

"It's rare to find young people doing this," he said. "It all de-

pends on your work history and how you were raised. Others will say give me a car so I can cruise Main Street or go to the football game. Others are not as patient and say, 'I don't want to wait,'" Mullins said.

Brad said his father has restored vehicles and he helped him with his. Brad found his pickup in a pasture.

"The only thing on it was the cab. There was no rear end or front wheels," he said.

Despite the rust and weeds, Mullins said he saw the potential in the pickup.

"I saw it. I had a vision," he said.

For more than a year, Mullins used his spare time to bring the pickup back to life.

All of the body is original. He used mechanical parts from other vehicles. The pickup originally had a 235 cc motor but he installed a 350. He painted it bright yellow, a color that he says is not very popular, even at Colby Rod Run.

"Just look down the line. I only see another yellow one," he said.

Mullins has been showing his pickup for about seven years. He has relatives in Hoxie and has taken his pickup to Atwood, Oberlin, Collyer and had been to Colby in the past.

"I'm trying to get in a Kansas City car show," he said.

Mullins said he has already understood the value of family, work and respect through his pickup.

Mullins' wife, Michelle, is 20 and has a 1974 Corvette. His younger sister has a vintage Camaro. Mullins said his family time is around car parts and tools — not the dinner table.

"I respect this vehicle more than my own — the one I drive," he said with a smile.

"This also has some sentimental value. My dad and I did this side by side."

## Car show entries range from old to almost-new

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Although a majority of the more than 100 cars on display at the Colby Rod Run were 30 or 40 years old, one car is still under warranty.

Maureen and David Collard of Aurora, Colo., entered their black 2006 Chevy SSR.

The truck defies type. At first glance, it looks like a new take on an old pickup, which it is. However, the pickup is also a hardtop convertible.

"When we bought it brand new, it had seven miles on it," Maureen said. "We took it out of the showroom at Len Lyall Chevy in Aurora."

She told her husband she wanted it. They paid \$45,000 for the SSR. It has a 390-horse power six-liter Corvette engine.

"It'll go from 0 to 60 in 5.3 seconds," she said. "It's very, very fast."

The SSR was based on 1950- to 1953-model Chevy pickups.

"This is the only convertible pickup here in Colby," she said. "There are people here that have never seen these. I've enjoyed it since I've owned it."

Sometimes people think it was a custom-built vehicle because of its unique look.

"It's my everyday vehicle except in the winter," Maureen said. "I have a 2002 Chevy Blazer I drive in winter. I bought it specifically because I wanted to play with this toy."

The SSR gets many looks when

they have it out. The first year they owned it, they took it on vacation to Indiana to visit David's family.

Maureen said another SSR pulled up beside them at a stoplight. That was one of only a few they have encountered. Between the two of them, they have seen four on the roads in the Denver area.

The SSR isn't their only classic. They also have a 1979 Corvette.

Maureen said they enjoy coming to the Colby event. She has ties to the area. She was born at the old Thomas County Hospital. Her maiden name is Rhea, and her mother lives in Oakley.

The SSR was a one of a kind car, but Ford Falcon enthusiasts came out in force to show off their cars.

Tom Botkin of Golden, Colo., and his fellow Falcon owners represented the largest group of cars, with almost a dozen at the rod run. They are part of the Mile High Chapter of the Falcon Club of America, which comes to Colby each year for the rod run.

"This is the most we've brought," he said.

Botkin said the cars are popular because the 1963 models came with a V8 engine.

"They're quick because of the small-block Ford V8," he said.

The small, fast cars are his livelihood now, and he sells them in Golden. He retired from teaching.

He had his Ranchero at the run, which he has restored, with the exception of the engine.

The Falcon debuted in 1957, and was made until 1978 in the United States. It is still made in Australia,



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Maureen Collard of Aurora, Colo., put the top down on her 2006 Chevy SSR. The vehicle is a hard-top convertible pickup with a

where it is called the Ute. Besides the Ranchero, which looks like a pickup, he also has a convertible and another Ranchero.

Another eye-catcher was Diane Bull's 1966 Chevy Caprice.

Diane, of Hoxie, enjoyed showing off her car, painted Prowler

Purple, which had a one-eyed, one-horned purple people-eater perched on the air cleaner assembly. She and her husband Jerry have owned the car 20 years, and spent the past year having it restored.

"We just liked it when we first saw it," she said.

They paid \$1,200 for it, and were going to fix it up.

But family took precedence. When their children were old enough, they borrowed the car to drive it, and eventually it was wrecked.

It sat outside a long time, before

the restoration began.

The rod run was the second show they have taken it to.

The car's body is the feature Diane likes best.

"When you sit in it, it feels like a car," she said. "Everybody seems to like it."