

Car show combines retro luster and rust

BY STEPHANIE BARNARD

Eagle correspondent

Most of the cars on display at the Orpheum Car Show on Sunday boasted shiny paint jobs, restored hardware and not a speck of rust in sight. But not Fred Robbins' 1938 Plymouth.

"It took 71 years to get it to look like that," he said of the rust-covered pickup he rescued from a wrecker yard back in September.

Robbins did, however, invest \$7,000 into installing a 1955 Dodge Hemi engine in it. He finally got the Plymouth up and running about a month ago.

About 75 to 80 cars were entered in the show, with proceeds from entry fees benefiting the Orpheum's restoration project. There were some modern sports cars on display, but most of the vehicles dated back a couple of decades.

Shawn Fleming went all the way to Branson, Mo., to buy her 1964½ Ford Mustang, which boasts 122,000 miles. She's named it Ruby, a nod to its bright red hue.

"(Vintage cars) are more innovative-looking than today's cars," Fleming said. "They have a lot more personality."

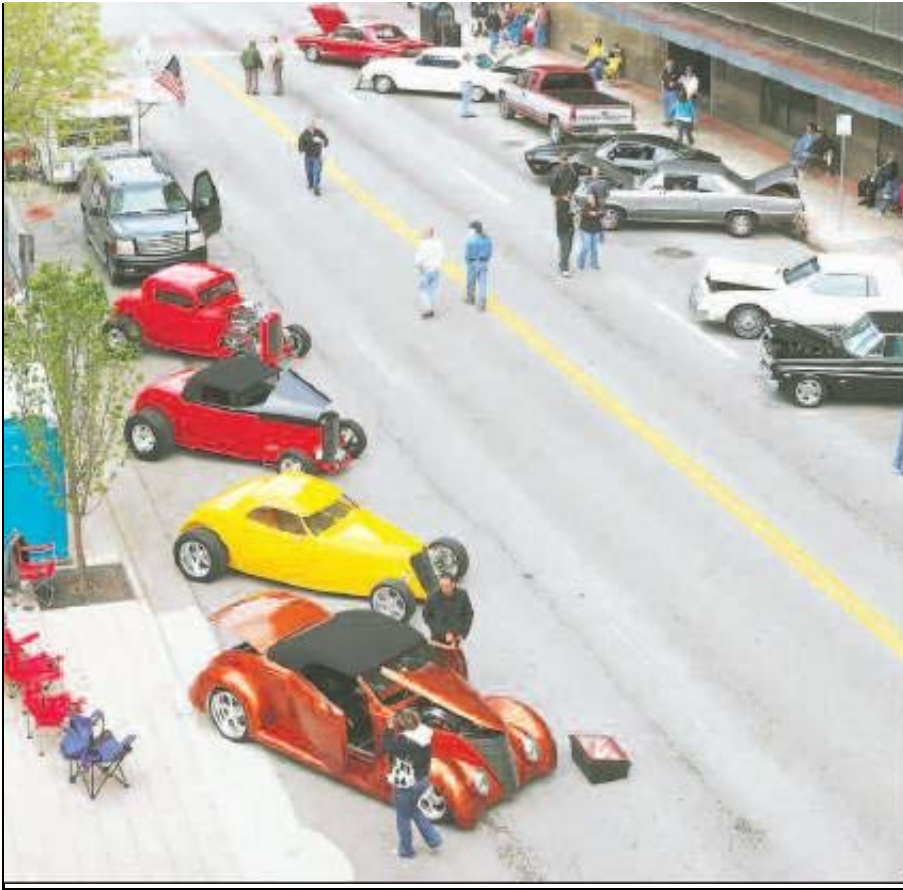
To complete the retro feel, oldies music blared through speakers outside of the Orpheum and vendors sold funnel cakes and lemonade. The show, in its second year, is one of many fundraisers the Orpheum will hold this year.

"It's kind of a family thing," said Fleming of her interest in car shows.

Family is also important to Robbins, who had a logo for his grandparents' old store — Robbins Market in Lake City — painted on the Plymouth.

"It's a tribute to them," he said. "And my brother passed away, so I had his name painted on the glove compartment."





Photos by Jaime Oppenheimer/The Wichita Eagle

About 75 to 80 cars were entered in the Orpheum Car Show, a benefit for the historic Orpheum Theatre.

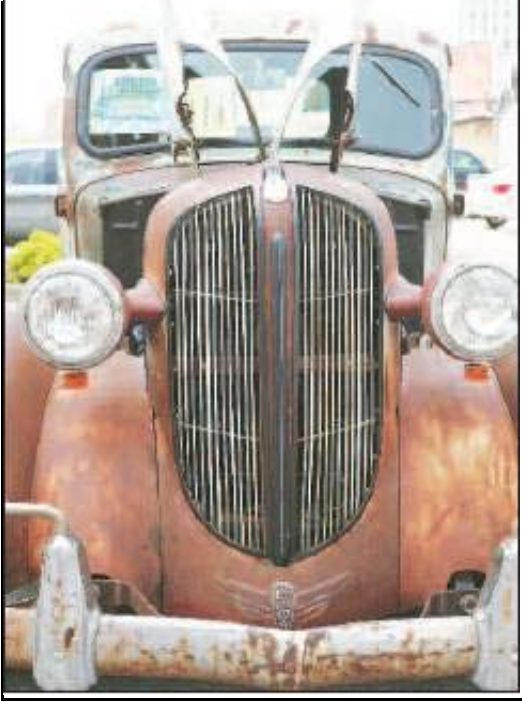


"You got to take a tetanus shot to get in," said Fred Robbins of the 1938 Plymouth pickup he rescued, then refitted with a Hemi engine and left painted as is.



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