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Meet & Greet

September 27
Car Show

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Friday, September 26

Meet and Greet @ 7 PM

Saturday, September 27

8 AM – Registration begins
11 AM – Judging begins
Noon – Registration closes
3 PM – Awards ceremony
4 PM – Cruise 'N Silsbee Cruise

FOOD VENDORS

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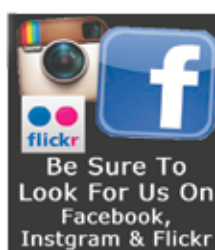
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Cruise'n Silsbee to have their 25th anniversary car show

Daryin McInnis
writer@silsbee-bee.com
The Silsbee Bee

SILSBEE – Cruise'n Silsbee will be having their 25th Anniversary Car Show, at Kirby Memorial Stadium, 1005 North 7th St., Silsbee, on September 26 and 27—proceeds to benefit local scholarships and charities. Cruise'n Silsbee has been a long-time staple in the community, raising profits for local scholarships and charities, while hosting a two-day event of fun for families and car enthusiasts alike. The event showcases vintage, antique, and sports cars through a "Show and Shine" parade, drag races, a cruise,

and a variety of vendors. Friday, September 26, at 7 P.M. will be a free, pre-event Meet and Greet, while Saturday, September 27, kicks off the day with the Car Show from 8 A.M. to 4 P.M. Awards will be given for the "Best Of" at 3 P.M., with the cruise to follow. On-site registration is \$30 and will include a complimentary T-shirt. The Cruise accepts sponsors from various organizations and businesses, highlighting them at their own award ceremony. The Cruise has always been very appreciative of the support they receive in honor of their event. In 2008, the event

was canceled due to Hurricane Ike, which significantly affected local fundraising efforts. At the time, organizers expected to raise \$8,000 to \$10,000. Since then, the Cruise has only come back stronger and has partnered with Raising Cane's in Beaumont for a "Cars and Cane's" event in 2024, where Raising Cane's donated 15% of sales to support Cruise'n Silsbee's charitable mission and scholarship program. The community is always excited for the event, giving families a weekend out to enjoy themselves while being able to support local businesses and give back to their area.



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Derrick Terry's 1968 Pontiac Firebird



Derrick Terry stands with his 1968 Pontiac 400 Firebird that he plans to show at the Cruise'n Silsbee car show on Sept. 27 at the Old Kirby Memorial Stadium in Silsbee. Terry has several antique vehicles that he is either working on or is getting ready to sell.



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Thursday, September 25, 2025 • 2 

5th Street Cruisers grow into Hardin County car club mainstay

Dylan Busby
reporter@silsbee-bee.com
The Silsbee Bee

SILSBEE — What began as a few friends taking their classic cars out for a meal has grown into one of the most recognizable vintage car groups in Southeast Texas. The 5th Street Cruisers, founded four years ago by longtime car enthusiast Tommy Bohler, have quickly become a mainstay of the region's automotive community.

"It started by us talking about, in the evenings, going out for a drive to go

get a burger," said Bohler. Bohler, who began collecting cars after retirement, has built a personal collection of six vehicles. His passion helped shape the club's growth, attracting like-minded enthusiasts who share an interest in preserving and showcasing vintage automobiles. Bohler said, "The more exposure we got, the more people wanted to join up." From its early days of casual meetups, the club has expanded into a structured group with 51 members.

The 5th Street Cruisers are now a regular presence at local car shows, community events, and charity gatherings across Hardin County and beyond. Their classic vehicles are not only admired for their craftsmanship but also serve as a reminder of the history and culture tied to American car ownership. The group emphasizes camaraderie, with members often traveling together to regional events or organizing outings that highlight the shared pride of maintaining older vehi-



Bohler's yellow 1969 Plymouth Roadrunner is one of many Plymouths in his collection.

cles. In doing so, the Cruisers have become ambassadors for the hobby, inspiring younger generations to appreciate automotive history. Now one of the

most active car clubs in Southeast Texas, the 5th Street Cruisers continues to build on its reputation for fellowship, community involvement, and a

dedication to preserving the beauty of vintage cars. "When the weather is good on the weekends, we go out," Bohler told the Bee.

Daddy-Daughter duo shines at Cruise'n



David Richard and his daughter, Monica Richard, with special helper, Bugs the dog, sit atop their 1968 Porsche 912 Targa and 1966 Ford Mustang, in between their 1978 Volkswagen Bus.

Daryin McInnis
writer@silsbee-bee.com
The Silsbee Bee

SILSBEE – David and Monica Richard, of Fred, the duo, spend weekends traveling across Texas, showcasing restored vehicles and building memories together. Their participation highlights not just the craftsmanship behind the cars but the bond that fuels their hobby. For them, every show is more than competition — it's quality time on the open road.

When Monica was only eight years old, her father, David, brought her out for their first car show, where they won a sponsorship award with his 1951 Ford Shoebox. At age twelve, David bought Monica a 1966 Ford Mustang, a project they could enjoy together. When they originally purchased the car, David said, based on the paperwork that came with the car, everything was all original. Since then, some of the rubber pieces were wearing out, so they needed to be replaced, and he recently changed the motor to another Mustang engine, but everything else

remains the same. Their current full collection includes Monica's 1966 Ford Mustang, David's 1968 Porsche 912 Targa, and a 1978 Volkswagen Bus. David decided that, as much as he loved the above-mentioned 1948 truck, he was ready for something new and sold it. He had his mind set on a 1968 Porsche, so the hunt was on. He woke up one morning and hopped on a Porsche Facebook group he frequently looked at, to find the car he wanted in Northeast Dallas. So, Monica and he made the drive to pick up the fly ride. Before the Volkswagen Bus, David had a Volkswagen Dunebuggy that he traded for the Bus. There's never a dull moment in their garage. While David

doesn't tend to hang on to his toys for long before trading them for a different project, he cherishes these moments with his daughter so deeply. It's an amazing sight to see with the bond they have created, and you can truly see how proud he is of his daughter. David and Monica are both members of 5th Street Cruisers, and Monica is the youngest member they have, at barely 18 years of age. When they first joined, what Linda Westbrook called a 'car family, not a group or club,' they were both so happy to have something to do with other like-minded people. They've entered several shows together, with both coming home with numerous awards for their classic toys, such as

Daryin McInnis | The Silsbee Bee

"Best in Class: Unfinished" and "Sponsors Choice." "The 5th Street Cruisers really have been so awesome. We like getting to see everyone with their cars, and it's just a big family, essentially. Most 'clubs' take dues, and they don't do that," said David. David and Monica will both be at the Cruise'n Silsbee event on Saturday, September 27, so be sure to stop by and check out the classic cars they have begun restoring and talk with them about their history together.

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1982 Chevy C10 Custom, dubbed 'Ol' Rocket', sits pretty in front of the historical Pines.

Toby Willis | The Silsbee Bee

Family Legacy on Wheels: Three Generations Share the Spotlight



Steve Willis and granddaughter Madelynn Willis, showing off her first award for Sunburnt Silverado.

Toby Willis | The Silsbee Bee

Daryn McInnis
writer@sils-
bee-bee.com
The Silsbee Bee

SILSBEE – Three generations once united through their love of classic cars are remembered on the show circuit today. A grandfather's passion sparked a tradition that now lives on with his son and granddaughter, who continue to restore vehicles and now showcase them at community car shows. Though grandpa has passed, his presence is felt in every polished hood and roaring engine, as the family honors his memory by carrying forward the legacy he began. Toby Willis, of Silsbee, and his daughter, Madelynn

Willis, are both car enthusiasts with a passion that derived from Toby's late father, Steve Willis. Their wide range of trucks they own includes a 1977 GMC High Sierra, a 1982 Chevrolet C10 Custom, and a 1986 Scottsdale Chevy C/K Truck, all of which are Classic Squarebodies. Toby said that his father was always a car enthusiast and really enjoyed working on various things together. The generations did not lose interest either, as Toby's three children followed right in their father and grandfather's footsteps. When asked about how Toby came to get into the hobby, he responded, "I mean, from

really early childhood, I can remember my dad always working on one. Car Shows didn't come until the mid-2000s as a young adult for me." While Steve wasn't originally on board with doing car shows, his son finally urged him to just come to one event. That one event changed everything. "My dad always thought Car Shows were crazy until he came with me to the first one I did, and then he kind of saw how much fun they could be. So, he really got into it too and started keeping his shiny and loved showing it off. We really enjoyed it together," reminisced Toby. The history of

these trucks, generationally speaking, is nothing short of extraordinary. The 1977 GMC High Sierra, known as 'Ol' Yeller', was bought by Mr. Steve, who owned the truck for fifteen years. The squarebody today only has 19k original miles on it, 48 years after its birth. Mr. Steve and Toby had worked on the 1982 Chevy C10 Custom, known as 'Ol' Rocket', together. The truck had originally belonged to Toby, who drove it when he was in high school, where he and his dad gradually restored it over time. The 1986 Scottsdale Chevy C/K Truck was rebuilt by Madelynn, Toby, and Mr. Steve for Madelynn. She then wound up entering her beloved Sunburnt Silverado into a local Car Show, where her Grandpa got to see

her win her very first award. That old squarebody would be the last truck built before Mr. Steve passed away, leaving a sense of legacy and pride within the family. Toby and his family have participated in a variety of Shows, but have specifically been at the Cruise'n Silsbee event since 2015. Winning several awards and spending quality time together, Toby bragged on the event, stating, "Seeing kids and families is the best part. Just watching the community come together and

seeing kids get excited for the hobby. I love watching that generational gap be bridged over this." Toby and Madelynn are both members of The National Squarebody Association, Square Body Nation, and Excessive Performance. It takes several days to prep for the event due to having multiple vehicles, but Toby and crew will begin driving to the event on Friday evening for the Meet and Greet, and stay throughout Saturday at the show, making his rounds throughout the town later in the evening.



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Dylan Busby | The Silsbee Bee



Penny Hickman's prized GTO

Submitted | The Silsbee Bee

Dylan Busby
reporter@silsbee-bee.com
The Silsbee Bee

LUMBERTON — For more than five decades, Penny and Mike Hickman have built a life together centered on shared experiences, mutual support, and a love of adventure. Married in 1972, the couple, now in their 70s, continue to seek out activities that bring them joy, with vintage cars becoming their latest passion.

Their story began on a blind date at a youth revival, followed by college together at Lamar University. Both Beaumont natives, the Hickmans eventually made their home in Lumberton, where they embraced a variety of pastimes. In their younger years, that meant everything from

volleyball and rifle shooting to golfing and scuba diving.

When back problems made strenuous activities difficult for Mike, the couple turned their attention toward something new. With more time and resources available, they embraced classic cars, fulfilling dreams they had held since their youth. Their first vehicle was a 1972 Ford F100, and over time, they added a 1972 Oldsmobile 442 and a 1954 Chevrolet station wagon known as a Handyman. Penny also fulfilled her own long-held wish with a 1967 Pontiac GTO, the car she had always dreamed of owning.

Mike, a former Marine, brings a disciplined approach to their shared interests, while Penny

balances it with her creativity and steady presence at Rosedale Baptist Church, where she has played piano for 62 years. She first learned the instrument at age 12 and has remained dedicated to her role in church music throughout her life.

Today, the Hickmans' collection of cars is more than a hobby. It represents decades of partnership, adaptability, and the search for joy in every stage of life. What once was a blind date has become a lifelong journey filled with adventure, resilience, and new chapters that continue to unfold.

"We are in it for the fellowship of it," said Mike. "We love the camaraderie of it."

Through vintage cars, the couple has

found a pastime that connects them not only to their own history but also to a broader community of enthusiasts. For the Hickmans, the road ahead still promises shared memories and plenty of miles traveled together.

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1966 Mustang finds a royal home in Linda's Pony Palace



Linda Westbrook sits proudly with her dream car, a 1966 Ford Mustang named Lil Red.

Daryn McInnis
writer@silsbee-bee.com
The Silsbee Bee

SILSBEE – Linda Westbrook will make her appearance at Cruise’n Silsbee, Saturday, September 27, with her 1966 Ford Mustang, along with members of 5th Street Cruisers, who she calls a ‘Car Family’, not a Car Club.

Westbrook had told her husband how she dreamed of owning a 1966 Ford Mustang for as long as she could remember. She reminisced on the nostalgia associated with the year she graduated high school, stating it brings back so many fond memories. So, they set out on a hunt for the perfect car for her. Searching high and low, all over the country, Mrs. Westbrook finally stumbled across her car, which she named ‘Lil Red’, in a man’s yard in Buna, August 5, 2019. Her first outing in the 1966 Ford Mustang was Cruise’n Silsbee at their 2019 event.

Since purchasing the car, Mrs. Westbrook decided Lil’ Red needed her own garage, dubbed ‘The Pony Palace.’ Once inside, there sits the

Mustang, a purple ‘swanky’ bathroom, and a lounge area with cheetah floors and a Zebra print throne for the queen herself, Mrs. Westbrook. Lining the walls are several awards she and Lil’ Red have won together, along with her husband and trophies galore. Lil’ Red has had quite the impressive run, so to speak, since being owned by Westbrook. They have even been featured in a music video by Blackbird Anthem, of Florida, about a Vietnam Medal of Honor Recipient, Don Jenkins.

While not much has changed with the car, with the exception of new tires, rims, and power steering, the car remains in pristine condition, with all original matching identification numbers, and even has the original paperwork from the factory where Lil’ Red was assembled in California. Her license plate even matches ‘Linda 66’, in bright red, drawing attention to the owner everywhere she goes with her Car Family.

“When we first began this group of people, there were only 4 or 5 of us, and I was, of course,

the only woman. Since then, we’ve evolved to over 50 members and quite a few of our drivers are women now, too,” said Westbrook. “We began going to lunches every Wednesday as just a chance to get together and give us something to do when there aren’t car shows

going on, and now, it’s become a weekly thing. You’ll just see 20-30 cars in a restaurant parking lot, it’s really cool. We’re not a club; they take dues, we don’t do that. This is just a group of people who love cars. If somebody has some kind of trouble, we all stop to end the trouble.

Daryn McInnis | The Silsbee Bee

We’ve had people have blowouts on the way somewhere, and everyone just pulls over to help until the problem gets resolved.”

Mrs. Westbrook’s car isn’t the only thing that shines. From the Pony

Palace to her good-hearted personality, Linda and her ‘family’ are a bright light for the Cruise’n Silsbee event and every luncheon she puts on. Be sure to stop at the Car Show to visit her on September 27.

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