



Photos courtesy of Kris Vanek

Kris Vanek's 1959 Edsel Villager/Ford Ranchero hybrid has the distinguishing grille and front end of the Edsel Villager station wagon.

It's not that kind of hybrid car..

Vanek's Ford Ranchero-Edsel Villager mashup is a one-of-a-kind cruiser



Associated Press

The short-lived Ford spin-off company Edsel produced its final vehicles in 1959, including some of the 1960 models.

By Kathleen Alaks
of the Daily Courier

Station wagon, pickup truck or some kind of odd hybrid between the two? That's one of the questions car aficionados will be asking when they see Kris Vanek's entry in this year's Back to the Fifties car show and cruise. That's the question Vanek asked himself when he saw the vehicle for sale on Craigslist about two years ago. "It looked like a 1959 Edsel (Villager station wagon), but had a pickup bed. But it didn't really look like a Ford Ranchero either. It intrigued me deeply," Vanek says. Turns out, this particular vehicle had started its life as a 1959 Ford Ranchero that was modified with donor parts from a 1959 Edsel Villager.

Turn to HYBRID, Page 6C

Love of Chevys runs in the family

Father and son's vintage cars have hauled in many awards at the annual car show

By Edith Decker
of the Daily Courier

In addition to blood, perhaps a bit of motor oil also pumps in the veins of the Helvik family. Steve Helvik of Grants Pass, got his love of cars from his father, a professional hot rod and racing car builder in Southern California. Steve then passed that love on to his son, Ray Helvik. The Helvik father-son duo have a way of being winners at the Rogue Valley Cruisers' Fabulous 50s Car Show, part of Back to the Fifties. They've raked in several trophies each — Steve with his 1941 Chevy Coupe hotrod and Ray with his 1966 Chevy Nova SS hotrod. Steve, who retired to Grants Pass in 2009 to be closer to all three of his sons, is a member of the club and also judges the Best in the Park award with two other motorheads. Ray, who got here in 1989, is busy with his young family and on his job — delivering auto parts. But both enjoy the car events of Back to the Fifties week, and especially bringing home the jackets and other awards. As an added boost of family connections, Steve's coupe was



TIMOTHY BULLARD/Daily Courier

Steve Helvik (left) and his son Ray with Steve's 1941 Chevy Coupe with 383 stroker engine (front) and Ray's 1966 Chevy Nova SS.

finished by Mark Laeger in California and Ray's Nova by Mark's son, Jeff Laeger, in Gold Hill. "We call it the father-son build," Steve said. Steve's coupe has Italian kid

leather interior, Ferrari carpeting and other premium parts left over from Steve's Palm Springs, California, shop when he shut it down. It features chameleon flames on the hood and front

fenders. "They change a lot of different colors," Steve said. The car took eight years to build, partly because it came in pieces from a 1990 police

Turn to FAMILY, Page 2C

Back to the Fifties schedule of events

Here's what's going on for Back to the Fifties. All events are free, unless otherwise noted.

Tuesday

• 6:30 p.m. Concerts in the Park jump-starts the party with Lil' Queenie, a seven-piece band from Portland, playing the raucous music of early rockers such as Fats Domino and Chuck Berry, in Riverside Park. Some classic cars will be on display to whet your appetite for the days ahead.

Wednesday

• 6-9 p.m. The Fruitdale Grange hosts an all-ages sock hop, with music by Sights & Sounds DJ, a limbo contest and a hula hoop contest, a 50/50 raffle and a silent auction. This year's theme is Dancing Through the Decades, with music from the 1950s to the 1980s. The Grange will be selling root beer floats and food and some classic cars will be on display in the parking lot. Admission is \$5 per person or \$20 for a family. All proceeds go to Shoes for Kids, a local charity. The Fruitdale Grange is at 1440 Parkdale Drive.

Thursday

• 6-8 p.m. Grab the family and cruise to five local diners to participate. A classic car is not needed to participate. Just pick up cards at each of the participating diners. The cost is \$5 per hand and participants can buy as many hands as they want. Start at any of these participating stops: Dairy Queen, 610 Redwood Highway; Jimmy's Classic Drive-in, 515 N.E. E St.; Ric's Corvette Bar & Grill, 1831 N.E. Sixth St.; Sonic, 1560 Williams Highway, and Herb's La Casita, 515 Rogue River Highway. Get to the Evergreen Stage in the Town Center Plaza at Sixth and G streets by 8 p.m. for the awarding of prizes and get a raffle ticket for each hand turned in for a chance to win even more.

Friday

• 7 a.m.-2 p.m. The Classic Car Pre-Show is at the Growers' Market parking lot on F Street between Fourth and Fifth streets. • 7-9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. The American Legion, 206 N.W. F St., serves breakfast (\$6) and lunch (\$6-\$8). • 4-7 p.m. The Josephine County Historical Society Ice Cream and Pie Social is in the society garden at Fifth and J streets. Dessert is \$5 per person. Andy Martin will provide musical entertainment. • 5-10 p.m. The Classic Car Line-up is on G Street, which is open to pedestrians only. • 7-9 p.m. Sound Stage Revue gives a concert of '50s music on the Evergreen Stage in the Town Center Plaza, Sixth and G streets. • 9 p.m. A free family film will be shown at Town Center Plaza.

Saturday

• 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free children's games, bounce houses and Home Depot projects move to a new location this year, set in Town Center Plaza in front of Oregon Futbol Academy on G Street. • 10 a.m.-3 p.m. The Fabulous '50s Charity Car Show is at Riverside Park, along with '50s music, raffles, food and merchandise vendors. The awards ceremony is at 2:30 p.m. The event is hosted by the Rogue Valley Classic Cruisers. • 2-6 p.m. Parkway Christian Center hosts a car show and shine in the church parking lot at 229 N.E. Beacon Drive, with '50s music to set the mood. • 7-8:30 p.m. Classic Car Cruise — for cars from 1974 and older — runs downtown. See the map in this special section for the route. • 8:45 p.m. The grand finale concert opens with a Frank Sinatra impersonator to warm up the crowd, followed by Elvis impersonator Cody Ray Slaughter. It all takes place in the Town Center Plaza, Sixth and G streets.

For more information, contact Experience Grants Pass, 541-450-6180.

Mobile Madness Since 2005

If, while celebrating Back to the 50s, you experience 2019 issues with your phone...
...Come See Us!

iPhones, iPods, iPads, Androids & Tablets

GRANTS PASS LOCATION
1549 NE F Street, Grants Pass
541-295-8835
Mon. - Fri. Now Open Sat. 10 - 2

MEDFORD LOCATION
2424 Crater Lake Hwy. #2
Medford, OR
541-494-4056
Open 7 days a week.

ASHLAND LOCATION
1545 Siskiyou Blvd.
Ashland, OR
541-708-6630
Mon. - Fri.



Margie & Rockabilly Bear
Artists: Laila Dzene & Tamie Richardson
Created in celebration of the "Back to the 50's" event.

Back to the 50's Celebration

Presented by the City of Grants Pass
July 23-27, 2019

For more information and schedule of events: www.back2the50s.com

Don't miss the 29th Annual **Back to the 50's Celebration**, a fun-filled week hosted by the City of Grants Pass and the Rogue Valley Classic Cruisers in Riverside Park and downtown Grants Pass.

"Evergreen is proud to be the title sponsor of Back to the 50's. Through sponsorship of community events, Evergreen is able to make a difference where we live. We hope you and your family enjoy the many activities this event provides."

— Jeff Hyde
President
Evergreen Federal Bank

