

15th Annual Galaxie Nationals Meet

Dawsonville, Georgia 2011

Presented by Atlanta Galaxies

Saturday morning, October 22nd started noticeably cool at 41 degrees but that did not slow down some of the early participants of the *15th Annual Galaxie Nationals* meet hosted by *Atlanta Galaxies*, and directed by Bruce Miller and Walt Simonds.

The Galaxie meet was held in conjunction with the *Mountain Moonshine Festival* in Dawsonville, Georgia. It was about as dark as dark could be and already there were a dozen or so cars in place for the show. They had an early start because festivities for the meet started the day before with a tour of *Bill Elliot's NASCAR* race shop located just outside of Dawsonville. The tour also included lunch at the famous *Dawsonville Pool Room* restaurant. Sixty Galaxie club members took the tour and "Awesome Bill" himself signed the Nunez's and Studley's cars.

My mission on Saturday was to photograph each car as it arrived at the parking area. That plan immediately failed as the arrivals started coming so quickly that we would have had them backed up in the roadway waiting for admission. Once inside, parking and registration went as smoothly as could be hoped for. The plan had organized the cars into parking by year but there were so many more cars than were pre-registered that Bruce Miller's precise, drawn out, parking plan had to be quickly modified. Volunteers at the registration desk made sure that entrants received their show packets in short order and the rest was congenial history. Okay, maybe the Porta Potties could have been a little closer but at least we did not have to smell them all day.

There were many high quality 427 cars this year, mostly '63s and '64s but there were also at least ten '65s. Personally, I've never seen that many 427 cars together in one show. There were two '67 428 cars, both 4 speed. There were also more '60 and '61 Starliners than I have ever seen in one place before. Every one of them was a high quality car.

Tom Gerrard of Manalapan, FL brought in three fine cars. A '60 Sunliner with a hi-po 352 and overdrive, a '63 XL convertible, 406, 4 speed with less than 25,000 original miles and a '64 XL convertible, 427, 4 speed. We could have eaten off any part of these cars. In fact, the same could be said for most of the cars in the show.

James Claycomb from Osterburg, PA sent his 1963 R Code XL National show winner AACA car down to be displayed. We were honored to have the presence of the Claycomb family & Mike Pullian, the restoration specialist from Bowman, Georgia. Mike restored this 427 car with NOS parts which Jacky Jones (*Jacky Jones Ford* in Hayesville, NC) & Donald Allen helped locate.

Randy Henson was there with his gorgeous yellow '61 Sunliner convertible but I never found him to talk with.

One of the nicest "ordinary" cars belonged to Bessie May of Hobbs, New Mexico. She and her husband Rocky came in with a gorgeous '64 XL 4 door hardtop. I don't think I've seen one of these since 1964. The car was restored by Larry and Glenda Cleary of *Roman Road Auto Restorations* in North Wilkesboro, NC. The car was passed down to Bessie from her mother, who first purchased it in 1968. The car has been upgraded with the addition of a dual master cylinder and with a cleverly hidden fuel injection system on the 390.

Sam and Helen Pealvey of Hoover, AL brought their restored '66 XL 4 door hardtop. I didn't recall having ever seen one of these. Good reason for that—Sam created it out of an LTD. Helen had an interesting story to tell about the car. It seems Sam knew of its existence for some time but when he finally decided to inquire, the car was no longer where it had been sitting as it had been donated to a charity. Sam went to hound the charity but the car had been

stolen off of their property. Some considerable time passed and one day while driving down one of Alabama's fine country roads, there was the car sitting on a used car lot. Sam quickly contacted the charity, the law got involved, and long story short, Sam and Helen now own the car.

Terry Patterson and his wife drove their '64 500 in from Lynchburg, TN. The car had been purchased by his dad in 1965. It was sold a couple of times over the years but Terry has it back now and it's not going anywhere. Disappointingly, Terry did not bring any samples of Lynchburg's most famous product, *Jack Daniels Tennessee Whiskey*, but he and Mrs. Patterson were welcomed anyway.

Dale Baliles and his son drove in from Winchester, VA with his '65 LTD. This LTD is a factory original 390, 4 speed car. It has power brakes and power windows but no power steering. I noticed his young son sitting behind the wheel. He might have been 11 or so. It is great to see kids interested in our old Galaxies; usually their tastes seem to run to tuner cars.

Kenny Nunez from Metairie, Louisiana drove his '67 XL. Not a surprise, as Kenny drives the snot out of this car. It has a 4.6 out of Lincoln Mark 8 and a Keisler 5 speed. The car has too many modifications to mention here but it has appeared in a previous issue of the *Galaxie Gazette*. It has also been on the *Hot Rod Power Tour*. Kenny is very knowledgeable and is always willing to help another car nut.

I met a very nice couple from central Illinois who drove in with their '67 500 convertible. After the show, they were heading on to Sarasota, Florida. The car is red with a BLACK interior and NO air conditioning. I tell you those Yankees are tough.

Gary Lester of Mooresville, NC brought his '65 500 2 door hardtop. He found the car as a nice 289 C4 combo but what he really wanted was an "R" code. What's a man to do? He built one. It was done really right. If you did not look at the data plate, you would never know that Ford did not build it.

David and Jacky Rothermund drove their '66 7 Litre convertible up from Coca, Florida. The car is much, much nicer than driver quality but they drive it anyway. They only got around 11 mpg on the way up but I got the impression they did not care. The fun factor had kicked in.

I also met Albert Lewis of Paris, Alabama. Albert, a true southern gentleman, drove in one of his four '65 Galaxies. His wife is not into spending money on all those cars. Albert told me he appeases her by taking her for a ride in the convertible to places where she can be shined and shone. (The wife not the car.) He said she can't stay mad while people are complimenting her on the car. I'm going to try that with my wife.

Eddie Sechrest rode in with his car full of family. The five of them made it a community effort to clean up his '64 500 2 door hardtop. They were having a good time. The 352 brought them in trouble free from Winston-Salem.

One sad note. Tom Hopkins did not make it to the show. He was driving his '62 XL convertible from Dearborn, Michigan and hit a slick patch of something, spun out and totaled the car. He is okay but he had just completed the restoration after five years. Our sympathies to Tom.

I need to mention that Dennis Gage (*My Classic Car*) was also at the show, tooling around on his golf cart and checking out prospects for future shows. Funny, he did not look at mine very long.

There were so many other people that I did not talk to or get to photograph their cars. Many of the '62s and '63s were parked side by side so that I just could not get a good shot of those beautiful cars. Regardless, anyone attending would have to agree that, as a group, the crowd was both friendly and knowledgeable and were more than willing to talk about their favorite Galaxies.

At the close of the show, we all gathered at the *Georgia Racing Hall of Fame* for our

banquet. The facility is Dawson County Georgia's tribute to the home of moonshine running and the beginning of NASCAR. It is also Dawsonville's City Hall. Prior to the meal we were entertained by a bluegrass band known as *The High Strung String Band* and we had a go around of door prizes. It seemed like everybody won something. We dined on chicken, pork, green beans, cole slaw, biscuits, etc. There were plenty of desserts to go around (at least the first time) and of course no southern meal would be complete without sweet tea. The food was great as judged by the "licked clean" plates at the finish. At the end, wood plaques with the participant's names engraved on them were passed out.

Major prize winners were:

- Walt Simonds - 1965 Dearborn Palomino XL Convertible Interior Set.
- Ray Yarber, Ron Barr - each received \$500 Dearborn Gift Certificates.
- James Powell, Frank Butler, Danny Jones, Kurt Hamlin and Jim Christenberry - each received \$100 Dearborn Gift Certificates.
- Jack Kolbe was the winner of the set of 225-70-15 tires.

No one bothered to count the number of cars in the show but we know we had 79 pre-registered, had 15 in the car corral, 30 in the "Moonshine" show. All told we think we had about 150 Galaxies. Every assigned space was taken and then some. We donated \$1,800 to Kare for Kids and \$800 to the Georgia Racing Hall of Fame.

It was a long day for more than a few us but time well spent. At one point during the day, I was talking with Bruce Miller and Walt Simonds stopped for a moment while on his way to put one more detail in order. Walt said "never again". You know what? I don't believe him. He likes the hobby and the people too much to ever quit. There were a lot of people working their tails off to make this meet come off. Their names may not make it into print but my hat is off to every one of them. Without them, the 15th Annual Galaxie Nationals Meet would not have happened.

The Ford Galaxie Club of America and Atlanta Galaxies would like to thank . . .

Our sponsors:

Dearborn Classics, Jacky Jones (Jacky Jones Ford, Hayesville, NC) Donald & Judy Allen, C&L Enterprises, Autokrafter, Dennis Carpenter Ford Restoration Parts, David Ruelas, Mike's Classic Cars, Hagerty Classic Car Insurance Specialists, and Wholesale Online Tires

Our volunteers:

Sue and Bill Howell, Paul and Carol La Monica, Rich and Patty Boyd, Jim and Pam Maddox, Bruce and Joy Guiney, Danny and Cheryl Jones, Luke and Carolyn Souther, Bruce Miller, Joe Huff, James Powell, Charles Lewis, Tom Morton and Walt and April Simonds and their grandkids.

Apologies:

Walt apologizes for misspellings on name tags, plaques and banquets books. He will use a proof reader next time. I apologize if I have misrepresented anyone's intention or their car. It was unintentional.

Thank you to all of our participants and best of luck to the chapter presenting the 2012 16th Annual Galaxie Nationals. You can contact us for guidance as we have learned many valuable lessons.

Last of all, (or maybe it should have been first of all?), I would like to thank our National Club Director, Mark Reynolds, who was unable to attend due to knee issues that affect long distance driving, for hanging in there all these years so that we can have these events to attend. Thanks for keeping the club going, Mark.

Rick Fogel for Atlanta Galaxies

Marietta, Georgia