

Chevy's Best: Local club honors 1950s-vintage Chevrolets

By Jim Bohlen, St. Paul freelance writer - Star Tribune
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When you go to a "Back to the '50s" show at the State Fairgrounds, you'll notice that a large number of the 11,000+ vintage models on display are mid-'50s Chevrolets, more often than not a two-tone Bel Air. Given the number of mid-'50s Chevys out there, it's not surprising that there's an area club for fans of these popular collectors' models. The club is called Chevy's Best, it has been around since 1974 and it currently has about 80 families on its membership roster.

Started for fans of 1955-57 Chevys, the club no longer insists that members own one. They do need to have an interest in the models, however, even if they're driving vintage Fords or newer Corvettes.

Like many area clubs, Chevy's Best puts on shows. The club charges modest admission for annual shows at Suburban Chevrolet and Broadway Pizza to cover expenses like its monthly newsletter. But the club also collects cash donations for area food shelves at its shows, at its monthly meetings and at the cruise-ins it puts on at the Lookout Bar & Grill in Maple Grove on third Wednesdays, May through September. The club also collects aluminum can tabs to help the Ronald McDonald House.

Club members bring vehicles to GSTA's annual Rod & Custom Show and most members drive their cars to "Back to the '50s." The club participates in the Adopt-A-Highway cleanup program and in activities such as a Halloween Run to Hudson for a party/gathering in a member's "cool garage," as current club president Paul Larson calls it. And Terry Hallich tested members' knowledge of '55-'57 Chevys during the club's annual Apple Run this fall.

Mike Jansky, who is president of the Medallions Club, one of the state's oldest, handles Chevy's Best merchandise, which consists of clothing with club logos. Typical of mid-'50s Chevy owners (he has a '57 Bel Air two-door sedan), he's enjoying the car he couldn't afford when he was younger. Hallich, by the way, sold two '56 Chevys to get a '53 Bel Air because he likes to be "a little different," he says.

Larson, who joined Chevy's Best soon after its founding, was a mechanic for 30 years and likes helping other members with their cars. He takes his '57 Bel Air Nomad wagon on vacations because, he explains, "If it breaks, I can fix it." He also has a '57 Bel Air convertible and a 1956 210. Why? He likes the cars' looks and large interiors.

To join in the social camaraderie at the heart of Chevy's Best, call 763-757-7554 or e-mail 4morechevyinfo@chevysbest.net. The club's website is www.chevysbest.net.