



From left: Hood ornament from a vintage car, 1965 Pontiac GTO, 1957 Chevy Bel Air, flags hang on the front of a 1931 Model A Ford. (STAFF PHOTOS: DOUG HOOD)

CRUISING THROUGH HISTORY

Students visit vintage auto exhibit

By SUSAN BLOOM • Correspondent

What better way to gain perspective on 20th-century Americana than through a traveling exhibit of the automobiles of each decade?

That's exactly what students at Lacey Township High School will experience on April 5, when the Vintage Auto Museum of New Jersey's "History on Wheels" exhibit rolls into the school's back parking lot to provide a unique lesson in American history and pop culture.

The History on Wheels exhibit involves a chronological lineup of vintage cars by decade and presentations from people by the museum on how the size, shape and colors of each car, as well as the materials used in their manufacture, reflected the personality and priorities of the nation at that time.

The collection of cars range from the early technology of an 1896 Ford Quadracycle and 1920s-era Model T to the Al Capone-style cruising sedans of the '30s, the big boxy styles of the '50s and the muscle cars of the '70s.

"Vintage cars are really like time machines," said Whiting resident Phil Vitello, 57.

Vitello is a Vintage Auto Club of New Jersey member who will be showing his own prized '28 Ford Model A in the History on Wheels exhibit.

"Cars really bring people together and connect us back to memories of our youth and a simpler time in history," he said.



From left: Dave DiEugenio of Forked River is the executive director of the Vintage Auto Museum of New Jersey, Phil Vitello of Whiting stands with his 1928 Model A Ford, Sidney Feld of Toms River sits in his 1931 Model A Ford pickup.

"The truth is, there are few inventions that changed our society as much as the automobile," said Dave DiEugenio, executive director of the Vintage Auto Museum of New Jersey. "It impacted how and where we lived, enabling people to be more mobile and move out to the suburbs, and also spawned entire new support industries as well as the construction of highways and buildings nationwide."

The magnitude of the automobile's connection to American life during the last century is a fact not lost on Lacey Township High School social studies teacher Jesse Fiduccia, who recognizes the value of the hands-on, visual display to her students.



"The purpose of the event is to showcase how the automobile has changed and progressed throughout the decades and to highlight how the automobile's purpose has transformed along with society's needs," she said. "The event will be open to all of our United States History II classes, who will visit the exhibit during their scheduled class period."

Currently calling the Seaside Heights Community Center its home base until construction of its new headquarters in Manchester is completed in the next couple of years, the Vintage Auto Museum has about 150 members, most of them also members of the Vintage Auto Club of New Jersey.



The museum itself owns 21 vintage cars, but members happily supplement the museum's holdings with their own vehicles for display at area shows, parades and other venues.

DiEugenio noted that educational events such as History on Wheels, which exhibits five to six times a year at local schools and nursing homes, are among the most important activities the museum engages in as a means of promoting and preserving antique vehicles.

"Cars give meaning to events and touch people's souls," said the 69-year-old Forked River resident. "The exhibit is so nice to share with people and really makes history fun and tangible for kids to learn."



THE HISTORY ON WHEELS EXHIBIT

To book History on Wheels or to learn more about the museum, call 732-797-1456 or visit www.vintageauto-museum.org.