

Calendar

Found in a Barn

Annual Woodie Gathering

I've been going to Wavecrest since the second one," says Steve Seebold, 53, a woodie owner, surfer, and surfboard maker who lives in Pacific Beach. How did he miss the first of what in 24 years has become the biggest annual gathering of woodies in the world?

"Wavecrest started out as a kind of block party or somebody's barbecue that got a little big," Seebold says. "A bunch of people who lived in the Wavecrest apartments in Del Mar, along with a few friends, got together to have their own surf contest. At the first one, there

were a couple woodies. The next year, there were a couple more. It snowballed

from there, with every year the woodies becoming more important until, after a while, it became a woodie car show with a small surf contest, rather than a surf contest with a couple woodies."

Seebold's woodie is a 1947 Ford Super DeLuxe, which he bought from an L.A. lawyer in the late 1970s, although he only got it on the road three years ago. "I didn't abide by the golden rule of car restoration," he says to explain the delay, "which is 'Never stop working on it.' I'd stop for years at a time. Even if you only work on it ten minutes a day, you'll get it done much faster than if you work in intense spurts."

He has bought and sold other woodies, six at least. Some he never did get running. He just bought them because they were cheap and with the hope that he'd pass them along to somebody else who might get them road-ready if he couldn't. "That's pretty much the mentality of any car restorer. You're just trying to save them from turning into rust in a forest somewhere."

The most elaborate kind of car restoration is called a "ground up." That's the treatment Seebold gave his '47. The process begins with complete disassembly. In the end, it comes out looking as if it were fresh from the factory, says Seebold, who undertook all the woodwork himself. "It had great wood, to begin with. That's why I bought it. But the old varnish still had to be stripped; the wood had to be sanded where it had deteriorated or turned black from weathering. And new panels had to replace the old plywood in the doors, quarter sections, and tailgate."

Like the Wavecrest itself, some event participants are legendary.



Steve Seebold with '47 Ford woodie

There's Reggie Keyohara of Encinitas, for instance, who still has the same woodie (a '48 Ford Super DeLuxe) that he drove to the original Wavecrest in 1979.

Keyohara still surfs. So does Henry Trulson of Carlsbad, another original Wavecrest. Trulson, current president of the San Diego woodies Club, has restored three woodies. Two were '48 Chevies. ("And the reason? I was born in 1948," he says.) His present model is a '49 Ford.

Wavecrest continues to grow. Last year, almost 300 woodies were at the Saturday meet; the same number is expected this year. And organizers hope for 100 at the police-escorted, merchant-sanctioned woodie cruise up the Coast Highway from Encinitas to Oceanside, then down to Del Mar and back up to Encinitas on Sunday morning.

One of the newer local participants is Frank Delaney, who moved to Oceanside from Massachusetts three years ago. "I used to read about Wavecrest in the National Woodie Club magazine, thinking, 'Wow! This is the thing,'" he

says. "There was nothing like it back east or, actually, anywhere."

Delaney's is a '41 Ford, which he bought in 1980 as a basket case. "It was, like a lot of woodies, found in a barn, neglected. My wife's cousin heard about it, and we talked with the guy who owned it. It took me a couple of years to get him to agree to sell it." It had long been restored by the time Delaney and his wife moved to San Diego. "We had it shipped in a very elegant, enclosed van, so it didn't get dirty or rained on."

Delaney, 63, who has never surfed and doesn't intend to start, can relate the lore about woodies and surfers as if it were his own: woodies from the '40s became really cheap when they finally became old; that's why the surfers bought them. Plus, they could fit their surfboards inside them or strap them to the roof.

Seebold, the surfboard maker, is asked what the equivalent of a woodie is for young surfers. Certainly not the wood-sided PT Cruiser. "Most young surfers have an appreciation for vintage woodies," he says, "but when they find out how much they cost, it's

more money than they want to spend." A good price for a fixed-up, drivable woodie is \$25,000, according to him. Most woodies sell from \$30,000-\$40,000 to \$60,000-\$70,000. He also knows of a '46 Ford, unusual because of its four-wheel-drive, that's for sale in San Diego for close to \$250,000.

"Surfers today," says Seebold, "don't drive anything different from anybody else."

— Jeanne Schinto

24th Wavecrest Woodies Meet
Saturday, September 20,
8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
Moonlight Beach parking lot

"Woodies on 101"
Sunday, September 21
9:00-11:00 a.m.
Starts at Encinitas Civic Hall
(505 South Vulcan Avenue
at E Street), north on 101 to
Oceanside, south to Del Mar,
back to Encinitas
Free
760-476-9750 or
sandiegowoodies.com

Local Events
page 77

Classical Music
page 92

Art Museums & Galleries
page 94

Theater
page 95

Pop Music
page 101

Restaurants
page 135

Movies
page 148