

You'd Have To Be Nuts Not to Go to This Show



Written and Photos by Guy Atchley

There are few clubs where the members will admit they're nuts, but one club addresses this from the very beginning with their name: Santa Cruz Valley Car Nuts. They love their cars, and yes, it is a passion. The club has more than 140 members (many of whom are snowbirds). That's why they draw people from far and wide to see what they do so well — restore and maintain classic cars. Phil Layton is the President of the Club. He has been involved with classic cars for many years and has been instrumental in organizing a host of car shows. This fall he and other members of the Car Nuts are busy putting the final touches on plans for the 28th Annual Sahuarita Classics Car Show on January 28, 2023. Layton says, "It's really a storied event in Southern Arizona. Once held at the Tubac Golf Resort & Spa, it is now held at the Quail Creek Veterans Municipal Park in the Town of Sahuarita. Like many other events, COVID and the economy affected our ability to continue the show in Tubac. We turned our focus to the north and found a perfect partnership with the Town of Sahuarita. With their can-do attitude

town departments lined up to support the event. From the mayor's office to the Parks & Recreation Department we have a great core of individuals on board. The Town of Sahuarita has designated the car show as one of their 'Signature Events' on their 2023 Calendar of Events."

The Santa Cruz Valley Car Nuts have always been about giving back to the community. Layton said last year's show did exactly that, "We had over 350 cars, and we had up to 5,000 people who came to look at those cars. The town was really impressed and in awe that we could put on an event like that. This year we expect at least 400 cars and even more people."

The advantages to the car club became apparent very quickly. Layton says, "We pay nothing to use the park. We pay nothing for our law enforcement. They go out of their way to make it a first-class event, including striping the fields for parking. Anything we need, the town makes it happen. They're doing a lot of the advertising. They



want to be in charge of the food trucks, so we'll have a regular food-truck jamboree. They're going to put up tents with tables and chairs where people can eat. It's really a joy to work with them."

Veterans Municipal Park also provides flat fields, which both the exhibitors and spectators appreciate. Layton points out, "We will have two, fully lined soccer fields. On one field we put all the collector cars, and on the other field we put all the classic cars, like the hot rods and the high-end cars. People will see 20 different classes of cars, ranging from the classic 20s, 30s and 40s cars as well as street rods, low-riders, Corvettes, Porsches and Mustangs."

The owners of the cars will vie for trophies such as best in class as well as best in show. Layton adds, "Last year we had the mayor of the town pick his favorite. That was a big hit. He loved coming over and doing that. He chose a fully restored 1946 Lincoln Continental. It was gorgeous." Spectators will be happy to know that the five dollars they spend on each ticket will go back to the community. Layton says this is nothing new, "Over the course of the 20-plus years of this car show we literally we have given hundreds of thousands of dollars back to the high schools in the form of scholarships. This year we'll focus on the Automotive Program at Sahuarita and Walden Grove High Schools. Between those two schools they have 140 kids in the program. This year we gave them \$15,000 for tools they needed, including a device for diagnostic engine testing. A lot of these kids go on to Pima Community College, and we'll be providing scholarship monies for some of them."

With the pandemic seemingly in the rearview mirror, the club will



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have more time to focus on promoting the car show. Layton says, "The show is going to have a lot of cars from elsewhere, not just in Southern Arizona. Last year with just the six-week notice, we had cars from New Mexico and a lot from Phoenix. We also drew cars from Rio Rico and Nogales, but the majority came from Tucson."

If you're wondering who'll be the judges, Layton says, "The judges come from within the club. We divide the club members who want to be judges



and assign them two or three categories of cars. Spectators will be treated to some cars that they've rarely seen, if ever. Layton listed a few, "We had a Ferrari that came down from Phoenix. It was a beautiful car. We had some kit cars, like the Cobra AC. We had a McLaren. And we had a Porsche GT4 Coupe, which is a quarter-of-a-million-dollar vehicle. And we had a Nissan that is a righthand drive. And, yes, it is legal to drive a righthand car in Arizona. The owner drives it all the time."

Perhaps you'd like to join the Santa Cruz Valley Car Nuts Club.

It costs \$25 a year, and you can take part in all their events. Layton mentioned a few, "We have the monthly breakfast at the Longhorn Grill on the first Monday. We do the Cars and Custard event at Culver's on the first Friday night of the month beginning at 4pm. It draws up to 130 local cars. We even rent out Desert Sky Cinema to watch car-themed movies. And we're talking about doing a wine tour in October. In December we do a big Christmas party for club members. We also do a toy drive. Last year we bought 30 brand new bicycles and partnered with the Town of Sahuarita and the Salvation Army to give them away."

Then, after Christmas, comes The 28th Annual Sahuarita Classics Car Show. Mark your calendar for January 28 from 10am to about 3:15pm. The location: Quail Creek Veterans Municipal Park, 1905 N. Old Nogales Hwy. Phil Layton says he'll be looking for you with his '34 Ford 400 horsepower street rod. You can register your vehicle or simply get more information on the car show at the club's website: carnuts.org.

