

Chesnee's New Style Toy Run

By Wally Wersching

The City of Chesnee, SC is no stranger to "Toy Runs". They have been holding conventional toy runs for the last 12 years. Conventional - meaning that bikers ride in, and gather outside until the



short ride, then come back to town to eat free food. Their toy run is always held the Sunday before Thanksgiving so the weather for riding motorcycles is not always perfect. In some cases, the weather is dangerous to motorcycle riding - rain, cold,

and strong winds. That's the way it was last year, and not many bikers showed up to bring toys for the children.

This year, the City of Chesnee, Dennis from Chesnee Classic Cycle, and the local Legends Chapter of the AMCA (Antique Motorcycle Club of America) changed the toy run completely.



This year, it's a combined Toy Run and Cruise-In for antique and classic bikes, and cars. It will be held at the Chesnee Shrine Club off Rt 11 so if it was cold, people could be warm inside the clubhouse eating free delicious BBQ, listening to the live band. All the proceeds of the event still go to the Chesnee Kops Kids.

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It sounded like a great idea so I decided to drive my 1972 GTO to the event. I left home about 12:30 with the sun shining and the temps in the low 50's. It would have been a perfect day to ride but I promised Dennis that I'd bring the GTO. I pulled into the Shrine Club parking lot at a little before 1:00. I was surprised to see that the lot was almost completely full of cars and bikes. After I located a



parking place, I started to walk around. I was amazed by the quality of vintage bikes and cars. The Legends chapter of the AMCA brought their bikes, and had a booth set up. They were very friendly with all the other bikers who rode in - showing them the benefits of joining their chapter.

Many of the classic cars belonged

to the Burns family. They brought nine cars from a 1905 REO Runabout to a 1975 Ford Bronco. All were driven to the event. They all were in great condition. I especially liked two of them: the 1941 Lincoln V12, and the 1935 REO Royale. The Lincoln was a convertible and looked like it just rolled off



the production line. The REO looked like a typical gangster car but with a lot of class. I could have stood, and looked at them for hours imagining what it would be like to drive them. They were parked next to each other too.

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With more and more cars and bikes rolling in, it was obvious that the way they parked spectator cars was going to be a problem. They were mixed in with the bikes and Cruise-In cars. They were running out of spaces. I talked with Dennis - they weren't expecting as many cars to show up. There's another large parking lot behind



the building where the spectators could park. I'm sure that next year, he'll make some changes because it will be bigger yet. This type of Toy Run/Cruise-In will be a winner in years to come. People were talking much more, and just the thought of being able to go inside if it were to rain, will bring

in a lot more people.



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I left a little after 2:00, and headed north on Rt 221. I wanted to stop in at the 16th Annual Rutherford County Toy Run. They hold theirs on the same day as Chesnee's, and it was always difficult to go to both before. I followed Rt 221 all the way to Rt 74. It was a very pleasant drive - Rt 221 is four-lane all the way. The weather was perfect with

great scenery. I headed to Forest City to drive on Rt 74A through town. The Rutherford County Moose Lodge was a few miles on the right.

The Toy Run started near Spindale, NC in the old Kmart parking lot behind Denny's, and rode through Rutherfordton, Spindale, and Forest City before stopping at the Moose Lodge. The Moose Lodge along with the Cleveland County Independent Bikers (CCIB) were responsible for the run to help area children have a pleasant Christmas.

I arrived a little after the run got there. There still was a long line of bikers bringing the presents into the lodge. They will also be eager to get their free food too.



I met a few friends, and we talked for a while before I left at 3:00. It was a full afternoon of people giving to the children in need. We were all glad that

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the weather cooperated. The children will have a lot of toys this Christmas.