

Barry and Trish Watson

Hot August Nights in Reno, Nevada



Maple Ridge Notary Trish Watson with "Original Sin," the 1950 Mercury custom beauty that has won many awards for her and her husband Barry

Literally thousands of cars and enthusiasts gather in Reno for a week each year for one of the biggest car events ever held in the "Biggest Little City in the World."

The Background

At 7:30 PM on Saturday, August 1, 1986, hundreds of revellers were still outside—partying, cheering, and pushing to be let in to a first-time event at the Reno-Sparks Convention Centre. Inside, 10,000 applauding "teenagers from the '50s and '60s" were massed together in anticipation of seeing and hearing the Righteous Brothers, Wolfman Jack, and Jan and Dean—*live!*

That first year of Hot August Nights was more about nostalgia than cars. No one remembers exactly how many cars were in that first parade. Car owners "registered" their cars on the spot and lined up six-abreast on North Virginia Street. The throngs *ooohed* and *aaahed* as the "works of art" slowly cruised the drag.

Today

It's been called the largest cash-prize giveaway for any Classic Car Show in America. Here's the cash lineup.

- Atlantis Casino Resort: \$25,000
- Bank of America: \$20,000
- Eldorado Hotel and Casino and The Silver Legacy Resort Casino: \$21,000
- Grand Sierra Resort: \$20,000
- Peppermill Hotel Casino: \$25,000

Each daily winner was automatically entered into Grand Sierra Resort's "Best of Show" competition—\$10,000 in cash.

Each day, Tuesday through Saturday, the Grand Sierra Resort hosted its Classic Cherry Show-n-Shine with daily judging for Best Paint, Best Interior, Best Engine, Best Car, and Best Truck. The winners each received a ribbon and \$500 in cash.

Each daily winner was automatically entered into Grand Sierra Resort's "Best of Show" competition—\$10,000 in cash.

The Foundation

Hot August Nights celebrated its 21st Anniversary, August 3 to 12, 2007. The Hot August Nights Foundation strives to work with community, business, and education leaders to impact the lives of in-need or at-risk children. The Foundation accepts and administers private gifts from friends, volunteers, corporations, fundraisers, and other sources to supply vital educational resources and fund programs for which support is either limited or unavailable.

The Excitement

Unfortunately, Barry and I did not get the chance to travel to HAN this year. We've driven down six times in the past. It's an easy 2-day drive and we enjoy the highway in our 50 Merc—always drawing lots of attention from other motorists.

As you can imagine, Reno is teeming with nostalgia that week and the city is well suited to handle the crowds. The entire city gets involved,



At the auction, Trish tried for a pair!

with most casinos following suit in the '50's theme—from pony tails to poodle skirts.

On our last visit, an estimated 250,000 spectators were in town for the festivities—so many that it's impossible to attend them all. Concerts abound—The Beach Boys, Sha Na Na, The Righteous Brothers, Herman's Hermits, Tony Orlando, and various tribute shows. Events include BBQs, dancing in the streets, an old-fashioned picnic, a craft fair, swap meet, and 3-day auction of classic cars. A "must" is Prom night—and the Sock Hop and a visit to the National Automobile Museum.

A "must" is Prom night—and the Sock Hop and a visit to the National Automobile Museum.

The 78-lane bowling centre is worth checking out. *The Los Angeles Times* called it the "Taj Mahal of Tenpins." On the main floor is "Paul Revere's Kicks" Diner and Dance Club that serves up hot food by day and hot tunes by night—a real '50s restaurant.

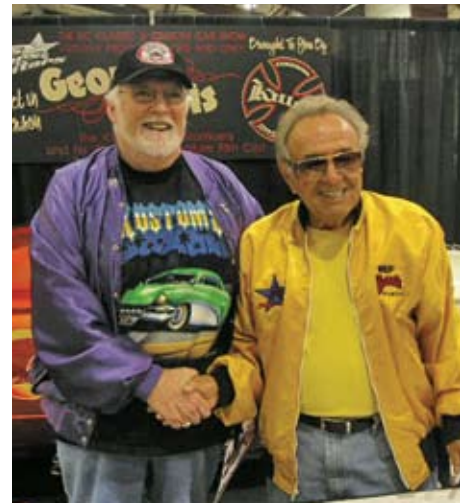
Sunday is the culmination of the week with the Grand Parade going for

nearly 3 hours as the cars—the real "stars"—parade down the main street, with the fabled James Dean Merc from *Rebel Without a Cause* traditionally in the lead.

By 4 PM that day, Reno is almost back to normal. Everyone is on their way home, whether near or far.

It's truly an incredible week for both car- and '50s-nostalgia followers. If you're planning to go, book your room a year in advance! ▲

Trish Watson is a BC Notary who practises in Maple Ridge.



Barry with George Barris, the builder of the Munster Cars and Batmobiles



Crowds enjoying an outdoor concert



Current HAN Logo



Buelah the Buadillac