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REBUILT 1968 FORD MUSTANG

"Redwood Roadster" Has A Solid Wood Body

A 1968 Ford Mustang rebuilt with a solid redwood body gets a lot of second looks when Merlyn Zubrod of Templeton, Iowa, takes it on the road.

Zubrod has driven his "redwood roadster" in parades all over western Iowa where it has won a number of first-place ribbons for best parade entry. He's also driven it in several weddings.

"It rides like a million bucks. I wouldn't hesitate to drive it to California and back," says Zubrod, who farms and does wood-working as a hobby. "I had made wood cabinets before, but I had never tried anything like this. It took six months to build and I didn't have any written plans to follow. My only guide was a memory of a wooden car I'd seen on television once years ago. It looks like a convertible, but I don't have a top for it so I can drive it only when the weather is good. I don't take it to car shows because they don't have a class for wooden cars. There's about \$700 worth of redwood on the car. I used redwood because it's easy to work with and doesn't dry out or warp. I had a lot of help building

the car from my local pastor, Father (Eugene) Schumacher, who helped finish the wood. We sanded it, stained it, and then sprayed it with four coats of boat varnish. The finish has stood up - the car's redwood surface has proved impervious to weather."

Zubrod stripped the metal body from the chassis, leaving the seats, dash, and windshield in place. He used ordinary shop tools to cut and fit the wood and screwed it onto the body framework from the inside. He mounted 12-in. wide fenders over each wheel and added 4-in. wide running boards. He removed the original tires and replaced them with 15-in. wide white sidewalls. He equipped the car with a front grille salvaged from a 1968 Mercury car and a rear luggage rack from an old Chevrolet station wagon. A "space-saver" wheel mounts at the rear. The door hinges are off an old meat cooler and the door handles are off a tractor cab. Tail lights were removed from a Dodge Coronet.

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19-YEAR-OLD'S BUSINESS IS PAYING HIS WAY THROUGH COLLEGE

He Turns Old Ford Tractors Into Cash

By Lynn Hamilton

Other people's trashed tractors are Cody Jones' treasure.

The 19-year-old from Cleburne, Texas, buys old Ford tractors from the 1940s and 1950s, then rebuilds, repaints and resells them. His business is not only paying his way through college, it also earned him the 1990 National Agricultural Mechanics Proficiency Award at the national FFA convention.

Like most entrepreneurs, Cody started small. When he was a freshman in high school, he took out a \$1,200 loan from his father to buy an 8N Ford tractor. He reconditioned the small, 23-hp tractor, repainted it to its original red and gray colors, and found a buyer. He made enough money to buy another tractor, and he was in business.

Since then, both his business and his knowledge about tractors has expanded considerably. The first few years, Cody



Cody Jones buys old Ford tractors from the 1940s and 1950s, then rebuilds, repaints and resells them.

hired a mechanic to do the engine work, while he concentrated on the body work and painting. He didn't have much shop space, so Cody did most of his work outside. "I had to hope for a real sunny day when I was painting," he says.

Gradually he added tools and equipment

CORPORATION SET UP TO KEEP IT GOING

Town Bands Together To Save Local Cafe

Last year Brigitte's Country Cafe, the lone food service establishment in Woodbine, Kan., nearly closed its doors.

The cafe had been anchoring the town's main business block for a long time, but high overhead and low profits took its toll. "With the payments and upkeep on the building, I was struggling so much that I was going to have to close," says Brigitte Dill, owner.

But then the townspeople and farmers banded together to set up a corporation to keep the cafe going. They bought the building and sold shares to 75 stockholders. Brigitte owns the cafe business, but the corporation is now responsible for its upkeep. No dividends were promised to stockholders and none are expected because there's little chance there will ever be any cash return on their investment. Profit, say the stockholders, is the availability of quality food service to the community. And there's no shortage of that, according to the 50 or more customers who patronize the now sound financial business every day.

Woodbine is largely a German community. Brigitte came to the U.S. from Germany nine years ago, and her two employees' and best friends are also natives of Germany. When Brigitte took over the cafe there was seating capacity for just 25 people. She remodeled a garage in back of the cafe which provided capacity for an additional 50 people. "The farmers all come in for coffee. There are always 15 or 20 here every morning. Sometimes there's a birthday or special occasion, when someone buys coffee and rolls, and the breakfast crowd reaches as many as 88 at a time."

Sometimes American dishes slip onto the "daily special" board, but Brigitte hates to admit it. "We cook mostly German food here, like goulash or sauerkraut bratwurst," she says. German food is highlighted on Sunday when the crowd usually swells. Some of her Sunday specials include zigeuner schnitzel, jaeger schnitzel, and roccaden with spatzle. The price is \$5.50 on Sunday. "People seldom complain about the price of food. The only time they ever complained was when I increased the price of coffee from 40 to 50 cents a cup."



Brigitte Dill owns the cafe, but the corporation is now responsible for its upkeep.

Since the corporation has taken the financial burden away from Brigitte, the business has been profitable. "It's paying for itself. I don't have any problems," says Brigitte, who has the option to buy the building back. She doesn't expect to do that. "The community likes to have us and we like to have them. The farmers need us and we need them," she points out. "Even if it's a holiday and we're closed, they come in and make their own coffee."

Brigitte's tight budget doesn't allow advertising, but word of her German food has spread by mouth over a wide area. Other newspapers have published stories, and Brigitte has seen increased business because of them. One time she even made the national news. "But that was when we were talking about closing down," says Brigitte. "They put my name in USA Today because I was broke, but I'm still in business now and they haven't printed that."

Business during winter months is sometimes slower, but the Lions Club meets at the cafe twice a month and there are other special parties at Christmas and family gatherings to help make up for the slack in business.

German is not only in the menu, but in the decor of the cafe as well. Pictures, plates, and decorations from Germany, and even the German flag adorn the dining room of the cafe. German music often plays on the sound system.

Excerpted from Grass & Grain. Photo by Frank J. Buchman.

to his inventory, and recently constructed a steel building for a shop. Now he does all the work himself, and to date, has reconditioned and sold 75 of the Ford tractors.

Cody credits his agricultural mechanics classes at school in helping him to learn his trade. Now that he has graduated, he returned the favor last year by donating a tractor to the FFA chapter. He paid chapter members to work on the tractor and then bought the tractor back once it was finished. The members earned enough money to attend the Texas FFA convention.

Though a sluggish economy has left many businesses scrambling, the recession has actually helped Cody's sales. "I sell my tractors for about \$1,950. A new tractor of that size would probably run \$3,000 to \$4,000." He gets a lot of business from a nearby vacation area, as people going to their cabins stop by to purchase a small tractor or mower. Business has been good

locally, but Cody has also received tractor orders from Corpus Christi, 400 miles away.

Advertising in both newspapers and radio has helped him spread the word about his business. He uses a radio show called "Trade Fair," to tell about his business. He calls in several times a week, and has sold a half-dozen tractors over the air.

Tractors will be in Cody's future, even though he hopes to get a degree in accounting and attend law school. "I'll probably always work in tractors on the side."

Cody's success comes as no surprise to his former agricultural education instructor Jack Swilley. "Cody is a pretty self-motivated young man," Swilley says. "Whatever he does, he gives 100 percent, there isn't anything halfway about it." Swilley also says Cody has some savvy business skills. "He can sell anybody anything." Reprinted with permission from FFA New Horizons Magazine.