

FAMILY PICKUP HOMETOWN REUNION

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My father's family grew up in the small copper mining town of Bisbee, Arizona. My grandfather was a miner and bought a 1951 Chevy Truck as his work truck and family vehicle. My father and his five sisters all grew up with that truck. They even took their driver's license test in the old truck.

About 20 years ago, my grandfather passed away, and the rusty old truck was passed onto my father. Now living in Santa Clarita, California, my father's dream was to restore the truck in honor of his dad. One year later, however, my father died of cancer, and he never got a chance to realize that dream. But before he passed, he gave the old truck to me.

Going to Bisbee for the 4th of July every year was part of growing up for me. It was how my dad liked to use up his vacation time. I have many fond memories of this tradition, and the parade was always a highlight.

Every year since my dad passed 19 years ago, I would sit roadside at the Bisbee 4th of July parade and watch a classic car or two pass by, and every year, I would have inspirational thoughts about following through with my dad's dream, but I always had excuses.

In 2021, my first grandson was born, and in 2022, we took him on our annual 4th of July trip to Bisbee for the first time, along with the rest of the family. While I was there again at the parade, I saw another classic car drive by, and I decided that I didn't want to die and pass on this rusty old truck to my son and grandson without restoring it.

When the parade was over, I turned to my wife and declared out loud to her that I was going finish the restoration and bring it back the following year to surprise my aunts in the parade.

As soon as I got home, I reached out to two of my cousins who are in the automotive industry to help me; they agreed. One of my cousins, Chubby from Chubby's Automotive, helped me with the full restoration project. My other cousin, Larry from Larry's Auto Body, helped me paint the

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truck. Both are from Sylmar, California.

It was one of the most challenging things I've ever done in my life. No one knows the amount of rigorous hard work, endless money pit and relentless sacrifices someone has to make to restore a classic car unless you've actually done it.

The truck was Bisbee inspired. It has a custom mural painted on the back panel of the bed and custom chrome Bisbee emblems. On the last day before we left for Bisbee, in the wee hours of the morning, I was finally able to put on the last bolt, check the final fluid levels, and attach the last piece of chrome trim.

On July 1st, we loaded it on the trailer and headed off for Bisbee, me and my family. Somehow I was able to keep the secret from my three aunts who live in Bisbee and surprise them in the parade. It was such a surreal moment for all of us—very emotional. ■

