

ON THE ROAD IN DIFFERENT TIME

# Vintage trailer enthusiasts flock to 'Trailers in the Trees'

Events

Annual event features travel trailers from across the state

8-7-11

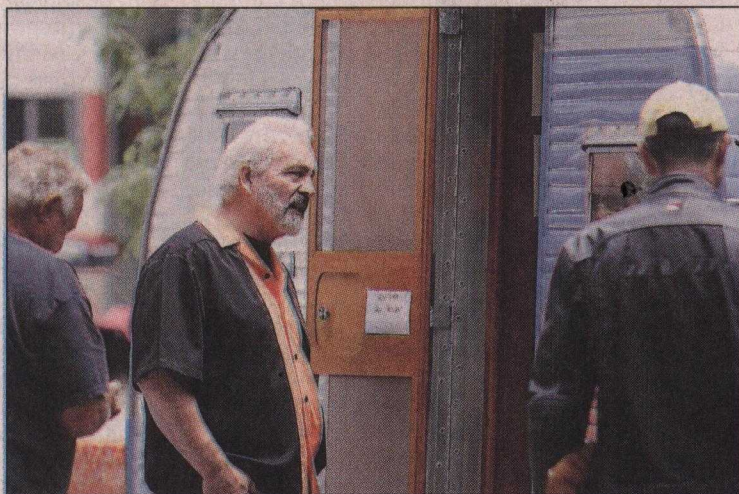
By KIMBERLY WHITE

kwhite@santacruzsentinel.com

FELTON — Dozens of vintage travel trailer owners bonded through shared childhood memories Saturday, oohing and aahing over dozens of restored relics during the fifth annual "Trailers in the Trees" rally at Smithwoods RV Park in Felton.

Slipping through a brief window in time, they relived the memories created during family camping trips, when the trailers lacked the luxurious bells and whistles featured in today's monstrous recreational vehicles.

One had 1940s- and 1950s-era figurines sitting on the small shelves inside, while another even had a small cat door cut through the front door. Yet another had a wall hanging titled "Recipes for Keeping a Husband," and a bathroom with nylon stockings hanging over



JOHN WILLIAMS/SENTINEL

Bruce Boeher, of Sacramento, center, checks out a Cardinal Deluxe vintage RV on Saturday during the Trailer in the Trees open house.

a shower rod.

"That was so classic," laughed Jim Kohl, visiting with his wife

from Pleasanton. "It was right out of that time period."

Napa resident Dan Cutright

said he and his wife, Susan, spent about two years restoring their 1954 aluminum Traveleze, which he likened to "a rustic cabin on wheels."

The Coasters' 1958 hit "Yakety Yak" drifted out of a small speaker inside a fully restored, 1954 Jewel travel trailer, its pink, color-coordinated interior featuring everything from drapes and a bread box in the tiny kitchenette to a pink lamp and tissue holder in the small bedroom. A stream of late-afternoon sun shone through one of the windows, the light gleaming off a strand of pearls coiled inside a dish next to the bed.

Thomas Birdsall, who traveled to the rally from Danville with his son, purchased the trailer in 2009, and said he got his inspiration for the interior design from two pink china dishes he inherited from his

SEE TRAILERS ON B9

## TRAILERS

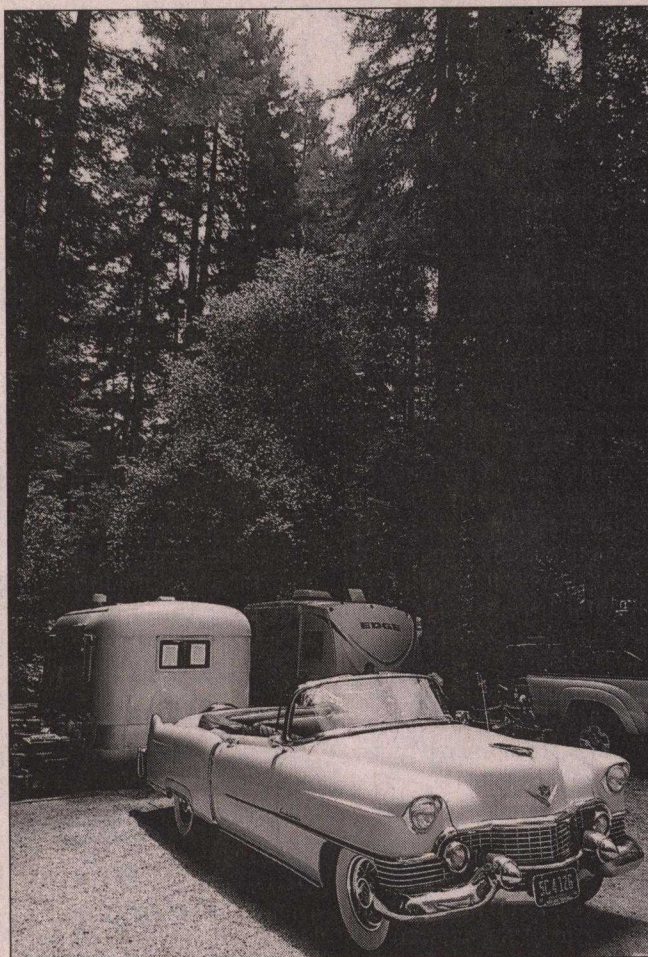
Continued from B1

grandmother. His 12-year-old son, Alan, helped with some of the restoration and decorating work, but asked whether all the pink bothered him, he shrugged and said, "I'm used to it by now."

In the late afternoon, Steven Katkowsky took a group to view his museum in Ben Lomond, which has dozens of vintage cars and trailers, as well as fishing and camping gear. Few of the items are actually for sale, he said, but it provided another chance for the event's participants to relive a simpler time in American history.

Santa Cruz resident Penny Cotter came up with the idea for "Trailer in the Trees" after noticing there were few such "RV rallies" in Northern California, and wanted to provide an opportunity for people who love vintage trailers to gather for a weekend of camping and solidarity. Sitting on a picnic table outside of the 1962 Shasta Airflyte she and her husband restored was a scrapbook featuring before and after pictures of the restoration project, which they completed in 2006 incorporating items owned by her grandmother.

This was Kathy Lebs's third year participating in the event, which involved traveling from Santa Rosa with her 17-foot-long, 1962 "perfectly imperfect" Road Runner. Paneled in birch, with a small Formica kitchen table and a pull-out Gaucho bed in the bedroom,



JOHN WILLIAMS/SENTINEL

A vintage Cadillac and a yellow 1950 Vagabond Model 19 enjoy some time in the sun during at Trailer in the Trees on Saturday at Smithwoods RV Park.

she sees her trailer's small flaws as adding the character that the "modern monsters" lack.

Most of the restoration work was cosmetic, but she's been working for the last two years on another trailer that she calls "Chiclet" — a reference to both its shape and the female version of a "man

cave."

She fondly recalled memories created as a child while camping with her parents and grandparents, saying that although she only purchased the Road Runner several years ago, "it's the same smell, the same feel. It's like a song, you close your eyes and you're right there again."