

Saturday Night Cruisers' 9/11 show a fitting tribute

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It's an emotional show, one that takes a lot of planning to make sure things are done correctly and respectfully. The members of the Saturday Night Cruisers Car Club of New Windsor do their best each year to honor those lost Sept. 11, 2001. They have been holding their annual 9/11 Memorial Car Show ever since.

When the club first conceived the show, it was seen as disrespectful. Who could have a car show with music, trophies and raffles on this horrific day? But the members knew what they were doing, and despite some folks who said they wouldn't go, the club had the show.

It turned out to be a memorial service and a salute to our firefighters, police officers and recognition of our military who were headed to war against those who attacked us. That reality holds strong six years later. It's never wavered, and it has proved to be one of the most popular shows during the month of September.

This year's show, held Sept. 15, welcomed the Middle Hope Fire Department, the New Windsor Fire Department, which provided a color guard for the ceremony, and the Vails Gate Fire

Department, which raised a huge flag on its ladder truck. The New Windsor Ambulance Corps also attended.

Prayers were said, speeches were read, the national anthem was sung and tears were shed. Jim LaPenna, who was at the World Trade Center that day and who tried to help people, was present for the ceremony. The Catskill Fire Cats exhibited some antique firetrucks and one firetruck, Engine 63 Aviation Hose "Volly's in the Hood" from the Bronx, that was at Ground Zero that day.

The Cruisers also honored one of their own at the show. Tommy Kramer was a devoted member of the Saturday Night Cruisers and a fireman for the Dan Leghorn Fire Department from Orange Lake. Members of his fire department were on hand to perform a special ceremony in Kramer's memory. The department members come to the show every year to perform the service and also include a flag folding ceremony. This show was one of Kramer's favorites.

After some emotional moments, show participants wiped their eyes and hugged each other as they headed back to their cars to continue on with the show. Yes, there were trophies, music by the DTI Band and raffles, but no one denied why they were there — to never forget — and the Cruisers proved that they hadn't in fine fashion.



Proceeds from the show were donated to the Police, Fire and Widow Fund.