

## GREENFIELD WINTER CARNIVAL

## No snow, but vintage snowmobiles to admire

By **MAX MARCUS**  
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GREENFIELD — The Winter Carnival, besides being a weekend of activities for locals, is also one of only a few shows for vintage snowmobiles in the state.

The machines date mostly to the 1960s, '70s and '80s, a period when there were many more manufacturers of snowmobiles than there are today, and much greater variation in their designs.

"All the new ones kind of look the same," said Jarod Erickson, who collects and rides old snowmobiles with his father, Karl Erickson, at their home in Barre. Of the four that they brought to Greenfield on Sunday, Jarod said his favorite was a 1969 Arctic Cat, with a blue-tinted wind-

screen, a leopard-print seat and a body shaped more like a pontoon than a jet ski.

Karl Erickson said he became interested in vintage snowmobiles about 20 years ago. Back then, he would buy an old, non-working machine for a few hundred dollars, get it running again and then sell it at a higher price.

Since then, prices have gone up: a vintage snowmobile in working order typically goes for about \$1,000 now, Karl Erickson said. This probably indicates greater popular interest in older machines, he said. But because the prices are higher in general, he doesn't buy and sell fixer-uppers like he used to; now, he and Jarod mostly just collect them.

"I enjoy working on them, he enjoys riding them," Karl Erickson

said.

Compared to other shows in the region, the Greenfield show is relatively small, said Nick Ruddy, who lives in Charlton. Ruddy guessed that he owns about 150 snowmobiles, with about 100 of them in working order and the others either in need of repair or just for salvage parts.

There were about 20 snowmobiles at Beacon Field on Sunday. Six were Ruddy's. In November, he was at the Big E in West Springfield, which has a show with hundreds of snowmobiles, he said. He goes to about six to eight shows a year. Most are in New York, and the few that are in Massachusetts are usually in the western part of the state.

The Big E's show may be bigger,



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**Jarod Erickson, from Barre, shows one of his favorite vintage snowmobiles at the Greenfield Winter Carnival on Sunday.**

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but it's inside. At the Greenfield Winter Carnival, when the weather cooperates, collectors can give snowmobile rides around Beacon Field. That part didn't happen this year due to a lack of snow.

The appeal of old snowmobiles is similar to old cars and motorcycles, Ruddy said; part of the fun is repairing the old machines and doing the regular maintenance that, in more modern designs, is automated with computers. Ruddy said he's been interested in vintage snowmobiles for about 10 or 15 years. He started with a bit of mechanical knowledge, but he mostly learned as he went.

The 1960s through the '80s are the most collectable period for snowmobiles because of the variety of their designs. Like with cars from that period, they are less sleek than today's machines, and more interesting to look at; their bodies were obviously not designed by computer for aerodynamic efficiency. Even the colors were more interesting.

Today there are only four major manufacturers of snowmobiles, but back then there were many more, according to Ruddy. Some



STAFF PHOTO/MAX MARCUS

## Vintage snowmobiles.

companies that manufactured motors for other uses would sell snowmobiles also: there was a John Deere-branded snowmobile on display on Sunday. The different brands started buying one another out in the late '70s, Ruddy said, and by the end of the '80s, there were only a few left.

Among the six Ruddy brought to Greenfield on Sunday was one of his personal favorites: a white Yamaha, estimated to have been built in 1968 or '69. It is one of only two of that model known to exist now, he said.

Ruddy found it while buying a different vintage snowmobile. That happens sometimes, he said: you can get lucky if you know what you're looking for. In this case, the seller knew what he had, and charged appropriately.

"But how do you price something like that?" he said.