

Restored to the Core

Student remodels old Mustangs

With his parents out of town, junior Brandon Kantarevic held a can full of bright red spray paint. Feeling the weight in his hand, he set his eyes on the white Dodge Intrepid, an unsuspecting car unsure of what was about to happen to its hull.

Inching closer and closer to the car, Brandon had one goal: turn this white Dodge into his father's Mustang. Ignoring the mechanical differences, he planned to recreate the paint job. Raising the can, he moved his index finger to the trigger. Finally he pushed – bright red paint spewed against a white backdrop. Kantarevic saw red and could not turn back. He pushed the trigger again, and again, and again. Moving up and down the car, he removed the traces of white that had once possessed the car.

Before he could finish his work, his grandfather pulled him back, cursing and shouting, wondering why in the world he would do such a thing. His grandfather tried his best to remove Kantarevic's work, but the paint stayed, and the shouting fell on deaf ears. Kantarevic had found a love that would last a lifetime.

Cars were a hobby that caught him by the collar and pulled him in. "It's just one of those things I naturally became hooked on," Kantarevic said. "I enjoy all there is about cars. Every curve, corner, and edge."

As Kantarevic's grandpa was a taxi driver and a self-taught mechanic, Kantarevic had learned secondhand all there was to know about cars. Brandon became the family mechanic when he moved to the States from Bosnia. "Whether it had been changing the brake pads, replacing the belt, A/C, et cetera, over the years I continually graduated to knowing more and more," Kantarevic said. "I never expected it to become a major part of my lifestyle."

Everything in Kantarevic's life began to revolve around his hobby. "When he's not working on his cars, he's working on himself, muscles and all," junior Mirza Velic said. "He has to, if he's going to do the hard lifting for his cars."

For his first big project Kantarevic restored a Mustang. He personalized the car inside and out. From the sound system to the lime green paint, everything about the car exuded Kantarevic.

Kantarevic could not focus all his time on one motor, so he moved on to another project, a 2003 Terminator Cobra Mustang. He poured everything into his newest project. "Time, money, effort, money, lots and lots of money, whole paychecks actually," Kantarevic said. He claimed he would spend it on his girlfriend, if he had one.

The process took a long time, and Kantarevic worked on it more than any other one of his projects. "All that's left is the re-installation of the motor and the car is finished," he said.

Car shows became the natural next step, and Kantarevic brought along his friend, junior Edis Ganic. "Basically all we do is prop up our hoods, show off our cars, buy and sell merchandise," Ganic said. "It's always a great time, regardless of what we're doing." Kantarevic also began a YouTube channel to show and review different models of cars.

Kantarevic believed he had found his calling. "I can say 100 times over that at the end of the day when I sit down and think about it, it is completely worth it," he said. "I mostly manage to find bliss when I'm just cruising in the thing I've built, with the music up, with no care in the world." No amount of protests could stop him from doing what he loved. They would only fall on deaf ears.



Dominant. Unsheathing his most ambitious project to date, junior Brandon Kantarevic removes a protective sheet to show off the fruit of his labor from the last few weeks. Kantarevic has poured himself into this 2003 Mustang, his third restoration project. (Photo by Edin Sehic)

1. After a mid-day snow storm, senior Maddison Grave prepares to leave by cleaning the snow off her car. While this particular storm did not result in a day off school, the storm Feb. 2 did. (Photo by Ashley Long)

2. Every Wednesday, junior Will Madson and freshman Chris Yao enjoy their extra time before tennis practice by having a small grill-out in the tennis court parking lot. "I think that me and Chris Yao were grilling brownies," Madson said. (Photo by Maddie Boettcher)

3. Junior Joel Woodsmall cleans up his bloody nose after a rather violent game of tackle football at the state cross country meet. "I was playing center and when the play started a sophomore ran his shoulder right into my nose," Woodsmall said. (Photo by Kyle Kane)

4. Junior Josiah Trost begins filming for his video series "Fortitude Miles," which consisted of him and his friends competing to run a mile while doing some sort of task. This video contained other students drinking one can of Mountain Dew every lap. (Photo by Kyle Kane)

5. After a below freezing night of camping at senior Dallin Russell's house, seniors Braden Cooper, Bryan Friestad, Russell, Erik Francois and Zane Johnson come in for a cup of hot chocolate to warm up. "It was rough while setting it up, because it was quite chilly, but once we got in the tent with our sleeping bags and blankets, it seemed like just another night hanging out with laughter and jokes," Johnson said. "It's a cool feeling, always pun intended, to be able to say that we survived sleeping in below zero weather." (Photo by Kyle Kane)

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