About 3,000 people came to the car show Saturday in Huntington Beach. Proceeds benefit the city library.

Classy chassis show is one for the books

By Jeff D. Opdyke
The Orange County Register

HUNTINGTON BEACH — The window sticker on John DeMarr's 1967 marina blue Corvette convertible reads $5,606.35. That was the sales price nearly 25 years ago at a Stewart Van Horne Chevrolet in Yuma, Colo.

Today, the tires alone — original Goodyears from 1967 — are worth twice that.

"I found the front two in Illinois, the back two in Texas," said DeMarr, a Huntington Beach private investigator who spent Sunday afternoon showing off his immaculately restored Corvette at the sixth annual Concours d'Elegance car show.

"Cars and libraries have nothing to do with one another," event chairman Bruce Powers said. "But by bringing them together, people are helping support the library who might not otherwise know we need the help."

At a park adjacent to the library grounds, families reminisced about the era of America's muscle car and owners primped their autos like moms fussing over daughters on prom night.

John Seggie's 1955 Chevy Bel Air is as orange as a bottle of Nehi. On Sunday he walked around it, spritzing a little water on, buffing a shine on the paint and chrome.

He's put $29,000 into this car. Press him on what he'll sell it for, and he draws a blank.

"This is my toy. I don't know if I could sell it."

For the right price, DeMarr will sell his convertible Corvette. It's one of only 2,101 produced; he's put more than two years and $60,000 into its purchase and restoration.

The car caught many eyes Sunday, and one man stopped to inquire about its cost.

"It's pretty expensive," DeMarr cautioned.

"How much?" asked Mark Nakasani.

"Eighty-five thousand," Nakasani strolled away.

"That's really what this is all about anyway — just walking around and looking and feeling that wonderful sense of nostalgia," said Ruth Bailey, two-time Huntington Beach mayor. "And it's a great way to help the library."