



CLASSIC HEARTBEAT

October 2007

Volume 31, Issue 10

NEWS OF '55, '56 AND '57 CHEVYS IN NORTH TEXAS AND BEYOND



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www.DallasClassicChevy.com
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8th Annual Brazos Drive In Movie Night THIS Saturday October 20th

This annual tradition for DACC is open to all cars and clubs. This year we are leaving sooner than in the past to allow time to browse the square in Granbury. **We will meet at 2:45 and leave promptly at 3:15 from the 'Park-N-Ride' parking lot on the south side of Interstate 20 and Park Springs (west of The Parks Mall) in Arlington.** From there we will make the drive to Granbury and stop off on the square and spend a little time there before moving on for a night at the Drive In. Greg Hedum is the club contact for more information and he can be reached at (972) 539-9886. If weather is in question, check the club website (DallasClassicChevy.com) for last minute updates!

Coming In November

DACC will meet on Sunday November 11th at the office of club sponsor Abraham George who represents American National Insurance and their CHROME Specialty Car Insurance Program. Abraham will provide lunch and we will have a tech sessions on 'How To Get Your Chevy's Paint In It's Best Condition' which will be presented by Joshua Ottmann of Ottmann's Detailing along with hearing about 'How to Properly Insure Your Classic Car' from Abraham George with American National. And as we always do in November we will hold club elections for those offices that are coming due - President, Secretary, and 1 Board Member position. Mark your calendar for what should be a very informational club meeting!

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DACC TAKES CLUB PARTICIPATION AWARD AT 'HOT TEXAS NIGHTS'

With a year of record rain in the area, DACC has somehow managed to dodge having a rainout up to this point of the year. Again on a hot Texas Saturday night in August, rain was a threat for the DACC participation in the annual Christian Classic Cruisers 'Hot Texas Nights' car show in N Richland Hills. As in the past, club members had an option to grab dinner at Joe's Pasta just up the road from the show site and many members did just that as we filled the place! Then later at the show, tri five Chevys from the DACC dominated the turnout of well over 100 entries in this event. The rain stayed away and with over 16 tri five chevys from the club on the grounds we not only took 'Best Club Participation' but the following took home awards -

Stu Jacobs - '55 Chevy Bel Air Hardtop

Greg Hedum - '55 Chevy Bel Air Hardtop

David Graves - '56 Chevy Corvette

Lorenzo Castillo - '55 Chevy 210 Sedan

James Sparrow - '56 Chevy Bel Air Hardtop

Congrats to the winners and thanks to all the participants who came out for a great summer evening to enjoy their old cars and their friends who drive them!



FALL CLASSIC CHEVY SHOW BRINGS OUT '55, '56 and '57 CHEVYS FROM ALL OVER NORTH TEXAS!

September had a great turnout of Tri Five Chevys for the Fall DACC Classic Chevy Show at Reliable Chevrolet. The weather was anything but Fall like with temperatures in the mid 90's with similar humidity but that didn't keep the Chevys away! Nearly 50 '55-'57 Chevys filled the corner of Arapaho and Central and along with music provided by Dan Bunch made for a great afternoon of talking Chevys. While this is a non judged show, we did have 'Favorite' cars picked by the staff at Reliable, and club sponsor Chrome Insurance's Abraham George paid a visit to the show to pick his favorite car. Reliable's Favorites included in the '55 class Rob Wechsler of McKinney, '56 class was John Rush of Plano, '57 class was James Carter of Terrell and in the Corvette class David Graves of Carrollton. Abraham George selected Glenn Smith's '55 from Sachse as his Favorite Tri Five Chevy at the show. We had several new members sign up at the show which is always good and the management of Reliable was very happy to host the show. Special thanks to Reliable for providing the great door prizes that were passed out that included a number of \$100 Best Buy gift certificates! Look for the club to make another visit to Reliable next March for what should be even a bigger and better 'Classic Chevy Show'



Memories of my '55 Chevy Convertible

DACC October
Feature Car
Mike Cook
Carrollton, TX



I bought this '55 Chevy Convertible in 1966, it was my first car and has provided me a lifetime of memories. I was in high school in my home town of Fredericktown, Missouri when I found my Chevy. This car with me behind the wheel saw a lot of action in those days.

I can remember my first ride in it. It belonged to Jim Higby who got it from a salvage yard to replace the '55 convertible that he had just wrecked. It needed a lot of work. The rear springs were weak and the front shocks were shot. He put a 327 in it which was a pretty hot set up in those days because everyone else had a 265 or 283. He traded his single 4 barrel intake for a dual 4 barrel intake from a 1956 Corvette. He took me and my friend Chris Kinder for a test ride one day. When he got on it, the car squatted hard and the front end shot up. It felt like it pulled a wheelie, but it was hard to tell because the front seat wasn't bolted down and flipped over and we were on our back until we managed to upright it. I knew then that I had to have it! It sat in front of the Jim's house for months after he lost his driver's license while driving it. I finally worked a deal and bought it for \$500. That doesn't sound like much, but it seemed like a lot to my Dad who did not approve of me buying this junky old car, especially considering the shape it was in. That ate up most of my savings and I didn't have much left to fix it up, but I finally had it.

When I bought it, the starter didn't always work. You had to start it by getting it rolling and popping the clutch. So I parked it on the hill next to our house. Also, I put it in reverse to keep it from rolling, because the emergency brake didn't work either. My dad would put a small brick under the front wheel to serve as a brake just in case. Right after I got it I was inside the car polishing the chrome as it was parked on the hill, when Dad wanted me to see if it would start. I put it in neutral and gave it a try. The solenoid caught, and it started right up. Then he told me that I needed to call my neighbor about mowing his yard (the going rate for yard mowing was \$1 back then and I needed money for my '55). I shut off the car and ran into the house. Well, the car nearly beat me there. It jumped

the brick, ran down the hill, and smashed in the side of Dad's '64 Chevy station wagon. I had forgotten to put it in gear. If his station wagon hadn't been there, my car would have crashed into the stone wall down by the creek. Well, Dad was pretty mad because he had just had his car fixed after I had driven too close to the guard rail of the ticket booth of the drive-in and creased the whole side.

The gas gauge and speedometer didn't work either. You had to use your best guess when it came to knowing when to get gas. Brakes seemed to be an option so downshifting was essential. I still remember the sound of metal on metal as I drove the hilly roads in Missouri.

Another feature of the car was the \$9 shift linkage from J. C. Whitney. You could screw in different sizes and shapes of shift handles but unfortunately it didn't work as well as it looked. I spent many times under the car trying to get the transmission out of first gear. That was until one Christmas I got a heavy duty Fenton shifter that solved my problems. Santa is good.

I rebuilt the front suspension with a 3/8" drive socket set, and a leaky hydraulic jack in true shade tree fashion. I raised the front of the car with some twist in spring raisers and the rear with homemade rear shackles. I ran chrome scavenger pipes that stopped in front of the rear end, until they were outlawed. Then I swapped them for a pair of glass packs and tail pipes along with some big chrome dump shots. They looked cool, but I was afraid to drive with them open.

I covered the seats with white roll and pleat seat covers. I installed a tiny 9" steering wheel for a while and it worked okay on the road, but parallel parking was impossible. I didn't have a radio so I bought a powerful 8-track stereo from a classmate and mounted it under the front seat. That was the hot setup. Come to think of it, the stereo probably was hot (stolen).

Next I sanded it down and got it ready for paint. The front bumper was off one night during this stage of my car



restoration when I left the school hangout called Teen Town one Friday night in a hurry to meet up with some friends. I made a rolling stop at an intersection by looking both ways, then I stomped the gas pedal. Unfortunately, I didn't see the old black Chevy in the middle of the intersection. I smashed him right in the side. The front end of my car was a mess. The fenders and hood were all crumpled. The radiator was hissing where the fan had hit it. The clutch linkage jumped the ball and I couldn't shift. I don't think the other guy had insurance, because he suggested that we just fix our own and left. I started my '55 in gear and limped it the few blocks to my house. The next day my Dad and I went looking for parts and found a front clip in a salvage yard for \$20. It was complete with working horns, lights, and everything. I bolted it on myself, had the radiator repaired for \$15 and I was back in business. Finally got it painted for \$45 with the color of Marina blue. Thin line white walls and baby moons completed the look.

The week after it was painted I backed into a parked car and crumpled the tail light. I was sick. My friend Chris Kinder's uncle Baldy ran a fleet of '55 Chevy taxicabs. (Chris had a '55 too, but that is another story.) I got a taillight lens and chrome bezel from the taxicab graveyard for nothing. I took my car back to the shop and they straightened out the fender and repainted it for \$4.

I drove the car through high school and college. When I moved to Texas in 1972, I parked it behind my parent's house. It was looking kind of sad. It had primer spots and some rust. I wanted to move the car to Texas, but I was afraid to drive it that far. This was in the middle of the gas crisis and I wasn't sure if I wanted to pour money into a car that drank a lot of gas.

One night I dreamed that I was back home riding down some back road. And there I saw my car out in a field rusting away with broken windows and weeds growing all around it. Then in real life the next day Mom called to tell me that some kids had been looking at my car. They wanted to know if I would sell it. A few weeks later I had another dream that I was back home. I went out to check on my car and my Dad had made it into a trailer! Then again in real life the next day I got a call from a guy that had been looking at my car. He wanted to buy it. I figured it was time to go get it. This was in 1975.

So I had my Dad get a towbar and buy some new wheels and tires. The Western aluminum slots are still on it. A friend of mine drove up from Houston in his Blazer to help me go get my '55. We drove from Dallas to Missouri taking 11 hours. After 3 hours sleep, we hooked up the towbar and lights and hit the road. It was foggy and with the short wheelbase Blazer oscillated like a snake pulling the '55 it took 19 hours to get back to Dallas. Then my friend had to drive to Houston.

Now with my '55 with me in Dallas, the engine smoked pretty badly and it was time for a rebuild. I didn't know who to take it to but someone at work recommended a place. The front man at the garage only knew one buzz word – High Rise. He called me and said that they were having trouble doing a compression check because of the high rise. I scratched my



head, because it has a low profile Corvette 2-4 intake. Then he said that it was the high rise camshaft. He meant high lift. That is still odd, because it had a stock hydraulic cam and even a lumpy cam wouldn't prevent a compression check. Then he said that my high rise was stuck. I finally figured out that he meant exhaust heat riser. All of that should have told me something. I told him to make sure that he painted the engine while it was out. He did – Ford blue. And to make things worse, he couldn't figure out the carburetor linkage, so he bent it up and added a bunch of nuts and washers. I managed to correct both the paint and the linkage once I got it back.

The resurrection continued as I had Herb's Paint apply fresh paint of 1975 Corvette blue. I bolted in a new trunk to replace the one that was rusted out as convertibles do that are left outside. I replaced all of the wiring and added a cassette stereo from Classic Autosound. Inside got all new white roll and pleated interior and a new convertible top also. The tired 3-speed was replaced with a Muncie close ratio 4-speed and Hurst shifter.

I used to take it down to Forest Lane in Dallas on the weekends to show it off where a lot of hot rods and young people hung out. It was a Dallas version of American Graffiti. I met David Graves there one night. We have been best friends ever since and we now live across the street from each other.

David and I were both early members of DACC. We were very active with my '55 at many of the indoor car shows during this time. David and I would caravan on Friday night to out of town shows in Waco or Tyler, spend hours waxing and cleaning, and drive back to Dallas after midnight. Then we would drive back on Sunday for the trophies and teardown. Four hundred miles for a plastic trophy and a dash plaque, but the memories were priceless.

The previous owner Jim Higby and I both went to the same college – the University of Missouri at Rolla. After I graduated I moved to Dallas and amazingly later he moved to Dallas. One night I went to a college alumni gathering in Dallas and I thought Jim might be there, so I took the '55. It was my pleasure to give him a ride down LBJ in the '55 that we both shared. Only this time the seat didn't fall over.

I keep it licensed and inspected, but I don't drive it much nowadays. I am slowing down I guess. It still looks good from a distance, but it needs some attention. There are a lot of things I would like to do to it. The main thing I need to do is drive it!



"Under Construction" Car Feature

This month we will kick off a new feature that will appear in the newsletter we hope several times a year. This car feature will be a little different in that it will highlight a member's project car. Many of our club members have cars 'Under Construction' and the intent is to share with other members these projects. Many times the stories that go with building a car can fill a book in itself. And besides it is always fun to read and see what others have coming. This will be a newsletter only feature with no additional photos or stories on our website. So this month we will begin with club member Charlie Siever's 1955 Chevy project car.

SCATTERED ACROSS THREE STATES !

The story of Plano's Charlie Siever's 'Under Construction' '55 Bel Air Sedan

In 1963 when I got my drivers license, all I wanted was a 1957 Bel Air hardtop Chevy! But being from northern Missouri, it was hard to find one that I could afford. A friend had a 1955 Chevy Bel Air 2-door sedan that was in good shape and it had a powerglide transmission along with a 6-cylinder engine. Not my ideal car, but the price was right...\$100.00. So in April of 1966, I became the proud owner of my first and current Classic Chevy. I am the second owner of this car, because the previous owner acquired the car as a gift from his mother.

The 6 cylinder lasted about three months. Then a 283 engine and a close ratio 3-speed transmission was installed. This was my daily driver until I went into the service in 1968. It did make one trip to Texas in 1967 from Missouri before I went in the service. We made it all the way to San Antonio to see relatives. (I wonder how many dollars worth of gas that would be today?)

For the next 4 years I only got to see her 30 days at a time. After I got out of the service, I worked for the Navy in Hawaii for a couple of years, but I missed home and my of course my Chevy. So in 1974 we were back terrifying the old home town... only now with a Muncie 4-speed transmission and a 327 engine. This is the way I drove it until I got married in 1980. Then she (the Chevy) was parked in a garage awaiting some tender loving care. Little did I know it would take so long!

In 1986 I got divorced and then in 1987 I got a transfer to Dallas. She (the Chevy) stayed home. All I did was make plans for her that never worked out... kind of like my job. I was downsized in 1992, so I moved to Lincoln, Nebraska.

Then things really took off. It all started with finding a one-piece frame and a friend with a welding shop. We moved the springs under the frame rails and cut off the bell housing mounts. Then we powder coated the frame and a 9" F#\$* rear end with disk brakes were installed.

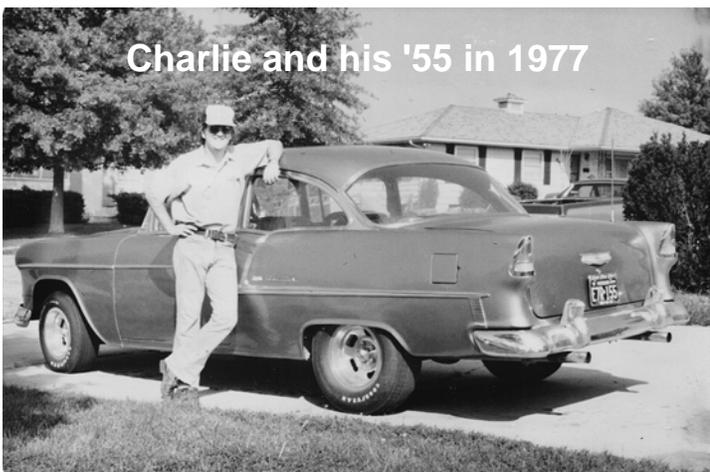
I took a job back in Dallas so I loaded everything up in 1997 and moved back to my house in Plano. Some of my friends found it so amusing that I had a 9" Ford rear end in my Chevy. So I bought a Moser 12 bolt and sold the 9" Ford. The front has stainless upper A arms and coil-over shocks with rack and pinion steering. The motor I have for it now is a 60 over, 454 with factory rectangle-port aluminum heads and intake with a 780 Holly.

In 1998 I took her to a buddy's body shop in Missouri and told him to take his time... NEVER TELL A BODY MAN TO TAKE HIS TIME! The good news is that after all that salt and storage she only had two body braces that were bad! Sure must be a lot of body work involved replacing those two body braces! In 2006 the body was finally put on the one-piece frame

It is now 2007. My engine is in Lincoln, Nebraska. My car is in Missouri (The paint/body man says he will be done by the end of August, I'm just not sure which year). My transmission, a Tremec 5-speed, is at my office. I have car parts in every room of my house except the bathrooms... and sometimes there.

When she gets done she will be wearing a new black paint job, with a tan leather interior, power windows, tilt wheel, and Classic Chevy Gauges. I don't care if I ever win a dog-gone thing. I just want her all together so I can DRIVE! Oh yes, she will be a driver. I just hope I'm not too old for Texas to allow me to have a driver's license when I'm done!

Charlie Siever - Plano, Texas



Charlie and his '55 in 1977



Charlie's '55 today





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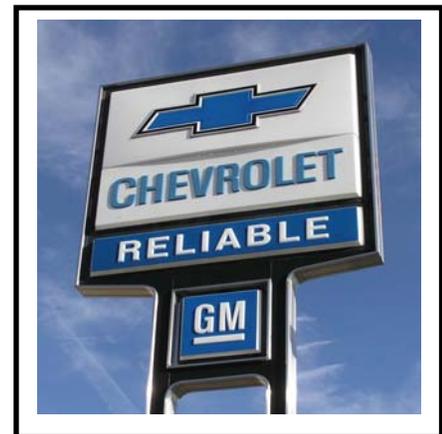
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