



# CLASSIC HEARTBEAT

May 2008

Volume 32, Issue 5

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



PO Box 814642  
Dallas, TX 75381  
[www.DallasClassicChevy.com](http://www.DallasClassicChevy.com)  
Est 1976  
Current Membership -149

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### Membership Information

Dues are \$25 per year,  
payable to  
Dallas Area Classic Chevys,  
mail to the club PO Box.  
To determine your renewal date,  
check your mailing label, the top  
right corner is the month/yr your  
membership expires.

## Lone Star XXVI

THIS WEEKEND – May 2-3, 2008

21735 North IH 35 Exit 353 West, TX 76691

# Czech Inn of West



For the 26<sup>th</sup> year in a row, '55-'57 Chevys will be the focus at this annual gathering that rotates within the state boundaries of Texas each year, and for 2008 it is being hosted by the Heart of Texas Classic Chevy Club of Waco and held just north of Waco in the town of West at the Czech Inn. If you do not have room reservations at the Czech Inn, you may want to travel to West for a Saturday only event. If you have reservations at the Czech Inn, you likely would like to drive down on Friday. So here are a couple of options – **Friday** you can drive down in time for the scheduled Welcome Party with food and beer on Friday night at the Czech Inn (contact DACC member Bill Preston at 405 615-3856 for Friday caravan details) OR **Saturday** drive down to West leaving at 9 am from our meeting location at the Wal Mart parking lot at Interstate 20 and Great Southwest Parkway in Grand Prairie (there we will decide whether to drive down 35E or 35W). Either day and either way, make plans to join DACC along with club members from Austin, Waco, Houston, San Antonio and more for this year's *Lone Star Classic Chevy Convention*. The event schedule is as follows - Registration Fri May 2 12-5pm & Sat 8 am-noon, Welcome Party with food and beer on Fri night 6-8 pm at Czech Inn, Sat night catered meal at KD's Smokehouse at 6 pm. Entry fee is \$30 and includes Friday night party and a T-shirt. This is a non judged show but there will be specialty awards, raffle & 50/50 pot. And as we always do, the DACC will select our Favorite Tri Five Chevy at the event and present our award to that vehicle. Check the club chat board for any last minute news and updates – and plan to join us for Lone Star 26!

### \*\* Next Month \*\*

## Cruising west to Thurber!

**June 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday DACC will caravan to Thurber, Texas located off Interstate 20 west of Ft Worth and to the Smokestack Restaurant. Along the way we will pick up club members from the Parker County Cruisers Car Club who will join us for lunch in this historic town. Mark your calendar and plan to join us for what is shaping up to be a memorable day of driving that Classic Chevy!**

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Photos by Chris Graves

**Growing up in McKinney, Texas** I always had a great love for cars. You see, my father owned an upholstery shop for over 18 years and I can still remember the days when my father would customize the interior of a vehicle for a so called hot-rodder. Dad would roll and pleat the seat covers in the cars and I would love to watch him cut the material and sew it in the channel foam, of course my favorite part was when he got it all put back together. At the ripe old age of 10, I would sit in those cars on Coke Cola cases and shift the gears as the cars were sitting in the upholstery shop only imagining myself owning a car like that someday.

In 1967, I was a junior at McKinney high school and I bought a yellow with a white top 1957 Chevy 2 door sedan. It was a six cylinder, automatic, single exhaust car. After about two weeks of begging I talked my dad into putting a solid black leather seat cover, black headliner, black door panels and a black package tray in the vehicle. The seats were so hot you could hardly stand to sit on them in the summer because they would blister your legs. In 1968 McKinney Motor Parts (an automotive parts shop) had a brand new 283 that had just been bored out to a 301 with a full race cam. This man had it built and could not pay for it and there was \$250.00 owed against the engine. I remember asking my grandmother if she would loan me the money so that I could buy that motor and I would pay her back when I went to work that summer after football season. I can

recall my dad wasn't real big on his high school son having that much of a motor in his car for some reason! Of course, I immediately got the loan and I had the engine delivered to a local garage in McKinney and they started to make a senior's dream come true. Changing the 6 cylinder automatic single exhaust Chevy over to a brand new 301 dual exhaust with a Fenton four speed transmission in the floor was a dream come true. From that day forward I always had a love for the tri-five Chevy. I was like most other teenagers at that time, and after a couple of years with the car I wanted something different, something more modern with air-conditioning, so I sold the senior's dream car for \$1250.00.

Fast forward a number of years and we started going to a lot of the car shows. We would go to Oklahoma City and attend the National Street Rod Association events and the Good Guys shows locally along with making sure to attend the Classic Chevrolet events in this area. I was doing my best to locate and possibly buy a '55 or '57 Chevrolet. I acquired a taste for the '55 Chevrolet because this guy in McKinney had a '55 that I thought was a dream car. It was silver and black and I really liked the way it set and it had a big block and that sound was sweet. I would see him in my neighborhood and always wanted to stop the guy and ask some questions about his fine ride. The man I am talking about is Rob Wechsler, he only lives a couple of blocks from my

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 3**



house and we have since become very close friends with him and his family. Everything was coming together to make it possible for me to buy my dream car and at the time I didn't realize it. You see, I was very fortunate to have belonged to McKinney Country Club. This club is a nine hole golf course located in McKinney, and I had belonged to the club for the past 15 years. But the value of the land was getting so high that we could not afford to play golf on it and it was hard to get members for a nine hole golf course. It fell upon hard times when we couldn't recruit new members. After some time, several developers wanted to make offers on the property. The 97 members decided to sell and divide the funds, thus giving me the means to hopefully purchase my classic vehicle. We were now ready to get serious about searching for my dream car. We had added a third car garage onto the house approximately one year earlier so that if and when we found the right vehicle we would have a place for it.

I had been steadily looking at cars all over the country for the about two years and we decided to go to the Kruse Auto Auction in Tulsa where I had seen a yellow and white '55 Chevy that I had been looking at on the internet for several months. As most cars guys know, they're not always what they appear to be until you get there and see them for yourself. I had pretty much decided this is the vehicle that I would be purchasing through this auction. My wife, Rendy and I traveled in June to the auction held in Tulsa arriving on Friday and we went straight to the auction and found the yellow and white Chevrolet. But after getting within ten feet of the vehicle I knew it was not the car for me. The yellow and white Chevy was a little rough around the edges, the carpet was worn out and under the hood it had some leaks and there were a lot of tie wraps around the wiring to keep it off the hot engine. Needless to say we were very disappointed that we had traveled that far and it was not the vehicle that I thought it was. On that same Friday afternoon I saw a purple '55 Chevy that a man had going through the auction and I thought it was an absolutely gorgeous vehicle, but I was afraid it would be way out of my price range. This purple



'55 Chevy went through the auction that afternoon not meeting its reserve. I expected that it was long gone and was probably too rich for my pocketbook. Friday night we went to the hotel and the next morning I woke up early and went down to get some things out of my truck. Parked beside me was the man that had the purple '55 Chevrolet and he was getting into his truck. I spoke to him and we started up a conversation, one thing led to another and we started talking about the '55 Chevy that he had in the auction. I thought the vehicle was gorgeous and we really hit it off well. He explained to me the history behind the car and why he had it at the auction. Also at the auction was a friend of mine Rick Prince who owns Texas Muscle Cars just east of McKinney. Rick looked over the car and he was good friends with the guy selling it. He said the car was solid and in fine shape and if I didn't buy it he would. My wife and I decided to buy the car. We now call that gorgeous purple car the "Painted Lady". It is Hawaiian Orchid Pearl, P.P.G. colors. It was built by Mr. Gerald Walker in Jacksonville, Illinois over a period of five years. He had the car finished for about a year when he died of a heart attack. The gentleman that sold me the car was selling it for Mr. Walker's wife. We have had a lot of fun with the car this past year. We have gone to lots of shows and we enjoy weekend cruises and I often think of the man that spent all of his time building the purple '55 and only enjoy it for a short time after it was completed. I would like to say the greatest benefit that Rendy and I have realized after having the car for almost a year is the great people you meet and get to know when you go to and participate in car shows. We have met so many good hardworking people with great family values that share our interest in classic cars.



Our "Painted Lady" has a new 350 HO crate engine, 650 cc Holley carburetor, HEI distributor, Sanderson ceramic

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**



## DACC CRUISES TO CEDAR CREEK LAKE!

Last month the DACC made a trip through East Texas to club member Carl and Charlsie Mitcham's beautiful lake house on Cedar Creek Lake. The club provided some good East Texas BBQ for lunch and although the winds were kicking up that day at the lake, it didn't keep us from having a great turnout and good time. There is something about driving a line of classic tri five chevys together that is a sight to behold and making our way through East Texas doing just that made it even better! Thanks to Carl and Charlsie for having us and for their neighbors for putting up with us!



**Dennis Lind**  
1942 – 2008

Our thoughts and prayers to the family and friends of fellow club member Dennis Lind who lost his battle with cancer on April 13<sup>th</sup>.

Be sure and check out Dennis' Feature Car story on the club website, and from that story you will be able to tell that Dennis was a true Tri Five guy. Dennis will be missed by his Chevy friends



### *Terry Box '55 Chevy Feature Car continued*

coated headers, electric fuel pump, 700 R transmission, rebuilt stock rear end with 355 gears and new axles. Also it has Heids two inch dropped spindles with one inch lowered coils, 11 inch power disc brakes, KYB shocks all around, 17 inch intro wheels, rack and pinion steering, stainless steel brake lines, new aluminized exhaust with stainless steel tips, smooth fire wall and a new grille. The body was a frame-off restoration taken down to bare metal and blocked to perfection painted with P.P.G. Hawaiian Orchid Pearl paint. The interior has Stewart Warner Speedometer, Tach, Fuel Gauge, Volt, Temperature and Oil Gauges, custom fiberglass console, polished dash inserts, AM/FM cassette radio, Vintage Air, Gennie floor shifter. Chevelle bucket seats are finished in a medium gray custom interior by Twin City Upholstery in Bloomington, Illinois. I would like to give credit where credit is due and acknowledge the great effort and work of the late Mr. Gerald Walker of Jacksonville, Illinois for building a wonderful example of a 1955 Chevrolet.

Truly one of the great benefits of owning a vehicle like this is that I have been in law enforcement for approximately 40 years and I have been Sheriff of Collin County for approximately 23 years and I truly enjoy the break from law enforcement that my '55 gives me. I get a chance to get away from my regular job and enjoy the fellowship of other car guys and gals. Going with your wife to functions that are not related to law enforcement or politics has been a real treat for Rendy and myself.

There is nothing like getting in the '55 on a cool morning or late in a summer afternoon and feeling like you are teenager again, if only for a couple of hours while you cruise around town. I look forward to meeting more DACC club members and going to more club events in the future.



## FOURTH OF JULY PARADES



**WE NEED  
YOU!**



We are hoping to have club entries in 3 big parades in the DFW area on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. The only way to get this done is to get YOU INVOLVED! We are looking for up to 24 cars to enter in 3 parades!

There isn't a better way to celebrate our country's independence than with a good old fashion parade and our old Chevy's are perfect for this all American celebration! We are not looking for just show cars, we need everyday drivers to make this happen.

Since we have 3 parades we would like to be in, we have 3 coordinators to make this happen. You are encouraged to contact one of them NOW so that we can finalize our entries into these parades. We will be participating in the Arlington 4<sup>th</sup> Of July Parade, the Plano Independence Day Parade and the Lakewood 4<sup>th</sup> Of July Parade in Dallas. To get in one of these parades, here are the coordinators –

Greg Hedum (972 539-9886) for Plano, David Graves (214 738-5231) for Arlington and Dan Bunch (972 270-0461) for Dallas/Lakewood. We need to know NOW if you want to be in the parades so that we can plan properly so please contact one of the coordinators today to sign up or if you have questions!

**SIGN UP  
TODAY!**

## 'UNDER CONSTRUCTION' Feature Car

**Mark Ottwell's '56  
From Rowlett**



My Chevy's story starts at Johnson Brothers Chevrolet dealership (located on Main Street in Dallas) in 1956. My grandfather, J. A. Ottwell purchased this '56 new and drove it for two years. In 1957, my father Johnnie Ottwell, purchased a new 1957 Chevrolet convertible (with a Continental kit) but he found that since he was about to get married, the payments were a little too high so he trade vehicles with my grandfather.

Unfortunately, the 1957 Chevy was lost in an auto accident in 1960. My father drove the '56 until he purchased a '64 Impala SS and he decided to turn the '56 from a family car into a street racer. I remember as a child being in the garage while he worked on replacing the original engine, transmission (both sold Alas!) and front suspension. At this time due to a paint accident at his job, he had the car repainted from its original white on turquoise to all black and the interior was refurbished in black and white. It even has an original 1966 Cadillac headliner. The original turquoise seat and door covers are still under the newer leather black and white interior.

He completed that work and the last time the car was driven under its own power was 1968. Soon afterwards, we moved from Dallas to East Texas and the '56 went with us. It sat in a field near our home for about a year and he transferred it to my uncle's house in Dallas. My uncle began the work of turning it back into a family car. He got as far as removing the engine and transmission and stopped. In 1978, after a few moves in between, my family was living in a house with a garage again in Sherman and that is where the car has been until last year.

My father is a great mechanic and knows a great deal about Chevys. Unfortunately, because of his age and health he is not able to work on the vehicle any longer. He gave it to me and I promised to get it running again as a memorial to my grandfather (who died unexpectedly in 1961) and to this Great Age of the Chevys from the mid fifties.

I am not a mechanic (other than simple jobs like changing sparkplugs, oil, etc) and I am hopeful that there is a DACC member in the Rowlett area that might be able to help me with replacing the engine and transmission and getting the car back on the road again My goal is to restore the car as close as I can to its 1960 appearance. I have a lot of parts (including two '56 radios and a clock, a 4 speed transmission, a 1970 Chevy 350 engine block and several other things) but I don't really know where to start.

Larry Rollow was kind enough to come out and look at the vehicle and give me some pointers, but much of this work has to be done carefully since it has basically been garaged (in more than one place) for almost forty years. I have done some initial brake work, but it would be great to have a teacher to warn me about the "DONT TOUCH THAT!" and the "You gotta replace that" things I need to know. Thanks!

### In Memoriam

We are saddened by the loss of Gladine Weehunt, wife of Ben Weehunt who passed away from cancer on Thursday April 24<sup>th</sup>.

All of us in the Dallas Area Classic Chevys extend our sympathies to Ben and his family on the loss of his wife.





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Lone Star 26  
May 2-3  
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