



CLASSIC HEARTBEAT

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

September 2009

Volume 33, Issue 9



PO Box 814642
Dallas, TX 75381

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.

THIS SATURDAY - Sept 12th

Fall Classic Chevy Show

Note New Time-10AM to 1PM

at Reliable Chevrolet in Richardson
Arapaho and Central Expressway

No Entry Fee - No Judging
Favorites Pick Only!

ALL '55, '56, '57 Chevy cars, trucks and vettes
welcomed!



NEXT MONTH – 3 Club Events!!!

Sunday October 4th

DACC at the State Fair Of Texas

You must sign up to bring your car! Free fair admission for you and your family! Cars are behind barriers and DACC members will be on site all day! Contact David Graves ASAP to get in the Fair lineup at 214 738-5231

Saturday October 10th

Drive In Movie Night to the Brazos Drive In

Our 10th Annual trip to Granbury that features a stop on the square in Granbury to shop and dinner at Babe's Chicken Dinner House, then on to a authentic 50's era drive in movie theatre! *Open to all cars and clubs!*

Contact Greg Hedum for more info at 972 539-9886

Fri to Sun October 23-25

16th Fall Foliage Tour to Poteau, Okla

This is a great trip for the fall with your Chevy! Contact Bill Preston at 972 691-4968 for more information!

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ATTN – DACC DRAG RACERS

The Texas Muscle Car Club Challenge Series starts back up after taking the hot summer off with the first fall race at the ¼ mile supertrack Texas Motorplex in Ennis on **Sunday September 13th**. Gates open at 8AM (race admission is \$30, spectate is \$12) and you get two time trial runs followed by eliminations in all classes near noon. Classes for all cars, regardless of how slow or quick they are. Handicap racing equalizes the racing and puts it all on the driver! Look for Tom Walker's trailer in the pits – this is Camp DACC. Larry Epperson is bringing a brisket so come HUNGRY!

The very next weekend the series runs again at the 1/8 mile Northstar Dragway in Denton. The **Sunday September 20th** race will have the gates open at 9AM and feature the same rules and program as the week before.

Plan to attend and race with DACC or support 'Team DC'. More information at www.TMCCC.org or check the club chat board on our website.

**TMCCC Drag Races**

Sunday Sept 13th - Texas Motorplex - Ennis
 Sunday Sept 20th - Northstar Dragway - Denton
 BEEEEEEEE THEREEEEE !!



BIG Tri Five TURNOUT at 'Hot Texas Nights' Car Show in N Richland Hills

DACC traditionally has attended this show in August the past several years and again in 2009 we 'made our mark' at Hot Texas Nights.

A super turnout of Tri Five Chevys from DACC again earned the club a plaque for Best Club Participation. Attending the show from DACC were - Robert, Sarah, Jessica & Robin Conkle with their '55 4 door Bel Air, David Graves – '56 Corvette, Mike & Sandra Reeves – '57 Convertible, Jim & Trish Sparrow – their '56 Bel Air is in the club display at Reliable Chevrolet so they came in their Ford street rod, Ralph & Barbara Ellis – '55 Bel Air, Carl & Charlsie Mitcham – '57 Bel Air, Marvin Cowden – '55 Bel Air, Greg & Nick Hedum – '55 Bel Air, Bill & Diane Preston – '56 Nomad, Dan Bunch & Vickie Penny – '57 Bel Air, Alan Strong – '57 150, George Johnson – '56 Nomad, Mike & Vickie Dodson – '56 Nomad, Larry & Dianne Epperson – no car as it's in paint prison, Joe Ortega – '57 Bel Air, Ron Burdett – '57 Bel Air wagon and Terry Hitch in his 'other car' '64 Corvette. Thanks to all these club members for attending the show representing DACC and congrats to David Graves and Joe Ortega for taking class awards. With over 350 cars on the grounds this show was full of a great variety of cars. Be sure and check out the club website for the photos from the event.



IT CAME IN 17 COLORS.
 ALL OF THEM RED, WHITE
 AND BLUE.





Loren Baxter
Dallas, Texas

This month's Feature Car was born in California, lived in New Mexico and now resides in the garage of Loren Baxter in Dallas. Below is the amazing story of the life of Tizzie - the '56 Chevy.

I think I am a little different than most Tri-5 owners. As a kid no one in my neighborhood owned a Tri-5 and I was never a car enthusiast. I didn't know what a Chevy Bel Air was until Tizzie came into our lives. Here is that story.

In early 1978 I was 13 years old and we were living in Alamogordo, New Mexico. One night my mom got a call from her Aunt Bea, whose husband had recently passed away, and she was no longer able to drive. She asked my mother if she still wanted the Chevy that my mom always loved. My mom said they could not afford to buy the car from her. My great aunt Bea's reply was "Did I say anything about buying it?" So we packed up the truck and camper and off we went to San Pedro, California!

My great aunt, Beulah May Matlock, called the car Tizzie Lish but we just call her Tizzie. Tizzie is a 1956 Chevrolet Bel Air two-door hard top, built at the Los Angeles plant in August of that year. She has all the extra chrome on the outside including fender birds, spot light/review mirror, wire wheel covers, locking gas door and a continental kit. Under the hood she is your basic 265 with a two-barrel carburetor and two-

speed Powerglide. They did give her dual exhaust but no A/C, power steering or power brakes. She came painted in Grecian Gold and Calypso Cream. The interior is a charcoal/yellow pattern cloth with cream imitation leather.

I have heard two stories about Great Aunt Bea and where she first saw the car. The first one is that she saw the car at Seaboard Motors in San Pedro, California and wanted to buy it but was told the dealership was not finished with the car yet, so she waited. With all the extras on the outside we believe the dealer was using Tizzie to help promote the last of the '56s before the '57s arrived. The other story was told to my dad by her husband who said that they saw the car on display at the county fair or the state fair and Great Aunt Bea had to have the car. Either way I have the original Dealer's Report of Sale and Application for Registration and I know she financed the loan through GMAC and drove Tizzie home on August 17, 1956. I only wish I knew how much she paid for the car.

In 1978 we arrived at Great Aunt Bea's home and I soon discovered what a '56 Chevy looked like and why my mother loved it. Over the next few

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Loren Baxter's '56 Feature Car Continued

days my dad went over the car getting it ready for the trip. I helped when needed and studied the car in great detail. I soon discovered that I could not find the gas cap. Dad chuckles and tells me to ask my great aunt. She laughs at me too and gave me one clue: look for a key slot (remember this '56 has the locking gas door). Back out to the garage I went but the only key slot I found were for the doors. It's not behind the license plate because there is a spare tire there and it's not in the trunk. Around and around I went. Now Great Aunt Bea, mom and dad are standing there laughing and enjoying the show. Finally they pointed out the left tail light. I have to admit that I have my fun when I ask people to find the gas filler door.

March 22, 1978 we started our trip back to New Mexico. Tizzie has 21,090 original miles on her at that time. It was fun riding in the car and seeing the people honk and wave. She used a couple of quarts of oil but other than that it was a smooth trip home.

Once we got Tizzie home it was time to clean her up. My job was to polish the chrome. I never knew a car could have so much chrome. In 1979 Dad restored the engine compartment and got it ready for some local shows. Tizzie won many awards at the car shows and I enjoyed going when I could. In 1987 the primer was starting to show through the paint so she was repainted.

Sometime in the middle of 1990 Mom put Tizzie in a storage unit to keep her out of the elements because there was no room in the garage. That was the last time anyone saw her for 18 years. In 1995 I moved to Dallas but never forgot about Tizzie. I visit my parents every year and every so often I would ask mom if she wanted to check in on Tizzie but she always said no. I think she was afraid of what she would find like rats having eaten the interior, rust, or no car at all. In early 2008 I convinced mom to let me have the car. On March 13, 2008 Mom and Dad opened the storage unit to see what kind of condition Tizzie was in. They pull off the car cover and the worst they found was dust and 4 flat tires. They called me that night with the exciting news. We knew Tizzie would live again.

Now the planning began. Dad came up with a work list and I set out trying to find parts. This is when I really started learning about Tri-5 Chevy's. On April 12, with help from a friend, my parents went to the storage unit to load Tizzie on to a trailer and bring her back home. As mom sat in the drivers seat to steer the guys pushed. Mom soon discovered there were no brakes and the parking brake was of no help either. To moms horror there was nothing she could do as she rolled backwards (serves her right after she laughed at me for not being able to find the gas cap as a kid)! Luckily there was a curb and an empty lot behind her, so no harm done.

Dad started working on Tizzie, starting by dropping the fuel tank. Years of leaded fuel had plugged up the strainer. About two weeks later, on a Wednesday, I arrived from Dallas and the work began. The rear freeze plugs were removed on both sides to clean the rust out of the engine block. Spark plugs were removed so that an upper cylinder lube could be sprayed in. The fuel lines were cleaned out and a new fuel

pump installed. The engine oil and filter were changed along with the transmission fluid. Without the spark plugs in it we spun the engine over and dad noticed the oil light went out. She had oil pressure. So far, so good.

On Thursday we were ready to fire her up but the fuel tank had not been installed since we were waiting for a filler tube o-ring. So instead we made a temporary gas tank from an oil bottle and crossed our fingers. With the fuel system primed Dad turned the key and she started right up. Both of us had a smile on our faces from ear to ear. After running a flush through the cooling system Dad replaced the radiator while I replaced the heater core. The next two days were spent rebuilding the brake system, reinstalling the fuel tank and going over the electrical system, just to name a few things.

By the weekend Tizzie was ready for a test drive. I had the honor of being behind the wheel. The first thing we noticed was the speedometer did not work and then we quickly discovered the bias ply tires, having sat flat for so long, were no longer round. But at that time we didn't care, we were cruising down the road in a '56 Chevy!

Soon I had to head back to Dallas and do my part by making sure the garage was ready for Tizzie when she would arrive. I had to build a shed to make room in the garage and extend the garage by three feet to make sure she could fit in there with the continental kit. Back in Alamogordo the work on Tizzie continued. I financed the work, Dad did what work he



could do and Mom supervised. All rubber bushings for the control arms, steering linkage and rear springs were replaced along with the shocks. She needed new tires and I stayed with the bias ply because I think they have the correct look.

I arrived back in Alamogordo in October and the first thing we did was remove the distributor for an inspection and cleaning. After reinstalling the distributor, Tizzie never ran right. We spent a good day or more trying to figure out what went wrong. The only way she would run right was to leave the vacuum disconnected from the distributor. We took Tizzie to

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Loren Baxter's '56 Feature Car Continued

a Saturday car show up in the mountains at Ruidoso Downs and had a good time.

Soon it was back to Dallas for me, leaving my dad with the distributor problem. During this, Dad learned a valuable lesson one day. Do not rest your arm on the battery especially if you have a metal watch band on. His watch band shorted between the positive terminal and the battery hold down causing a bad burn on his wrist along with a new dance and a few choice words. But Dad did find the problem with the distributor. It turns out that I had the wrong size screw in the wrong place so that when the advance plate moved the condenser touched it causing it to short out. Next Tizzie had to go in to have her transmission rebuilt. I encouraged Dad to drive Tizzie and he took me up on it. Both him and mom enjoyed cruises at the Sonic with the local car club. Dad even took Tizzie to the Senior Center to let the seniors sit in her, have their picture taken and relive the past.

On April 22, 2009 I was once again back in Alamogordo, this time hoping to drive Tizzie to her new home in Dallas. One problem remained, a rear main oil seal leak that the mechanic could not fix. We picked the car up from the garage on Thursday and by Friday we knew the rear main seal was still leaking. We decided to use the weekend to think about our options and took Tizzie to a car show on Saturday. At the car show Tizzie took first place in her class along with \$50! That evening it was cruising the Sonic with the local car club where some of the members said goodbye to Tizzie.

To drive Tizzie to Dallas or have her transported there, that was the question. We decided that the oil leak was not that bad and that a car should be driven and enjoyed. So with that in mind, on Monday the 27th, at 6:30 am, with Mom in her car and Dad behind the wheel of Tizzie, with me riding shotgun, we began our trip to Dallas. This time Tizzie had 28,110 miles on her. The trip could not have been any better. She only used one quart of oil during the trip and averaged 15 mpg on the flat lands cruising a 65 mph. We



all took turns driving her and I made sure Dad had the most time behind the wheel. He had put so much hard work and love into her and I wanted him to enjoy his last adventure with her. I pulled into my driveway in Dallas at 9:30 pm that night.

Now what for Tizzie? As Dad put it, he had the easy part getting her mechanically ready and was leaving the hard part for me, the cosmetic work. I will need to do another restoration of the engine compartment along with the under carriage. Time has taken its toll on the interior and it needs attention. And all that stainless steel trim needs a good polishing. Mom gave me a lot of documentation on the car as she had almost all the vehicle registrations starting from when the car was new. She also had almost every receipt for parts bought and any services done on the car while she owned her.

I can't thank my parents enough for all that they have done for me. Mom for giving me the car along with her advice and research she has done. Dad for his hard work in getting Tizzie running. He called it a labor of love. One day when I am no longer able to drive I will pass Tizzie along to someone in my family. **But until then, it's my turn to enjoy Tizzie.**



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