

THE CHESAPEAKE BULLETIN
CIRCULATION MANAGER
6505 UPLAND RD.
FORK, MD 21051

OUR 55TH YEAR

FIRST CLASS MAIL



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First Monthly Meeting of 2010 – Jan. 11th
Flea Market 50/50 Raffle Tickets In The Mail – Feb. 1st
AACA Annual Meeting – Philadelphia – Feb. 12th & 13th

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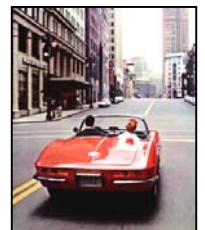
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Gary Wilmer's 1962 Chevrolet Corvette at the Howard County Fair – Read about this car on page 10

Owning a Corvette - the Dream That Became a Reality

By Gary Wilmer

Having inherited a love for and interest in automobiles from my grandfather and father, I learned to identify cars as they cruised the streets of Baltimore in the late 1950s and early '60s. Like most teens, I dreamed of owning a Corvette. However, for most it was just a dream. I always liked the 1962 Corvette, with its solid body color, compared to the '61 and earlier model years with the contrasting color coves.

Fast forward to 1991. Walking the fields at the fall Hershey swap meet, I spotted a nice looking maroon 1962 Corvette in the flea market area, not the car corral. I don't remember the name of the dealer, but he had six to eight cars on display. I believe he was from the Midwest, quite possibly Wisconsin.

I continued walking during the day, but I was thinking about that car. I knew that I would love to have it, but I didn't have that much money. Where would I get it? I called home and talked to my brother and mother, asking them if I could borrow the money. My mother said yes, she would lend me the money. Now I was really afraid. Should I or shouldn't I? I had never spent that much money on any car I had ever owned.

I went back to the dealer and discussed purchase details. I looked the car over top to bottom, started it up (I didn't drive the car in the flea market field) and negotiated a price. I left a small deposit with a plan that I would come back to Hershey at the beginning of the next week and settle the deal before they headed home.

I got a ride back to Hershey the early part of the next week as planned. I had to drive the Corvette home in the dark, since we couldn't get to Hershey until after I got off work. That day it was raining heavily. Driving down I-83 with all of the trucks passing me, I was very nervous behind the wheel. The

defroster didn't work (I kept wiping the windshield every few minutes), and the mufflers were bad and very loud. It was no fun driving this small, cramped, two-seater for the first time under these conditions.

By the time I got home, my hands and arms ached and I had a very bad headache, but I had made it home in one piece. Overall the car ran fine. Most Corvettes leak around the convertible top and mine was no exception. The carpets were soaked, so the seats had to be removed and the carpets pulled out and allowed to dry.



This is a page from the '62 Corvette sales brochure. The car is promoted as "America's Sports Car" – capable of being personal transportation, a fun competition car, or a fire-breathing racing machine.

My 1962 Corvette convertible is painted Honduras Maroon with a black top and black interior. The 327 CI V-8 is rated at 340 HP, with a four-speed transmission, and a 4.11 rear. In 1962 there were four horsepower options for the 327 engine – 250, 300, 340 and the 360. The 360 HP engine was fuel injected. Corvette production in 1962 was 14,531, the highest output since 1953 when Corvette was first produced.

There were several "firsts" and "lasts" on the 1962 Corvette. The '62 was the first with the 327 CI engine, seat belts as standard equipment, narrow style whitewall tires, and heater/defroster as standard equipment. And '62 was the

last year for this classic style body design, a solid rear axle, exposed headlights, and the external opening conventional trunk.

Corvettes of this era could be ordered with a convertible top, a solid lift-off top, or both. When I bought my car, it only had the soft top. I always liked the look of a hardtop, but finding a nice one for a reasonable price was not easy. However, about 1994, while walking around the Corvettes at Carlisle show, I spotted a decent looking top. That year it was very dry and dusty and the top was covered with dust, but it appeared

to be Honduras Maroon. It was Sunday, the last day of the show, so I made them a low offer. They accepted, probably because they didn't want to carry it home.

I folded my Corvette soft top and placed the hardtop on the car. It was a nice fit and drastically changed the car's appearance. The best part of this story is when I washed and buffed out the hardtop, the color was a

perfect match to my car. All I did was replace a couple of brackets, clean it up and put it on. It looks as nice as the rest of the car.

Over the past nineteen years, I have been continually upgrading this car to get it in show condition. The exhaust system was replaced, as was the entire brake system. The car was detailed from top to bottom, and under the hood. I've gotten it almost to where I want it, but as most antique car owners know, they are never done. I love this Corvette and probably will keep it until, at some point, I give it to Todd or Andrew.

These early Corvettes are not a very practical car for a family of four, but periodically I will take it out for a spin early on a Saturday or Sunday by myself, top down, shifting gears around the back roads of Carroll County.

The sales brochure is right-on about the car – it doesn't get any better than this!