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*The Lone Star Corvette Classic races*

*photo by Chris Fritchie*

## Corvette Dreams

By Cynthia Howe

**CORVETTE DREAMS.** They often happen outside the gray of sleep, when you catch yourself blowing smoke from your back tires as you rev your chrome engine to its maximum potential. For many of us, the love affair with the Corvette has lasted longer than we've been legally capable of driving.

While the Corvette is over 50 years old, today's Vette enthusiasts come in every size, shape, age and gender with one thing in common, a passion for the Corvette. They enjoy re-building their cars with precision, high-performing engines, layering chrome over numerous engine parts, maximizing interior styling and comfort, and in general, "pimping" their rides. Some lovers gravitate toward the competitive nature of the vehicle while others have developed camaraderie with the socialization among other admirers via Corvette Clubs, shows and activities.

The Dallas metroplex club is known as the Lone Star Corvette Club. This

fantastic group boasts over 1,000 members and has been gathering for more than 23 years. The club is made up of a variety of people from every walk of life: empty nesters, yuppie youngsters, new money, old money, some with kids and some with grandkids along for the proverbial "ride."

Jean Hill has been driving nothing but Vettes for the last 15 years and serves the club as secretary. While today she safely totes her grandson (appropriately wearing a "Corvette Kid" t-shirt) around in his car seat, other days she's competing in racing heats such as Khana Cross and drag racing. She's no typical, cookie-baking grandma! Since the invention of the air bag, Corvette has ensured its fans by providing everything necessary to keep the love affair going. Ms. Hill shared, "The Corvette is manufactured with specialized hooks to install car seats, and if the child's weight is under the legal rate, the air-bags don't go off, which really makes it nice for us grandmas."

Ms. Hill loves everything about the Corvette and the club she calls "family." "We love to do road trips together, out of state shows and lots of activities where we just get together and have fun with our cars." She has met hundreds of couples that share her passion. Along with her constant Corvette companion, her husband, she'll often take her daughter or grandson along as she enjoys racing all over the United States. One event close to home is The Lone Star Corvette Classic.

This year's much anticipated show was held in May at the Texas Motor Speedway (TMS). The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Classic featured terrific speakers along with GM Engineers and professional racecar drivers.

The fun began the first night with Khana Cross races, another race called "Treasure Run," and a silent auction and welcome dinner where the "Wheels and Pipes" winners (a showman competition based on the cars' appearance) were announced. In addition, the Treasure



Jean & Ken Hill (top);  
 Kerri Lingenfelter Page with her family (bottom)  
 photos by Chris Fritchie

winner and Khana Cross Awards were announced.

Saturday was a full day beginning with the Car Show. Many groups and organizations, along with individuals, held competitions based on their own developed requirements for appearance, performance, engine modifications, etc. Each group developed their respective awards, but the fun involved was quite contagious.

In conjunction with the Car Show was a terrific opportunity to find your own passion on wheels: "The Car Corral," offered a variety of Corvettes for sale.

Saturday night, for many participants, is always the highlight of the entire show. In addition to a silent and live auction, a wonderful dinner and awards ceremony covering the events of the day brings everyone together to celebrate. Special guests this year were Dollie Cole, Nick Cole, Dick and Willy Guldstrand. Many of the participants look forward to seeing other Corvette owners they have developed friendships with over the years. It is striking to see how one dream car has pulled together people from all walks of life to create a community of caring, wonderful people.

The care and concern this group has developed really shined on Sunday, when they had the Make A Wish kids race! While many organizations benefit from the funds raised at this event (all proceeds are distributed to non-profit organizations), the greatest joy comes from the Make A Wish event. About 100 special needs kids got to do Hot Laps in Corvettes around the Speedway and had their pictures taken with the car and their driver. The kids had to be seven years or older and weigh at least 40 pounds to be able to participate. The kids loved it and the families enjoyed the special day tremendously.

The kids aren't the only ones making their way around the TMS track, there were plenty of Hot Laps remaining for



participants and the TMS Infield Road Course. The course is driven LeMans style, driving around the track three times at 100 mph. If you've always dreamed of driving around the Texas Motor Speedway like the big boys do, this may be your opportunity to drive through the tunnel onto the track, and make some friends along the way.

To participate in next year's Classic, go to the Lone Star Corvette Club's website at [www.lonestarcorvette.com](http://www.lonestarcorvette.com), to get more details.

Friends and family, family and friends, it all comes together for many who participate in the Lone Star Corvette Club. A key member of the club is intimately aware of the sense of family the Corvette has created.

As a teenager, Kerri Page brought home a Ford Fiero. Her father, an engineer who specialized in custom engines, known as Mail Order Motors, told her she should have at least bought a Corvette if she wanted a sports car. Kerri thought so highly of her father's opinion she traded her Fiero for a Corvette. Her father loved it so much, he went out and bought one for himself. She recalls, "Dad would grab me when I got home from school and ask me to go race with him. He had just tweaked the motor through the afternoon and wanted to see what it would do. So, there I'd go to race with my dad – again! But it was so much fun!"

Her father, John Lingenfelter, went on to specialize in engineering motors specifically for Corvettes and then expanded his engines to fit other cars and trucks. The name Lingenfelter is now synonymous around the world with high-powered, precision Corvette motors. When you see a modified Corvette drive by, you may just see his signature, "Lingenfelter," emboldened on the side. His meticulous dedication to reinventing cars and trucks with legendary precision spanned more than 28 years.

Mr. Lingenfelter won 13 career national events. He was also the first driver in his class to break the six-second quarter-mile barrier. His personalized Cavalier was known as the quickest four-cylinder drag racing vehicle with an E.T. of 7.08 seconds. Along with awards, and the fastest Cavalier, he has also been written up in *Motor Trend* and *Car and Driver Magazine*. "All that and he raced



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the Blue Angels, too,” Ms. Page shares with a proud grin. While he was highly successful, his daughter remembers him as a quiet man of purpose and affection. He died in 2003 after sustaining injuries while doing one of the things he loved most, drag racing. He was 58 years old.

His daughter Kerri continues her father’s passion, along with her husband, John Page. They established 21st Century Muscle Cars in Carrollton, where they continue the tradition. “When we moved to the Dallas area, we couldn’t find a shop that followed my father’s philosophy, so we decided we’d open one ourselves.” Their team continues their commitment to excellence in design and engine packages. Every detail is meticulously fine-tuned to reflect the refined power, speed and control associated with the Lingenfelter name.

When you visit their shop, you’ll be amazed at the vehicles you’ll find there. One Lingenfelter Corvette, a 2006, has 800 horsepower, is quiet, comfy and extremely sleek. The brakes alone are \$8,000. “It’s not unusual to have customers come in and spend over \$85,000 customizing their cars.” One

couple came in with matching Corvette’s and had them specialized and upgraded throughout. “Cars tend to pull a family together sometimes, along with kids, dogs and sports,” one spectator commented. “If your child leaves his fingerprints in the grease, you’re less likely to leave that car behind any time soon.”

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This summer some long-time Corvette lovers will make their way to Bowling Green, Kentucky to meander through the National Corvette Museum. In fact, this year Classic will also send some of the proceeds to the museum in support of its commitment to memorializing their love affair with the car. From the birth of the Corvette in 1953 to the precision

sleekness of today’s model, the museum has something for every Corvette lover to admire. Across the street from the museum is the current Corvette plant, where they crank out approximately 20 Corvettes per hour.

The new model for 2008 is collecting rave reviews from those who have caught a quick peek at it in Bowling Green. It’s long and lean, every young man’s dream. 500 horsepower anyone? With a top speed of 190 miles per hour, this car is only intended for those who want to go fast – very fast, in a hurry!

When the Corvette was still in the planning stages and a name was being developed, it was decided the car would be named “Corvette” after a fast Royal Navy warship that was utilized primarily as a convoy ship that could be deployed quickly and efficiently to protect precious cargo during wartime, including World War II. Today, the Corvette continues to protect and guard precious cargo, like grandsons with Corvette Kid written across their t-shirts.

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