

Terry Shannon

I have been a Chevy muscle car fan from way back. My first car was a '65 Chevy Impala SS. I stuck an "097" cam into my little 283 and replaced the 2 barrel with a 4 barrel and terrorized Kirkwood highway in the late 60's. That "Lead Sled" was way too heavy so I bought a '63 Chevy II and stuffed a 327CI, 300hp mill in there and added headers and traction bars and went back to the loop between Howard Johnson's, McDonald's and Gino's. I found out along the way that the seats and door panels from a '67 Camaro fit pretty damn good in that little flea with teeth as I called it. Couldn't keep a tranny in it so I sold it and bought a more civilized '69 Camaro SS with a 350/300 4 speed in it. I mellowed out and bought a '74 Camaro with A/C and an automatic transmission in 1978. Then came marriage, fatherhood and some unmentionable cars.

Fast forward to the not so distant past and I ended up working with some motor heads that got me thinking about the good old days. Back in the good old days Corvette was king as far as I was concerned. The cost was just out of reach for me then and my story is the same one you've read many times. Always wanted one! Then one of my co-workers bought a '64 Corvette Roadster and showed up in my driveway with it one Saturday morning. I call that the day of the infection. I had the fever!

For several months I bought and read a ton of books and magazines about Corvettes. I started going to car shows as often as I could too. One of those shows was the CCND Fathers Day Show at the Concord Mall. There my wife Gwen and I met Bill and Beth Molnar. They were very gracious with their time and answered a million questions while I lusted after their '60 Corvette. Beth told Gwen how much she loved the car and I think that was the point where Gwen really started getting comfortable with the idea of putting a Vette in the garage.

In the summer of 2003 I went over to the show in Vineland hoping to find something nice for sale. I had heard of a Corvette dealer called Conte's Corvette and thought I'd slide by there on my way just to find out where the place was so I could come back another time. They were closed when I got there but sitting right there in the window was a '66 big block coupe with a four speed tranny, A/C, P/S, side pipes, knock offs and it was talking to me right through the showroom window! I was back on Monday and found that the car was in really great shape. One more trip with a friend who has had a few Vettes and the deal was done! I was sure I had died and gone to heaven as I drove it home. There is indeed NOTHING like a big block!



As I went to various shows with my '66 I noticed that my attention was increasingly directed to the C-1's in attendance. Around this time my wife and I welcomed our first grandchild into the world. A safety concern came up as Gwen was driving a BMW Z-3 at that time. She didn't want to put the new bundle of joy in the front seat of a convertible with an air bag that she couldn't disable. So the Z-3 was traded in on a BMW 545i with a nice back seat for the baby in the spring of 2004. Soon after, it hit Gwen. "We need a convertible" she said. I couldn't have agreed more! I started scouring the internet looking for a C-1. They



always look good on the internet, unfortunately. After several false starts I was again back at Conte's Corvettes. Lo and behold there was a '60 Corvette that looked just like Bill and Beth Molnar's ride! Black with silver coves, red interior and a white top. Done deal, this baby's coming home with me!

Soon after came the Backyard Buddy so I can double stack them in the garage. I have not done a whole lot to the '66 so far. I hid the Pertronix electronic ignition under the cap, replaced the front disc brake calipers with some stainless steel sleeved jobs and converted to a spin on oil

filter. I also added a teakwood steering wheel which really sets off the interior. Ironically, I met the previous owner at the Vineland show a year after I bought it and he said that the teakwood wheel was the final touch he had planned on putting on the car had he not sold it. Interestingly, this gent won this car in a raffle to benefit a New Jersey school. In his words "It was supposed to be a frame off restoration". Judging from the receipts I received for work and parts that he paid for, including a repaint, he didn't end up netting much after taxes when he sold it to Conte! Be careful of what Pro Team calls a frame off restoration is all I can say.



As for the '60, well it's certainly not as original or in as great shape as Bill and Beth's ride but it's a nice looking driver and it's a lot of fun. The '66 is so close to original that I don't want to change anything else and what I have changed is certainly reversible. The '60 will be the one I'll play with without fear of harming something sacred. It's an NOM car that started out as a 4 speed 283/230 with Cherry Bomb exhausts that somebody has stuck an unknown solid lifter cam into that is just a blast to drive and very dependable. I've replaced all of the brake linings, wheel cylinders and hoses and done a couple of other things during this long winter so that Bill Molnar won't try to hop in and drive away with the wrong car. I changed the top to black and installed a set of Cragar SS mags, something else I've always wanted. Currently the instrument cluster is at Corvette Specialties of Maryland getting freshened up and the right rear bumper is getting rechromed as it was scratched up very noticeably. As the result of a long walk on Limestone Rd. this summer I have also replaced the fuel sending unit over this winter.



What might my next chapter be? Who knows. But now that my wife has taken over my Jeep Grand Cherokee as the baby transporter this BMW 545i seems expendable. Cadillac STS? Corvette C-6? Hmmmm. Gwen did mention that we need a convertible SHE can drive. In my mind I've already got it narrowed down to Sunset Orange, Artic White or Machine Silver.