

## **“PEAKING” IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR**

**By Ken Peak, RCC Historian**



### **HOW LONG HAVE YOU OWNED *YOUR* CORVETTE? THIS GUY? ONLY 67 YEARS!**

Bill Hatch, as a recent graduate of USC (class of 1955), had a good job as a high school English teacher and basketball coach at Monrovia (Calif.) High School. With his 1950 Ford convertible acting its age, in August 1957 Bill found himself in the market for an automobile and intended to purchase a new Chevrolet Bel Air.

However, a salesman at Bates Chevrolet in Alhambra, California suggested that Bill look at Chevrolet's sports car instead. Bill did take a look, and as the saying goes, the rest is history. That day the salesman showed him three 1957 Corvettes on the Bates lot, proudly noting their colors of white, red, and black (specifically, per the *Corvette Black Book*, they were Polo White, Venetian Red, and Onyx Black; Corvettes also came in four additional colors that year: Aztec Copper, Cascade Green, Arctic Blue, and Inca Silver).

Although funds were tight (Bill's beginning salary in 1956 was \$4,600 per year, including the stipend for his coaching assignments), that day he purchased the Onyx Black model (by far the most popular Corvette color of that year, with 2,189 such units built of 6,339 total) with red interior. The 4-speed transmission had been offered as a Corvette option (\$188.30) four months earlier (in April), but Bill's preferred black car on the lot was "basic": a 3-speed transmission, the base 283 ci, 220 hp engine, auxiliary hardtop (a \$215.20 option), AM radio (\$199.10), and no heater (saving him \$118.40, a car heater not often needed in California).

After making a down payment of \$1,863.72, trading in his 1950 Ford (receiving a trade-in allowance of \$200), and adding fees, the purchase price for the Corvette was \$3,430.72. Bill financed the balance of \$1,400 with 18 payments of \$83.03.

Pmt. Date 1st No Pmt. 18

AP 593860 Maker Batch  
 (THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS FOR USE OF HOLDER ONLY AND IS NOT A PART OF THIS CONTRACT)

## CONDITIONAL SALE CONTRACT

### Motor Vehicle

The undersigned Seller hereby agrees to sell, and the undersigned Purchaser hereby agrees to purchase, subject to the terms and conditions set forth hereunder and on the reverse side hereof, the following described motor vehicle, with all equipment, accessories, parts, appliances and appurtenances, acceptance and delivery of which property in good condition is hereby acknowledged by the Purchaser:

Year	Make (Trade Name)	No. Cyls.	Standard, Custom, Special, Sport, etc.	Type of Body	Model, Lot # or Number	Manufacturer's Serial No.	Motor No.	License No.
1957	Bow Chevrolet	8	Corvet	2 dr sedan			E 57 S 105543	

☐ Automatic Transmission   
 ☐ Overdrive   
 ☐ Radio   
 ☐ Heater   
 ☐ Power Steering   
 ☐ Power Brakes   
 ☐ Power Windows   
 ☐ Air Cyls. (Describe)   
 ☐ Other (Describe)

(1) Cash Price \$ 3098.77  
 Accessories \$ 200.00  
 Sales Tax \$ 131.95  
**Total Cash Price \$ 3430.72**

LESS: (2) Down Payment - Cash \$ 1863.72  
 Trade-in Advance:  
 Payoff \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Net \$ 200.00  
**Total Down Payment \$ 2063.72**

Description of Trade-in:  
 Year 50 Make Ford  
 Year 50 Make Ford

(3) Unpaid Cash Price \$ 1367.00

(4) Total Insurance Premium (See Insurance Schedule) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(5) Fees to Public Offices:  
 Registration \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 License \$ 33.00  
 Transfer \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Describe) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total Fees \$ 33.00**

(6) Unpaid Cash Balance \$ 1400.00

(7) Time Price Differential \$ 94.54

(8) Contract Balance \$ 1494.54

### INSURANCE SCHEDULE

Effective Date of Policy \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF COVERAGE	PERIOD OF COVERAGE	PREMIUM
<input type="checkbox"/> Fire & Theft	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Collision (\$ _____ Deductible)	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Bodily Injury Liability (\$ _____)	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Property Damage Liability (\$ _____)	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Insurance (specify type): _____		
Total Insurance Premium		_____

(Insurance Company) \_\_\_\_\_ (Agent or Broker) \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTICE TO PURCHASER**—Unless specifically indicated above, no insurance policy insuring Purchaser against damage resulting from ownership or operation of the vehicle herein described arising by reason of personal injury to or death of any person, or from injury to property, has been or will be obtained by the dealer or any lending agency to whom this contract may be assigned.

(9) Payment, in lawful money of the United States of America, shall be made in Eighteen 18 equal successive monthly installments of Eighty Three and 03/100 Dollars (\$ 83.03) each, payable on the same day of each month, commencing September 1, 19 57, and continuing until the Contract Balance is fully paid together with such other sums as are hereinafter provided for with interest alone not to exceed the maximum rate permitted by law. All payments due under this contract shall be paid at the place designated by Seller or Assignee.

Purchaser specifically acknowledges receipt of an exact copy of this contract including the **TERMS AND CONDITIONS ON THE REVERSE SIDE HEREOF**, which are incorporated herein and made a part hereof.

Dated August 12, 19 57, at Alhambra, California.

**BATES CHEVROLET**  
 (Seller sign here)  
[Signature] Title Key

X (1) William Lloyd Hatch  
WILLIAM LLOYD HATCH  
 (Purchaser)  
 X \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Address at which property will be maintained)

Bill used the Corvette as his daily “driver,” commuting to work on weekdays and visiting the beaches of the Los Angeles area on weekends. I-5 highway was new in 1957, and Bill put its high-speed traveling ability to good use.

He was still using the Corvette as his daily driver when he met his future wife, Marylyn, in 1958. She had cruised in her girlfriend’s 1957 Thunderbird, but never in a Corvette - until her first date with Bill in 1961. They ultimately married and left for their honeymoon in the 1957 Corvette, driving up the California coast to San Francisco, then east to Lake Tahoe, then through Yosemite Valley and Sequoia National Park. At times when roads were gravel, Bill was forced to drive slowly to

keep from chipping the Corvette's paint. Gas stops set them back all of 29.9 cents per gallon.



The couple would have two daughters, and as with any parents with a growing family, they began to question their Corvette's practicality; the car simply wasn't well-suited to carrying their two young daughters as passengers. Bill later confessed that he occasionally thought about selling his old sports car; however, each time he broached the idea with Marylyn, she convinced him to keep their "first-date" car.





Over the years Bill and Marylyn fell in love with Western Europe and vacationed there frequently. While away, Bill's parents watched over the prized Corvette in their garage.

After retirement, the couple moved to the beach city of Carlsbad, California, where they would eventually gain two granddaughters - each of them taking turns riding in Grandpa's Corvette. The Corvette still ran as well as it ever did, even with 159,164 miles on the odometer and Bill still driving the car on a weekly basis. Other than two engine overhauls, a fender-bender, and a re-paint, the car was still stock and a pure "survivor."

In fact, on his 89th birthday in January 2021, he and a friend took the Corvette out for his favorite meal, at his favorite place: the In-N-Out Burger in Carlsbad.

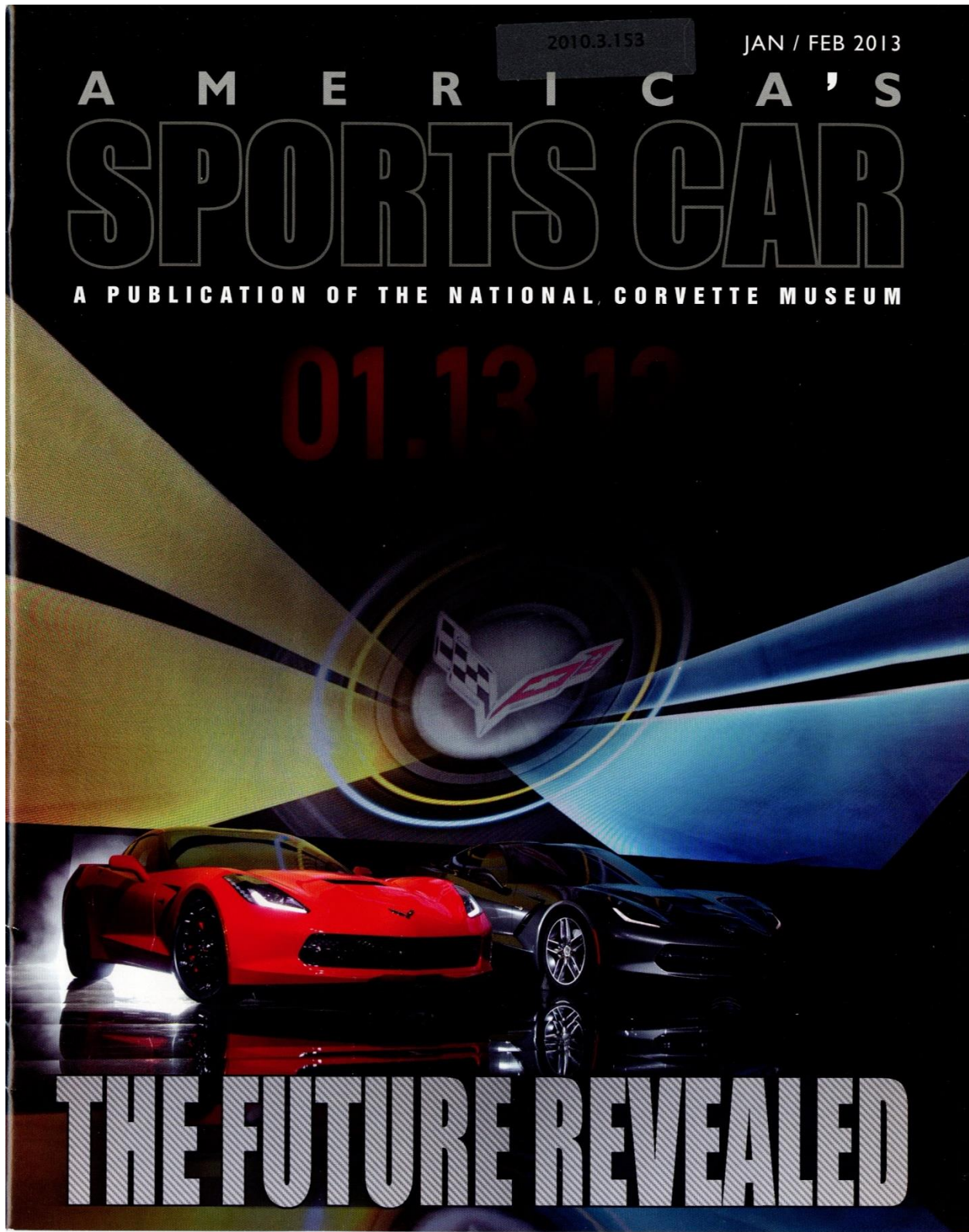


That friend, Cary Thomas (see endnote)<sup>1</sup> - himself a serious Corvette owner and author - issued the following challenge in one of his blogs:

*If anyone can identify someone who is a longer continuous (and original) owner of a specific Corvette, let's hear it! If Bill doesn't hold the record, then we need to celebrate whoever does!*

Furthermore, Cary submitted an article about the longevity of Bill and Marylyn's 1957 Corvette ownership to the magazine of the National Corvette Museum,

"America's Sports Car"; their story was included in February 2013 in a feature called "Corvette Memories" which described the experiences of selected Corvette owners.





### **A Will and a Way**

Looking to buy a 2007 red coupe, I made the decision to sell my 1999 silver convertible. I placed national ads as Corvette owners don't seem to mind the distance if it gets them to the right car.

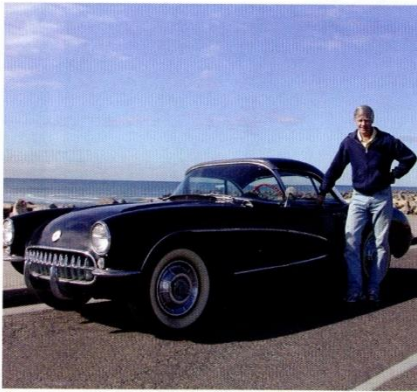
I got a call from a man named Will in Georgia who said the car was exactly what he was looking for. He was about to get married in a couple of months and wanted to have it by then. I was in Michigan so we started looking at what it would take to make a deal.

Later on I got a call from Will's father in Alabama. At first I thought it was trouble but as it turned out, he was calling on behalf of Will's fiancé, Margaret. When she heard about the car from Will, she got the idea to secretly buy it out from underneath him and then give it to him as a wedding present.

Will's father and I worked out the deal leaving me with the difficult task of telling Will that the car had been sold. He was disappointed but went on to tell me that his fiancé had told him that it was probably a bad time to get a Corvette anyway with the wedding coming up and all.

As you can see by the picture, Will and Margaret got married, and she gave him his Corvette chariot to start the journey of their new life together.

Coincidentally, that same day, my son arrived home with my Monterey Red Corvette Coupe home from Washington, making this a love story with TWO happy endings. —Tom Ball



### **Committed for Life**

Bill Hatch bought his 1957 Corvette brand new and has been driving it ever since.

The Corvette was his daily driver, taking him to work at Monrovia High School in California where he taught English and served as a basketball coach. On evenings and weekends the car took him to the beach for volleyball games and fun with friends. It took him on his first date with a girl named Marylyn, and in 1962, the car took them on their honeymoon. The Corvette was there when they had their two daughters, and now his granddaughters are taking turns riding in Grandpa's Corvette.

The car was \$3,400 new, and back then gas was only 29.9 cents per gallon but you can't put a price on the great memories Bill and Marylyn enjoyed ever since. —Cary Thomas

### **eMotion sickness**

My husband Wayne and I were always Corvette lovers but like most young couples we figured we'd have to put the dream of that two seater on hold to start a family.

We tried to have a baby but after several miscarriages, the doctors finally told us that we probably would not be able to have children. Switching gears, we went back to the idea of getting a Vette instead.

We found a 1969 C3 and bought it from a couple who were getting rid of it because they were expecting their first child.

We brought it home in July 1980 but as wonderful as it was, I seemed to get motion sickness whenever I was in it. Turned out, it wasn't motion sickness, but *morning* sickness instead! In the end, we had our beautiful miracle child, Kimberly, AND our Corvette. —Margie Daniels



AMERICA'S SPORTS CAR 9

Sources (all photos from Cary Thomas blogs, cited below):

Antonick, Mike. *Corvette Black Book, 1953-2023* (Gambier, OH: Michael Bruce Associates, 2023).

Thomas, Cary, “Bill Hatch: 55 Years with his Original 1957 Corvette,” August 7, 2012, <https://carys-corvettes.blogspot.com/2012/08/bill-hatch-55-years-with-his-original.html>.

Thomas, Cary, “Cary’s Corvette Continuity Challenge,” October 27, 2019, <https://carys-corvettes.blogspot.com/2019/10/carys-corvette-continuity-challenge.html>.

Thomas, Cary, “65th Anniversary for Bill Hatch’s Corvette, August 11, 2022, [https://carys-corvettes.blogspot.com/2022/08/65th-anniversary-for-bill-hatchs.html?utm\\_campaign=925054\\_Customer%20Spotlight%3A%20Bill%20Hitch%2FCary%20Thomas&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=CC%20Industries%20L.L.C.&dm\\_i=670C,JTRY,7QC1JS,2BYTZ,1](https://carys-corvettes.blogspot.com/2022/08/65th-anniversary-for-bill-hatchs.html?utm_campaign=925054_Customer%20Spotlight%3A%20Bill%20Hitch%2FCary%20Thomas&utm_medium=email&utm_source=CC%20Industries%20L.L.C.&dm_i=670C,JTRY,7QC1JS,2BYTZ,1).

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<sup>1</sup> Cary Thomas has for many years selflessly chronicled the personal and Corvette lives of his friend and neighbor Bill Hatch, writing several blogs and an article for the National Corvette Museum’s magazine about Bill. But Cary warrants a separate discussion in his own right, given his rich history and that his entire life has revolved around Corvettes: owning (nine of them, models ranging from 1959 to 2024), racing, writing about, rescuing, and even restoring them.

Cary’s nine owned Corvettes include the following:

- a 1959 (a fuelie with 4.56 rear end and metallic brakes) purchased while he was a teenager in 1966 which he drove to college and afterwards, winning a number of drag racing trophies
- a 1984 Corvette, purchased new, then given to his brother as a birthday gift in 1997
- a 1956 – a full restoration by Cary in his home garage (a restomod; see: <https://nans56.blogspot.com/>)
- a 1962 – also a full restoration, almost to NCRS standards (but a bit nicer!); (<https://carys62.blogspot.com/>)
- a 2003 50th Anniversary model, with Museum Delivery (<https://2003corvette.blogspot.com/>)

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- two mid-year Stingrays were “rescued” out of a garage in 2012 (and that story was published in the book, “50 Shades of Rust” (<https://carys-corvettes.blogspot.com/2012/06/operation-corvette-rescue-v.html>))
  - For a time he owned the 1967 from the above event (<https://carys-corvettes.blogspot.com/2013/10/some-progress-on-1967-corvette.html>)
  - a 2018 Z06 / Z07 that was a General Motors Display car then purchased by Cary as the first customer (<https://2018z06-corvette.blogspot.com/>) (this car later sold through Bring A Trailer)

All the above Corvettes have been sold, but he and his wife still own two:

- a 2024 Stingray (<https://carys-corvettes.blogspot.com/2023/12/nans-c8-mid-engine-corvette.html>)
- a 2024 Z06 (<https://carys-corvettes.blogspot.com/2023/12/nans-z06.html>)



In 2003 Cary wrote a book about his first Corvette and all his buddies and their Corvettes and muscle cars in the late 1960's. The book has enjoyed three sold-out printings and was featured in Vette Magazine (for information about his first Corvette, see: <https://beltsvilleshell.blogspot.com/>)