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## Love from the start: Americana Corvette Club takes fun seriously

By KYRA GOTTESMAN - Correspondent

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CHICO — From the moment the first one was unveiled in 1953 by General Motors, the Corvette has captured the imagination of Americans.

"I wanted one ever since I was a 12-year-old kid in junior high," said Tom Huston, president of the Americana Corvette Club.

"That was 1967 and the Corvette was the fastest thing on the road. It was winning races, and the style was awesome. I saw one drive by on the street and knew right then I was going to have one someday," he said.

The Americana Corvette Club was incorporated as a nonprofit in 1982. It was formed in August 1977 by a small group of Corvette enthusiasts from Beale Air Force Base and the Yuba City-Marysville area. Today, the club has 44 members, mostly couples in their mid-50s to late 60s who live in Butte and Glenn counties.

A social club

Some members race their corvettes, but the club is mostly a social club of folks who just "enjoy the heck out of their corvettes," said Huston.

"We have doctors, teachers, Chico State professors, retired business professionals and ranchers in the club. It's a pretty good variety of demographics," said Huston.

"Most of our members are couples and several members have several cars. Quite a few ladies in the club own their corvettes." Houston, along with his wife Carol, director of the School of Nursing at Chico State University, owns a fifth generation, 50th anniversary edition burgundy Corvette.

Some members take their corvettes out only for club outings

or to show; others, said Huston, use them as their "everyday" cars. But no matter how they enjoy their sports cars, they all have one thing in common: They fell in love with this American sports car when we they were young.

"Whether we saw one for the first time diving by, or we had an uncle who owned one or saw a picture in a magazine, we've dreamed of having one all our lives," said Huston.

"I waited till the kids were grown and out of the house before I bought mine. I guess some would call it a mid-life crisis, I just call it the fulfillment of a life-long dream."

Runs, shows and shines

Club members enjoy the companionship of their fellow Corvette owners during monthly dinner meetings that rotate between Logan's Road House in Chico and Cornucopia Restaurant in Oroville. Some like the car shows they participate in, the "show and shines," which are mini car shows where the owners drive their Corvettes and then shine them up for viewing.

Others like the holiday parties or the day and weekend runs to Quincy, South Lake Tahoe and Coos Bay, Ore.

"It's a group that I felt immediately comfortable with," said Cindy Scott. "They're like family to me; everybody looks after you to make sure you're doing OK.



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"When we do those fun runs, it just makes my heart jump when I see all those cars in a row. It's awesome, just glorious," said Scott, who purchased her 2000 silver convertible in April 2010. She joined the club two months later.

Keep it local

While members take their cars and their fun seriously, they are also committed to making a difference for others. The club supports two organizations, the Jesus Center, a nonprofit organization that provides food and a safe place for respite to the homeless; and the Esplanade House, a shelter and life- and work-skills service program for homeless families.

Americana Corvette Club raises money through raffles at monthly meetings, special events and through its largest fundraiser, "Rods, Ribs and Rides."

"We've done it in conjunction with Rolling Hills Casino in Corning for the past two years. It's a fun event and the funds we receive from the registrations for the car show — that's the 'rods' part of it — we contribute," said Huston.

On average, the ACC raises and donates \$6,000, divided between the Esplanade House and the Jesus Center.

"Everything in the club really revolves around charity. That's one of our concerns: To help the community. It's such a cool thing," said Scott, who works in the Costco gas station on East 20th Street.

"I see every day all these people walking to the local shelter. It just touches my heart these families with kids and women with babies. There's a big need, especially in this economy, for charities to help out in the local community and to keep it local. That's what we do."

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Americana Corvette Club

Membership: Open to any Corvette owner; \$35 annual family membership

Meetings: Monthly on the third Thursday at 7p.m.  
Next meeting: Tonight at Logan's Road House, 1900 E. 20th St. Chico

Next Fundraiser: Show & Shine at Logan's Road House, Saturday, 6 p.m. in conjunction with the Drifters Car Club and the Harley Hog Group of Chico. 15 percent of restaurant proceeds from the evening will be divided among the three groups. Americana Corvette Club will donate its portion to the Jesus Center and Esplanade House

For more: [www.americnacorvetteclub.org](http://www.americnacorvetteclub.org).



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