

A Mid Life Crisis *by Terry Brim*

Pete Cerar was always a car guy. Like many of us who were in high school in the late 50s or early 60s, cars were well, sort of a way of like, just part of our psychic.

Pete remembers his dad buying "Junkers" at the beginning of summer during his high school years for Pete to drive to work during the summer and then he would sell the car in Sept. According to Pete, he would try to "spiff'em" up. Of course whenever Pete had a hot date, he would drive his dad's silver on silver 59' Chevy convertible.....WOW!

Like many of us, after high school, came college, military services, marriage, family, etc. You all know the story. During all those years however, Pete had always wanted an old corvette, but could do nothing about it.

Fast forward to his mid 40s. Pete, he and his wife Judy were sitting at the breakfast table one morning and Pete turns to her and says "I think I'm having a mid-life crisis" According to Pete,

Judy's eyes got real big, she said "really". Pete said yea, I think I would like to buy an old Vette.....Judy said "oh, ok" (sigh of relief) and that was that, Pete now had the green light and he was on his way.....way to go Pete!

Enter Al Kationa, Pete had known Al for many years and knew he was into vettes. Pete wanted something in the late 50's. He had graduated from high school in 58' and Judy had graduated in 59'.

By this time after going to shows with Al and doing his homework, Pete knew he wanted a 58' or 59' high horse fuel injected car. As

luck would have it, Al had a buddy up in Corning, NY that was restoring just such a car. It was a 59' high horse fuelie, black over red with

silver coves....just What the doctor ordered!

Pete and Al flew up to NY with a friend in a small piper cub to look at the car.....it was just what Pete wanted and a deal

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was cut. According to Pete and verified by Al, it was a trip neither will soon forget. Turns out they ran into to

some very severe weather on the return trip, wings iced up, air pockets, the whole bit and neither knew for sure if they would ever see the vette again.

This was in the winter of 1987/1988. This was not the first vette Pete actually bought however. Although, he had signed a

contract for the 59' in the winter, it was not quite finished and in the spring of 1988, Pete and Al went to Knoxville



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Where Pete found a white /red 61' fuelie. He bought the 61', brought it home (actually had to have Craig Egbert trailer it home because the brakes went out) and for 11 weeks, Jeff Bernhardt and Craig went over the car making it "right".

Meanwhile in May of 1988, the 59' was delivered to Pete with the odometer reading a mere 43434 miles. As a side note, the car now reads 45908 miles on the odometer. Pete says his goal is to keep the miles under 1K per year. The car is now 47 years old so he is sticking true to his word!

Pete has traced all owners back to 1965 and has notarized letters from them authenticating both the mileage and the fact the car is an original fuelie....

One of the reasons the car has such low mileage is that it sat in parts for 18 years from 1970 to 1988.



In 2001, Pete decided he wanted a C5 for taking trips and going on the road. He sold his 1961 fuelie to Craig Egbert in late 2001 and began his search



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True to his word, Pete changed out the interior to red, (and a lot of guys thought he wouldn't do it!!) put a Corsa exhaust system on it, red valve

for the C5. Just like when he started his search for the 59' Pete knew what he wanted.....a fully loaded yellow convertible with red interior! Now what are the



covers, painted the brake calipers red with yellow corvette insignia compliments of Craig Egbert again, put red corvette



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letters on the front and back, and put mirrors under the trunk!



The car now has 12K miles on it, still not a lot, but he and Judy do drive the car! Pete says the car is nice because he can just jump in the car, go see their kids, take a road trip ala Bloomington, Carlisle, Columbus, his son Chris lives in Columbus, Bowling Green plant tour, etc.

The car is equipped with a 6-speed, HUD, 12 disc CD player, polished aluminum wheels and all the other goodies you would expect to see in a C5. On a personal note, I can only tell you that on a highway, Pete is a tough guy to keep up with. I think his cruise control has a minimum setting of 80 MPH!!!

Let me return to the 59' for just a moment. During the process of doing historical research on the 59', Pete discovered that at one time, one of the previous owners had painted the car blue and another had used black

shoe polish to dye the interior black! Back then I guess Corvette's were just another car to customize and personalize however one wanted.....

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THE CLOCK STORY...At the conclusion of interviewing Pete for this article, we came out to his drive way where the 59' was parked and



as we approached the car, we heard a rather loud tic tic tic. In Pete's own words, he uttered "what the hell is that?" Turns out that while

we were in his house doing the interview, the gears driving the second hand on the clock in the 59' had stuck and would

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not rotate. Obviously, Pete was not a happy camper! He had had the clock rebuilt 18 years ago when he first got the car and was going to have to have Roger of Roger's Clock rebuild it again.



WOW. 18 years seems like a long time for an old corvette clock to keep running, especially the mechanical style.

While sitting at Carlisle with Pete and his son Chris, retelling the story about the clock, Chris and I did a little calculation. Turns out that Pete disconnects the battery whenever the car sits in storage, so if he only put 2474 miles on the car in 18 years, driving an average of 40 MPH, that's less than 62 hours real time on the clock! I told Pete he should take the clock back to Roger's clock and tell him it ran for less than 2 weeks before it failed.....doubt that he did that however.

