

SPACE AGE STAR - OCTOBER 2014

**OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SPACE AGE CHEVROLET REGION
OF THE AACA**



**MOTORAMIC CHEVROLET FOR 1955 TURNS
SIXTY YEARS OLD**

TIME FOR HERSHEY!



ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILE CLUB
of AMERICA

FROM THE EDITOR - RUSSELL HEIM

We have a lot going on this month. Our membership has grown wonderfully since we received our charter. We have over 40 members now. Thanks to everyone who has joined and to Bob Parrish for the AACA Speedster article. That was great publicity and many members joined after reading Bob's article. We also received some new members who read about the region in Old Cars Weekly, so thanks to them for mentioning us.

We didn't discuss including 1955 and later Chevy trucks when we started the region, but some of the new members own trucks, so we'll welcome the "Space Age" trucks as well.

In this issue we'll celebrate the 60th anniversary of the fabulous 1955 "Motoramic" Chevrolet. So much has been written about these cars which I won't revisit here. Instead, we'll look at how Chevy presented the cars at their introduction.

The beautiful Bel Air Sport Coupe on the cover belongs to member Ray Fowler. Thanks to Ray for sending the photo. A few other members also sent photos which will appear in the next few issues. Please send as many photos and stories as you can. They'll make the newsletter more enjoyable.

Hershey is almost here. The unofficial region spaces are in the Red Field North, spaces RNI 82-86. This is the last row of the field, along the bushes next to Hersheypark Drive. The TIP tent is at the end of our row.

We'll hold an informal region meeting on Thursday afternoon at two. In case of bad weather call my cell phone at 516-445-7165 for alternate arrangements. The weather has to be better than it was last year.

Feel free to stop by and visit at any time during the meet. We'll have a few extra chairs and at least one member should be at the spaces. We'll have some region recruiting flyers available. We won't be at the spaces on Saturday because we'll be at the car show.

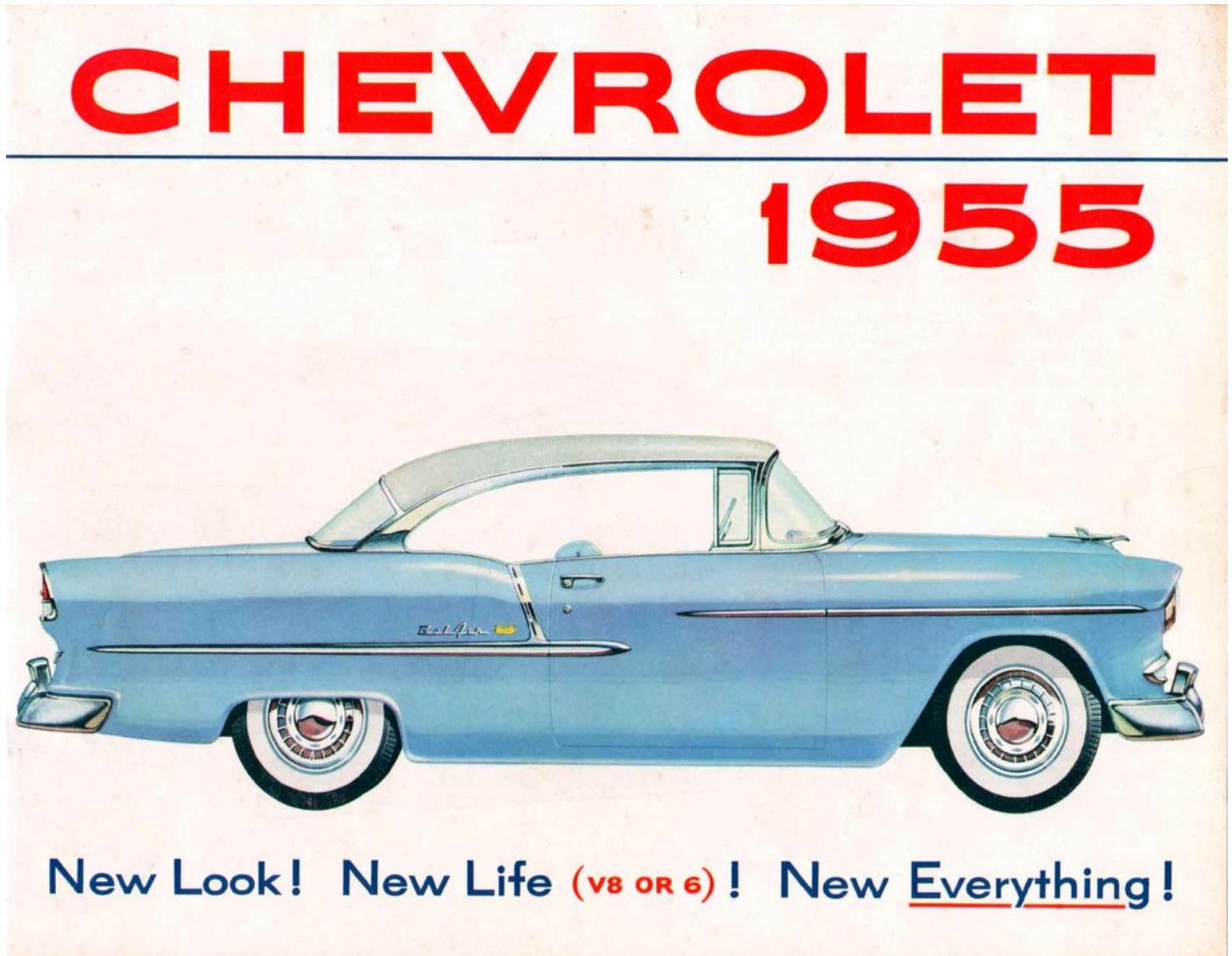
Member Laurie Hollis mentioned that her family has spaces in the Orange Field, if you're over that way stop by and say hello.



Chevrolet's *red-hot* hill-flatteners!
162 H.P. V8 - 180 H.P. V8

MOTORAMIC CHEVROLET FOR 1955 TURNS 60 - BY RUSSELL HEIM

The 1955 Chevrolet is best remembered for its dramatic styling and the introduction of the famed small-block V8. These cars were a huge departure from prior Chevrolet offerings and Chevrolet advertising and brochure writers must have worked a lot of overtime for the introduction of the 1955 models in the fall of 1954. Let's take a look at how Chevrolet presented their all-new car for 1955.



The writers bragged that the Motoramic Chevrolet for 1955 was far more than a new car. "It's a new concept of low-cost motoring...a low-priced car that looks, performs and rides like the finest on the road!" Here's a list of what was new for the 1955 model year:

- New Turbo-Fire V8. The brochures description: "As modern as tomorrow with quick mighty power and great smoothness and quietness. The V8 was available in 162 or 180 horsepower form.
- Two lively new sixes, the Blue-Flame 136 and Blue-Flame 123.
- 12-volt electrical system. "Gives you more extra reserve for all electrical needs. You get faster starts, full charge at lower speeds, positive ignition at all speeds."
- All new body by Fisher featuring: New Sweep-Sight Windshield, new unitized side construction, new high-level ventilation, new

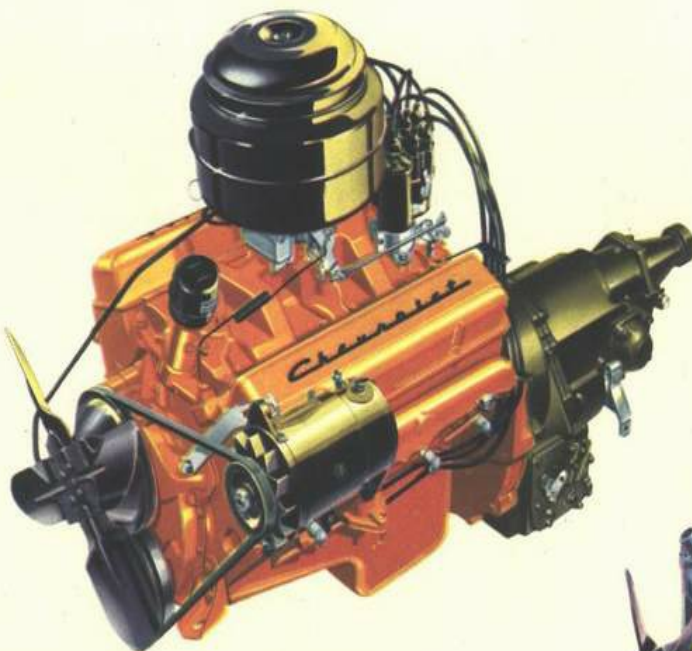
- frame, new rubber body mounts, and new low-level luggage compartment.
- New Chassis
- New Glide-Ride front suspension (fancy name for ball joints).
- New Anti-Dive braking control.
- New Engine Supports.
- New Linkage-Type power steering
- New All-Weather air conditioning by Frigid-air.
- Center glove compartment.

- Ball race steering
- Improved transmissions
- New Hotchkiss drive

They touted the Sweep-Sight windshield as the newest thing in style and sight. It curved gracefully around to the A pillars, giving the driver a wider view of the road ahead.

They referred to the new exterior design as "Show-car Styling" and described the cars as "wider and longer looking, and much, much lower." A driver could now "see all four fenders from behind the wheel." They described the new interior as looking luxurious.

Introducing the Great New 162-H. P. "TURBO-FIRE V8"



A V8 as modern as tomorrow, with quick, mighty power and great smoothness and quietness. It's a valve-in-head husky with 8 to 1 compression ratio to squeeze greater power from every drop of gas.



12-Volt Electrical System

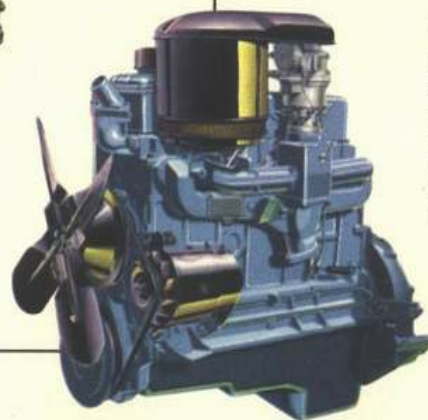
Double last year's 6-volt system, Chevrolet's new 12-volt system gives you more extra reserve for all electrical needs. You get faster starts, full charge at lower speeds, positive ignition at all speeds.

Chevrolet Presents Two Lively New Sixes



"BLUE-FLAME 136"

This new 136-H.P. valve-in-head engine gives you the kind of power and pep that makes every mile more fun. 7.5 to 1 compression ratio, four-point suspension, new cooling and lubrication systems, plus other new features make it the finest six in its field.



"BLUE-FLAME 123"

A new 123-H.P. engine designed to give you the kind of action you want. It's a valve-in-head engine, full of engineering features that mean performance, economy and long life.

EXTRA! Super "Turbo-Fire V8" with 180 H. P.

Here's an optional "Turbo-Fire V8" engine that packs a 180-horsepower wallop for even greater "get-up-and-go" with smooth, instant response. It features a 4-barrel carburetor plus a special intake manifold, dual free-flow exhaust system, a high capacity oil-bath air cleaner and all other great New Chevrolet V8 engine developments.



It's Making '55 Famous—For Fun!

Chevy instantly became a young man's car. The image changed from reliable but dull family cars to dynamic performers. Chevrolet's ad agency proclaimed the new cars as "The Hot One". Automotive historians stated that the product shift by Chevrolet in 1955 was second only to Ford's introduction of the Model A.

The new cars were a big gamble for Chevrolet that paid off. They had their best ever sales year, not topped until 1962. Model year 1955 production was 1,713,478. The new V8 was popular with 740,652 sales. Powerglide gained in popularity, sales reached 880,234 in 1955.

Long, low and wide was a major 1950's automobile styling trend and the 1955 Chevy was a great example of that theme. The 1955 Chevrolets were lower and wider than the 1954 cars, and appeared to be longer despite retaining the 114 inch wheelbase of the 1954 models.





The 1600 1600 Sport Coupe

Fresher than springtime!

Gayer than the first bright flowers!

With a new V8 and two new 6s to choose from!

What could turn a young man's fancy
to thoughts of love
quicker than the new Chevrolet!

A realist might say that a young lady is more likely to arouse thoughts of love than an automobile. But it would be obvious to the informed that a realist with such a literal outlook had never commanded a new Motorama Chevrolet with a "Turbo-Fire V8" (or with one of the new 6's) under its hood!

For here is an experience in plus-power that will delight the senses as fully as the long, low lines of the new Chevrolet will delight the eye. . . . There are many new features about the new Chevrolet that the cold-minded will embrace with all the logic and reason at their command. . . . just as Chevrolet's fresh styling and gay colors and great power will send the fanciful soaring! Won't you take the time to see and drive the new Chevrolet? . . . Chevrolet Division of General Motors, Detroit 2, Michigan.

Motorama



Stealing the thunder from the high-priced cars!

TAKE YOUR CHOICE OF 6 NEW POWER TEAMS

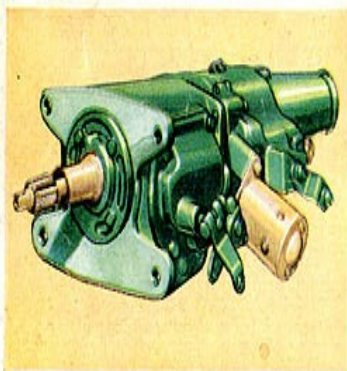
- | | | | | | |
|----------|---|----------|-----------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | 123 h.p. SIX
with Standard
Transmission | 2 | 123 h.p. SIX
with
OVERDRIVE | 3 | 136 h.p. SIX
with
POWERGLIDE |
| 4 | 162 h.p. V8
with Standard
Transmission | 5 | 162 h.p. V8
with
OVERDRIVE | 6 | 162 h.p. V8
with
POWERGLIDE |

Both Overdrive and Powerglide Power Teams optional at extra cost.

BIGGEST POWER-DRIVE CHOICE IN CHEVROLET HISTORY

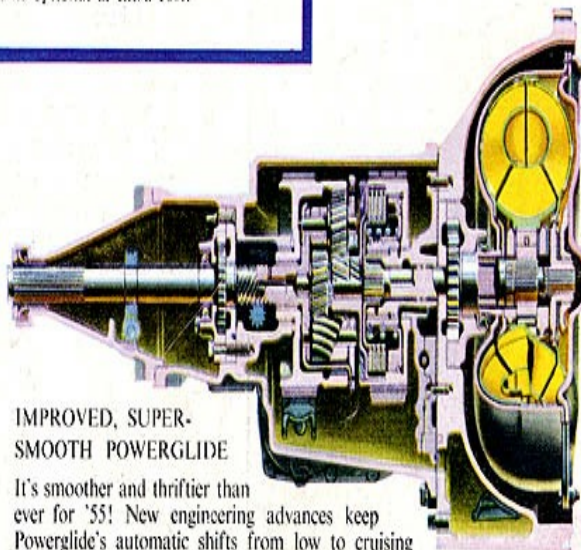
In the new Chevrolet you have your choice of *three* great valve-in-head engines, including the new V8—and your choice of *three* advanced drives, including new Touch-Down Overdrive. All in all, you can select from six different power-drive combinations (as shown in the table at left)—the biggest choice in Chevrolet history. You get power as you like it in Chevrolet for '55!

Extra! The new Plus-Power option boosts Chevrolet's V8 horsepower to 180 ... brings you even more exciting performance! Available at extra cost on V8 models.



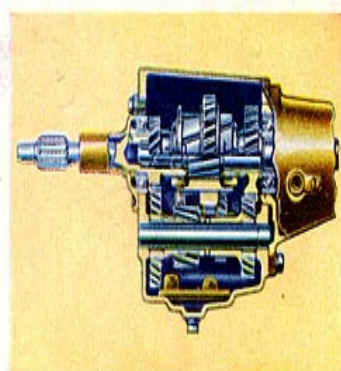
NEW TOUCH-DOWN OVERDRIVE

Here's great new driving flexibility and wonderfully responsive performance combined with big gas savings! It's optional on all models at extra cost.



IMPROVED, SUPER-SMOOTH POWERGLIDE

It's smoother and thrifter than ever for '55! New engineering advances keep Powerglide's automatic shifts from low to cruising range a smooth, silent secret. You move away from a standing start in an unbroken stride of power. And Powerglide now brings you even greater durability. Optional on all models at extra cost.



NEW HEAVY-DUTY SYNCHRO-MESH TRANSMISSION

The very finest in standard driving with outstanding gasoline economy! Extra built-in strength and durability, too!

All illustrations and specifications contained in this literature are based on the latest product information available at the time of publication approval. The right is reserved to make changes at any time without notice in prices, colors, materials, equipment, specifications and models, and also to discontinue models.

CHEVROLET MOTOR DIVISION OF GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION, DETROIT 2, MICHIGAN

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

Efficient, overhead valve V8 engines were gaining popularity and Chevrolet wanted to add this type of engine to their line-up. State of the Art features of the new V8 were lightweight aluminum pistons, forged steel crankshaft, short-stroke cylinder dimensions and lightweight independent rocker arms. They increased the compression on the six cylinder engine, raising horsepower to 123 on synchromesh cars and 136 on Powerglide cars. The V8's bore and stroke was 3.75x3 inches and it had a compression ratio of 8:1. It developed 162 hp at 4400 rpm with two barrel carb, and 180 hp at 4600 rpm with four barrel carb.

They upgraded the rear suspension with bigger leaf springs that sat outside the frame rails with diagonally mounted shock absorbers. Front suspension improvements included ball joints, coil springs and unequal-length A-arms. Despite being lighter, the new frame had better twist resistance than the prior one.





The V8 gave the division an instant reputation as a builder of performance cars. No one thought of Chevy in that light before 1955. That year Chevrolets won 13 short-track NASCAR events, were very competitive in NHRA drag racing and a Bel Air convertible was the Indianapolis 500 pace car. In contemporary road tests Ford's 182 horsepower cars had trouble keeping up with Chevy's 162 horsepower cars and were no match for the 180 horsepower Chevys.

Despite all the changes, Chevrolet didn't abandon their traditional customers. Buyers who were uninterested in all the glitz could still get a plain 150 model sedan with a six-cylinder engine and a three-on-the-tree

synchronesh transmission. They retained the 1954 series names, 150, 210 and Bel Air.

The Corvette's styling was unchanged, but it now became a true performance car. The six was still available, but buyers had the option of a specially tuned 195 horsepower version of the new V8. The new engine didn't help Corvette sales that year, they sold fewer than 700. Reports of the car's demise circulated during 1955.



CHEVY GOES SMALL FOR 1976

By Russell Heim

By the start of the 1976 model year, Chevrolet faced fierce competition from small, foreign made cars. In a booklet entitled “1976 Chevy Small Car Digest”, they showed they were ready for the fight.

The booklet’s cover shows photos of Chevy’s small car line-up and curiously includes a Camaro. Inside, the new for 1976 Chevette receives four pages of attention while Monza, Vega and Nova receive two pages each. The Camaro only receives one page, the back cover.

EPA mileage figures are featured for each car, using the lowest performance engine and transmission combination. For Camaro and Nova this is the 250 cubic inch six with a three-speed stick. The other cars EPA figures featured a four-cylinder and four-speed stick shift. A few years earlier, Nova and Camaro were Chevrolet’s smallest cars and were heavily advertised with high performance V8 engines, a sign of how quickly things changed.

The Chevette is prominently featured in the little booklet. In a sign of the times, the booklet’s copy compares Chevette to Volkswagen Rabbit, Toyota Corolla and Datsun B-210. Until the mid-1970’s, foreign competition never figured in Chevrolet’s advertising. Some positive Chevette features:

- International design
- High EPA mileage figures (40 highway/28 city)
- Large cargo space
- Short turning circle
- 17 anti-corrosion protection methods used
- More leg room than Datsun B-210
- Prices started as low as \$2899

The most ironic statement in the Chevette write-up is that the car was basically a metric car and, “as you know, the metric system is on its way to becoming the standard of American measurement.”

After promoting the new Chevette, the booklet focuses on the second year Monza. Chevy claimed that the Monza was a lot of small car. They bragged of EPA mileage figures of 35 highway and 23 city using the 140 cubic inch four cylinder engine. The Monza section features the Towne Coupe in two photos and the 2+2 hatchback in one. Luxury features are mentioned in this section:

- White stripe tires
- Body-contoured bucket seats
- Sill-to-sill carpeting
- Full wheel-covers
- Prices starting at \$3358.85

Vega, now in its sixth and penultimate model year, was described as being tougher in four important ways. They offered a five-year/60,000 mile engine guarantee (also available on Monza). The guarantee covered repairs to the cylinder block and head, all internal engine parts, intake and exhaust manifolds, and the water pump.

The other areas of new toughness were the new torque-arm rear suspension, corrosion resistance and brakes. The Vega was now “built to take it.” They advertised the mileage figures as 38 highway and 22 city.

The booklet’s Nova section features hatchback coupes and four-door sedans in Nova and Concours trim. America’s “most popular compact” achieved EPA figures of 26 miles per gallon on the highway and 18 in the city.

Nova and Concours (a Nova with extra Chrome, a hood ornament, and fake wood interior decals) were described as a small family car that's not too small, with seating for six and a large trunk. They even mentioned available "responsive V8 power."

It was a stretch for Chevy to include Camaro in their economy minded booklet. Although the car had always been available with a six-cylinder, its image focused on high-performance and sportiness. Despite all this sportiness, "Camaro is quite a sensible car." It had a nice size, reasonable price and good gas mileage. EPA figures matched the Nova's. If the booklet's back page is accurate, the LT and Rally Sport packages were available with the six.



JOE SALVO'S 1970 CHEVELLE SUPER SPORT 396



Thanks to Sierra Madre, California member Joe Salvo for submitting information about and photos of his beautiful Chevelle. The 1970 Chevelle is one of the prettiest and most significant Chevrolets ever built.

Joe states that he has a lot of original paper work for this car, including the protecto-plate, the dealer invoice, the build sheet and all the manuals. He also has the car's original set of keys.

The Chevelle is Cranberry Red and is a numbers matching car. It has the following options with RPO code in parenthesis:

- Hood and deck lid stripes (D88)
- Roof drip rail moldings (B80)
- Wheel opening moldings (B96)
- SS Door Emblems (B22)
- Hidden Windshield Wipers with Washer (C24)
- 350 horsepower 396 cubic inch V8 (L34)
- Turbo-Hydramatic 400 automatic transmission (M40)
- Cowl Induction Hood (ZL2)
- 12-bolt rear with 3:31 ratio (G94)
- Special performance suspension (F41)
- Power front disc brakes (JL2)



- Power rear drum brakes (J50)
- F-70-14 Firestone Wide Oval Tires with five-spoke rally wheels (PL4)
- Floor console (D55)
- Front Strato Bucket Seats (A51)
- Deluxe seat belts and shoulder harness (AK1)
- Push-button AM/FM radio (U69)
- Windshield radio antenna (U76)
- Glove compartment light (U27)
- Deluxe gauges, including tachometer (U14)
- Electric clock (U35)
- SS396 Package (ZL3)
- Four-season air conditioning (C60)
- Power steering (N40)
- Tinted glass (A01)

Joe states that the car is a 15 time AACA award winner, including a repeat Grand National. He enjoys showing and maintaining the car with his wife Shella, and son Dalton. He says they show the car six to eight times a year and add approximately 600 miles a year to the odometer.

This sport coupe was assembled at the Baltimore plant in March, 1970. It was delivered to the original owner on April 10, 1970 at Bill Martz Chevrolet in Purcellville, Virginia.

Joe bought the car from a classic car dealer in Missouri. A previous owner had performed a complete rotisserie restoration on the Chevelle. Since Joe bought the car it's been featured in *Muscle Car Review* magazine.

Thanks to Joe for sharing this great car with us. I urge all members to share their "Space Age Chevrolet", regardless of condition. You must be tired of reading about my cars - there's only one I haven't included.

REGION MEETING AGENDA FOR 10/9/14 2 PM, HERSHEY PA

1. Dues. Right now we're not charging dues. We think this is important to build membership. We'll discuss the merits of this and the possibility of charging dues later if we incur expenses.
2. Region logo. So far no one has stepped forward to create a logo. We need one so we can start our Hemmings.com web site and a possible Facebook page. Your editor has tried creating a logo, but has been unsuccessful.
3. A possible presentation at the AACA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia in February 2015.
4. Publicizing the region. See items 2 and 3 above. Promotional brochures are available at the meeting.
5. Open discussion.

Please don't feel left out if you won't be attending Hershey. We decided to hold the

region meeting at the fall meet because a number of members will attend. With a non-geographic region, it's difficult to get everyone together. Anyway the meeting will be informal and we'll publish the meeting minutes in the December newsletter. If you're not going to Hershey, please email comments and concerns to your editor at JetSmooth61@optimum.net.

Let's hope for four days of good weather this year. If it rains like it did last year, we'll move the meeting to an indoor location later in the day. Please call me at 516-445-7165 if the weather is bad on the 9th.

Remember, this is your newsletter and I'm happy to publish any photos and stories you send.

I hope everyone has a great fall season and safe travel to and from all your antique car activities.

I'll send the next newsletter around December 1st and it will feature 1965 Chevrolets.

