

spring... ON THE ROAD

The life story of a '78 Chevy Silverado

BY ROXIE MURPHY
ADVOCATE STAFF WRITER
rmurphy@wardpub.com

Anyone who thinks 17-years-old is too young to find lasting love hasn't met Scott Kneeskern, the original owner of Black Beauty, a 1978 Chevy Silverado recently restored to its original glory.

"I was a senior in high school when I ordered it, only 17-years-old, and they let me sign for it," Kneeskern said. "A friend of mine went with me and bought him a new one too."

Kneeskern had been looking for a Chevy truck to restore.

"A guy I knew in Bland, Jim Rector, traveled all around delivering Michelin Tires," Kneeskern said. "I had been looking for one and he was looking for one for me. I asked him if he found me one and he said 'no, go buy a brand new one.'"

So he did. At Weidinger Chevrolet in Vienna, he placed his order and signed for the truck. Later, his mother who worked at the local bank had to co-sign on the loan for him.

"I bought a brand new one and ordered it the way I wanted," Kneeskern said. "My best friend then was Bill Baxter, we both worked at Lorots Grocery where the pharmacy and library are now — he went with me."

Kneeskern knew he wanted a 1978 Chevy Silverado — the name of which is derived from the English word Silver and the Spanish word El Dorado. "I wanted a 4-wheel drive and ordered almost everything you could except cruise control. I got pretty well everything you could back then."

The truck had four optional motors to choose from — one standard and three optional upgrades. He chose a 350 cubic inch engine (5.7-liter) small-block V8 with a 4.00 and 3.48-inch bore and stroke with between 145 to 370 horsepower.

The four-speed automatic came with a black exterior and burnt orange interior, a choice of cloth or vinyl, that the catalog listed as "top-of-the-line." The instrument cluster that included voltmeter, oil pressure and engine temperature needle gates, air conditioning, heat, tachometer, and radio was bright brush finished.

The exterior was jeweled with bright upper body and lower body moldings, a full tailgate insert and chrome Silverado nameplates.

"I used my truck," Kneeskern said. "I hauled wood, hay, everything. I used it as a truck and it was rusted out and it was getting in bad shape."

He took the truck hunting, fishing and hauled wood. Before its restoration, it sat at 370,000 miles on the odometer.

"It has been pretty well a part of my life, Kneeskern said. "I considered selling and a person I run around with said 'you can't sell that truck.' I called it Black Beauty 'cause other people call it that, but I haven't really named it."

In the 1970s and '80s, CBs were a big deal.

"Scooty was my (handle)," he said, and a decal with the name was proudly displayed on sliding back glass.

Kneeskern married and had children and eventually, the truck was replaced with another daily driver. So he started restoring it.

"I wanted to keep it the same," Kneeskern said. "No fabrications. All original."

He called Bernie and Michelle Kolb with Classic Rides Restoration, formerly located across from Rector Radiator, and asked the couple about restoring the '78 classic.

"My truck was one of the last ones he finished there before he moved the shop to their home in Linn," Kneeskern said. "They did the restoration and I was in there every week talking about what we was going to do."

Restoring the outside of the work truck required a lot of cutting and welding in



KNEESKERN PROUDLY shows off his restored 1978 Chevrolet Silverado (top photo) at the Belle park. His daughter and son-in-law supplied the "Scooty" nameplate (above) on the sliding back glass. Scooty was Kneeskern's CB handle in the 1970s and '80s.



PHOTOS BY ROXIE MURPHY

Paint & Bodywork Specialists

RODGERS
Autobody
COLLISION REPAIR

ADAMRODGERS16@YAHOO.COM • 20774 MARIES RD. 310, BELLE • 573.680.5578

Guffey Auto Parts

711 Hwy 28, Belle, MO 65013
573-859-3651
Mon. - Fri. 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. • Sat. 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. • Sun. Closed.

We
Have it
In Stock!

Shell ROTELLA
T4 TRIPLE PROTECTION
15W-40
HEAVY DUTY DIESEL ENGINE OIL

The Engine Oil That Works As Hard As You. **Shell ROTELLA**

Who knew?

We could shop **8 Different Companies** to find the lowest rates for your auto insurance.

- Dairyland
- Travelers
- Progressive
- Grinnell Mutual
- United Home
- Hagerty
- Gainsco
- Graham-Rogers

Call or stop in for a policy review and free quote.

Curtman Insurance Agency
Bryan Curtman & Sherri Biermann
111 South 1st Street • Owensville, MO 65066
curtmanagency@gmail.com
(573) 437-8258
~Farm~Home~Business~Auto~Life~Accident~Special Events

'68 Corvette: Don't ask, it's not for sale

BY LAURA SCHIERMEIER
ADVOCATE STAFF WRITER
lschiermeier@wardpub.com

About 25 years ago, Vienna resident Steve Deaton said his wife, Diana Duncan Deaton, told him she had a co-worker who had an older car she might want to sell.

Diana worked for the postal service and had filled in for someone at the Newburg Post Office. A woman who worked there told her about how her husband had passed away and she had a Chevrolet Corvette she "may sell."

Steve said "we like old cars" and Diana told the woman that when she was ready to sell, to call her as they'd like to take a look at it. Two years passed and the lady with the Corvette contacted them, asking them if they were still interested. Steve and Diana had two kids and a house payment. "Of course I was interested, but I didn't know if we could afford it."

They drove to where the lady lived and walked into the garage where the 1968 Corvette was stored. He said they had not taken six steps into the garage when Diana turned to him and said, "We need to buy it." They loved the Lemans blue Corvette and they bought it. "We had to borrow money to buy it, but I've never regretted it," he said.

The Corvette was in good condition

with 95,000 miles on it and did not need much work. Steve said he paid twice as much as the car cost when it was new. It's a fun car to drive and he likes the way it makes him feel. "It's not a long trip car," he said. "It's a drive to Argyle and back car" then it put back in the garage.

The car is a hobby he has. He says he will never sell it. "It's a car I really like and my wife gave me permission to buy it. If she said I could have it, hell ya!"

Steve says its great fun to drive a "Cool

How fast does it go? Steve says he actually doesn't know because he hasn't pushed it that far. "I bought it because I like old cars and because Diana said I could have it." He still likes old cars, particularly this one.

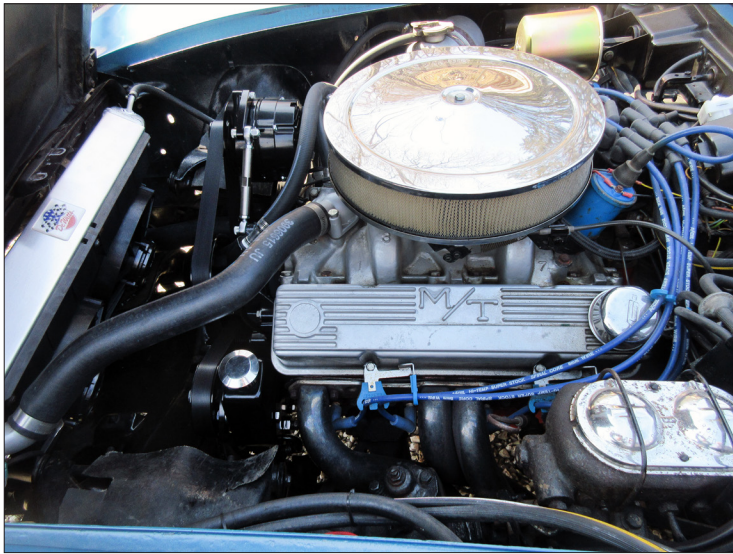
Not too long ago, he had Alex Haller and Wayne Henderson do some work on the Corvette, going through most of the drive train, vacuum system and made updates. Also, Justin Haslag owner of Top Notch Body Shop replace the carburetor with a new fuel injection system. This was a big upgrade and improved the performance and efficiency of the engine.

The car is mostly original. He replaced the interior carpet but not the seats. It looks great and with the new fuel injection system, it is mechanically better than the original. The car is 54 years old yet has less than 100,000 miles on it. "I would not hesitate to take it anywhere."

Steve takes the '68 to some local car shows, but the shows "are not my life" as they are for some car enthusiasts. His kids, Josh Deaton and Rachel Deaton Kempker, like the car, too, but they are afraid to drive it because they know his attachment to it.

This Corvette was manufactured in St. Louis. It has a four speed manual

See **Corvette**, Page 14



Car." When he drives the Corvette, it's a quick attention getter. People look at the car and some give a thumbs up, others wave, all indicating they like the car. "It catches your eye. It's a good looking car," he said. Corvettes have an American mystic surrounding them.



STEVE AND DIANA DEATON purchased the 1968 Corvette over 25 years ago. They both liked old cars and enjoyed going places in it. It's a cool car and usually attracts attention. Deaton's view of the Gasconade River (photo above) from the top portion of his property could be featured on a calendar. He enjoys being outside and having a fire burning. He had the carburetor replaced with a new fuel injection system (photo inset above), a big upgrade that improved the efficiency and performance of the engine. Deaton stands by his Corvette at a car show in Argyle. The only thing non-original with the interior of Deaton's Corvette (above right) is the new carpet on the floorboard.

PHOTOS SUBMITTED



*When Good as New
Isn't Good Enough*

Professional Auto Body,
Paint & Restoration

MIDWAY
PRO
AUTO BODY, Inc.

573-422-3961 33711 HWY. 63 NORTH • VIENNA
Todd Schoene, Owner

pbschoene2015@gmail.com

63 Auto & Truck Parts LLC
13986 Highway 63 • Vichy
Just north of the Vichy Wye
on Hwy. 63

573-299-4300
**Used Auto Parts from
late 90s to current
vehicles**

Used Tires from \$20;
Used batteries from \$30 with core

Hours: 8-5 p.m. M-F;
8-noon Sat.

**Current inventory can be
seen on car-part.com**

Mike Prigge • Logan Prigge

Chip Repair & Replacement ✓ ✓ Home & Auto

**Double Check
Glass Service, LLC**

"We check it twice, to make
sure it's right"

Mobile: 573-694-1524
Fax: 573-493-2592
Email: dcheck.shane@aol.com
Vienna, Missouri

Shane Hoecker, Owner/Technician

**Raising the Bar
on Car Care**

- Brakes • Exhaust • Tires
- Lube • Hauling Service
- Light Mechanical Work

BUD'S AUTO & HAULING

505 Hwy. 63 South
Vienna, MO 65582
573-422-3414

**HALLER
Automotive**
573-422-9904

**Trusted Service
& Repair**

cars | trucks | vans
foreign | domestic

Including: AC Repair
General Automotive Repair
Alignments | Oil Changes
Batteries | Brakes | Tires
State Inspections

908 Hwy 63 South | Vienna Mo | 573-422-9904
(former Weidinger Chevrolet building)



BEFORE RESTORATION the '78 Silverado was showing signs of wear with rust around the wheel wells (left) and thread bare seats (above). Kneeskern points out (below) that the finished truck has the original burnt orange dashboard. An upholstery company out of Taos, Mo. had to dye black material burnt orange for the new bench seat.



TOP PHOTOS SUBMITTED, OTHER PHOTOS BY ROXIE MURPHY



Silverado • from page 12

partial or full panels. "New front fenders, another truck that a guy had give to me we used the bed off of it and put it on my truck cause mine was rusted out completely," Kneeskern said. "Above the tires, front fenders was rusted, back fenders, rocker panels and cab corners. He pulled all that off and cleaned up the frame." Kneeskern had Kolb spray the underbelly of the truck with rhino lining to help prevent new rust from forming. "He replaced all the springs, which were original and pretty droopy," Kneeskern said. "In 1980 I put a three-inch lift kit on it with a homemade lift kit. That was replaced with a four-inch lift kit cause they

don't make the three-inch kit anymore." The engine was replaced with a turn-key 350 crate motor like the one Kneeskern originally ordered. He hired TJ Upholstery in Taos, Mo., to reupholster the burnt orange seats and interior. "He put it all back to the same color, but you couldn't come up with the material. We met a guy that we come up with black material and dyed it all for me to get it back to the original burnt orange," Kneeskern said. The project that started at the beginning of 2019 was finally completed at the beginning of 2021. "I picked it up in February of last

year and started it in September 2019," Kneeskern said. "She's a shiny black now. Looks better than it did when I bought it." When the truck was finally back home, Kneeskern's son-in-law and daughter purchased letters to put his handle on the sliding back glass and brought the restoration full circle. Now that the weather is coming around, Kneeskern will bring his Beauty out of hibernation. "I drive it when the weather is nice," he said. "If it comes down to it, I would use it as a work truck again, but now I have it fixed up and I am going to take it to show it."

How to maintain an older vehicle

New cars have been costly for quite some time, but those costs have spiked considerably since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. That unprecedented rise has led many motorists to wonder how they can get more mileage out of their existing vehicles. According to data from Kelley Blue Book and Cox Automotive, the average cost of a new car in September 2021 was just over \$45,000. That marked a \$3,000 increase from June 2021 and a \$5,000 increase from the end of 2020. Drivers who can't afford to keep up with the rising cost of new vehicles can take these steps to keep their existing cars running smoothly for years to come. • Take care of the timing belt. Engines may get all the glory, but they cannot run smoothly without a fully functional timing belt. Engines need various components to do their job, and those components must do so at the right time for the engine to run smoothly. Fully functional timing belts help to synchronize movements, but belts must be replaced every so often. Owner's manuals may note when to replace the timing belt, but they generally must be replaced every 60,000 to 105,000 miles. That's infrequent, but drivers can ask their mechanics to keep an eye on their timing belts. One issue many drivers encountered in the early months of the pandemic when people were driving less frequently was timing belts that were failing long before they reached the projected mile markers. That's because infrequent driving can hasten the demise of the timing belt. This is something for aging drivers who no longer drive a lot to keep in mind. • Take care of the brakes and associated components. The experts at Popular Mechanics urge drivers of older vehicles to replace their brake fluid every two years. Popular Mechanics also advises drivers whose cars are more than seven years old to replace the rubber brake lines when major brake work is required. • Pay attention to oil levels. The older engines get, the more oil they're going to burn. So drivers of older vehicles should check their oil levels more often than they would if their vehicles were brand new. This also is a great way to discover leaks before they lead to potentially significant issues. • Don't skip maintenance appointments.

Even if you're still driving less due to the pandemic, it's best not to skip recommended maintenance intervals. That's true for drivers of all cars, but especially those whose vehicles are aging. Routine tune-ups and oil changes, which may need to become more frequent the older the vehicle gets, can keep cars running smoothly and protect the engine over the long haul.



The rising cost of new cars is compelling millions of drivers to keep their cars longer than they might have anticipated. Some simple maintenance measures can help those cars run strong for years to come.

From Glass to Tires and more!

- Tires for your car, truck or trailer
- Paintless Dent Removal
- Hail Damage ~ Door Dings
- Full Auto Glass Replacement and Chip Repairs
- Automotive Accessories
- Running Boards, Leveling Kits, Lift Kits, Performance Upgrades
- Headliner Replacement
- Oil Changes
- Brake Service
- Towing/Rollback Service
- Check Engine Light Diagnosis

**WHITE AUTO GLASS
WHITE MOTOR CO.**

In business for over 60 years
212 Hwy. 28E • Belle, MO
573.859.6324



Corvette • from page 13

transmission. Steve said Rachel learned how to drive a stick shift by driving the Corvette. When the family lived in Marshall, Mo., Steve's neighbor saw him drive the Corvette into his driveway. The neighbor also had a Corvette and he proudly showed it to Steve, who asked him if everything on the neighbor's Corvette was original. Steve said the guy looked at him intently and asked him if he saw something wrong with it. Steve told him, "No, I wouldn't know." Steve says he's not a purist when it comes to the car, but many Corvette owners are. To him, the Corvette has added to his quality of life. He is one of many people in Maries County who have and enjoy nice, old cars. When the weather is nice, he likes to drive it with the top down as it is a convertible. It's not a perfect car and he

drives it when and where he wants to. He said up close it can be seen that the car is not perfect, but it's fun. Sometimes he drives it to the Lake, and that's fun when so many people "gawk at you." Steve laughs when he tells about what Rachel said when she saw the Corvette they'd bought. She said it only seats two people, and Diana said "That's right." Rachel probably didn't understand at the time, but Steve says she probably does now. Diana died in 2013 at age 52 of cancer. Steve lives alone now in probably one of the most beautiful spots in the area. His land abuts the Gasconade River and he has fire pits and a place to sit in a couple of spots on a bluff overlooking the river. He's lived along the river since 2007, saying he loves the smell of an outside fire burning, and loves to be outside. "It's my get your mind right place."

"It's my get your mind right place."

H & M COUNTRY STORE LLC
Come by and experience "Down Home Service & Hospitality" at Bland's locally owned convenience store!
573-646-3028
203 E. Colorado Street, Bland, MO 65014
KMCountryStore@gmail.com

RAINERI Transmission & Auto Service
Complete Power Train Service
SPECIAL TRANSMISSION SERVICE AND REAR ENDS
...on Autos, Foreign Cars and Large Trucks!
ALSO STATE INSPECTIONS
MANUAL. AUTOMATIC. CARS. BIG TRUCKS. SERVICE. QUALITY. RELIABILITY. ECONOMY.
The next time you suspect transmission trouble, count on us. No matter what type of car you have, you'll find our level of service is way above standard.
WE ALSO CAN HANDLE FRONT END SUSPENSION, BRAKES AND SOME ENGINE WORK
Call for an appointment today
573-437-8470
605 Raineri Circle • Owensville, MO 65066

AAA
OWENS TOWING
- 24 HOUR SERVICE -
Steve Brown - Owner
We offer tire service, auto repair, oil changes, lock outs
573-859-3912
Belle and Linn locations