

MAD  
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# On The Road

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## MEET THE MEMBERS

*Steve McGilvrey and Julie Baxter*

(Steve) - I rode in my first Corvette around age 6, in a '57 or '58 Corvette owned by a friend of my parents. That would have been about 1960. I was hooked on Corvettes then and there. Two years later my Dad took me all the way to Des Moines (about 65 miles - I'm sure he changed the oil before the big trip) to Des Moines Dragway to see a Drag race. Art Arfons had his Green Monster Jet car there for a demonstration run and promptly ran it off the end of the strip. More importantly, and more impressive to me, was seeing my first front engine Dragster run the quarter mile. Dragsters were the most impressive acceleration machines on the planet and I was hooked on that "Need for Speed" thing. My Dad had a 1937 Chevy Coupe all hopped up with a Corvette engine with dual quads on it and had the fastest car in town. All the hot rodders in town came to Dads garage to have him work on their cars so I had plenty of gear heads influencing my "formative" years. We moved to Des Moines in 1965. Over the years, I salivated over Hot Rod and Car Craft magazines and, ok, maybe a few other "un-named" magazines. My Dad bought me a motorcycle (dirt bike) when I was 12 and I had a field a couple blocks away to ride in. That started another quest for speed with trail riding, hill climbing, and running hot laps around the track we had built in this field. I ran a few TT races and had a lot of fun doing that.

By the time I got my driver's license I was already a full blown gear head. My first job was at a Hy-Vee grocery store. Late at night after work we would get together in the Hy-Vee parking lot and do burnouts with our cars. I had a '64 ford then all jacked up with a few mods done to it. I started hopping up my car as soon as I could scrape up some money. I got headers for Christmas and things snowballed from there. I couldn't afford a Corvette then so I bought and built up several Mustangs. I had a 70 Mach1 with a 428 super Cobra Jet in it. Next came a 66 Mustang GT that I built a new engine for. It had tunnel ram, dual Holleys, big cam, heads, etc, etc. I ran a 4.88 gear most of the time. I bought a set of drag slicks and had two grooves machined into them to make them "street legal" and installed 6.20 gears. I made a lot of money with that car on the streets and never got beat with it. In 1976 I bought my first Front engine Dragster. I didn't even have a garage at the time. I lived in a duplex. I tore the dragster all apart and carried every part to the basement and put it all back together. I spent the winter building the motor and trans and engine mounts. My landlord came in one time to service the furnace and about passed out when he saw a complete dragster with short block assembled in the basement. He thought I knocked a hole in the wall to get it in there. It was quite the conversation piece when entertaining guests. I started drag racing that next summer (on a real drag strip instead of the streets). Again, I was hooked on the incredible acceleration of a front engine Digger. But that "Need for Speed" thing kept at me, I needed to go faster. I sold that Dragster and bought a newer 210" wheelbase front engine Dragster. I built a new engine designed to run on straight methanol and experimented with several induction set ups. I finally made my own fuel injection system and sent it to Kinsler to be flowed and set up for my car. It looked awesome and ran great. In the pit lanes at the Summer Nationals in Kansas City, Don "The Snake" Prudhomme came walking by, stopped, did a

double take and walked back to my car and asked me about the fuel injection system. He thought it was a really cool setup that I had built. At another National event I had tried a different wheelie bar setup and pulled this gigantic wheel stand off the line. It came down pretty hard and I nailed the throttle again and legged it down the track. When I hit the chutes sparks were flying everywhere. I had broken both motor mounts and the fuel tank mount. We used hose clamps to hold the engine in the frame and ran the other two days like that. It worked so well we adopted it to our new mounts which made engine swaps a little faster. Best times were 6.80's at 203 mph in the quarter mile. Nothing has felt fast since then. Everything is relative. My kids grew up at the drag strip. They would steer the car while it was being towed back to the pits and I was peeling off my fire suit.

After racing Dragsters for 10 years I had gotten to the point where the next level up was to go Professional. I had 5 good sponsors but to go PRO was a ALOT more money. I was offered to be the driver for an alcohol Funny Car but at the time I had a great job, wife and two little boys and I would have had to move away, so I had to decline. I started taking Flying lessons in 1986 and fell in love with Flying. I couldn't afford both racing and flying so I sold the race car and all the extras along with it and concentrated on flying. After getting my Private Pilots license and getting some hours under my belt, I searched out the toughest instrument flight instructor I could find. I wanted to get my instrument rating. I rented a simulator and had it in my basement for 3 months to practice on. I loved the precision of instrument flight and did really well. We used to rent a couple airplanes and about 6 of us guys would fly to Indianapolis for the Indy 500 for a few days. Other times I'd get off work at 3:30, head to the airport, grab one of the planes we had in our club (we had 9 of them), and fly down to this little airstrip in Missouri that was right next to a beach. You could park the airplane and walk about 200 yards down to the beach, hang out a while and fly back home in time for dinner with a nice tan.

My sons and I would ride dirt bikes on the trails but I was getting to the point where I needed another "Need for speed" fix. My youngest son Dan wanted to go Moto-Cross racing so I thought hey, if I have to take him to the track I just as well be racing too!! So we bought a couple new Moto-Cross motorcycles, bought a tractor with an end loader and built our own Moto-cross track on our 7 acres. We raced Moto-cross for about 6 years and had a blast together. One of my proudest moments was when Dan passed me for real, and not because I let him. It was quite a rush hitting those 70 or 80 foot jumps on a motorcycle. My oldest son Scott was content to stay with trail riding. More likely than not you would find him with headphones on his head making music mixes for some of the local DJ's. He's very good at that sort of thing.

My first Corvette was the red 1980 Vette that I still have today. I don't remember when I bought it but it was a long time ago. It only had 29k miles on it when I bought it. Next came a '94 Maroon coupe. During this time I worked for Delavan Gas Turbine in Des Moines. We designed and built fuel nozzles for jet engines. I worked on the after burner for the F-16, the new nozzles for the B-52 upgrade, and the "new then" Osprey program. I used SolidWorks CAD software to do design and drawings for the fuel nozzles. During this time I went to some SolidWorks Conferences and was asked by one of the SolidWorks employees if I would consider being on their newly formed drawings advisory board. I jumped on the opportunity. I met the founders of SolidWorks and was soon offered a job there. "There" being in Concord Massachusetts near Boston. I moved there in 2002 and spent 2 1/2 years there. I didn't like living out East and missed my kids and family. (I was divorced at the time). I was having this really "strong" urge that I needed to get back to the Midwest close to my family and asked to be transferred to the Madison WI office. After a few months they agreed and on Halloween 2004 I left Massachusetts in a 26 foot U-Haul with my 1980 corvette on a trailer and moved to Madison. Four months later my youngest son Dan (26), was killed in a car accident. Life hasn't been the same since.

I met Julie thru my neighbor in Massachusetts who worked with Julie previously at the Hospital in Cedar Rapids Iowa, small world huh. She moved to Madison with me a year later. We have two cats to keep us company. Six weeks after moving to Madison I bought my first brand new corvette, a 2005 LeMans blue coupe. I put 28k miles on it in 18 months then traded it in on a 2007 Silver coupe that I ordered from Ballweg. I kept that one 11 months and put around 18k miles on it. I then ordered my current 2008 silver coupe and five months later, tore all the fenders and front end off and installed Z06 body panels. I loved the look of the Z06 but wanted to be able to take the roof off and have the A6 six speed auto. When Julie walked into the garage and saw my "new Vette" with all the body panels ripped off it she thought I was nuts. Naw, not nuts but maybe a little "Full Goose Bozo". Back in June of this year I picked up a cherry 18k mile 2000 black Corvette hardtop. I now need a bigger garage as I can only get 4 cars in it. So now here I am, getting that urge for that "Need for Speed" thing again. What's a guy to do.....

(Julie) Since Steve decided to write an autobiography, I'll keep mine short. I'm Steve's partner in crime for the last five years. I have one daughter, Jessica, whom some of you have met. I don't actually own a Corvette of my own but I enjoy cruising in now, three of Steve's Corvettes. I will occasionally drive one, but not often, as Steve is a horrible back seat driver (edit by Steve – Nonsense, Vettes don't even have back seats!!) . I am a Respiratory Therapist and I work at Stoughton Hospital. It's one of the best Hospitals I've worked at. Some of my hobbies are flower gardening, reading, antiquing, Flea markets, second hand shops (St Vinnies here I come) and believe it or not, cleaning. For me it's great therapy. Oh and did I mention drinking Wine!?!? I also love Cats. One of the best things I love about Mad City Vettes is the friendliness of all the members and the variety of all the events we do. We're looking forward to taking the Vette to Louisiana in October. The one thing I would like to do in this life before I check out is to visit Italy, Amen...

