



Lone Star '29' One For The Record Books!

A sputtering economy. Record high fuel prices. The nation's largest exclusive 'Tri Five' Chevy event had many things going against it for it to be a record setter. But in spite of these obstacles, the hosting club Dallas Area Classic Chevs pressed on in their efforts to make the 29th version of the Lone Star Classic Chevy Convention the largest and most eventful ever.

The Lone Star Classic Chevy Conventions began in 1983 with a idea of getting '55-'57 Chevs together each year in Texas with a different host club and location each year. Austin, Texas was the site of Lone Star I and about 50 of the collectible 'Tri Five' Chevs came. Ever since that first event, somewhere in Texas each year the '55-'57 Chevs have gotten together to celebrate America's Favorite classic car. 2011 was no different, just bigger!

The 29th version had all the makings of being 'over the top'. The host this year, Dallas Area Classic Chevs had hosted the largest event in the series that last time the event was held in North Texas in 2006 with 190 turning out for the event. This year, the club wanted to blow past that record. In order to do that, an aggressive program of activities at reasonable costs had to be put together to get the Chevs to Dallas.

So with almost two years planning, the Sheraton Grand DFW Airport Hotel in Irving, Texas was selected with the requirement of reasonable room rates, cover parking in case of one of those Texas frog strangler storms came, sponsors were courted to help fund the various events and special attractions were lined up to make the event a special one. When it was all put into place, regardless of fuel prices and the economy – the '55-'57 Chevy community came in force and supported Lone Star '29'!

On Thursday of the event, with no real activities scheduled, the hotel parking lot was already looking like a trip back to the 50's! Sponsors were already getting into place with their rigs and folks were getting ready to enjoy the Memorial Day weekend 'Classic Chevy Style'!

Friday the host club had established a huge free VIP tour to nearby Cowboys Stadium and Texas Motor Speedway for attendees to the convention that included bus transportation. This took a good part of the day and did it ever set the tone for the weekend. When the nearly 200 folks that took the tour returned to the hotel, there was nothing but smiles and happy faces!

Friday was also the big day for the classification of Chevys for the Show N Shine judging competition. This huge undertaking ran like clockwork and later in the evening the judge's meeting took place to inform every one of the requirements for the big Saturday judging event.

Friday evening the host club provided a poolside picnic, but excessive high winds made the event an indoor affair. Inside a live local radio remote was taking place so folks got to be featured in some of the on air discussion. After the meal, it was time to hit the highway and go to the local drag strip for some racing – Shoebox style. The group made the trip up to Denton's North Star Dragway and over 20 '55-'57 Chevys made runs. By the time the evening came to a close Jim Nungesser from Kansas took the Eliminator 2 win with his '56 Chevy and the \$200 cash that came with it over runner up Jim Baughan who got \$50 for his efforts with his '55 Nomad from Texas. In the faster Eliminator 1 class, a pair of Texans made it to the final round. Sonny Poteet with a blown big block '55 Bel Air took on Tom Walker's small block '56 Sedan Delivery with Sonny getting the win and the big cash prize over a red lighting Tom Walker.

Saturday dawned bright and earlier for many as the prestigious 'Show N Shine' judging competition was on the agenda. Cars needed to be cleaned and prepared and judging assignments laid out for the over 100 '55-'57 Chevys that were to be judged. The judging process can be a demanding affair and with temperatures in the 90's it proved to be just that. Hats off to all of the judges who sweated it out, but when it was all said and done the results were nothing short of amazing. Using the tried and true 1000 point judging method used for decades in the Tri Five Chevy community, cars are judged against a judge sheet and based on the resulting score awards are earned at Bronze, Silver, Gold or the highest Platinum levels. There is no First, Second or Third Places at the show and this eliminates the competition against other cars that you normally see. It is all about competing against that judge sheet. And at this event the results found 43 Chevys attaining that highest award of Platinum, a solid statement of the quality of cars that came to Irving for this event. The highest score of the show went to Dave Fletcher from Brentwood California who got the full 1000 points for his beautiful black '57 Chevy Convertible, a score that is rarely seen in the Tri Five show circuit.

For those wanting to forgo the Show N Shine, there were buses running continuously from the hotel during the day to local shopping attractions, dining and movie theatres.

Saturday evening the local host club brought out the fantastic oldies band 'Curb Service' who belted out nearly two hours of old time rock n roll standards along with some great original material of their own. This was leading up to the drive in movie showing of the classic coming of age, hot rod movie 'American Graffiti' After another free meal from the hosting club, this one label 'Picnic in the Parking Lot' the drive in was set up and the parking lot was converted into a real drive in theatre. A huge 30 foot screen was erected in the parking lot with 5000 watts of sound wired up! As dusk approached over 500 people gathered around the screen to see Graffiti – one more time! But this one was special, Candy Clark who played 'Debbie' in the movie was flown in from California by the host club and her presence at the showing of the movie made it a special one! A brief discussion by Candy about the movie and then it was time for the flick. When it was over, the '55 still crashed at the end, the '32 Ford coupe still was the baddest in the valley and not one person left before the end!

Sunday there were several activities that had people excited and the first was the Texas size Poker Run for the '55-'57 Chevys. Two groups running in opposite directions of each other made a great scenic drive around the North Texas countryside and it included a stop for breakfast at a local marina. \$800 was split in the end among those top Poker hands so needless to say several folks REALLY enjoyed going on the Poker Run!

After a great Poker Run, Sunday had a big Indy 500 watch party inside the hotel and many eyes were peeled on the big screens to see the 100th running of this auto racing classic. Also, transportation was provided from the hotel to the local Grapevine Historic Main Street area where folks could shop at one of a kind shops, eat at some of the areas most unique dining options and more!

Later in the day, a 'Peel Out' contest was conducted. This was done in honor of Candy Clark being in attendance. In the movie American Graffiti her character 'Debbie' says to her date Toad – 'Peel Out, I just love it when guys Peel Out'. So at Lone Star '29' guys could take their '55-'57 Chevy and 'Peel Out' for Candy's approval as the best Peel Out. Some of the participants took it a little further than a Peel Out and went with full bore burnouts with billowing smoke coming off their tires. But as Candy explained, she wanted a simple and harmless 'Peel Out' not a tire smoking burnout. For his efforts at performing the perfect Peel Out, Candy selected Alan Strong for the winner in his flamed '57 150 sedan!

That evening the final event of Lone Star '29' turned out to be perhaps one of the best of the weekend. Normally presenting a stack of awards at a car show can get – well a little boring and drawn out. But with the assistance of local radio personality Jon-David Wells serving as the Master Of Ceremonies and Academy Award nominated actress Candy Clark presenting the awards, this Awards Banquet was nothing short of a production! As each winner was announced, a photo of the winning car was shown making it easy to see why these cars were award winners. Jon-David Wells turned the banquet into a comedy show and for over two hours had the over 300 people in attendance laughing and actually enjoying an awards banquet! If all of that wasn't enough, over \$4500 worth of door prizes were passed out to the crowd in attendance. This brought to an end what turned out to be the most attended and most successful Lone Star Classic Chevy Convention yet!

Final numbers for the event had over 250 registrations, 30 car clubs represented with the Houston Classic Chevy Club having the most in attendance. Over 10 states were represented and with several coming from California the Long Distance Award went to Chuck and Jean White who narrowly beat out several other 'Californians' for the award.

Special thanks go to the event sponsors who supported this event – Danchuk Manufacturing, Painless Performance, Grundy Worldwide/Heritage Insurance, Wilson Auto Repair, Irving CVB, Texas Museum Of Automotive History, Classic Chevy Connection of Texas, Oreilly Auto Parts, Authentic Automotive, Ciadella Interiors, Houston Classic Chevy Club, Reliable Chevrolet, Ecklers Classic Chevy and English Color & Supply. What a great bunch of supporters of the '55-'57 Chevys!

Next year the event moves south to San Marcos, Texas and will be hosted by the Central Texas Classic Chevy Club. The dates will be May 3-5 so mark your calendars and don't miss Lone Star XXX!