

# Our First Corvette! By Molly Heyen

**A** month after my husband Tim and I bought our Corvette, the new plates finally came in. We had been enjoying the car to its fullest, driving it down open country roads between Chicago and Springfield the way a Vette is meant to be driven, feeling the power our old RSX never had. It was late fall, and we were on the way to my parents' home when the oil pressure light came on. Strange, we thought. There was little to do other than find a gas station and top off the oil, then look into the problem the next day.

My parents live in Evanston so we went west on Touhy Avenue and turned north onto McCormick Boulevard. Tim drove carefully and well within the speed limit as we discussed what the oil light could mean. When the traffic light turned green we crawled around the corner (as well as a Vette can crawl); suddenly the flashing lights of a police car were shining in our mirrors.

We quizzically looked at each other. Why would a police officer pull us over now? When Tim lowered the window, the officer asked, "How are you doing tonight?" Poor Tim had nothing to say except, "Um . . . confused?" The officer explained that she pulled us over because our license plates – our brand new license plates – were registered to a Toyota Camry in Rolling Meadows! The officer asked us to place our hands on the dash as she asked more questions:

"Did you pay for this car?"

"Yes."

"When did you buy it?"

"About a month ago."

"Did you buy it at a dealership?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes?"

"What dealership?"

"Stasek Chevrolet in Wheeling."

"Where are they located?"

"On Dundee Road."

"Did you get the plates when you bought it?"

"No, they just came in yesterday."

"Did you pick them up at the dealership?"

"Yes."

"Ok. I want you to keep your hands on the dash. I am going to write down the VIN, and I will be right back."

I bet it was easier for Tim to keep his hands on the dash, because as the passenger I had to stretch my arms out and after a good ten minutes the dash felt miles away. In the meantime, the officer looked everything up and learned that the car, in fact, belongs to us.

We stared at each other half smiling – waiting to laugh – as another officer (the back up) arrived. I also counted my blessings that it was dark, because I didn't want people I know to think I was getting *busted*.

An eternity later the officer returned and explained that while our license plate and paperwork said one thing, the computer had a discrepancy: it was off by one

number. She wrote a note describing the situation in case another officer pulled us over, and she suggested we go to the dealership for help in the morning. Before the officer left, she quickly checked our front plate. Our eyes rolled – just as hers did – when she saw there was no front plate to speak of.



*Tim and Molly visit the Corvette factory in Ohio*

Finally, we were on our way to tell our stolen-car story to my parents and to forever ponder the reason why the officer ran our plates in the first place. All I know is that my brother-in-law, who is in the police force, gave a look of understanding when we suggested age profiling might have been the reason. A month after the ordeal, he confirmed that the record had been fixed in the State of Illinois' computers.

We thought our Vette problem was over, but we were wrong. Nearly a year later Tim mailed a check to renew the Vette's license plates. Neither of us noticed the plates had expired before the sticker arrived in the mail. Tim was driving to work one day when an officer pulled him over for having an expired sticker.

The officer ran our plates and returned to the car to inform Tim they were registered to a *stolen* Toyota! Poor Tim spent the entire morning getting a new sticker and trying to be sure that the computer showed the correct license plate number.

Since these ordeals we have considered vanity plates for the Vette using a word that captures something special about our car. After this last incident, we decided the perfect vanity license would be the letters "S-T-O-L-E-N" – but alas, it is already in use in Illinois. ●

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*Molly Heyen and her husband Tim have been lifelong sports' car enthusiasts. They have owned their Corvette for over a year and have never been pulled over in it for a moving violation.*

