

A VENT WINDOW VIEW  
*New Romances and Old Cars*  
May 2016, B. K. Showalter

A short week after I graduated from the small town high school where 16 classmates and I had spent four undistinguished years my dad enrolled me in a state college. His action truly caught me by surprise since school terms I had known always began in September. Of course, if things had gone as Dad originally planned I should have spent the summer of 1955 at home on the farm until late August when, according to *my future* that Dad, Mom and I had discussed, I'd leave home and begin college classes.

However, in late May when Dad headed out for an appointment to show some real estate to a client early one morning, he decided to gas up the Chevy at a roadside service station five or six miles from home. Business there was fairly slow that morning which allowed the station's proprietor time to mention that several of my pals who had graduated high school with me had already joined the US Air Force or the US Navy.

How Dad happened to know that State held classes during the summer was a mystery to me, but the minute the car was gassed up, he headed for home. As soon as he arrived he ordered me to get my "things" packed; he then added, "Let's get you enrolled in college."

I never asked Dad what prompted him to change his mind about my summer activities, but three hours later, I was enrolled as a freshman at State. Added to that, I had a job in the student cafeteria and a room on campus.

That early start gave me a leg up on my job as the chief engineer in charge of a dishwashing machine that I quickly learned to operate. That piece of machinery outweighed the little Ford tractor that I had figured to be operating on the farm until September when State's regular college classes were scheduled to begin. Running that rig also gave me a chance to meet some of the other kids employed at the cafeteria.

One of the girls and I became engaged the following summer when again we labored in the *salt mines* aka the *student union kitchen*. At the end of that summer semester I took her home to meet the family. She owned a 1952 Ford with a six-cylinder engine and a stick-shift transmission but, since I was the host, it seemed that I should provide transport for the occasion. Dad, still driving his '55 Chevy (a six cylinder with an overdrive transmission that had been "my" wheels during my last year of high school) collected us, and we took the girl home to meet my mother.

Some thirty-odd years (and about that many cars) became memories before I caught up with that young lass and convinced her to marry me. Sadly, her little '52 Ford had been traded away many years before the wedding took place, but ... I said "yes" anyway!

Convincing her to marry me may have been one of the smartest things I've done as an adult! She is a great organizer, one who can read a map better than most, and she has weathered every CHVA National Tour since 2001. Just as important, when one's restored auto throws a hubcap while rolling through the slums of a major city it is nice to know that your co-pilot is physically able to leap a tall curb in a single bound in order to grab up a runaway hubcap before it could be stepped on or used as a "Frisbee" by the players in a pickup basketball game. (Honest! She passed that test, too!)