



William McMillen stands with his 1976 Chevrolet Corvette Stingray that won the Dealer's Choice award at Corvettes on the Columbia car show in the Tri-Cities. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Sweet ride

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

William and Christy McMillen's 1976 Chevrolet Corvette Stingray is a thing of beauty. And it's not just the McMillens who think their car is something special. The root beer-colored Corvette recently took home the top prize at one of the largest Corvette shows in the Pacific Northwest, beating out more than 240 other Corvettes for the Dealer's Choice award at Corvettes on the Columbia in the Tri-Cities.

"There were a lot of really beautiful cars up there," William said. "I was shocked when we won."

They had been a little disappointed not to win any awards in their class, Christy said, but when the final award of the night came the emcee started talking about how the winners had five kids and eight grandkids vying to inherit the car someday.

"We looked at each other and thought, 'No way!,'" she said.

The McMillens are relatively new to the car show circuit. William brought home the Corvette about three years ago. Forced into early retirement by an autoimmune disorder, he bought a classic car because knew



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
The McMillen's have classified the deep brown color of their '76 Stingray as "root beer".

he needed something to focus his energy on. He had loved Stingrays ever since high school, when a friend drove into the school parking lot with an orange one from the early 1970s.

"It was the first Corvette I was actually able to touch," he said. "I fell in love with that body style that day."

He always dreamed of owning one in retirement. And when retirement came sooner than expected, he told Christy that a friend was driving him to a

doctor's appointment in Portland. Instead, they were headed there to look at Corvettes



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Water droplets collect on the hood as William McMillen details his 1976 Corvette Stingray.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
William McMillen uses a micro-fiber cloth to buff out water spots on one of the mirrors of his 1976 Corvette Stingray.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
William McMillen checks the oil in his 1976 Corvette Stingray while getting it ready for a car show.

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William McMillen washes his 1976 Corvette Stingray at his home in Hermiston. Staff photo by E.J. Harris