

THREE SPEED LESSONS LEARNED THE HARD WAY

by HARRY CIANCI

When I bought my '57 (Number 4412) it had a Muncie four speed transmission in it. It was geared all wrong for me, the speedometer didn't work, and it wasn't original. I decided I wanted the original three speed. I told myself the only difference between the passenger car and the Corvette three speeds was the tailhousing and the shift linkage so it should be no problem to assemble a correct three speed. Wrong.

I found a transmission in Fort Jones, California, and a tailhousing in New York State. I bought a shifter at a swap meet (from Roy?) and the linkage and shifter arms from a dealer in Pennsylvania. That was when I found out the side covers are in different locations. It was suggested that I just weld the Vette arms to the car sidecover shafts, but I wanted this to be done right. I bought a Corvette sidecover in Oregon, and put everything together. Everything fit in the Corvette now, except I had to change the front driveshaft yoke from the Muncie style to the '57 Chevy style. Then I met Roy and learned about the long Corvette style yoke.

I looked and looked for the correct style yoke, and finally spotted one holding down a pile of Hemmings magazines at the Sacramento swap meet. I inquired about the price of the magazines and the paperweight, and was promptly told the paperweight was an early Corvette front yoke and they were worth a lot of money. I passed on the Hemmings and bought the yoke.

That was when I found out that not only are the yokes different between the car and the Vette, but so are the transmission tailshafts. The Vette yoke is an inch longer than the car yoke, and the splines in the Vette's transmission tailshaft are also an inch longer than the car's. You cannot use the Corvette yoke with the

passenger car tailshaft. I bought a tailshaft from New York, and hope to have the correct shaft and yoke installed this summer.

The following chart summarizes the above:

	Yoke Length	Trans Shaft Spline Length
Passenger Car	3-3/4	4-3/8
Corvette	4-3/4	5-3/8

Special thanks to Roger Brower for his help with my transmission problems.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The article from Harry is correct. And while reading his letter, I realized that I didn't mention the out-put shaft of the tranny when I explained the difference between a car and vette drive shaft yoke. The Corvette tranny out-put shaft splines are longer than the car, by one inch. The reason for the one inch difference to the yoke was to back up the axle dropping if the rebound straps were to brake, so that the yoke would not come out from the tranny, causing damage to the rear seal. This in turn caused the rear out-put shaft of the tranny splines to lengthen so that if a hard (bump) was incurred the yoke could also travel deeper into the tranny and not damage itself which it would using the shorter car out-put shaft. I didn't think at the time that some one would use a car tranny by replacing the side cover and tail housing. That is why the high cost of an original part!! Or paying attention to detail. Sorry Harry

-Editor