

The Volt Vette Project

Chapter 2

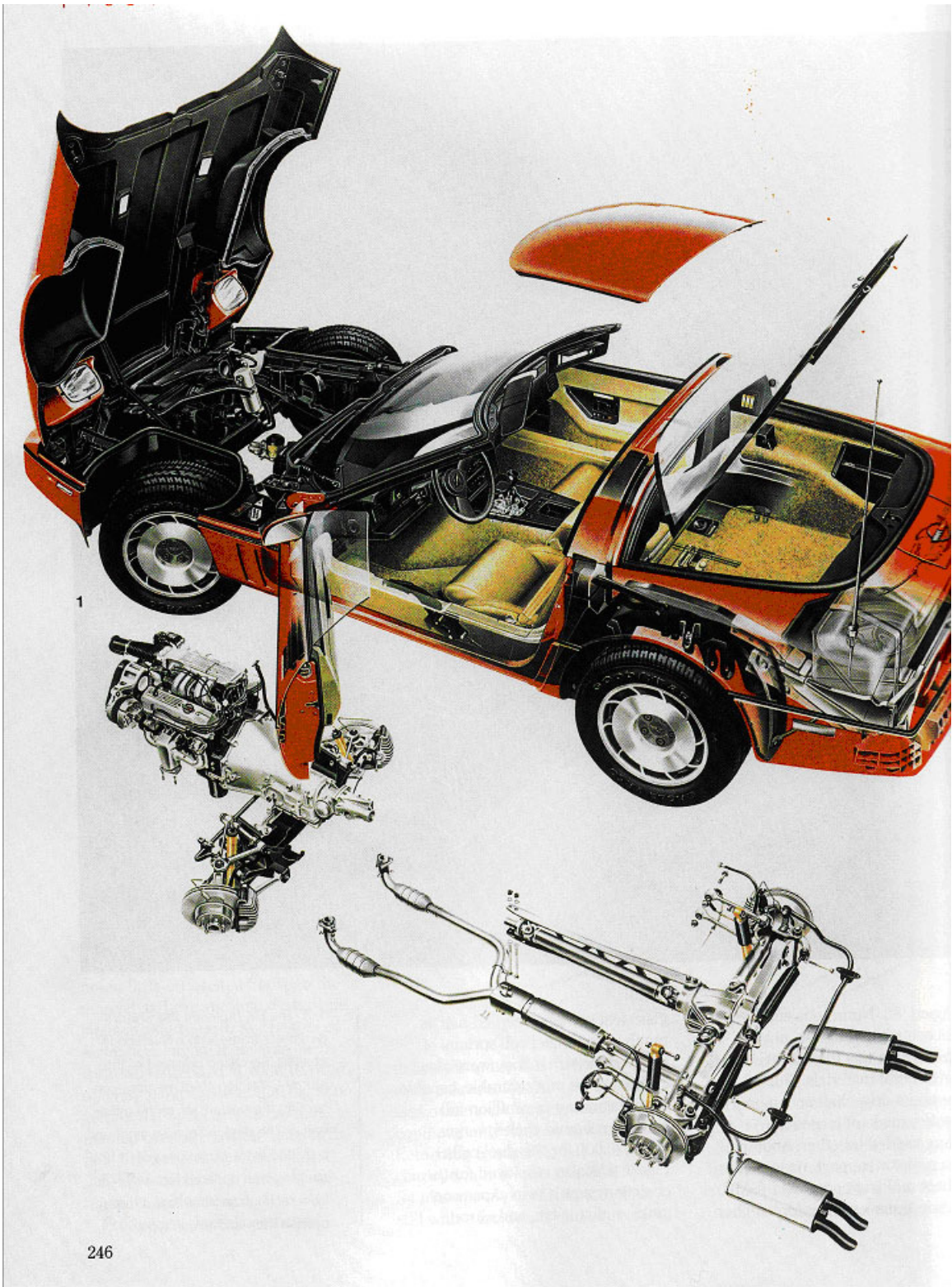
“Convert a Corvette sports car to Electric?” that’s a crazy idea. But, the more I researched it, the more possible it seemed.

The newer Corvettes were too expensive to buy; the early Corvettes were also very costly.

But, in the middle, 1984 to about 1994, a Corvette could be had for under ten grand. It gets better. These cars were the only Vettes with a clam shell hood And a digital dashboard! Very useful for a conversion.

This drawing shows how the hood and clear glass hatchback work. The hard top can be removed and stored behind the bucket seats.

All of this will make it easy for the Minnesota Chapter of the EAA to display it at public venues like the State Fair.



I check with Lee Hart, an electrical engineer, and my EAA mentor and advisor.

Lee thinks it might work. I start shopping for the right car. The idea is to bolt an electric motor to the manual transmission, after removing the old engine. One problem; most Corvettes of this age have an automatic transmission, and I'm told electric motors aren't real efficient when hooked to an automatic. I finally find a Vette with a 6 speed manual transmission. It was a real joy to drive. I drive it over to Lee's house. He looks it over and gives it the thumbs up.

But the seller and I can not agree on a price.

Lee comes up with an idea to save the project. If we buy a more powerful electric motor we could eliminate the transmission altogether! The larger motor could bolt directly to the Corvette drive shaft. I love his idea.

I buy a dark red 1987 Vette on Aug. 7, 2007. It has 109,000 miles on it, worn carpeting, but the body and frame are in great shape.

Joyce and I drive the car to Duluth. The Corvette handles very nicely and we get 30 miles per gal. We visit Peter, Joyce's cousin. He likes my project and agrees to buy the old engine, once it's out of the car.

Everything is smooth, so far.

Time to order an electric motor.