

9/3/01 Buff. News B6
2001 WLNR 1169508

Buffalo News (NY)
Copyright (c) 2001, The Buffalo News

September 3, 2001

Section: EDITORIAL PAGE

DON'T MISS THE MOMENT FOR THE SAKE OF A PHOTO

AMY E. MORGAN -

I've begun to wonder of late how many moments I've missed while taking a picture or taping with the camcorder so that I could "look back" and remember a special moment. No doubt I have some great pictures, but I'm thinking now of the small nuances that I may have missed.

Life-defining moments can be elusive. Whether large or small, we don't often recognize them in our lives, much less someone else's. I certainly didn't expect to see one during a tour of the Corvette assembly lines in Bowling Green, Ky., in July. It turned out to be my lucky day, because for security reasons no pictures are allowed on the tour.

My husband, our 12-year-old son, Abe, and I followed our guide Laura through the plant as she explained the work in progress around us. Slowly we turned from side to side as we passed the various assembly stations.

"Look, there's the dashboard. See him putting in the taillights? Oh, what a great color!" We looked up and watched the conveyer system as it delivered parts throughout the plant. Abe remarked that we must look like "country folk come to the big city" as we pointed and stared.

The Corvette developed before our eyes. The chassis took shape. The body came together and was lowered onto the chassis. A lesson at the brake area let us know at a glance that the red calipers denote a high-performance model. Our final stop was just past where the wheels are mounted. In front of us glided one finished 2002 Corvette after another.

Sleek, powerful and only two feet away from our strictly enforced, yellow-bordered walkway, our hands itched to reach out and touch its smooth lines. Laura explained that at this station, the Corvette engine is started for the first time. They call it birth.

Bill Dunning, a first-start operator, stepped around from the assembly line and handed Abe a key. "Want to start her up?" he asked. Abe followed him out of the yellow lines and into another world. He glided down into

the black leather driver's seat of the yellow Z06 and found the ignition in the dashboard, not the steering column where he expected it.

He turned the key -- the first car he's ever started -- and 405 horsepower came to life. He checked the horn and rear defogger, as instructed, and revved the gas just a little. He turned to us for an instant and smiled. Then he turned away and stared out the front window. He settled deeper into the seat as his hands slid over the steering wheel. Gone were the plant, the tour group and the assembly line. He was in the future.

Hook, line and sinker. A Vette was born, and a dream as well.

Today, I focus hard on how he looked as he sat in the car. I noticed the rapid rise and fall of his chest, which was swelled with pride and excitement as he returned to the group, and the fact that his eyes couldn't stop straying back to the Corvette he had sat in even before the customer who ordered it.

I'm not sorry that I don't have a picture to remember this. A picture would define it as I saw it, but not as Abe experienced it. The pure memory of it is filled with so much more, both for him and for me. He doesn't need a picture to remember. He won't forget.

As for myself, only time will tell, but I believe I glimpsed a life-defining moment.

AMY MORGAN lives and writes on Grand Island.

For submission guidelines on columns appearing in this space, click on The Buffalo News logo at the Buffalo.com Web site, then click on Opinions and My View, then scroll down to Contact Us and click on that; or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Opinion Pages Guidelines, The Buffalo News, P.O. Box 100, Buffalo, N.Y. 14240.

AMY E. MORGAN

--- INDEX REFERENCES ---

Language: EN

OTHER INDEXING: (CORVETTE; OPINION PAGES GUIDELINES; PHOTO; VETTE) (Abe; AMY E. MORGAN; Bill Dunning; Hook; Laura; P.O. Box; Sleek; Slowly)

EDITION: FINAL

Word Count: 725

9/3/01 BUFFALONWS B6

END OF DOCUMENT