

# STRAIGHT TALK



VOLUME 3 NUMBER 4, Summer 1990

## 'Vette Vignettes from Bloomington...



**LEFT:** Well, is it a "Straight Axle" or isn't it? This unique entry at Bloomington is a '55 Pontiac Bonneville Special Motorama Car owned by Joe Bortz of Illinois.



**ABOVE:** Noland, Lucy and Roy with the SACE Banner.

**LEFT:** No. 6, the 1956 Corvette Sebring Racer owned and exhibited by Frank Buck of Mountain Home, Pennsylvania.



**More about 'Vettes in this issue!**

## CARS WANTED...

**WANTED:** 1959-1962 Corvette for my personal use. Prefer later model with Fuel Injection. Originality very important. Will consider fully-restored car. BRUCE STALLWORTH, 425 Ponderosa Court, Lafayette, CA 94549. (415) 934-1339, or (415) 544-7255 (business).



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## CARS FOR SALE...

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## PARTS FOR SALE...

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**FOR SALE:** '57-'65 Fuel Injection Fuel Pump Drive Shafts, A/C 6409698, \$36.95 PPD — Also complex Flex Shaft and housing assy with knurled nut A/C 6409648, \$87.95 PPD. RON JONES, Box 351, Botsford, CT 06404. Phone: (203) 426-2623.

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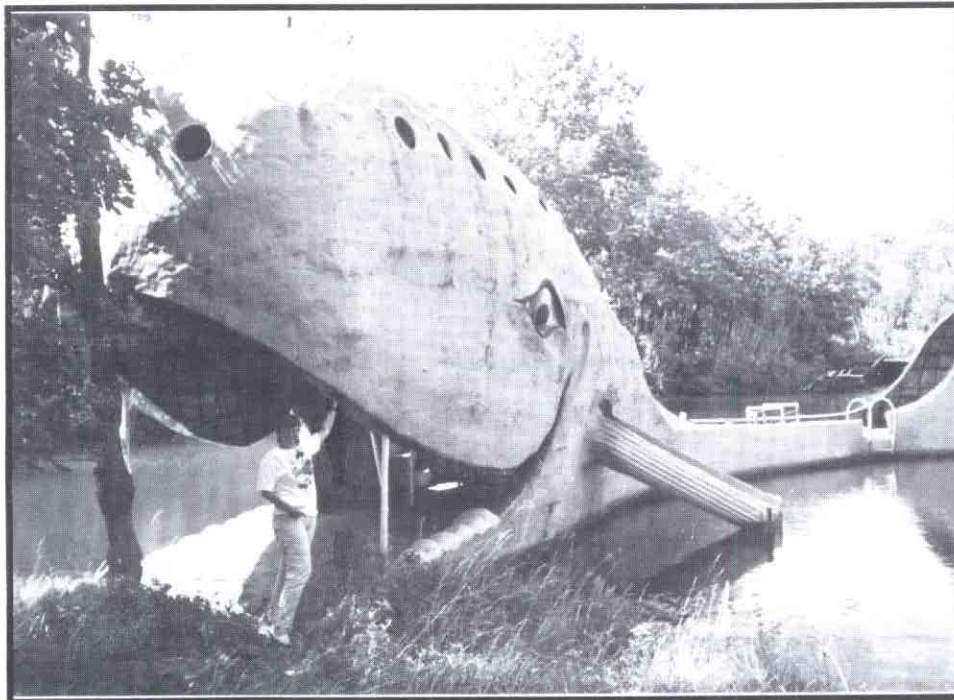
# Bloomington Gold... Via Route 66

See Article on Page 15

TOP: "Swap Meet 66" is just one of the many interesting places that can be seen along Old Route 66.

CENTER: Big Blue Whale, Catoosa, Oklahoma.

BOTTOM: Oatman, Arizona



## ATTENTION SAGE MEMBERS:

✓ Next year, the 1991 National will be held at Springfield, Illinois...

✓ The 1992 National will be hosted by Bill Eldridge in the state of Washington...

Watch for details about these and other events in future issues of "Straight Talk"

## Also in this issue of Straight Talk...

"Straight Axle Safety"

Color Name Update

Corvette Questions & Answers

A '55 On The Road

Modified... '56 Corvette

'54 Drag Racer

Sample from the upcoming Straight-Axle Corvette Technical Guide...

...and Much More!





# EDITOR'S PAGE

—Roy Braatz

My first time at Bloomington was an eye-opener. There were countless Corvettes, parts, dealers, and people.

Corvette prices on the early models touched the clouds. If the prices of parts to build up a car were added up, you would need to carry insurance of \$250,000 (a quarter of a million dollars!) to build it again if you total your 'Vette.

"Buyer Beware!" I watched many people buying Nash radios, Chrysler two-four carbs, etc., thinking they were getting correct Corvette parts. As Dale Pearman, a Bloomington judge and workshop instructor, put it, the "Swap-meet University has an 'outrageous tuition!'"

Steve Eveloff, the Director of Workshops, gave my wife and I a Press Pass, allowing us to take in all of the events for free. "Thanks, Steve." I would have to say that the staff and everyone involved were great.

## STRAIGHT TALK

The publication of, by and for members of Straight-Axle Corvette Enthusiasts. Published quarterly

President ..... Noland Adams  
 Editor ..... Roy Braatz  
 Treasurer ..... Lucy Badenhoop  
 Contributing Writers: ..... You, the members

Please address all letters, articles, etc., to the Editor, 14521 Bears End Dr., Nevada City, CA 95945, (916) 265-5947; or to SACE, P.O. Box 2288, North Highlands, CA 95660. Thank you.

From what I saw and heard, these people have got it together. What impressed me was their workshops and the caliber of instructors. To me, this is what makes Bloomington work. Even with tornado winds and mud up to the knees, they had it together.

Next year, Springfield, 60 miles west of Bloomington, will be the site of our 5th National Convention. Noland and I will be holding a workshop on Straight Axles in Bloomington (I think). More on this later!

During the '50's and '60's, I traveled "66." Today, it's called the Mother Road and today, you CAN "get your kicks on Route 66" seeing all the old towns and talking to people along the way. When I drove it as a young man, it was called "Bloody 66" and there were NO kicks. It was a narrow, winding, (very fast at 80 mph) heavily used road, and was driven by truckers, buses, bikers, and what-have-you.

In conclusion, I would like to take this time to thank our members on the response I've been getting on our articles and stories. As you see them in this issue, please keep them coming!

—Editor

### KEEP YOUR MEMBERSHIP CURRENT

Are you letting your membership expire?  
 The top line of the address label gives your member number and expiration date.  
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## TREASURER'S REPORT

By Lucy Badenhoop

As reported last time, we are continuing our membership expansion efforts. Noland, Roy and I attended Bloomington Gold in June and signed up 44 new members on the spot.

We also placed about 300 applications on all the 1953-62 Corvettes in the parking lot. We should be getting some mail-in response from these.

While at Bloomington, I attended two of their workshops on gold certification (basic and advanced) to learn how they judge. They have some good ideas that differ from NCRS-type judging.

SACE needs to develop its own judging concepts that will incorporate the best of the various techniques being used by other organizations. We'll be discussing this at our annual membership meeting during the 1990 convention.

Last time, I also indicated that we were getting close to publishing our own technical guide. A preview copy of the first two volumes will be available for review at the convention in July, 1990.

They are ready to go to the printer — see the sample on the next page. The two volumes total 260 pages for general and mechanical (interior and exterior volumes will follow soon). Note that each volume includes all ten years of the straight axles.

It will cost about \$5,000 to print the first edition of the first two volumes, a sum that the club doesn't have available. Consequently, we are taking orders and will print when 200 orders have been received.

You can reserve your copy of the first two volumes by sending your check for \$25 (Total cost includes shipping). Your check will not be cashed until printing is imminent.

If 200 orders are not received by December 30, 1990, we will assume that lack of interest to mean that we should not publish it. In that event, your check will be applied to

your 1991 dues unless you request otherwise at the time of ordering.

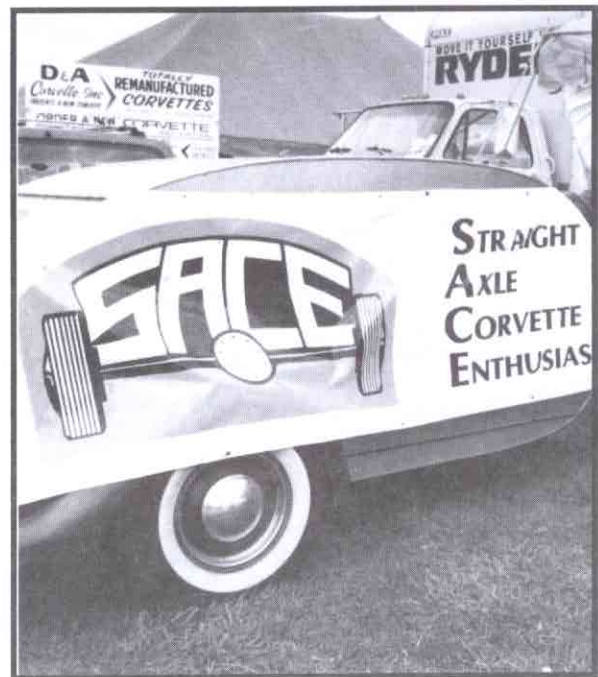
Another new item that is available for immediate shipment is a club sticker for \$2.00 (includes postage). It is 1.5 x 8.0 inches with a peel-off backing, similar to bumper stickers. It shows the SACE logo, and the words "Straight-Axle Corvette Enthusiast" in club colors: red, yellow, black and white.

We have received a new supply of T-shirts, so all sizes are available: small, medium, large and X-large. Total price (including shipping) is \$12.50.

All club business should be addressed to:

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P.O. Box 2288  
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## A Special Thank You to Jim Gilbody...



**MEMBER JIM GILBODY** of MD generously gave of his time and effort to make SACE a large banner and two posters for use at shows and conventions.

As shown in the above picture, the banner was very helpful at Bloomington, IL. Since we were so easy to find, we signed up 44 new members!

## 2. ENGINE CASTING NUMBER:

| 1953-55    | 1956    | 1957    | 1958-60 | 1961       | 1962    |
|------------|---------|---------|---------|------------|---------|
| 3701481(1) | 3720991 | 3731548 | 3737739 |            | 3782870 |
| 3835911    |         |         | 3756519 | 3756519    |         |
| 3703524(2) |         |         |         | 3789935(3) |         |

(1) until between casting date J133 to J163  
(about E53F0010226 to -233)

(2) eight cylinder only

(3) very late 1961 only

Six cylinder engines: The casting number is located on the front passenger side near the fuel pump.

Eight cylinder engines: It is on the rear driver side below the master brake cylinder on the upper portion of the flywheel housing. Some numbers may contain an "X" indicating an initial casting run.

## 2.1. References:

Adams, Pages 51, 130, 233, 332

NCRS Judging Manual 1953-55, page 25

NCRS Judging Manual 1956-57, page 27

NCRS Judging Manual 1958-60, page 17

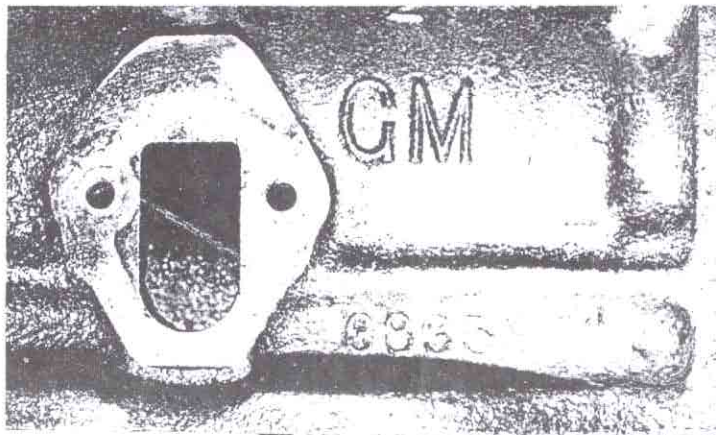
NCRS Judging Manual 1961-62, page 13

NCRS Specifications 1953-72, page 59

AIC, pages 2-3, 15-17

**SAMPLE  
PAGE:  
TECHNICAL  
GUIDE**

1954 CASTING  
#3835911



**TO ORDER: SEE  
TREASURER'S REPORT  
ON PREVIOUS PAGE**

## SACE TECHNICAL PANEL

Technical advisors have three duties: (1) answer questions from the general membership regarding problems they are experiencing with their car; (2) record the questions and answers and transmit them to the Straight Talk editor for publication; and (3) provide assistance in the preparation of a technical guide book.

Every request for assistance will require the requestor and the advisor to jointly complete the form. The advisor will send it to the Straight Talk editor.

Any member wishing to make use of this service may contact the advisors listed. If you write, please use the form and include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. If you phone, have the information ready for the top half of the form before you call.

Be considerate of the time zone differences, and place your call so it is received between 8:00 and 9:00 P.M. for the advisor. If you want the advisor to call you back, be prepared to accept the collect toll. Technical Advisors are:

Steve Solokoff (53-54)  
4524 Baltimore Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19143  
(215) 382-6366

John Kocsis (56-57)  
Rt. 2, Box 281-C  
Athens, PA 18810  
(717) 888-7418

Mike McCagh (53-55)  
1715 Frederick Street  
Cumberland, MD 21502  
(301) 777-0089

David Bartush (56-57)  
6560 Red Maple Lane  
Birmingham, MI 48010  
(313) 642-3522

Dwight Farmer (58-60)  
5232 Foxboro Landing  
Virginia Beach, VA 23464  
(804) 495-0154

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Mesa, AZ 85201  
(602) 833-1012

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Mountain View, CA 94042  
(408) 7233-2775

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(503) 269-1427

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23317 Schoenborn St.  
West Hills, CA 91304  
(818) 883-5766

## Request for SACE Technical Advice

**REQUESTOR:** Art Bruns, Cambridge, MN.

**VEHICLE I.D. NO.:** 10867S110184.

**PROBLEM DESCRIPTION:** The wipers on my 1961 operate correctly except that when the control is turned off, the blades do not move to the bottom of the windshield.

**QUESTION:** What can I do to correct the problem? I have cleaned and lubricated the mechanism.

**ANSWER:** The problem is in the motor itself. Under the cover are points sets & levers, which are activated by the switch. If you put power to the motor, you can activate the switch & determine which points are not working properly. You will need to remove the wiper motor from the car.

**REFERENCE BOOK & PAGE:** '57 Chevy Electric Wiper Service Book.

**ADVISOR:** Chip Werstein.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Roy,

I enjoyed seeing your booth at last weekend's Puyallup Swap Meet, and of course, meeting you.

I'm the gal who stopped by with Ed Mecum, Jr. I own a '58 F.I. 290, Panama yellow with white coves. I'm just in the beginning stages of a complete, frame-off restoration. It was quite interesting to look through your photo album and see your '55 come back to its glory.

I'd like very much to know where I could purchase a 4-wheel castor stand like the one seen in the restoration pictures. Is it just a common engine stand, or something customized? I believe I saw it used for both the engine and the body.

Hope you'll be able to pass along any info you have. I'll soon be to the point where I'll need to yank the body off the frame and make it mobile.

Thanks in advance for your time.

Sincerely,  
STEPHANIE TOWNE  
Seattle, Washington

*Editor's Note: Stephanie, I use a hospital S/S/ gurney. After all, what the 'Vette body needs is medical attention. Right? —Roy*

Dear Straight Talk,

As the supply of N.O.S. aluminum radiators rapidly evaporates, those of us wishing to restore our straight axles are faced with the dismal choice of paying prices far beyond the realm of rationality for the few that still exist, or compromising with one of those hokey improvisations constructed of copper that are touted as "reproductions."

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

As the owner of a '62 with an original radiator that is showing its age, I am astonished to learn that the repair or rebuilding of aluminum radiators is beyond our nation's technological reach. Didn't we put 12 men on the Moon, didn't we send a space probe to Neptune? If repair isn't feasible, is the manufacture of an accurate reproduction such an outlandish idea?

As an organization dedicated to the preservation and restoration of classic Corvettes, it should be one of SACE's top priorities to resolve the aluminum radiator crisis. No organization is more qualified, and quite frankly, none has more obligation to initiate this undertaking.

Sincerely,  
VINCE CREISLER  
Kent, Washington

*Editor's Note: Sorry, Vince, we're a club, not a repro company. —Roy*

Dear Roy,

As a member of SACE for two years, I wish to express my thanks for the fine articles in "Straight Talk." I appreciate the efforts of Noland Adams, Lucy Badenhop and yourself to help our young organization grow and become a valuable resource to its members. I also value the assistance I received from two of our technical advisors recently.

I own two Corvettes, a 1986 Coupe and a 1961 Roadster with close to 90,000 miles. Of course, the "straight axle" is my favorite. My wife prefers the power equipment and air conditioning on the newer one.

In addition to SACE, I belong to two local Corvette clubs and NCRS. While I have loved cars as a hobby for years, I find the restoration and preservation of early Corvettes particularly interesting. SACE addresses that desire very well.

I am happy to note that our 1991 Convention is in the Midwest, making it tempting for me to plan on driving my '61 to Springfield and then on to Bloomington, Illinois. I believe old cars are still meant to be driven, not trailered around like museum pieces. People who rarely drive their cars are missing out on most of the fun, I think.

Keep up the good work! May our numbers increase.

Sincerely,  
ART BRUNS  
Cambridge, Minnesota

Fellow Solid-Axle Enthusiasts:

A Corvette-related organization that includes Mr. Noland Adams as a member and active participant certainly commands my interest. I would like to receive more information about SACE. Please include a sample of your newsletter with membership information.

I purchased my solid axle in 1974. It has been in storage ever since. I began a body-off restoration approximately 1-1/2 years ago. I am basically an automotive hobbyist and the car is very much a leisure-hours only project.

**Here are some details of the car:**

1960 - Serial #00867S101335 - 98,000 miles, 230 h.p. Hardtop only. White with silver trim, red interior. Options and accessories: Powerglide, Radio, W/Washer, Sunshades, P/Brake Alarm, W/W Tires, Heater, Courtesy Lights.

During the early stages of chassis reassembly, I was confronted by the usual problems encountered when dealing with the rear axle rebound straps.

Being somewhat of a perfectionist, I agonized about the usage of nuts and bolts, or blatantly incorrect solid round head rivets (as supplied by various Corvette parts vendors) to secure the strap and plate assemblies. I resolved to find a supply source for the rivets I needed.

I have not conducted much investigative research on solid axle cars of earlier or later vintage, but the original rivets on my 1960 and a 1959 I examined were of a truss head semi-tubular design. I strongly suspect that the same type of rivet was used throughout the '53-62 production run.

**I narrowed down the specifications and dimensions of these rivets as closely as possible approximating the following:**

Steel — Semi-tubular, straight hole, truss head. Rivet body diameter - .188". Rivet head diameter - .375". Rivet head height - .063". Tubular hole diameter - .136". Tubular hole depth - 3/16". Rivet clinching allowance - .120". Rivet length: 9/16" or 5/8".

After several inquiries, I was successful in my quest for a supply of suitable rivets. The problem of installing the rivets while working in a cramped, restrictive environment and achieving a correct, strong, O.E.M.-type clinch was still unresolved.

With patience and some ingenuity, I devised a simple, compact and rugged tool that successfully met all my criteria, and could be used with the car's body on or off the chassis.

The tool is simple to use, approximately 7 inches long, and forms a perfect rolled-edge clinch with little effort.

—Bert  
(604) 525-5895

Dear Editor,

Just a note to say "Thanks," for all the thankless things you do for SACE.

Sincerely,  
Jim Hanna



# STRAIGHT AXLE SAFETY

Noland Adams

Safety is a boring subject. Yet it's important; so much so that we would all suffer without proper safety.

I've been on a number of safety committees at work. There, workers are forced to utilize programs designed to help them prevent accidents. I know the contempt and distaste for safety programs and those who suggest them. We have several helpful safety tips for early Corvette owners; some quite serious. The thoughtful straight-axle owner would be well-advised to heed the warnings contained in this article.

1. There is a possibility of the hood falling and bopping a head or crushing a finger. To prevent this, holes were drilled on the sides of the hood prop. By installing a bolt in the hole, you can be safer.

I know that I have seen this in a Chevrolet publication. Yet, I have been unable to locate it. Jim Dawson found it in the 1967 service manual:

## HOOD PROP SAFETY RETENTION FEATURE

"When extended under hood service operations are anticipated, the hood prop track and slide should be secured by placing a 1/4" bolt and nut through the existing holes. This will prevent accidental closing of the hood that could result in a serious injury."

In an emergency, just about anything will work. A ball point pen, a stick, lots of makeshift items. Just don't get hurt.

### Fire Safety Applies Here...

2. Fire is a problem with older cars; Corvettes are no exception. wiring becomes worn and frayed. Fuel leaks are much more common. These, along with backfires, are the common causes of fires. Worse, if the fire gets hot enough, the fiberglass body itself may support combustion and burn all by itself.

Preparation is the key, for not all fires are a "common" type. Like most emergencies, they begin at the worst possible time, so be ready for anything. Let's examine one such unexpected fire.

Several years ago in California, a 1961 was under restoration. The car was in good condition, so it got a "frame on" restoration. The body was repaired and primed, and the rebuilt instruments were replaced. All that remained was to paint the body and install the interior trim and exterior chrome.

Then someone noticed that the gas tank was leaking. At that point, it was an easy task to remove the tank and get it repaired. The car was parked in the driveway beside the house. A drop light was brought out to assist locating the bolts on the tank hold down straps. The owner and a friend soon had the leaking tank loose, and it was lifted out

of the body. However, in the process, the drop cord was knocked loose. As the light hit the driveway, the bulb broke, and a small fire started.

Now, the owner is holding the partially full tank, but he has a big problem. Does he replace the tank — just above the fire — or does he move it away and come back to fight the fire? He decided to move the tank to a safe spot, then return.

In the meantime, the other guy is running around looking for some way to put out the fire. The only thing he can find is a faucet - but no hose. Now, he is looking for a hose, as the fire grows quickly. Finally, a hose is located and connected. But wait... don't turn on the water yet; there's live electrical wires in the broken light bulb. More delay, as the drop cord is unplugged. Finally, they turn on the hose and put out the fire.

The repaired and ready-to-paint body was ruined: a real disaster. It was burned from the windshield area back to the rear of the top lid cover. All the rebuilt instruments and the main part of the body were badly burned beyond recovery.

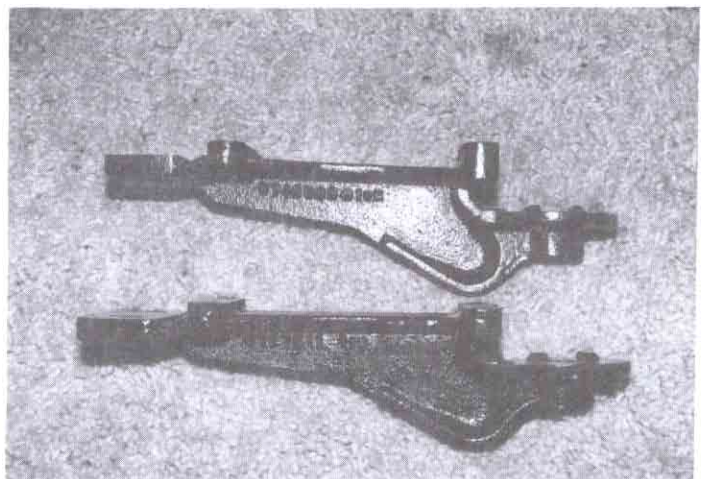
These guys were lucky; they located a complete '61 body. After a lot of time and money, the body was replaced, and the Corvette was saved to again be enjoyed someday.

If they had just had the garden hose connected to the faucet and ready to go, this disaster could have been prevented. Every Corvette should carry a fire extinguisher, period!

In addition, being ready for such disaster is just good sense. For one thing, complete Corvette bodies are really getting hard to locate, so be careful.

### Cracks DO Occur In Steering and Frame Brackets...

3. Last summer, Laurie Ames backed his 1954 Corvette



**IDLER ARM BRACKETS:** The rear boss is thicker on later versions.

*(Continued on page 7)*

(Continued from Page 6)

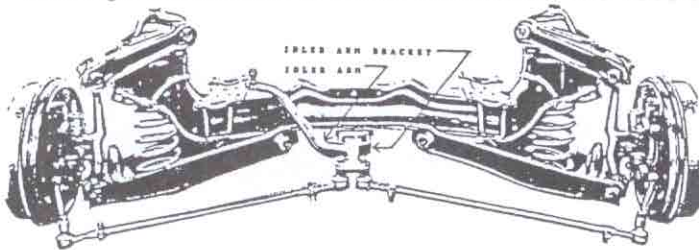
## STRAIGHT AXLE SAFETY

out of the garage. He was headed for a car show 20 miles away, but he would not make the trip. As he pulled away from the curb, the car's steering suddenly stopped operating. The steering wheel turned, but the front wheels would not respond.

Upon examination, Laurie found that the cast iron part that bolts to the underside of the front crossmember was broken. The tie rods were still connected, flopping around uselessly. It was something that neither one of us had seen, so we thought it was an isolated case.

First, we should identify this part. It's proper name is "Bracket, steering idler third arm." There were three different brackets used on 1953 to 1962 Corvettes. Part number 3706024 was used from 1953 to 1955; this number is forged on the side in depressed characters.

The 1956 and 1957 bracket was 3727511; this number was forged on the side in raised characters. The 1958 to



THE 1953 TO 1962 FRONT END FROM THE REAR, SHOWING THE IDLER ARM AND BRACKET

1962 bracket was part number 3742688; this number is also forged on the side in raised characters. Part number 3742688 is also available as a reproduction, which may be identified by the forged number 3742688 or 3742888 and the letters "TMS."

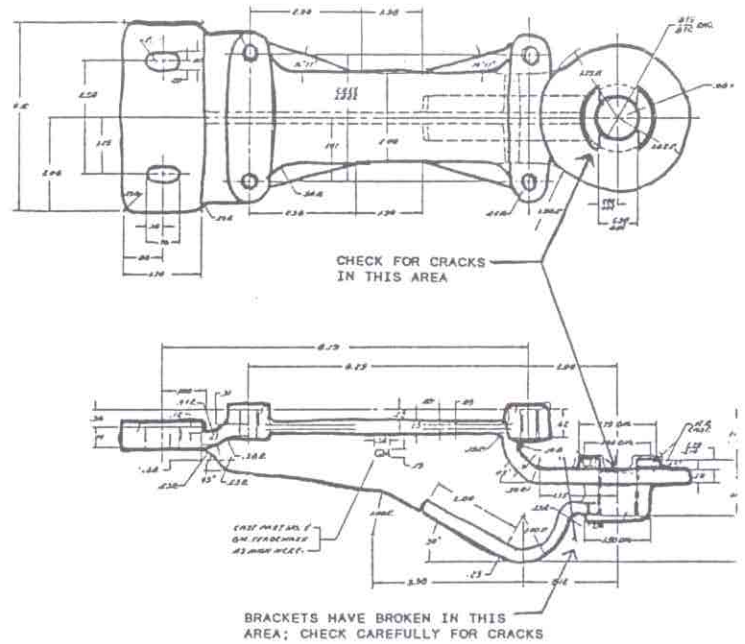
The thickness of the rear flange of the later bracket is the difference. The two early (1953 to 1957) brackets has a thinner flange (about 5/8"); the later bracket has a thicker rear flange (one inch).

There was also a variation in the arm (arm assembly, steering idler and third). The part used from 1953 to 1955 was 3706001, with the forged number 3706023. In 1956, the part number changed to 3737261, no forged number given. This design was change into 1956, and is known as the 1956 1st design. This changeover point is not known.

The 1956 2nd design used a different arm, part number 3733215, forged number 3733438. This 1956 2nd design was also carried over into and through 1957 production.

In 1958, the part number remained the same, 3733215, but the arm's forging number changed to 3731801. This 3722125/3731801 armed continued to be used to the end of 1962 production.

Since the rear flange of the later part is thicker, that would change the whole angle of the tie rods and steering idler arm. It appears that the brackets and arms are matched,



and early parts cannot be mixed with later parts and still function properly.

So much for part and forging numbers. Let's identify the part further. It mounts under the front crossmember directly under the center of the radiator. If the steering is equipped with a quick steering adapter, the adapter is an extension that bolts onto the idler arm; the tie rod ends are relocated to holes in the extension.

The bracket mounts to the front crossmember; the idler arm rotates in a large circular bearing located at the rear end of the bracket. Every time the steering wheel is rotated, the front tires are turned back and forth to steer the car. Tremendous pressures are placed on the arm, bearing, and bracket. These stresses can build up and cause the bearing housing portion of the bracket to break. *And I mean break right off, causing complete loss of steering, and the car goes who-knows-where.*

Also, this idler arm and idler arm bracket are too convenient in some ways. *When jacking the car up with a floor jack, the lift pad is often positioned under the rear end of the bracket. The entire weight of the front end may be lifted by this means. **STARTING NOW - TODAY - NO STRAIGHT AXLE CORVETTE FRONT END IS EVER TO BE LIFTED BY PLACING A FLOOR JACK UNDER THE IDLER ARM BRACKET.*** If in doubt, double check to be sure you understand the problem. Call someone if you don't; **this is a very important safety item!!**

We now know of two complete failures (breaks), and another which showed cracks around the bracket's load-bearing area. We have just begun checking these brackets for cracks, so who knows what we'll find. We must all check this item at once, in order to avoid a complete steering failure. We are all grateful that Laurie Ames wasn't just pulling off the freeway off ramp when his idler arm bracket broke.

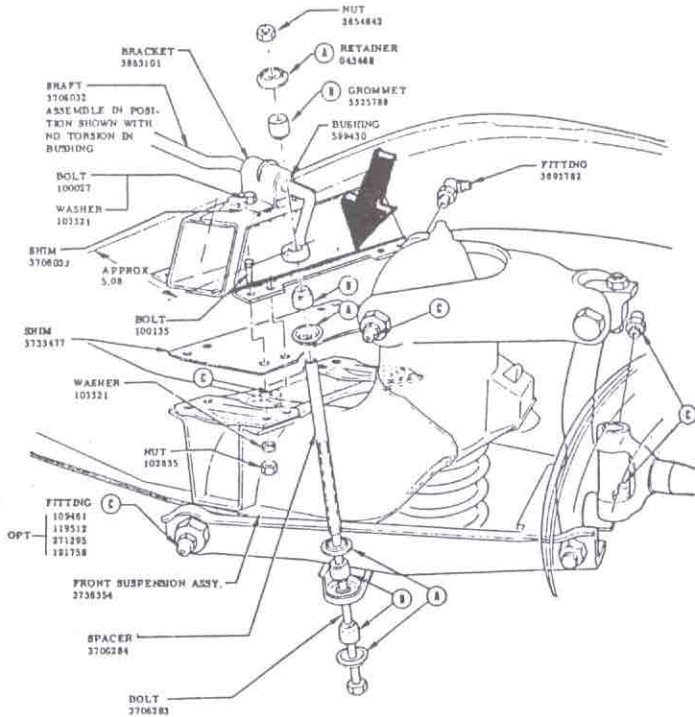
(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from Page 7)

## STRAIGHT AXLE SAFETY

When and where will yours fail? Such parts crack before they break. **Inspect yours before you drive it again.**

**4. Frame bracket cracks:** While examining Bill Harm's '53 frame (#264) for another project, Bill mentioned the cracks he had found. He was first alerted by another friend, Ken Weichmann, who had found cracks on his '57 frame first.



**THE ARROW POINTS TO THE BENT AREA OF THE FRAME BRACKET WHERE CRACKS MAY BE LOCATED.**

These cracks are in the corners of the front frame bracket. This bracket is riveted to the sides of the frame: it is bent 90 degrees, with its lower edges flush to the bottom of the frame. If you have a 1956 to 1962 Corvette, a tapered aluminum shim (one per side) is placed between the front crossmember and this bracket.

The brackets on some cars are cracking lengthwise in the middle of the 90 degree bend. The best cure seems to be the one used by Bill Harm. That is, weld the bracket securely from the backside. The original cracks may still show, but the bracket is firmly attached. Welding from the top side would be successful, but it would show, and it might interfere with installation of the front crossmember mounting bolts.

We know of no real problems here; that is, no front ends have dropped off to our knowledge. However, everyone with a chassis under restoration should check the front frame bracket for cracks.

Since this is an easy area to examine, everyone can look at their own car, running or not. Just how one would go

about repairing a cracked bracket on a running car might be tough. How much would you remove to feel safe? The entire fuel system? Members are invited to share their experiences and solutions.

### Watch Out for Hot Spots...

**5. This is an important item, but not a safety hazard like the others.** This only applies to certain carbureted 1956 to 1962 Corvettes, so the 6-cylinder and fuelie owners can go away.

This is a situation that does not normally happen to a Corvette under restoration. However, when the car is shown outdoors, it is somewhat normal to open the hood to show off the powerplant. It is also normal to leave the hood open for an hour or more.

If the sun is behind the car, the air cleaner collects the sun and focuses it on the underside of the hood. The black paint on the hood tends to absorb the concentrated sun's rays. The hood heats up, and the paint on the top side of the hood can be scorched and blistered.

I remember a white '62 on display several years ago. No one noticed this problem until an ugly bubbled arc several inches long was burned into the paint. Just when the owner wanted the car to look its best, disaster struck.

For many years now, owners have been making covers for the air cleaner top. This can be anything that doesn't harm the air cleaner finish. I have seen pieces of colored, towel-like fabric with the club's emblem sewed on the top. This is an attractive way to avoid damaging the hood's exterior paint.

Most judges are aware of the air cleaner's ability to focus the sun on the hood. Under these conditions, I have never known a judge to deduct for an air cleaner cover. In reality, it does take awhile for heat to build up. I guess at ten minutes as a safe margin. Any longer, and you'd better close the hood or cover the air cleaner.

### Straight Axle Safety Notes

Just as we were getting ready to print this issue, we heard of more 1953-62 safety problems. We talked to Joe Malicka of Country Corvettes in Kansas, (913) 886-7531. Joe has had many broken and cracked front frame brackets. Joe recalled one frame that had three of the eight bolt mounting areas broken: when the front crossmember was removed, those three just fell off! So, there are some serious safety problems here. Joe has a quantity of spare used brackets, so he just changes brackets.

He had never seen a broken or cracked idler and third arm bracket, but he is going to watch from now on. To my surprise, he knew of two idler arms that had broken on the drag link end! So, it looks like all those old cast iron parts are beginning to age. Let's take the time to check all the cast iron steering parts for stress cracks, a sign of future failure if not corrected first.

—Noland

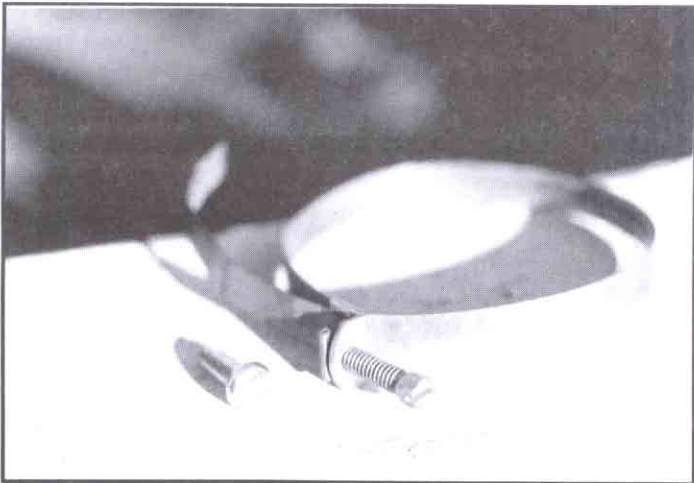
# FRESH AIR VENT HOSE CLAMPS

—Tony Catalano

The fresh air vent hose clamps as they are now available from G.M. and other after market suppliers come with a slotted hex head screw, and cost about three dollars. The correct clamps came with a shovel head screw. The clamp in it's correct form is available from a few Corvette after market part suppliers, but for \$12 or so. I have seen them at swap meets for as high as \$19 each and recently offered at \$25 from a parts supplier advertising in one of the magazines.

I easily modified my \$3 clamps. I started with the removal of the hex head screw. This is accomplished by filing off the peened-over end that retains the screw, and removing it.

Use the old screw you have just removed to measure for the proper length of your new shovel head screw. The



**FRESH-AIR VENT CLAMP, with both the slotted hex and shovel head screws for comparison.**

threads at the very end of the new replacement screw have to be ground off. Once again, use the old screw to determine the proper amount of thread removal. I just marked the number of threads with a marker and ground them off on the bench grinder.

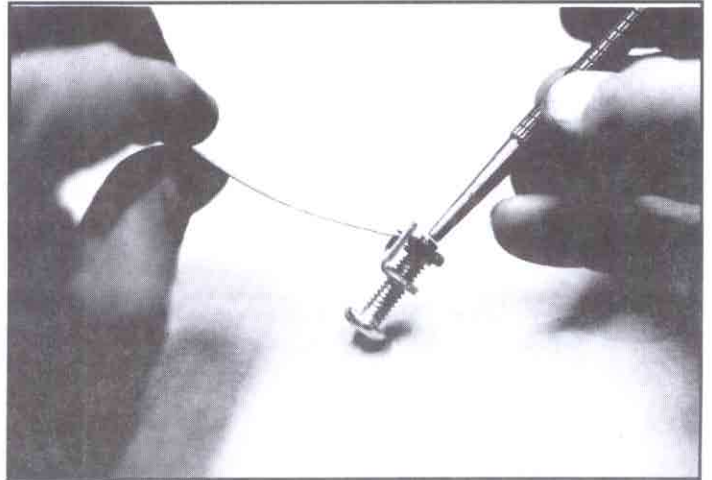
I also like to clear the threads around the newly-ground area. I like to first put the screw into the correct size thread die, then grind off the unwanted threads and then remove the die from the screw. This makes it much easier than trying to start the newly-cut threads into the die. All this clearing the threads business is all strictly optional. I figured, I have all these tools, may as well use them.

Now, you have your new screw cut to its proper length, the proper amount of threads have been removed and the threads are clean and clear. You're all set to insert the screw into the clamp (strap). Check to see if your fit is cor-

rect and you're ready to center punch the end over so that the screw will be held securely into place.

There's nothing to it, and it looks so nice. It is the little details that make such a big difference. I had to go to an old-fashioned hardware store with open bins of fasteners to find what I needed. My clamps took a 1/4-20 x 1" size screw. If you can only find it in a longer size, that's okay, as you will be cutting it to size. Technically, a fastener that is 1/4 in size or larger is referred to as a bolt.

—Tony



**CENTER-PUNCHING the end of the screw and putting it into place.**

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*Editor's Note: The letter below was written by SACE President, Noland Adams. It was originally published in the September, 1957 edition of HOT ROD Magazine. We couldn't print the picture of the car, but we thought you'd like the letter anyhow!*

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Sirs:

Enclosed is a photo of my 1954 Corvette with "that grille again." The grille is held in with two sheet metal screws — that's all. I can change back to stock in about half an hour. Besides the grille, I have the pipes moulded and coming out below the rear of the body, and 1957 Corvette hubcaps.

In the mill, the head was shaved, an "over full" cam installed, along with tubular pushrods. The powerglide gave up four times, so I figured it was time for a change. I installed a McGurk clutch, together with a 1941-48 Chevy passenger trans., with a 1949-54 side shifting plate, and a 1957 Corvette selector box and shifting levers. Now, it shifts exactly like a '57 Corvette, and is sure fast shifting!

Top time in SS 1/4 was 84-11 at Kingdon Drags in Stockton, California. I can wind to 4,500 in low, shift, wind to 4200 in second, and wind to about 3600 at the end of the quarter mile.

At present, I am President of the Pacific Pacers Auto Club, and have been reading HOT ROD Magazine since 1951.

—Noland Adams

Manteca, California

(Yes, George, it's me! — Noland Adams, April 1, 1989)

# SHROP'S CHEVY'S

Home Of The Fastest "stock" '56  
Chevy's In The World

## BONNEVILLE SALT FLATS:

1986 — '56 Corvette  
156.270 M.P.H.

1987 — '56 Corvette  
156.720 M.P.H.

1987 — '56 Sedan  
144.271 M.P.H.

1988 — '56 Corvette  
163 M.P.H.

1989 — '56 Corvette  
174.9 M.P.H.

Driver, Ron Shutter  
Cassville, Georgia

Driver, Betty Burkland  
Great Falls, Montana

Driver, Forrest Shropshire  
Cassville, Georgia

Driver, Forrest Shropshire  
Cassville, Georgia

Driver, Forrest Shropshire  
Cassville, Georgia

Dear Lucy,

Here is a check for 1990 Dues. I met Roy at Bend, Oregon, in 1988. That's where I found out about SACE.

I like it. I also have a 1960 Dual Quad 'Vette - average, unrestored condition.

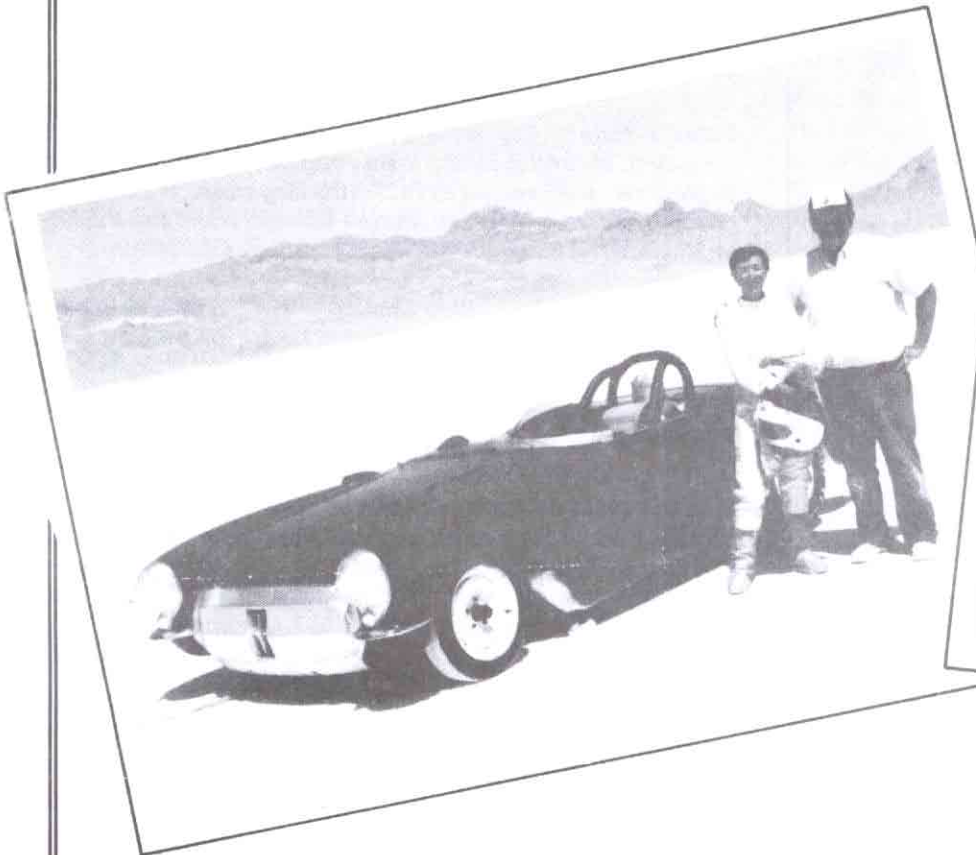
My 'Vette, the '56, has been in over 25 magazines so far. The last was the March issue of Corvette Fever.

I have lots of fun with it, and would love to write an article for the mag.

My best...

FORREST SHROPSHIRE  
Cassville, GA

P.S. Do you think I'm nuts about the '55, '56 and '57's?



# 1958 — Black and Beautiful

—Joe Ray, North Little Rock, Arkansas

For a person who can never recall even riding in an early model Corvette '53-62, it is a big step to purchase one. The only thing that could persuade me is a much-maligned year like the 1958. The only color I would want in 1958 is BLACK.

This J58S109104 1958 Corvette sat under a tree for about 15 years, and sometime during that time, it was stripped of white paint and primed. The owner had a serious fire and had lost much of his unrestored collection of cars and parts. This persuaded him to sell before fire could do it to him again.

After visiting his farm and looking at J58S109104, I asked him what was the color of this (thing) anyway. He said it was black with a silver cove. I said "You mean Charcoal with a silver cove." He said, "No, read my lips, Black with a Silver Cove." I asked him if he could prove that and he said "Sure." He then opened the glove box door which was black on the outside and said "Look in here."

Sure enough, there was black paint and the lacquer sticker was still on the back side of the door. He opened the gas filler door and said "Look in here." Sure enough, there was black paint inside the gas door. My interest was beginning to peak. A Black 1958 with a silver cove and its red interior would look great, but who would ever believe that I had a real Black 1958?

Since being a member of SACE and having The Complete Corvette Restoration and Technical Guide - Vol. 1, the chase was on to document an earlier Corvette with no trim tag. The chase was made considerably easier after the article on "1953 to 1963 Corvette Exterior Colors by Noland Adams" in SACE Vol. 1, Number 2.

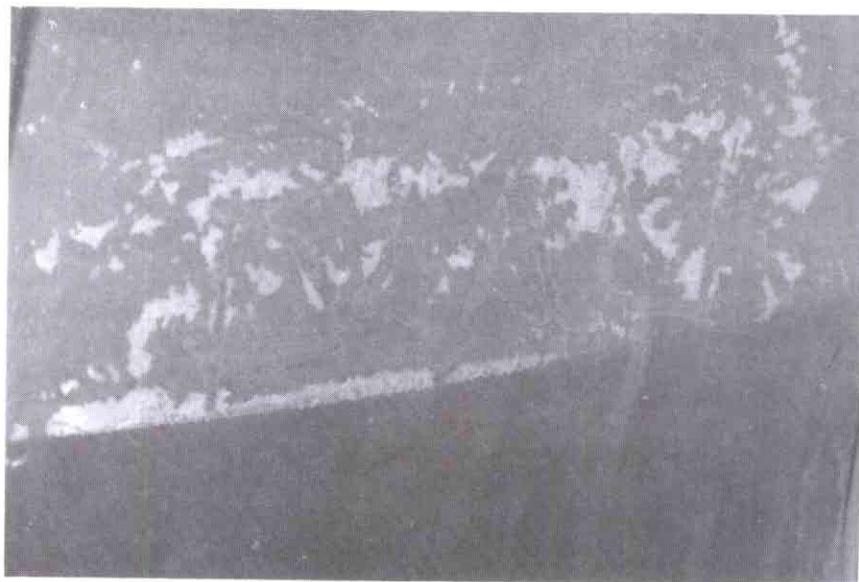
Then I was back on the farm with a quarter in my hand, asking this guy to scrape some paint off a panel in his trunk. He said "Go ahead, you can't hurt it anyway."

Lo and behold, the scraping revealed the letters "BLACK" in green wax pencil. See the enclosed pictures for yourself.

Upon further inspection of The Complete Corvette Restoration and Technical Guide - Vol. 1, page 306 revealed that the 1958

paint charts were changed on 3-5-58 to eliminate charcoal and begin black as an exterior color. Also, page 425 of the supplement to the second edition lists the Color Production for 1958 Black cars at a total of 493, making it 294 for solid black cars and 199 for black cars with a silver cove.

Further inspection of the car revealed that it was an original engine four speed with two four-barrel carbs (245 HP). With only the bumperettes and the trunk strips missing, a deal was made and the Black 1958 was delivered to my home.



**ABOVE:** These two photos clearly reveal the color name "BLACK" written in green crayon on the inside of the trunk.

# More News on WCFB's

Roy—

In response to your "WCFB - To Know or Not To Know" article, I would like to add my two cents, with some information that we gathered during the formative years of drag racing.

The Chrysler Carter Quads are exactly the same as the Corvette's, with the exception of the casting numbers being different, the weights being somewhat thicker, and the air bleed screw using a hex-head instead of being knurled. The Venturi was larger than the 'Vettes also.

Back in 1958 when I first started to race, I put a set of 1957 Plymouth Fury carbs on the 'Vette. They fit like a glove, and the linkage connected up perfectly. I locked the linkage in full throttle, which opened all jets at once. What a kick!

Nobody picked up on the fact that I was running Chrysler carbs instead of 'Vette carbs. I ran stock class, so you can see just how out of class I really was when you take into account that my car was a '56 'Vette. However, I ran it as a 1957 283 with Chrysler Carter Dual Quad Carbs.

In three years, I only lost eight races with this setup. The performance difference between the carbs seemed to be that the larger Venturi gave me more "kick" and they just ran more smoothly. They gave me no problems whatsoever.

Now I have the correct ones, "my originals," back on my "original" 265-240 HP engine, and they are somewhat "touchy." They don't have quite the kick as the carbs from Chrysler. Don't even ask about mileage, as we didn't pay any attention to it back then. I'll tell you, though, that I'm only getting 10 mpg. now.

These Carter Carbs were on all the 300's, DeSoto Adventurers, Plymouth Furys and Dodge 500's. Last year, while attending Bloomington Gold, I found a vendor trying to peddle a set of Chrysler Quads as 1956 'Vette Quads. When I questioned him about them, he said "I was the only one who knew what they were," and that he fully intended to sell them to the highest bidder as 1956 Corvette carbs, even though he knew they were Chrysler carbs!

About 18 months ago, I answered an ad in a national publication, from a well-known used parts dealer, stating he had a set of 1956 dual Quads. His asking price was \$1,400.00 for a pair which was in need of rebuilding.

After asking a few questions, I finally convinced him that what he had were Chrysler carbs and not Corvette ones, as he thought. He had no idea that the same carbs were used by Mopar, and thanked me for setting him straight!

So, Roy and fellow SACE members, yes, you can make up a set of dual Quads that will look like the original 1956 quads — from Chrysler Quads. Numbers won't match, but the inexperienced and untrained eye will not be able to detect them.

Be aware that the 1956 Corvette carbs are the hardest to find, as they were used only for 1956 and changed in 1957. Still, if you find them (Chrysler carbss) get them, because the internal parts can be used.

During my drag racing days, I really had fun, and nobody was the wiser in regard to my carbs!

—Ken Kavalchek

## 1957 Chevrolet Horns — A Suitable Replacement for 1958-1960 Corvettes

—Robert Vugas

During the restoration of my 1959 Corvette, I determined that both of my original horns were inoperable. At a cost of \$200-300 per pair for repair, I decided to find a suitable replacement.

The 1958-60 Corvette horns are Delco-Remy 12 volt Type S, with the low range stamped 351 and the high range stamped 352.

The Chevrolet passenger car horns are also Delco-Remy 12 volt Type S, with the low range stamped 325 and the high range stamped 326.

Both sets of horns are identical in appearance, excluding the part numbers and position of the mounting brackets. The Corvette horn is designed to mount downward, and the Chevrolet to mount upward.

I was able to gently pry off the mounting bracket, which is spot-welded in three spots, rotate it 180°, and re-weld it so that it now mounts downward. There is a hole, approximately 3/8", drilled through the mid-section of the mounting bracket, and when re-positioned for Corvette use, it is directly over the adjustment screw, which still allows adjustment, if necessary, for the horns.

I now have a set of working horns for my Corvette, which cost me \$5.00 at a swap meet.

# COLOR NAME UPDATE

**Noland Adams**

**New 1954 information:** Several brand-new 1954 Corvettes were photographed on the Harbour Freeway in Los Angeles. Several black-and-white photos had been seen back in the early Seventies, but never any in color. We always wondered if they were green, blue, red, black, orange, or what?

When I began writing for Automobile Quarterly, I gained access to Chevrolet's files. There, I found many color transparencies, including photos of the '54's on the freeway in L.A., dated March 18, 1954.

For the first time, we knew the color of the "dark" Corvettes. There was a total of 27 '54's in the photo: 15 were white, 8 were red and 4 were black. This photo was so important that it appeared on the cover of the Winter 1977 issue of The Corvette Restorer, NCRS's fine publication.

Where are those red and black '54's now? The white cars could be almost any '54. Surely, the red and black cars were specially painted at the factory for this occasion.

Now, we have an idea, for two cars have been located which are probably from that group. The first is E54S001168, painted black and located in California. Is this the first Corvette painted a color other than white?

The other is E54S001174, painted red and located in Iowa. Okay, members, let's keep an eye open for other colored 1954 Corvettes near these serial numbers.

1958 and 1958: Recently, we have seen '58's and '59's with the name "YELL." written in the trunk. (If you do not know about the color name location, the article first appeared in Volume 1, Number 2, and there have been several updates. Write to SACE editor Roy Braatz for information on copies of this article.)

Panama Yellow was a 1958 color, signified by "YELL." in the trunk. This has been proven by the examination of several examples.

Recently, a couple of '59's have appeared with "YELL." written in the trunk. I assumed they were hold-overs with a 1958 Panama Yellow paint job. However, I was recently visiting Rick Gower, and his '59, which was originally painted Classic Cream. To my surprise, there in the trunk was "YELL."

In summary, I must conclude that "YELL." in a '58 means Panama Yellow. However, when it is seen in a '59, it means Classic Cream.

No wonder it took us a long time to run down these details. There were only 265 all-Panama Yellow 1958 Corvettes. There were only 190 Panama Yellow - white cove combi-

nation 1958 Corvettes. Rarer yet is Classic Cream; there were only 134 1959 Corvettes so painted.

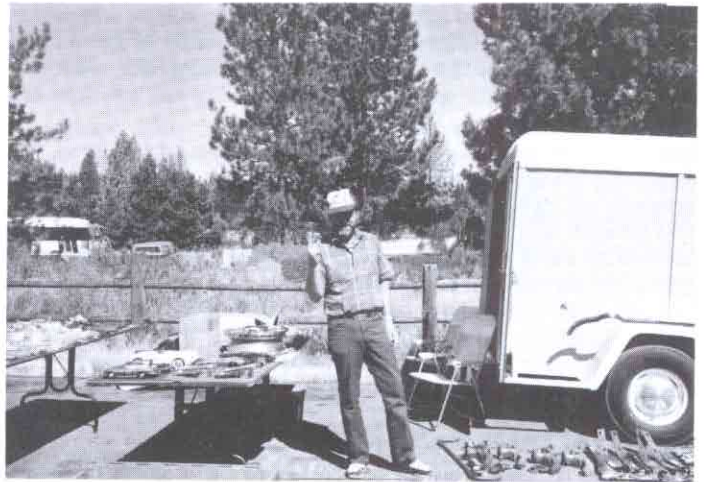
Enjoy those old Corvettes!

Later, Noland

*To the charter member who had a note in Vol. 3, No. 2, page 8: Amen Brother! Wave on!*

*(Mike McCagh, did you happen to read that note?)*

—TOM PARSONS  
Oklahoma City



**SACE MEMBER Lanny Johnson... still selling Straight-Axle parts (or they could be Nash parts!)**



**SACE MEMBERS Ken Wiechman and Rachelle. (He never throws away anything... he sells it!)**



# CORVETTE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

—Presented by Dale Pearman

(Note: Dale has given SACE permission to reprint his Bloomington Gold workshop booklet. Thanks, Dale!)

**Q.** My 1962 Corvette is within 500 cars from the end of the production run, and I've lost points in N.C.R.S. events because of a 1961 trunk latch pedestal. I have a 1961-style pop-up spring held to the pedestal with a single clamp and a Phillips-head screw on the passenger side. This spring does NOT sit in a well, depressed from the top surface of the pedestal. The judge said that it was an improper repair but I know for a fact that no repairs were ever done to this area of the car. Is it original?

**A.** Yes! I have been able to document, through Mr. Joe Johnson of Indiana, that starting at about serial number 14,100 in the 1962 production run, St. Louis started using all their inventory of trunk latch pedestals, clamps and pop-up springs from prior years. In 1961, the trunk LID had no special provision to engage the rubber bumper in the pop-up spring mounted on the pedestal's DRIVER side. All 1962 Corvettes used a 1962 trunk LID, differing from 1961 lids in that on the PASSENGER side, a square elevated fiberglass platform was provided to allow the rubber bumper on the spring to seat.

1961 springs were mounted on the top of the trunk lock pedestal, driver's side, with a single clamp and Phillips-head screw. (Rubber bumper of course on the spring). For 1962, a hole was cut in the pedestal, passenger side, and a shelf inside was formed for the spring to be attached in this well with rivets and clamps. (A bumper was also on the top of this spring).

After S/N 14,100, anything goes with respect to the pedestal and spring. I've documented one example with no well, no spring, and a 1961 style hole in the passenger side for the Phillips head screw. Another example shows a correct 1961 assembly on a 1962. Still, another shows no well, a Phillips head screw hole, and the end of a 1961 spring through the guide hole and clamped with a 1961 clamp and screw, all on the passenger side. I've never seen an original 1962 with a 1961 trunk lid (yet!) I wonder if end-of-production 1961 models and 1962 lids, or if VERY early 1962's had 1961 lids. Any help here would be appreciated. On page 342 of Noland Adams' first book a photograph is shown of a rubber convertible top lid bumper attached to the underside of a 1961 trunk lid with a Phillips screw. I'm not sure that I agree with what he states as being "original" for the 1961-62 production runs.

**Q.** I went to get a pair of window regulators for my 1958 Corvette and the guy said they didn't sell them any more. He said that '62's would work. Am I gonna get fastenered?

**A.** Yes! 1956-58 window regulators, (3723473 left and 3723474 right), have been discontinued for some time now. Reworked 1959-62 regulators for use in 1956-58 cars are available from a few of the better Corvette supply houses. You may be able to rework a 1959-62 pair yourself by bending the main arm and measuring for conformity with the originals. It's an easy job. Go back to Mr. Goodparts and purchase a 3757665 left and 3757666 right, if you so choose.

**Q.** Why do some bumperette assemblies stick out from the grilles so far on 1961-62 models?

**A.** 1958-60 Corvettes used teeth or vertical chromed pieces attached to a horizontal grille bar in front as opposed to the 1961-62 models which used a cast aluminum grille and a chromed steel horizontal grille bar. (1961 natural finish aluminum grilles are positioned close-up to the grille bar and 1962 anodized black or gold grilles are positioned further back with the use of spacers). The bumperettes are to be located further forward on 1958-60 cars to clear the grille teeth. As a result, two designs existed for bumperette supports; short ones, (1961-62, 3782765 left, 3782766 right), and long ones, (1958-60 supports; short ones, (1958-60 3739331 left, 3739332 right). As a cost-cutting maneuver, G.M. has discontinued the shorter version, reasoning that "one size does all." When you see the bumperettes more than an inch or so in front of the grille bar on 1961-62 cars, the reason is probably because the wrong supports are being used. The correct lengths are being made as reproductions, or if so inclined, the restorer may easily cut, weld, smooth and refinish an early, longer set for use on 1961-62 Corvettes.

**Q.** On a 1962 Corvette, aluminum rocker moldings are used on both sides.

Are they supposed to be painted in-between the strips.

All early production 1962 body sill moldings, 3820541 (left) and 3820542 (right) were unpainted until serial number 6000 or so when a flat black paint was added to the depressed portion of the rocker molding stamping, thereby accenting the raised aluminum horizontal ribs. I have observed both painted and unpainted moldings on mid-run production cars. Mike Ernst reports seeing unpainted moldings as late as S/N 6700.

**A.** These body sill moldings were held to the car along the top edge by a continuous retainer strip, (3814766) attached with four screws, (9412276) as opposed to the separate retainer pieces used on the mid-years. Two chrome-plated Phillips head oval screws, (9168496) were visible; one on either end of the molding in counter-sunk, dimpled depressions and retained with flat spring nuts (445109). Visible from underneath the car were five fastener assemblies (I've seen six and seven as well) along the bottom of the molding (screw 9417692, washer 120392, split ring lock, washer 12-380, and hex nut 134551). Fiberglass holes were drilled to the template formed by the molding.

**Q.** I have a 1962 Fuel-Injected Corvette and recently I rebuilt the windshield washer system. The heat shield for the fluid jar is made of aluminum. Is it supposed to be painted, left "natural" or what?

**A.** The heat shield was installed before the black-out eggshell paint process and therefore should appear the same shade of black as the rest of the engine compartment. The fiberglass underneath the shield is natural and unpainted. This shield is held to the inner fender with either hex or clutch head cap screws, (160046), lock washers, (120217) and nuts, (120614). I have seen mainly hex screws on production '62's.

**Q.** I see two different gas tank meters for sale in XXXXXX's parts catalog; one for '58-60 Corvettes and another for '61-62 Corvettes. What is a "gas tank meter" and what is the difference between the two?

**A.** The 1956-60 meter assembly was G.M. (1518785) while that for 1961-62 was (5642125). The only difference between the two meters was the manner in which the fuel outlet connected to the main fuel line running along the frame. A brass fitting with female threads was soldered to the end of the pipe for a rigid connection on the earlier cars, while a clamped rubber hose was used in 1961-62. Also, on the intake end of the meter pipe, a strainer assembly, (3751491) was used on all models. Part (5642125) is still serviced by A-C Delco as of this writing (5-18-90).

**Q.** I just bought a pair of bezels for the headlights on my white 1962 and had them professionally painted. The spears with the rivets were installed correctly, but the bezels won't fit right on the car. Have I done something wrong?

**A.** The '61-62 headlamp bezel (G.M. calls them "doors") are part number 3779239 and have been discontinued for some time now (Unavailable). G.M., however, has made available a "reissue" door, part number 3742509, sold as part number 3779239, which is the same casting number as the 1958-60 door with two holes drilled for the spear and either de-chromed or unchromed. I can't determine how the chrome is deleted. As I recall, two different casting numbers were involved between the two year groups, and therefore some differences could exist in shape. This fact would account for some of the misfit. The junction of the spears, (extension fender molding), (3779240), with the top molding assembly (3740215) left much to be desired as shipped from the factory. Usually a gap appeared between the two pieces. Joe Calcagno, a 1962 Corvette collector and restorer, wrote for the N.C.R.S. Restorer magazine a couple of years ago, that by using a nylon washer between the fiberglass fender and the top molding at the first mounting stud, a better fit would result in that most of the gap would be transferred to a visually less dominant portion of the assembly. I have used his advice to advantage on my cars. One one occasion, I had to trim back a portion of the top fender molding in order to get a decent appearance. The doors are mounted with four screws each, chrome plated oval Phillips head, (3770549) for 1961-62, and (3732018) for 1958-60 (Same screw, different numbers).

# Route 66 to Bloomington Gold

—Mary Braatz

(See Photos on Inside Front Cover)

On June 12, Roy and I met Lucy Badenhop in North Hollywood, CA. Since we were all going to Bloomington Gold in Illinois, Roy had told Lucy that we might as well go in one car.

Lucy needed to go on Old Route 66 and map it for next year's 1991 Route 66 Road Tour. Roy knew about Route 66. In his childhood, he had driven it with his mother. In his teens (1957-60), he drove it alone, and in 1966, when coming home from the Army, he drove it for the last time. So, he had no illusions. Lucy, on the other hand, had a dream. She has always want'd to drive her 1958 Corvette down Route 66. For this year, she settled for our Nissan Maxima. I, for one, just went along for the ride... and what a ride it was. From now on, Old Route 66 will always conjure up memories.

Lucy recruited a guy from Illinois to help show us Old Route 66. His name is Dana and he met us in North Hollywood. He came along in his pickup, just to guide us down Route 66. He is very knowledgeable and had done much research about Route 66.

When Roy learned that there were several alignments of Route 66 from 1926 to the 1940's, he was a little confused, but went along with Lucy's plan to cover as much of the original 1926 alignment as possible. We had to make Dana understand that we didn't want to go on really rough roads and no dead ends. He'd been on all of Route 66. A real 66 enthusiast! (Now, where have I seen that word before?)

We had some misunderstandings along the way. There were a few rough times, but by the third day, things were running smoothly.

Lucy needed many mileage checks and had to write street names, stops and directions — from the back seat. We tried to help by getting the exit numbers and if each stop used a stop sign or a signal. Anyway, by day four, she was getting more organized and the maps Dana had made were becoming more clear to her. One problem was that all the directions or maps and tourist books ever written have always been from Illinois to California. So, they were all backwards for us.

Once we got the kinks worked out, I felt a lot better, and the drive became more enjoyable, almost like a vacation.

Lucy had already driven the stretch from Santa Monica to San Bernardino (about 60 miles), so it was in San Bernardino that we got serious about Route 66.

I find that when I look at the old gas stations, restaurants and motels I can't help but think, how sad. These once-thriving places are now becoming ruins. Many cities were hurt by the new interstate... some so badly that they are only ghost towns.

They called Route 66 "The Mother Road," among other names. I've got a few new ones for it, but I won't elaborate. It was the only thing going from 1926 until the 1980's. In the '80's, the Interstate started passing it by, and most of the little mom-and-pop type business just couldn't stand the loss of traffic. We did meet some old truckers who still prefer to use the Old Route.

Surprisingly, much of Route 66 can still be driven and many of the small businesses still exist. I'm glad that associations are forming to save 66 as an historical road. We enjoyed visiting with the small town people. Many Route 66 Association members

helped us along the way. I bought a few books to help me understand its magic lure to others and myself.

The people still doing business on the lonely stretches of Route 66 are like pioneers to me. Some are struggling, but refuse to give up. There are still many busy places along the way. Route 66 went through many cities, big and small. The big cities have not suffered as the small ones have. They still do pretty good business, and get many more tourists, of course.

I loved the old buildings. They have such great designs, their own individual look. Many of them still use neon signs to draw business in. Some towns look like the Las Vegas Strip at night, all lit up.

There are mining towns from the 1800's, which have much for the modern-day tourist to see. One of these is Oatman, Arizona, which is on the original 1926 alignment. I am glad we didn't miss this drive. It was hard to believe that it was the main road at one time.

We passed some beautiful country which offered some magnificent picture-taking opportunities. There were many tourist attractions along the way, which we didn't have time for, on this mapping run. Roy and I did some back-tracking after Bloomington to see St. Louis, and the Meramec Caverns in Stanton, Missouri. Roy had been to these Caverns in the '50's with his mom, one of their cross-country moves.

We did stop at some antique stores and Indian trading posts. Roy must have seen over twenty junk yards he'd love to explore. It was interesting to see the different architecture in the old buildings. There are many old cemeteries where the pioneers have been laid to rest. It made me remember some of those old history lessons that I hated as a kid. History seems so much more important to me now.

Each of the eight states which Route 66 passes through is unique. From the Indians, miners, and pioneers, we have the most unbelievable land. There are deserts, prairies, mountains, cliffs, caves, and forests of every size. Everyone can find something of interest on Route 66, so go ahead and "Get Your Kicks on Route 66." I'm glad we did. Our little 1947 sleeper trailer has another 5,500 miles on it, and some new state stickers. It always gets its share of attention. Most people can't believe that we sleep in it.

Before closing, I need to say "Thank You" to Max Brockhouse of Chapin, Illinois. Max was kind enough to drive Roy and I around Springfield, IL., and show us the Holiday Inn, where next year's SACE Convention will take place. It is beautiful, and we know that Max will do a great job of organizing that meet. He introduced us to other Corvette enthusiasts and took many pictures for Roy that will be very helpful in future volumes of *Straight Talk*.

Thank you, also, to his wife Mary. Max and Mary, thank you for your hospitality and tour of your farm and hogs. We actually saw baby hogs being born. They were so tiny and cute, but Mom Hog was soooo BIG and "well" not so cute! They even sent me pictures of the baby hogs, which are going in the scrap book, right next to the Bloomington Gold Corvettes. Thanks so much. It truly was one of the highlights of my vacation!

—Mary Braatz

# The Modified, Non-Original '56 Corvette

—Tom Parsons

Ever since 1957, when I was in Junior High School, I wanted a '57 F.I. 'Vette. About 17 years ago, I got a chance to buy my '56. I couldn't find a '57 that I could afford.

Originality was not a big deal then like it is now. I just wanted a nice-appearing, strong-running single headlight Corvette. However, one thing led to another, and now very little is original on my '56.

At that time, few people, including myself, knew anything about NCRS. My desire was for a well-built car rather than a factory-correct car, although I did not want to alter the factory appearance. We removed the body, stripped and sandblasted the frame, and painted it gloss black Imron and went from there.

When I was in college, I worked part-time in a chrome shop. After college, I quit working there, but the owner would let me continue to chrome my own parts... sooo, the frame, block, heads and Muncie 4-speed case are about the only metal parts that did not get plated on my '56. (Yes, I disassembled the convertible top frame and plated each piece.)

When I bought the car, the original 265 was long gone and had been replaced with a 327, 2-barrel. I had a '57 dual 4 set which I had owned for several years (Remember when nobody wanted those old, small WCFB's on that low intake) so I slapped that on.

The '53-58 cars did not have any kind of traction bars, and with my 327, I needed something to improve rear traction. I remembered that later straight axle 'Vettes had some sort of factory bars above the springs. There is a salvage yard here in OKC that used to have lots of old Corvettes, and parts were dirt cheap. So, I started searching for parts to upgrade my '56 chassis. I found what used to be a '62 with a perfect frame and some suspension parts. In order to add '59-62 factory traction bars, you need the axle housing, bars, and frame brackets, all of which were on this frame. Now, are you ready? We cut the brackets off of this perfect frame with a torch, and removed a large section of the frame with the brackets.

I noticed that this frame also had what looked like a rear sway bar, so we cut that off along with a piece of frame. This frame also had a straight and heavier front sway bar, rather than the big notch like my '56 front sway bar. Someone had already removed the differential but left the '62 axles laying on the ground. After cutting all these parts off of this '62 frame, we loaded them in the trunk of my '51 Chevy (which I bought from Grandad in '62 and still drive to work every day) and I went up to the salvage yard office and paid the man, get ready — \$25.00. I went home, ground off the sections of frame from the brackets and had them welded to my '56 frame. The rest of the parts (you guessed it) I chromed. Now my '56 has the suspension

upgraded to a '62 with 5 leaf rear springs.

By January, 1976, the car had been completely rebuilt with lots of chrome and new paint, but the dual 4, 327 just wasn't strong enough. It needed a 350, but 350's do not have a crankcase vent hole in the back of the block. I did not want to cut holes in my chromed Corvette valve covers to vent the crankcase. I remembered reading somewhere about someone machining down the main bearing journals of a 350 crank to fit in a 327 block. So, out came the 327 and I rebuilt it with a 350 crank.

I have always loved F.I., but since my car is a '56, I stayed with the 2 4's. Then, one day I said that since the purists always condemn my car because nothing on it is original, I finally decided to buy an injector. I wanted it to look like a very early unit with a finned plenum, and perform like a late model unit. What I ended up with is a '58 finned top plenum that was once cut in half and ported out by Hayden Proffitt and Bill Thomas, and welded back together so that it flows more air. The air and fuel meters are from a '62 unit and the leaking cranking signal valve has been replaced with an electric solenoid valve. By the way, I have a photo of Hayden Proffitt beside my car, with his signed statement on the back of the photo that he modified the plenum.

I have added a steering column tachometer like the '57 had with the RPO 579E option, except that I have retained the original, in-dash tach which is generator-driven, and the column tach is driven by the F.I. distributor. I took some pictures of a 579E car in 1982, and by using the photos of the tach on that car and the illustrations in the Assembly Manual, I was able to fabricate a fairly accurate bracket from heavy stainless steel. The tach I used is a very old Stewart Warner 8000 RPM mechanical tach with a plain black face and white numbers similar to an AC tach. SW discontinued this tach years ago, and I located six new ones. I sold five and kept one for my car. At first glance, it looks very much like the AC tach on 579E cars.

Another modification is the exhaust. I use a full stainless steel system and 2-1/2 inch manifolds. If you get the front exhaust pipes for a '62 with F.I., they are made to bolt up to 2-1/2 inch manifolds and then you use the remainder of a '57 exhaust system.

Over the years, I have collected several posi units from 3.08 to 4.11 for my car. The 4.11 is used most of the time.

To make this a shorter story, I now have a red over chrome '56 with 2 tops, '62 suspension, F.I., a bored & stroked 327 which is now 357 c.i.d., Muncie 4 sp., and 4.11 posi. Does it run? Does a P-51 Mustang fly?!

My next plan is H.D. brakes and a repo '57 airbox. I need to borrow an airbox so that I can copy it. Does anyone

# The Ongoing Saga of the Old '54 Drag Racer

—Rich LaValley

Okay, okay... I know what I said. "Getting to the bottom of the iceberg." (Straight Talk: Volume 2, Number 2). "The old race car had raced once more and would retire a champion, NEVER to race again."

Well, first, never say never!

Second, let me tell ya a couple of true short stories.

## Story Number One:

A buddy of mine spent 7-1/2 years to complete his '54 Corvette, then drove his car twice last year...

I feel that all of us straight-axle enthusiasts must keep one thing in perspective. Our cars are very, very special cars. However, they are cars! After all of your hard work restoring them, drive'm!

---

(Continued from Page 16)

## Modified, Non-Original Corvette

repo this item yet?

Original is desirable only because it's rare, not because it's good.

*P.S. I have included a few pictures of the modifications which have been done to my '56. I have also included a Xerox copy of my Hayden Proffitt pictures. Sorry I can't let those out of my possession. You have my permission to use any, all, or none of the pictures if you wish.*

*In V3-3, you stated that you feel that most 'Vettes are not completely original, because owners of early cars have made changes to improve the car. I know several owners in and around the Oklahoma City area, and NONE of their cars are original, but they are nice cars, and maintained well.*

*Let me speak very candidly and off the record. You never hear people gripe, complain and moan when they see a nice '55 Chevy that has been personalized with a super paint job, custom interior, custom wheels and tires, plus a 350 and 4 speed... or a '32 Ford that has been made into a fine street rod. So, why are modified early 'Vettes so widely criticized?*

*If I don't stop here, I will never get off my soap box. Thanks, Tom.*

I told my buddy, "When you're taking your last breath on earth, you'll probably say 'Gee, I sure wish I'd driven my little Corvette more than twice a year!'"

Well, I drive my little car every chance I get. If my wife says, "Oh, darn, we're out of milk," I raise my hand and say "I'll go! - I'll go!"

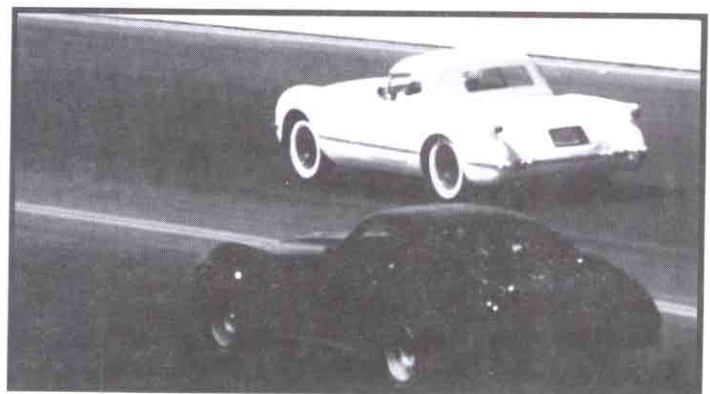
What's the point, you ask. Drive your little car every chance you get. We only go around once in life. So, get all the Corvette-ing you can get!

## Story Number Two:

I joined Santa Cruz Corvettes... What a fun club! We go on tours, rallyes, auto cross, car shows, socials, etc. Well, the guys kept asking me if I was going with the Club to 'Vette Magic... "Well, I'll go and watch," I said. "You'll watch?" they said, "what about your philosophy... 'We only go around once in life...'" and so on... so...

The biggest "All Corvette drag racing event in Northern California" was held at Sears Point on August 5th.

I dialed in at 18:20... Six races later, I had beaten all but one Corvette. That race turned out to be the most exciting race of all. I was lined up in the right lane. I adjusted my left outside mirror, so that during the race, I could keep my eye on the blue '74 Corvette in the left lane. The light went yellow and I slowly wound up the stove-bolt six and let out the clutch. No burning rubber... just wanted to get away from that slippery starting line... 30 miles per hour, go to 2nd gear... in 2nd I floored it until the speedometer showed 60 mph... then hit the high gear and go... check the rear-view... where's that blue Corvette?



The good news was that he was two car lengths back. The bad news was that he was coming fast! Checked to see where the finish line was... 350 feet to go! Where's

(Continued on page 18)

(Continued from Page 17)

## The Ongoing Saga of the Old '54 Drag Racer

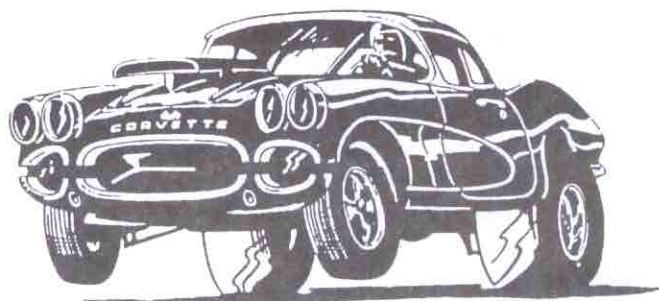
that blue Corvette? He was still coming... one car length behind me now... I had to make a decision. If I went too fast, I might blow my dial in of 18:20. If I slowed down, I might not win the race... and I didn't want to lose. So I hit the gas and then checked the mirror.

It was then I knew I had screwed up. The blue 'Vette was wound out as fast as he could go — and was still one car length behind. As we went over the line, I slowed and glanced to my left. There he was, giving me a thumbs-up sign, which I returned.



On my return to the time shack, I was sure that the time would be close. I never could believe how close. The time slip said that I went 2/100 of a second too fast. Oh, well! It was a super race. I knew I would get a runner-up trophy, but Holy Cow! To my surprise, it was enormous. This was the biggest trophy I had ever gotten in my life.

Who won "King of the Hill" that day? The car that won all brackets was a black, '62 straight-axle. No, I don't have a picture of that race car... I do, however, have a cartoon drawing that epitomizes that car, that day, that race, that 'Vette Magic.



Pretty neat, huh? Happy Corvette-ing!

—Rich LaValley

## Regarding '54 Hard-Tops:

Dear Editor,

I am very lucky to be the second owner of a 1954 Pennant Blue 'Vette. It is all original except the tires and has only 36,000 miles. The first owner is a 90-year-old man.

I would be interested in knowing more about hard-tops for 1954's. Were they an option?

I enjoy your publication. Thank you.

CARROL F. KETCHUM  
Bethel, VT

*Two hard tops were available as an after market product. Both came from Southern California. The first was a small rear window and there were three hold down clamps at the front. The second was a large, wrap-around window and there were two hold down clamps at the front.*



**Carroll & Marguerite Ketchum's '54. Two hard-tops are available for this year as an after market option.**

# SACE SUPPORTERS



## PARTS WANTED...

**WANTED: Correct engine mounting bolts** for 1956-1962. Bolts have the WB2C markings on the head and are 7/16" fine thread. Call or write to: TONY CATALANO, 15545 Cliff Avenue, White Rock, British Columbia, Canada V4B1V8. (604) 536-8435.

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  - E. Rear Carburetor for 245 H.P. Dual Quad Set up. Air Horn #6-1299, Body #0-049 with chock.
- JOHN B. RAVIKIO, 7 Deer Rest Road, Moorestown, N.J. 08059. (609) 235-2290, or (609) 234-2754.

**I AM RESTORING A 1956 CORVETTE.** Exterior: Aztec Copper. Interior: Beige. I need lots of parts. The following is a list of some for them.

Engine: Casting #3720991, Stamped I.D. GR or GV. Heads: #3725306 =  on front, or #3721762 =  on head. Transmission: 3-speed. Code S, Stamped, Upper Right Rear of Case. Rear - 34d Member: AH or AD or 3:70.1HT. Intake Manifold - Casting #3731394. Exhaust Manifolds: Casting #3731557 or 3731558. Carburetors: Carter WCFB #2419S or 2362S. Starter Motor: Tag #1107627. Distributor: Tag #1110879. Coil: #1115091.

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### Information on 1960-74 Original Spark Plug Wires.

Lectric Limited is conducting a study of the correct script on Packard spark plug wires for Corvette/GM products. If you have wires with any of the following date codes, please call, write or fax us. Respondents who supply new information will receive a complimentary set of wires! Dates needed: Small Block - - 1-Q-60, 2-Q-60, 3-Q-60, 4-Q-60, 1-Q-61, 1-Q-62, 2-Q-62, 3-Q-62, 4-Q-62, 1-Q-63, 2-Q-63, 3-Q-63, 1-Q-64, 2-Q-64, 2-Q-65, 3-Q-65, 4-Q-65, 1-Q-66, 2-Q-66, 2-Q-68, 1-Q-71, 2-Q-71 thru 4-Q-72. Big Block - will have 2 or 4 ⚡ (lightning bolts), 1-Q-65 thru 3-Q-71, 1-Q-73 thru 4-Q-75. Wires need not be off of a Corvette. Any GM product is the same. Call, write or fax Al Fierke at:

Lectric Limited  
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*This letter came in from SACE member Bruce Shaw at Eastward Enterprises, 1624 Dreshertown Road, Dresher, PA 19025. Phone (215) 657-2175.*

— Editor

Dear Klas and Roy,

After two years, we have finally accomplished what seemed to be the impossible - we have completed the manufacture of the worm and sector for the 1953 - 1962 Corvette steering box.

The production run is 250 matched sets. There will be no more run as the tooling is subject to fatigue after the 250 run.

Two other concerns are trying to purchase the complete run - and we are not sure that this would serve the Corvette cause that we all love.

I was wondering if you or other members of SACE would be interested in purchasing a unit each as a possible spare or whatever? I will sell them to fellow SACE members (only one for each owned car) for \$500 per matched set. I know that when they come on the market, the price will be approximately \$695 with very little dealer discount.

If anyone is interested, all I need is their name, address and phone number (No deposit necessary), and they will be shipped in July. I will give all SACE members until **AUGUST 15, 1990**, to let me know.

Yours truly  
Bruce Shaw

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# A '55 On The Road

—Richard James

All I wanted was a good vacation in the old '55 again to "get away from it all" for awhile. However, it rained and RAINED on the Northern California coast last May, the week before Memorial Day.

It was definitely an interesting experience driving the leaky '55 in the rain. I'm sure that other early Corvettes are not exactly waterproof, either, and I share some foul weather sympathy. I did give it

up one Tuesday and stayed in a motel room watching TV. It was terrible, but two good, partly sunny days made the trip worthwhile!

On the first of the two clear days, I met Carolyn Simpson (the California State Representative/President of SACE), and her nephew while stopped at a beach north of Fort Bragg, California. She bounced out of her Bronco, and asked me if I was a SACE member. I told her that I was, and we proceeded to talk about and photograph my partially restored/slightly modified '55 for some time. Fun!!!

I was also inspired to take more pictures of my Corvette than anticipated.

The picture of both of us with the Corvette was taken by her nephew. The rest are mine. Carolyn suggested that I write an article for SACE. I told her that I was not much of a writer, but that I could take good photographs. Hence, I said that I would submit a few photos and see if SACE members might enjoy them. I'll let my pictures tell the story!

All in all, my vacation was another, very welcome experience!

As you are reading this issue of "Straight Talk" we are already getting the next one ready for publication.

We predict that our Autumn issue will be complete in September. If you have any articles or other items that you would like to see in print, now is the time to send 'em in.

Thank you!

—Editor

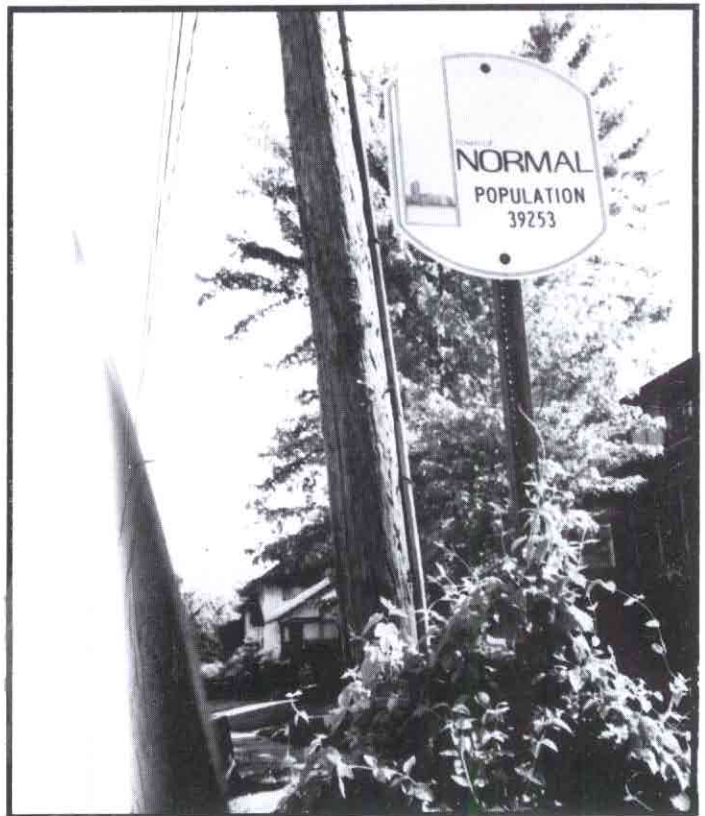


TOP: The author's partially restored/slightly modified '55 'Vette.

BOTTOM: California State Representative/President Carolyn Simpson, with the author near Fort Bragg, California.



# More from Bloomington . . .



**LEFT, TOP & CENTER:** Roy and Mary took their own hotel room with them... again!

**LEFT, BOTTOM:** The swap meet was hell!

**RIGHT, TOP:** People interested in restoring 'Vettes went to Bloomington. Anyone interested in restoring '53-60 Cads should go to Texas!

**RIGHT, BOTTOM:** The city of Normal, Ill., near Bloomington.