

## Historical (Mis)Adventures of the National Council of Corvette Clubs, Inc.

*NCCC's early years as told by Tom Henry, Charter/Life Member, Past President of NCCC (1975, 1976, 1978, 1979), Charter/Life Member of Corvette Club of Baltimore (Past President 4 terms), Chesapeake Sports Car Club (Past President 2 terms), Past Chairman, Baltimore Area Sports Car Council, NCCC Region Exec and Competition Chairman, (Multiple terms) and **Honorary Member of Central Florida Corvette Association.** The following was composed in 2015.*

On April 3, 1959, John Ralph, President of the Corvette Club of America (CCA) in Washington, D.C., wrote to known Corvette clubs around the country and extended an invitation to come discuss the possibility of forming a "national fraternity" of Corvette Clubs.

This organization, if formed, would represent all Corvette clubs, and consist of three regions: Eastern, Central and Western. John's letter was full of ideas that laid the foundation for NCCC. The meeting date was set for May 8, 1959 at Mayflower Hotel in beautiful downtown D.C.

The Board of Directors from (CCA) were hosts' to the event and those attending included: Dick Murphy and George Rodgers, Corvette Club of Baltimore; Ann Tamiguchi, Courere d'Corvette of Santa Ana, California; Joe and Kay Nichols, Shorty and Theresa Zambella, Northeastern Corvette Owners, New York; and Pete Johnstone, Anne and Tom Featherstone, Corvette Club of Michigan. Unfortunately, members from the Corvette Club of Western Pennsylvania and Corvette Cleveland were unable to attend although they had planned to do so.

A broad general discussion was held covering many aspects of a universal Corvette society. A temporary committee consisting of Dick Murphy, Anne Featherstone and Chuck Parish (CCA) formulated an official purpose for the projected club as follows: *"The purpose of the national federation shall be the glorification and improvement of the marque through collective strength and through that collective strength to set up a stronger alliance between owner and manufacturer, encourage dealer interest and further the pride of the ownership of the marque."*

Dick Murphy was named to head a By-Laws Committee. Serving with him would be George Rodgers, Joe Nichols and John Ralph. The group was charged with the job of drawing up a proposed constitution and bylaws for consideration by all Corvette clubs.

A temporary Board of Directors was named: John Ralph (Chairperson), Joe Nichols, Pete Johnstone, Dick Murphy, Ann Tamiguchi (for Gene Beck, President of her club) and Ruth Shenton (CCA) as recording secretary. After considerable discussion the name submitted by George Rodgers, "National Council of Corvette Clubs" was selected. It was agreed that such a name and idea would immediately suggest an organization designed not to detract from the autonomy of existing local Corvette associations, but a council-form of organization might prove effective; thus promoting the idea that the voice of a thousand + Corvette owners might carry considerable authority.

To simplify the earliest possible promotion of the national idea, Anne Featherstone was named Publicity Director along with three region representatives: Shorty Zambella for the East, Tom Featherstone, Midwest and Ann Tamiguchi with Gene Beck in the far West. Pete Johnstone was named to head a committee to study the necessary finances of a national club. Temporary headquarters would be established at the home of John Ralph.

Shortly, upon his return to Baltimore, Dick Murphy, President of the Corvette Club of Baltimore (CCB), announced that a meeting was going to be held in Detroit, Michigan in 1960 hosted by the Corvette Club of Michigan. Plans soon got underway for CCB members to participate in the "Pennsylvania Turnpike Grand Prix."

After several nights of tuning the "ole" '58 - 245 HP Automatic, Charlie Allen, my co-driver, announced that only Clint Kearney and Bill Kroneberger (deceased) (Charter Member of NCCC) (Later a member of CFCA) could possibly be competition on the trip. Clint drove a '54 - with a RARE three speed. After the news reached my pit crew, they decided to simply hook up the dual quads with solid linkage and see what happens. You guessed right - more black smoke than a brush fire in California.

A rain-filled trip across Ohio brought us to Detroit and we found our way to the Botsford Inn (old home of Henry Ford). Several hours of meetings led to committees being formed to discuss the formation of the organization and achievement of some ideas presented in 1959.

Saturday, July 2, 1960 at Warren Valley Golf Club was the First Annual Dinner of NCCC hosted by Corvette Club of Michigan. The cocktail hour was sponsored by Chevrolet and by twisting Joe Pike's arm got it extended another hour. To my amazement, I saw fellow Corvetter's go and get mixed drinks, return to the table, remove the ice and go get another. What a novel way to have refreshments for the rest of the evening!

Anne Featherstone (CCM) gave greetings from Mr. E. N. Cole, General Manager of Chevrolet and the Corvette Club of Michigan. Mr. Joe Pike, Editor of Corvette News, was introduced and shared greetings from Mr. Gene Staley, Chevrolet General Sales Manager. Joe also had duties associated with the merchandising of the Corvette. His title was Assistant National Sales Promotion Manager with responsibility for Corvette. Joe passed away early in 1994 and is missed by those who knew him as a friend and remembered by what he did for NCCC. Mr. Bob Zimmerman from Chevrolet Engineering then presented a short talk on a recent trip to LeMans, France.

Sunday, July 3rd, the serious gathered at Oakland County Sportsman's Club (Waterford Hills Race Track) to test the tricky 1.4 mile long road circuit. Ernie Mohawk and Art Sutphin, CCM's Competition Chairperson's placed hay bales along the course to make it a really good Sunday drive. Newly elected NCCC President, Dick Wolfe, proved that fiberglass and hay just do not mix head on. I should have felt sorry for Dick but the hay did nothing but improve the appearance of his Corvette! We packed up our trophies and said goodbye to the 100 people attending the first NCCC convention and headed back to the "Land of Pleasant Living."

Early in 1961, Joe Pike sent out an urgent request for clubs to meet with him and formally start the NCCC. The meeting was at Joe's home in Detroit. Arrangements were made to incorporate and officially "The National Council of Corvette Clubs, Inc." became a reality. The clubs that attended are the Charter Clubs of NCCC: Chicago Corvette Club, Corvette Cleveland, Corvette Club of Michigan, Capital City Corvette Club (Lansing, Mi) and Corvette Club of St. Louis. Dick Wolfe and the other early officers deserve credit for all the work they did in treading through unknown waters.

The NCCC emblem was designed by Dick Murphy from the Corvette Club of Baltimore. Since this is our incorporated seal, I cannot understand how though the years, it has undergone the change from round holes in the steering wheel to the oval holes of today. This discretion has repeatedly been reported to Past Presidents and Governor's. Maybe someday, I'll make a trip to a governor's meeting and put a formal motion on the floor to place the proper holes back in the wheel.

The Corvette Club of St. Louis (Margaret Orschelen - where are you?) was the host for the 1961 Convention and again the "racers" from Corvette Club of Baltimore were on their way. Tours of the Corvette plant were given and great parties held, lasting friendships were made and many participated in "table top racing" - the Council was on it's way. Approximately 100 people attended and a group picture of participating NCCC members and their cars was taken. (I believe that was the only time this happened). Some of us have changed a "little". After a 18 hour drive home (no interstate) the boys from CCB spread the word for NCCC.

Jim Hoppin, NCCC's second President, invited the Council to meet in Lansing, Michigan for the 1962 Convention. Capital City Corvette Club was host and what a nice job they did. This was a three day Convention with serious parties mixed in with the car events. Again, members present held a forum to study ways to grow in a well thought-out way.

As a side note: the 1st NCCC Sanctioned Rally was hosted by the Michiana Corvette Club on August 4th and 5th of 1962. It was called the "Hoosier Nightcap Rally" and covered 500 miles of beautiful Indiana.

In January, 1963, the annual election of NCCC Officers was held in Cleveland, Ohio. Two new offices were created: Activities Coordinator with Arthur Miller elected and 3rd Vice President-Members-at-Large with Sparky Kallunki elected. We now had a total of six National Officers. Corvette Club of Baltimore was selected host club for the 1963 NCCC Convention. Fred Tucker headed up this effort.

After the meeting, Andy Baumgardner, our outgoing Vice President of NCCC, conducted a tour of Cleveland's fabled "Short Vincent" street where Council attendees had ample opportunity to study interesting variations in independent rear suspension. One Council member, when asked of the validity of such a tour, remarked with some thoughtfulness, "I sometimes wonder how Positraction can hold such a spell over Corvette owners when such a demonstration as this is being witnessed". For the uneducated, "Short Vincent" street in Cleveland is fabled in song, legend and the police blotter as a series of cabarets devoted to exotic demonstrations of muscle tone, coordination and ability to synchronize with skillfully rendered "music". I hope it is still there.

Along came 1963 and the NCCC Convention in Baltimore, Maryland, hosted by Corvette Club of Baltimore. This was the first of the big Conventions. Over 450 people attended! So many memories come to me as I write this - where do I begin? Events included a tour of the Carlins Brewery, a wonderful dinner and dance hosted by Chevrolet and an all day visit to the famous A.D. Anderson farm (sponsor of CCB). I can still remember feeling that this was an organization destined for good things. The members of NCCC, then, as now, have always been our greatest asset.

At the time I was driving a 63 Sebring Coupe (ZO6), though the courtesy of A.D. Anderson, and those nasty brakes always squealed. I asked Dr. Dick Thompson, of Corvette racing fame, "how do I get rid of the noise"? He told me to get in and he would show me. Off to the Interstate and just after shifting into 4th around 120 MPH, he slammed on the brakes and (after I cleaned my shorts), he said "just do this now and then to clean the drums of build-up". The brakes were quite thereafter and so was I.

One of the highlights of the Convention was Bud Hosford (deceased), President of A.D. Anderson Chevrolet, presented winners of the Concours a one-of-a kind Corvette Sport Watch, made especially by Gruen for the event. These were probably the first real Corvette collector's item and today are much sought after. Lance Korzilius from Kalamazoo won one and I believe I know where four others can be found, but not bought.

Council had grown to twenty nine clubs by Spring 1964 and we welcomed the first "Canadian Club", Corvette Club of Ontario. The Michigan Region had grown to six clubs and they hosted the 5th NCCC Convention at Caberfae Lodge in Cadillac, Michigan. I did not attend this Convention as I was sailing the high seas on a luxury liner. From what I have read and heard from my friend Howie Fetterolf, it was a bash. Don Criss from Toledo remarked that during the four days of Convention "I ate \$20.00 worth of wonderful food - entered \$5.00 worth of events - drank \$25.00 worth of beer, \$25.00 worth of booze and met many wonderful people the value of which cannot be estimated". All this for a \$10.00 registration fee. Times certainly have changed!

The following short story was, in my opinion, one of the best ever offered by "Blue Bars". It was written by Ty Rods who had a column called "Uncle Rod's Fun Page" and appeared in the Summer '64 issue.

**HOT!!! HOT!!! HOT!!! - GMAC TO ENTER RACING**

It was released today by A. J. Bird of the Corvette paint department in St. Louis, that GMAC would definitely field a racing team in 1968. This long awaited "music to Corvette ears" was disclosed at a meeting of the "Business Lunchers" at Harry's Bar and Grill located in fabulous East St. Louis, Ill.

According to Mr. Bird, GMAC officials, during a recent "let's count our profits week", discovered that the interest on Corvette loans alone was bringing in a total of \$47,000,000.00 annually. After some

discussion the racing decision was agreed upon to help stem the overflow of profits that threatened to engulf local GMAC offices across our prosperous nation.

Mr. Bird went on to say that plans are already under way to purchase the Pennsylvania Railroad for use solely as team transporter. The team, according to Mr. Bird, would consist of 400 Extra Special, Grand Sport Corvettes, boasting 775 horsepower and weighing in at 700 lbs. (This nominal weight was obtained by use of an extruded fiberglass chassis recently developed by NCCC).

No expense would be too great as far as obtaining the very best of drivers was concerned. Such big names as James Bond, Martin Milner, Clark Kent and Juan Valdez have already been signed. Many others are under consideration including the fabulous Rick Johanson (who in real life is a dental assistant). Rick, as you all know, came into national prominence after driving a "welcome wagon" in Scranton, Pa. to a new land speed record during the spring of 1953.

Mr. Bird went on to say that the first team effort would be a Jack's Go-Cart track in Germ City, U.S.A. sometime soon.

Mr. Bird ended these heart warming but brief moments with the stunning words, "Nothing can stop us now, but the opposition".

With President Arthur Miller at the controls, plans for the 1965 NCCC Convention in Cleveland, Ohio began. We had now grown to 38 clubs and were receiving inquiries on "how do we become a NCCC club"? Among the more important issues at hand during this time was the study on "how fast can you go at Nelson Ledges race course on tubeless tires with 20 P.S.I.?" A heated debate on this topic lasted for 3 hours at the Governor's meeting. It was agreed that for high-speed events, tubes must be placed in tubeless tires. A few of the hot-shoes didn't feel like following the rules and you guessed it- one of them pulled a tire off the wheel and ended up out in the bushes. Ask John Palladino. As I recall, he made it about half way around the track before losing a tire. The gang from Corvette Cleveland did an outstanding job with convention and we began making plans for the 1966 convention in Baltimore.

Corvette Club of Baltimore were again the hosts and I got the job as Convention Chairman. Simple job for a weak mind. But then again, we did it in 1963, so this would be a piece of cake. After long nights of planning what to do with this crazy bunch, it was decided to keep them drinking for 3 days, hence, no need for events. Somehow, things did not work out that way. Ken Conkey tee-peed a Mustang, the Manager of the Holiday Inn was tossed into the pool, and we twisted Joe Pike's arm (again) to get just a few more minutes of free booze at the parties. A great time at the farm of A.D. Anderson, and a great deal of time was spent finding NCCC President Gary Cross for a breakfast meeting. Things went fairly smooth and a lot of fun was had by all. The Corvette Club of Michigan had 46 members in attendance and today a few of us still stay in touch. But then, isn't that the thing that kept us growing into the fine organization that we are today?

On September 4, 1966, the first National Speedkhana, hosted by the Corvette Club of Michigan, at Chevrolet Warren Plant in Detroit was held. The event was topped off with a bash at the home of Tom Dunn.

One hundred and twenty skilled NCCC racers tested the facility to the limit. A few of the trophy winners included:

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|--|-----------------|
| Modified - Gary Cross                              | Capitol City CC |
| Class AA - Ed Hieftje                              | Battle Creek CC |
| Class A - John Firment                             | CCM             |
| Class B - Gil Roycraft                             | CCM             |
| Class C - Russ DeJaiffe                            | CCM             |
| Class D - John Urban                               | CCM             |
| Class E - Richard McCall                           | Capitol City CC |
| Class F - 53-55 six in a row, why didn't you show? |                 |
| Ladies - Sue Bauman                                | CCM             |

NCCC now had 39 clubs with 903 members. Just a tad short of today's totals.

1967 brought us Rich Goranflo and the Kentuckiana Corvette Club. By this time conventions had become BIG events. Gil Roycraft was NCCC President and his leadership enticed us to reach beyond our dreams for a great organization. Our guest speaker for Convention Dinner was Don Yenke (deceased), one of the great piano players of our time. Don kept us rolling with many tales of Corvette racing and the "little ole horn" on the hood of his many race cars. For those of you who do not know of Don, he was one of the successful early Corvette "Racers". He definitely was one of the champions of our sport. From an infamous boat ride on the "*Belle of Louisville*" to wild rides around the half-mile oval at the speed event track, (where the boys from Battle Creek led the way and took FTD's, Earl Roberts on Friday and Ed Heiftje on Saturday); Rich and his gang did a fine job in showing how a convention should be run.

On a personal note, this was the year I took delivery of my 67, 435HP coupe. I had ordered the car in late 1966 so it would be ready to blast the competition at Louisville. After a long wait of 9 weeks and no sight of the Corvette, I called Gene Buss, Plant Manager - St Louis Plant, to find out what had happened to "my" Corvette. Gene told me he had no order to build a car for me and I flipped. After many hours banging on the dealer, who claimed to have ordered the Corvette, I finally called my friend Joe Pike. Joe told me he would look into the matter and call back. In less than 2 hours, I had a call from Joe and he told me my Corvette would be made "next Tuesday" and that I should be in York, Pa. to inspect it on Thursday. So, away I went to the train depot in York and upon telling the guard at the gate, "I have come to see my Corvette", he replied, "sure buddy". But then something happened when I told him I was Tom Henry and my Corvette was supposed to be there. He then jumped through several hoops and directed me to the spot where the beautiful coupe sat. On the inside of the windshield was a sign that read "Tom Henry - Baltimore RUSH". The nice guard then asked "are you a big wheel with GM"? I told him "no, just an telephone man with good connections". Seems that another dealer was mad that I did not order the Corvette from him and he had enough clout to sand bag the order in the zone office. I call that "Joe Power".

The 1968 Convention held in Grand Rapids, Michigan was a highlight in my long association with NCCC. Not only did I sit next to Zora and Elfie Duntov at the convention dinner, but my dear friend Don Hoskins (deceased) received the well deserved President's Award for his many years of hard and dedicated work for NCCC. Zora was our guest speaker. He held a question and answer session at the end of his formal remarks. One question was "why was the glove box left out of the 1968"? Zora said the 1969 would have some sort of storage pocket if we wanted it. You know the rest. We miss you Zora.

Getting to and from Grand Rapids/Baltimore was interesting to say the least. There was no trailer in the garage to transport my 67 "Race Car". I drove to the convention on Goodyear "Blue Streak Specials" (dry type). You know what happened? Rain on the way home! After sliding off the Pennsylvania Turnpike a couple times, I decided to wait for the big trucks to dry the roadway. We stopped, changed underwear, had a milkshake and resumed our trip. No more rain, but I was questioned at the last toll booth, "how did you make that last leg in under 30 minutes". Silly man.

1969 ushered in the first of many great Florida Conventions. In Daytona Beach we were greeted by Cliff Payne and the Florida gang. For fear of being sued by the motels we were using, just say it was quite frightening. The place called Convention Headquarters was undergoing renovations (we helped to move things along). We helped transfer wood from floor to floor, barricaded guests in their rooms, hallway racing in whatever you brought was allowed, but, management was very understanding. John Palladino was NCCC President and tried to keep peace with all concerned. He failed. Not only did we get to "race" at Daytona Speedway, but a baby porpoise was named "Vette" by Marineland of Florida to honor NCCC. One of the late-night parties featured a greased watermelon being tossed into the ocean. The one who came back with it won something (can't remember, but know it was a great prize). After about a hour, Larry Clodfelder (deceased) stumbled back to the beach, blood

dripping from him as if attacked by a shark, to claim the prize. Several of the ocean going fools needed medical attention from the lovely NCCC nurses on duty (kisses and beer).

Louisville for the 1970 Convention! Rich Goranflo and the Kentuchiana and Falls City Corvette Clubs once again hosted a memorable time. When I arrived with members of Corvette Club of Baltimore, I met this weird fellow they called Larry. He had the most wonderful Corvette in the world. At least, that was his claim. Larry Clodfelder (deceased) took me on the wildest ride of my lifetime. This was a full-blown race car! Deciding he should top off with Sunoco 260 before the events, he asked me if I would like to go along. Sure, why not? He neglected to tell me there were no mufflers on the car, but then any dummy could hear that. Away, we went to the nearest station. (about 3 miles through a nice quiet neighborhood). Upon our arrival at the pumps, we were asked "how did you get that thing here?" Larry said "just fill it up and we will show you". After leaving about \$500.00 worth of Goodyear rubber in the street, we managed to find the nice quiet neighborhood and he proceeded to show me what this wonderful Corvette could do in 2nd gear. When I got the courage to look ahead, I noticed one old gentleman in a wheel chair leaving the curb and heading across the street in front of "King Racer". To this day I have no clue how we missed him. Needless to say, I never took another ride in that Corvette. Howard Fetterolf can attest to our infamous trip with Larry later in the week to the big cave south of Louisville. About 110 MPH with 6 people and 700 pounds of tools in the trunk of an Impala. Larry is gone now, but was a NCCC legend and many people can tell about their friendship with him.

This was your normal quiet Convention, after we raced on that funny ole track at the fairgrounds, someone made the mistake of throwing one of President Nixon's (USA) bodyguards into the pool and Rick from Corvette Club of Michigan rode his motor scooter up and down the motel halls. Jack Eakins and Ken Conkey redecorated the elevators with flags and furniture. Oh well, our NCCC President of that year, Dr. Tom Raymond from Iowa, never could keep order.

1971 found our newly elected NCCC President, Jim Hildebrand (Hilde for short) at the controls. Jim is now a member of the Past NCCC President's Association of Florida along with John Palladino, Tom Bunn and Tom Henry. In one of his early writings as President Jim wrote "NCCC as a group has never done anything of a charitable nature. Many local clubs have worthwhile annual projects to better their community. Remember, I'm just throwing this out for discussion, but how about at one of our parties during each Convention, having everyone toss in a dollar or so, and we give the proceeds to a local charity". Could this have been the early start of NCCC's charity efforts?

NCCC member Ron Austin from Tiretown Corvette Club was working for B. F. Goodrich at this time and was sort of an instigator to have 14 of NCCC's "Hottest Shoes" go to the Lake Geneva Playboy Club for a weekend of tire testing and fun. Of course President Jim said "OK" and I was invited to participate. Bob Eisentrout and his gracious wife Barbara were our hosts for the event. Bob was Director of Marketing Services at Goodrich. After a few short presentations by Goodrich, we had dinner and then back to the hospitality room for "conversation". Next day found us at the world famous Lake Geneva Raceway and racks of Goodrich tires waiting for us to test. First we made runs on our own tires, then switched to the BFG's. It felt so good to scuff tires that were free! Gary Winter from Corvette Club of Iowa turned fastest time of day, but I suspect he was on Hoosier's with a BFG decal. It was truly a nice time and many thanks to BFG for the support they have given NCCC over the years.

The 1971 Convention was held in St Louis and was suppose to be a joint effort by NCCC and Western States Corvette Council (WSCC). NCCC was there but WSCC didn't show. John Palladino and Ray Rapplean did a great job as co-chairmen and everything went smoothly. We enjoyed tours of the Corvette Plant and Grant's Farm. For whatever reason the officers were invited to an afternoon with the Playboy Bunnies. Of course, at the awards dinner, the Bunnies were invited to help hand out the "goodies". The New York baseball club was in town and they found that the Plaza Hotel (NCCC Headquarters) was the place to be. So, by the way did that great singer, Pearl Bailey. The girls of NCCC had a nice time by the pool and I have some of the best pictures testifying to this fact. At one of the following governor's meetings, I had a slide show called "name that belly button". It was pictures of just belly buttons visible during the day at the pool.

1972 Hilde was still at the controls. This was perhaps one of the most important years in NCCC history. The East coast clubs met in New Jersey before one of the governor's meetings. They decided they were going to pull out of NCCC if it was not broken down into regions (as it is today). I was asked to present the idea to the Council. SCCA had gone to the region organization and it worked. Although we did not want to follow the SCCA way, we wanted to pattern our regions close to their setup. At the next governor's meeting, the proposed Regional idea was accepted and most members were supportive and understood our request. I guess it was not a bad idea.

1972 was the first of several outstanding Texas Conventions. Ron Griffin was Chairman and what a show was provided. The host hotel (Royal Coach Inn) and Dottie Hardy (Convention Services Manager) provided the best possible service of any of our Conventions up to that time. No matter what we needed, we got it. One of the many highlights of the week was time spent at a rodeo. If the cowboys did great, we booed. If they missed a rope throw or blew their event, we cheered. Of course, the greased pig chase was terrible. Various clubs tried to catch the poor piggy and the winner got a barrel of beer. You can guess the results. One poor piggy is now in hog heaven. A big thanks went to the Dallas Police for their patience and understanding; but they thanked us for the training they received from NCCC as they prepared for 100,000 Shriners coming the next week! Try to locate a copy of the Aug/Sept '72 Blue Bars to see it all.

1973 Don Gibel took charge and attempted to put a little class in the organization. It worked - for a while. Don tried the best he could to be a true professional in the way Council should run. Four thousand members soon convinced him to just relax and have fun. He set the stage on how to conduct and keep control of meetings. We all learned a lot from him.

Convention was held in Indianapolis and we tried a downtown high-rise hotel. Ugh!! Ever sit around a swimming pool and someone above you yells out your name? You look up and a host of water ballons come down to greet you. Matter of fact, a lot of things came down from the overhead rooms (shoes, hats, panties, shorts, candy bars and other rubber things. I called my insurance company and had my coverage increased!

One night Don Gibel and I decided to test the security provided by Indianapolis Raceway Park. Many members parked their Corvettes and trailers at the track because of the location of the host hotel and the promised security by track officials. Don and I approached the main gate and the guard dog looked up and promptly fell back to sleep. The guards were busy working on an older Chevy and didn't look up as we drove all around the parking lot. We were so pleased with the tight security, we loaded up Don's Corvette and brought it back to town.

As usual, the parties were great and although we had a little damage problem with the hotel, all worked out for the good of the sport.

Don Gibel had another go as President in 1974 and other than the wild Convention in Atlanta, things were quiet. Arlene Dillingham and the Corvette Atlanta gang made sure we had a good time. One event of note was the oyster eating contest that Larry Clodfelder (deceased) and Keith Admendon (bike king) had in a local restaurant. I don't remember who was the one left standing but I do remember the mess back at the motel. The speed event was held at Road Atlanta and the "Hot Shoes" had a hard time staying between the lines. One fellow even thought the lines led up to the wall. Bad looking Corvette after the bang but no real injuries to the driver.

1975 was the first of my 4 terms as President. What an honor to be selected to be the one who would take all the hits for NCCC. Of course, the job had so many perks! (or so I was told). A truly nice and rewarding experience for me. I could try to write about the many people who helped me but I'm sure I would miss someone and that would make me sad. You all know how much I depended on the help you gave me.

Cleveland hosted our 1975 Convention. Jerry Lancaster and Corvette Cleveland had their stuff together and with the gas crunch going on in the country, attendance was low. There was a week of fun and competition planned and away we went. First night the party was held at the Crawford Auto Museum and the start of what is now "sticker night" began. I placed a "Black Eye Susan" on the upper part of a lady's torso. Her name was Wanda. From that beginning and throughout the following years, I was in demand for a "Black Eye Susan". My friend Ken

Jestes provided all those "Susans" throughout the years. Later the gals got into the act. Such shameful behavior!!!

The Convention was actually held in a town outside Cleveland city limits. At one of the parties at the motel, the local police chief wanted a little something "extra" for the security we had already paid for. The next day I, along with some other members, and the owner of the motel were in the Mayor's office. Little did we know that the Mayor and the motel owner were at odds over some things going on at the motel and race track next door. After a heated exchange between them, I was asked what my problem was. I mentioned that the fellow (police chief) over in that office was trying to shake us down. The crap hit the fan! The Chief was called in and his story was that his officers had put in a long night and mentioned to us that a small reward would be nice. After another debate I was told by the Mayor that the NCCC was on notice to behave in his town or he would make sure we had no more parties at the motel. We promised to be good citizens. Everything worked out after that. So this is the President's job? I had a hard time sleeping in that motel. By the way, the hub caps on my tow car came up missing one morning. Some luck! Should I have called the police? I think not.

Florida in 1976 found me at the threshold of heaven (still President). When I pulled up to the Twin Towers Hotel for the convention, an employee came out to greet me and took my dog "Fritz" for a walk. *The Central Corvette Club Florida* (Now known as *CFCA*) had arranged for my wife and I, along with Fritz, to have the best suite in the place. Top floor, 3 bedrooms, kitchen, bar (fully stocked) and daily Fritz walking. All this and I had not won the lottery. Before the convention I had to make a trip to Florida to resolve a dispute between the club and the Convention Director. Seems like the Director wanted to keep the books her way and the club didn't want that. I asked her to change and when she didn't I fired her. A new Director, Jan Ellison, was provided by the club and convention came off without a hitch. Not only was this the largest Convention ever, with over 2000 members and guest attending, but the hotel was the best ever.

A special happening at the convention was when Shelly Tetzlaff presented husband Terry with a 6 lb baby girl named Cambria Ann. Guess who got the other top floor suite. Good job Shelly.

Daytona was used for the speed events. Now the "Hot Shoes" could really open up what they brought. The event had 293 entries and the top "racer" of the day was Clarence Bontrager of Central Kansas Corvette Association. The best overall mileage in the economy run was a little over 77 MPG by Stewart Goodwin (driver) and Kathleen Littrell (Navigator) from Indianapolis Corvette Club. Rumor had it that they were running the new twin-supercharged V5 that the Corvette plant had loaned to them. A little rough idle but could really choke up when taking gas. Maybe one day we will see it it production?

Along with all the Disney things, ocean trips, gator hunting and parties, this was a Convention to never forget.

I have taken you through my memory book from the birth of NCCC, the conventions through 1976 and shared a few stories of how we did it "back then". There are no less than 2,000 slides in a closet to document many of these events and someday we will get them put on tape for others to enjoy.

Should you ever get to Titusville, Florida, give me a call and stop for a visit. Many Corvette people have visited over the 31 years since our move from Baltimore. I still keep my hand and pulse on Corvette "stuff" by staying in touch with "Ole Corvette Nuts" and CFCA folks. Look us up in the telephone book.

Written by Tom Henry, Edited by Cheryl Henry