

Corvette Cruisers of Greater Daytona

The Talepipe Newsletter



May 2009

President: Bob Compton, Vice President: Jim Quinn, Secretary: Leslie Armstrong, Treasurer: Alice Luther, Directors: Ginny Quinn, Art Armstrong, Ed Doyle, Newsletter Editor: Jim Quinn

Our monthly meetings are held at the Club House Restaurant located at the Daytona Beach Municipal Golf Course the third Tuesday of each month. We invite you to dine with us starting at 6:00 PM, with the meeting starting at 7:00.

Breakfast on the Run:

It was a beautiful day to go to breakfast. Meeting at our regular spot we motored across the river to Peach Valley. They were very busy and we had a wait, but it was well worth the wait. Sitting at the table were the Armstrong's, Compton's, Doyle's, Luther's, and Quinn's. Everyone appeared to enjoy their meal.

May 3rd we will meet again to Brunch at Boston Fish House in New Smyrna Beach. Those who will be going will meet at the Sunshine Park Mall in South Daytona. We plan to head south at 10:30 AM to arrive around the time they open. Hope to see you there.

Speedway Show:

Windy was the word. Thursday Jim, Art, Ed and JR went to the speedway to set up the club tent. It must have been anchored down pretty good because it was there when we went back on Friday. There were a few of us there on Friday but on Saturday we had a pretty good showing. Attending were Armstrong's (both Vettes), Compton's (both Vettes), Doyle's, Fedele's, Chuck, Quinn's and JR. Bob had his racing Vette in the car coral and was able to sell it.

Because of the threat of storms Saturday night and Sunday morning the tent was taken down. I don't know if any members returned to the track on Sunday, but we all put in a full day on Saturday.

And They're Off:

The Doyle's will be hosting a Kentucky Derby Party on Derby Day, Saturday May 2nd. The party starts at 1:00 PM. Pre-race activities include enjoying some Kentucky Bar-B-Que, Bluegrass baked beans, Derby Pie, and Mint Juleps. Other beverages include Iced Tea and Lemonade. Lady's are asked to get into the Derby spirit by wearing your own Derby Hat. You're asked to bring a dish to share. Check with Jean so she can coordinate the food. Please R.S.V.P to the Doyle's.

Get Well Fast:

We all wish Chuck a speedy recovery from his recent heart surgery. Chuck is doing well and we look forward to seeing him joining in club activities soon.

We also wish Alice a quick recovery from her surgery and a good prognosis. Get well soon Alice.

Mini Golf:

Well, the first round of the golf tourney is in the books. Sixteen members showed up to get back in the swing, so to speak. Mystic Harbor has improved the course quite a bit, although the bugs were bad again. It seems George and Jim came away with the lowest score of 41. Sadie and Bob were close behind with 42's. Jackie and Warren are vying for the most hole-in-ones by sinking two hole-in-ones each for this round.

Corvette Cruisers of Greater Daytona web site: www.corvettecruisersdaytona.com

Afterwards we adjourned to Ritter's for a cool treat.

The next round will be played on Tuesday April 28th in Ormond on A1A at the Pirates Cove. Round 3 is Tuesday May 5th at Pirates Island on A1A in Daytona Beach Shores near the Port Orange Causeway. Check our website for the complete tournament schedule.



Editor Pro-tem:

Jim will be unavailable to produce the July Talepipe. We need someone to volunteer to do that newsletter. So if you are a closet news reporter come out of the closet and try your hand at doing the club newsletter for July. The newsletter format is in Microsoft Word and a template can be forwarded to you to work off of. Please let Jim know if you would like to fill in for him.

Independence Day & Race Party:

Since the Coke Zero 400 race and America's Independence Day fall on the same date the Quinn's are combining them into one party. The Independence Day portion of the day will begin at 5:00 PM with a picnic style dinner. The race begins at 8:15PM. The grub should be good ol' American style. You know hot dogs, hamburgers, apple pie, and Chevrolet. This will be a covered dish affair. The Quinn's will provide the hamburgers and hot dogs. We will need people to bring things like potato salad, baked beans, and desserts. Also bring what you want to drink. Please RSVP if you plan to attend.

Board Meeting:

A Board of Directors meeting will be held on July 6th at the Compton's. If you have anything that needs to be brought before the board, you can either contact one of the board members or you may attend the meeting. This is an open meeting and all members are welcome to attend.

Summer Charity Donation:

The club is looking for suggestions for a donation to a needed charity. Some suggestions were: Humane Society, a local food bank, and Camp Begin Again. If you have a suggestion please bring it up at our next membership meeting.

Birthdays in May:

Ginny celebrates on the 3rd, Lars does it on the 7th, and Joe will have to blow out another candle on the 14th. Happy birthday to you all.



SPEEDWAY SHOW

50 / 50:

Carole C. won the pot. She donated her winnings back to the club. Thanks Carole.

Poor Man's Corvette:

The 2010 Camaro will be in dealers' showrooms in May. The Camaro was introduced as a 1967 model. It has been referred to by some as a poor man's Corvette because many people who could not afford a Vette settled for a Camaro (your editor being one of them back in '67). An interesting article about the name for the Camaro is attached.

The Day the Panther Died

Written by Scott Settlemyre.

June 28, 1966 was a day of firsts. It was a day where 200 journalists were inducted into SEPAW (more about that in a minute). That day, the first and LAST meeting of SEPAW took place. It was the first time in history that 14 cities were hooked up "real time" for a press conference via telephone lines. (Something that seems so very simple today, but so very complicated back then). And it was the first time that the world found out that a new Chevrolet would be called "Camaro" – rather than "Panther".

On June 21, 1966, approximately 200 journalists from around North America received the following Telegram:

".....Please save noon of June 28 for important SEPAW meeting. Hope you can be on hand to help scratch a cat. Details will follow.....(signed) John L. Cutter – Chevrolet Public Relations – SEPAW Secretary."as you can imagine, there were many befuddled looks upon receiving such a telegram.

The next day, (June 22) – the same journalists received this telegram:

".....Society for the Eradication of Panthers from the Automotive World will hold first and last meeting on June 28. (Insert city here) chapter will meet at (insert hotel name here) and join national 14 city telephone hookup with meeting in Detroit at which national president E. M. Estes will preside. Please telephone acceptance to Frank Faraone, (Telephone #) (signed) John L. Cutter – Chevrolet Public Relations SEPAW Secretary....."

Well.....that certainly gave the journalists something to think about.....and the best part is that they would not have to travel around the country to attend this "SEPAW Meeting" – rather, they only needed to travel to one of 14 cities.

This was truly a technological undertaking.....

The Bell System (the only telephone system back then for those of you who are under 40 years of age....) call arrangement included 14 cities and originated from Detroit's Statler-Hilton Hotel (sadly demolished about two years ago after sitting in ruin for nearly 25 years) where Chevrolet General Manager E. M. "Pete" Estes made some announcements.

There were more than 100 persons involved in providing the two-way communication system over 13,715 miles of telephone circuits, including 9,259 miles of microwave radio and 4,446 miles of coaxial cable.

The announcement over the wires was heard by approximately 150 of 200+ journalists in the cities of: Atlanta, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Cincinnati, Dallas, Denver, Los Angeles, St. Louis, San Francisco, New York, and Washington.

Amplifiers and microphones were installed in each of the 14 meeting rooms across the country so that newsmen could hear Mr. Estes' remarks and direct questions to him. The questions and answers were heard simultaneously in all cities on the circuit.

GM was insistent that the system be tested – so a test call was made on Tuesday and was further backed up by an auxiliary circuit in case difficulty developed anywhere within the system.

It's interesting to note that we think nothing of linking friends on a conference call at will from our homes or offices – without any real forethought. It was a different world 40 years ago.....and as you can see by the above figures – it was quite an accomplishment.

The REAL story, however, was in what Mr. Estes was about to tell the journalists.

Looking through notes that survived 40 years within Chevrolet files, I've managed to put together some of what Mr. Estes talked about that day. Mr. Estes started the press conference with:

".....SEPAW stands for the Society for the Elimination of Panthers from the Automotive World – and by your presence, you are automatically charter members.....July 1 marks my first anniversary (As General Manager of) Chevrolet. It's been a fast and highly competitive year....." He went on to mention the many travels he made to dealers and plants – and mentioned milestones such as the 3 millionth Los Angeles produced Chevrolet passenger car—and the first passenger car to roll off the newly opened Lordstown, Ohio assembly plant. Mr. Estes continued with: ".....it is also a year in which Chevrolet has gotten into the hottest sales race since 1959....." He gave a

brief review of sales, model-year-to-date sales lead, and talked about his optimism for great June sales figures. He made it very clear that Chevrolet intended to remain America's number one selling cars and trucks.

".....one of the reasons we're going to stay number 1 is also a reason for this meeting. Chevrolet is definitely going to have a new car included in the new models for the 1967 model year – and this car will be introduced on September 29, 1966.....This is NOT news to many of you! As far back as April 8, 1965, A Detroit newspaper had page-one headlines proclaiming that Chevrolet had a "Panther" car to answer the horsy offering of a competitor. The question of who was answering who has been discussed frequently, since the four-footed competitor really answered the Corvair. And the Corvair actually followed up the Corvette which was the real pioneer of the sporty-personalized car in this country..."

"....in the two years since then, you gentlemen of the press, radio, and television have literally designed, built, and marketed the Chevrolet "Panther" to the point where we get irate letters from customers plus phone calls demanding all specifications and price so they can place orders!" (Note from Scott: --- Wow! Some things pretty much stay the same, don't they???) Mr. Estes continued: ".....We have frequently said "what Panther?" and there have been many other names suggestedciting Chevrolet's preference for names starting with the letter "C"....."

".....the personal sized car market is big" He went on to give current market figures and projected figures. ".....Corvair will remain in this markethanding the family-type small car business....." ".....with the 1967 line, Chevrolet will offer what we feel is the last word in personal sized cars....." He went on to describe the size of this new car in terms of comparison to both Corvair and Mustang – and some general details.

He announced that this new Chevrolet would be built in two assembly plants – one in Los Angeles (Van Nuys) and one in the suburbs of Cincinnati, Ohio (Norwood.) He also mentioned that Chevy II production would be switched to Willow Run (Ypsilanti) Michigan where they would be built alongside Corvairs. He then invited all news people to drive this new Chevrolet – and in fact all of the new Chevrolets at a Press Preview in Detroit on September 12 and in Los Angeles on September 19. Mr. Estes then said: ".....Oh yes! I almost forgot! The purpose of this meeting! Gentlemen: much as we appreciate the tremendous publicity given "Panther" we ask you to help scratch the cat once and forever. And as such, this will be both the FIRST and LAST meeting of SEPAW.Chevrolet has chosen a name which is lithe, graceful, and in keeping with our other car names beginning with the letter C.....it suggests the comradeship of good friends.....as a personal car should be to its owner.....Above all, it is the name of our new car line to be introduced on September 29.....and to us, the name means just what we think the car will do: GO!and here it is!....."

At that moment, five very pretty girls came onto stage – each holding a letter.....Mr. Estes held the sixth letter – and while a narrator described to out-of-towners what was going on, Mr. Estes placed each girl in order and then lined up with them for all to see the word "CAMARO."

.....and thus was the day the Panther died.

Now – many of you may have heard me talk about this day at various Camaro and Firebird shows. For those of you who have not heard this story, I believe it merits repeating: I often wonder, as Mr. Estes picked the name "Camaro" from a list of over 2,000 words – a name that means "Friend, Pal, or Comrade" --- I just wonder: Did he EVER imagine that this wonderful car – would bring so many "friends" together all because of the love of the Camaro?

When asked a year later how he came up with the name "Camaro" – Mr. Estes laughed that he locked himself in a closet and he came back out with Camaro!