



SCCC News

JULY, 2011

Travel to Mecca.....A.K.A... Fun at Every Turn.....the SCCC Goes to Bowling Green

It was a sunny Sunday morning on May 22nd when a group from the SCCC met at the Loaf N' Jug on Hwy 50/96 just east of Baxter Road. Excitement was in the air as people drank coffee, ate breakfast sandwiches, and chatted about the preparations for the trip, etc. The group included Burt & Sharon.....driving their Mini Cooper (their "other freakin' racecar is a Vette"....which had a bent rim and wasn't road worthy), Judy & Don....with the option to go topless were driving the only convertible of the group, Bill & Sally.....driving a silver C5 that had been cross country just a few weeks earlier, Dennis & Patty.....driving the only red Vette in the group (watch out for cops), Rick & Jill.....driving their Z06 with 505 HP (and a radar detector), and our leaders Lucky & Jannett.....driving their black C5.

Getting Ready to Roll



This Pueblo group planned to meet Bob & Vicki.....driving their black C5.....in Bowling Green on Tuesday. Bob & Vicki were on a major road trip through several states which took them all the way to North Carolina (for some "Tail of the Dragon" driving). Lucky had previously told the group that wheels up was at 8am sharp and as requested all cars were running and lined up at 8am for our trip to the Holy Land. Smiles were on everyone's faces as we drove out of the parking lot, turned east on Hwy 50 and headed toward our first nights destination.....Wichita, KS.

The caravan of 5 Vettes and a Mini was an awesome sight on the highway. In fact at one point along the way an elderly woman in a car that the group was in the process of passing pulled over on the rocky shoulder in a cloud of dust right after the first two cars had passed her and all she saw in her rear view mirror was more of the same. Similar "off road" experiences took place two other times during our first day on the road. Our group must have been slightly intimidating to other motorists. We got to Dodge City and decided to drive through town rather than take the by-pass.....a mistake.....which resulted in the first of many, many U-turns during the trip. Fortunately we were able to locate the Kansas Highway Patrol who gave us directions on how to get the "Heck out of Dodge".



Drive Thru Bottle Opening



Ready for Food

We checked in to our motel in Wichita and readied ourselves for dinner. Lucky and Jannett knew of a restaurant close by named Old Chicago. Dennis pulled out his GPS and determined that it was only a mile away. The group followed Dennis & Patty out of the motel and on to the highway.....Oops!! The GPS indicated that a turn on to the toll road was required.....everyone including Dennis knew this was not right.....but everyone (except Don & Judy) went onto the tollway.....3 miles and 30 cents later the group made another U-turn and headed back to the restaurant. After dinner the group learned that devastation had struck Joplin, MO. A tornado had literally wiped the town off the map. Our route the next morning was to go through Joplin.....we needed to adjust.....and also be aware as there was more bad weather looming in the area.

On Monday morning at 8am we left Wichita not sure what was in store for us. The TV's had indicated severe weather all around the area. Dennis was using his iPad and was watching the weather as the group drove east. He signaled the group to stop. A review of the radar and the storms caused the group to divert south toward Oklahoma.....about 100 miles out of the way but perhaps the weather would be better. A lunch stop gave us more time to review the weather.....and it didn't look good. We were in and out of the rain.....then we were in the rain.....and it was raining hard. This is where Lucky & Jannett had the misfortune of getting water in their engine and having to drop out of the caravan and eventually return to Pueblo (see last month's newsletter for full details). It was difficult for the group to leave the leaders behind.....but with the blessing of Lucky & Jannett, the rest of the group drove off into the rain. Things continued to be a little strange as we drove further east. Bill & Sally radioed to the group that their DIC was going crazy.....messages about no gas, low air pressure, high engine temperatures, etc. flashing on the dash.....we are pulling over to check it out. It must have been caused by the excessive moisture.....all systems were OK and we continued on.

We arrived in Poplar Bluff, MO at about 6 pm and checked into our motel. Dinner was on your own, but a few of us went to a Mexican restaurant and had a good meal.....along with good margaritas. The next morning we awoke to sunshine and it was Sally's birthday! In the motel lobby the staff brought in sweet rolls and we all sang Happy Birthday to Sally. We left Poplar Bluff at 8:30 am heading toward the Mississippi River. The Mississippi and the Ohio Rivers merge in a small Illinois town named Cairo. The news had been full of stories about the severe flooding that was taking place in that area. We had been assured by our leaders that the bridge over the Mississippi river was no longer closed.



Ready to Cross the Mighty Mississippi

However, when we got there we were told the bridge had been closed for 3 or 4 months due to construction and would not be open for another 3 or 4 months. We were able to find an alternate way to cross the river and it was only about 10 miles out of our way. The rivers were both very high.....but there was plenty of evidence that they had been much, much higher.



Once into Kentucky the group stopped at a small country store called Hillbilly Junction. We were treated very nicely and we were given directions to a great lunch stop.....the very scenic Kentucky Lakes state park. After lunch we drove through the country side of Kentucky heading toward Bowling Green. Suddenly, Rick & Jill radioed to the group that they had a low tire and were going to pull in to a gas station for some air. The tire was filled and we left....but we only got about 1/2 mile and it was low again. We were only 20 miles from BG, so Patty suggested to call ahead to Bob & Vicki who were already at the hotel to find a Goodyear tire store. Rick & Jill left the group at the outskirts of BG and headed for a tire store. The rest of us headed for the hotel. We were welcomed in the lobby by Bob & Vicki, who had already scouted out the town and the surrounding area. As promised the hotel was right next to the Corvette factory and the Corvette museum. A really great location and very nice accommodations. As it turned out Rick & Jill were not able to find a new Goodyear tire, but were able to have theirs patched and special ordered a new tire. Ironically, the tire had to be purchased from a Firestone store. There were some funny road signs seen along the way to BG.....the two winners were....."Caution 100 ft. ahead Old Lady Crossing" and in Flippin, Ky the "Flippin Church of Christ". Cars were washed and the group was ready for dinner. We had been advised by Lucky & Jannett that a catfish dinner at Harper's Catfish was a must do. Dennis had printed directions for the group and also had his GPS programmed for Harper's. It was only 35 miles.....well it was 35 miles to get to the general area.....then it was another 10 miles of up and down, back and forth along the highway.....U-turn after U-turn.....you

lead.....OK now you lead.....I think that you get the idea.....we were lost! The last U-turn was in a homeowner's circular drive.....this daring move caused local traffic to come to a stop.....a woman got out of her car and asked if we were lost?.....we told her where we wanted to go.....she pointed across the street and down a very steep hill.....she cautioned us that the road to Harper's wasn't meant for nice cars like ours.....she was right. It turns out that Harper's Catfish.....was really Harper's Bizarre.....the place was closed up.....looked like the storms had washed through it.



Harpers Bizarre is Washed Out



Where to From Here?

The group headed back to town, but then only a mile down the road we made one more U-turn and we found a steak house where we had a great dinner. For dessert, Bill bought everyone cake and ice cream and we celebrated Sally's birthday again!

Wednesday morning found the group up early and ready for our tour of the Corvette factory. Tuesday evening at the hotel our group had befriended a couple from New York who had driven their white C5 to BG to tour the factory and museum. Their names were Joe & Sally. We had a vacancy in our tour group for two people.....so Joe & Sally were the stand-ins for Lucky & Jannett. They were very grateful to be able to join our group as they didn't have advance reservations and weren't sure when they could tour. The factory in Bowling Green is a former Chrysler air conditioning plant. The facility is 1,000,000 square feet. GM gutted the air conditioning plant and rebuilt it for Corvette production. The first Corvette off the line in Bowling Green was on June 1, 1981. At the end of the C4 production run the Kentucky plant was once again completely gutted, then redesigned, rebuilt and re-tooled for the C5 assembly. The 1.5 millionth Corvette was built on May 28, 2009. Our factory tour was scheduled for 8:30 and the Corvette factory was only ½ mile from the hotel. At 8:15 we formed a caravan and drove to the factory. Later we would take pictures of our cars in the parking lot.



Our tour guide was a young woman who did a great job showing us the factory. GM doesn't let tour groups go everywhere in the factory, so there were places we couldn't go.....such as the paint shop. However at the factory a.k.a. the "Place Where Dreams are Born" we were still able to see some areas that we couldn't access. The 470 workers at the plant start work exactly at 6:12 am every Monday thru Thursday working a 10 hour shift and they are able to complete about 8 Corvettes an hour. All cars being built are pre-ordered by dealers. There is about a 4 week lag from the order date to the start of the build process and it takes about 3 ½ days to complete the build. Workers at Bowling Green have a significantly more complex job than workers in other auto assembly plants. In other plants robots do many of the tasks so a typical worker has about one minute of work per cycle. At Bowling Green the work cycle is 6 ½ minutes on average. This makes the work much more challenging and when you add in the many variants the complexity is that much higher. Since all models of the Corvette are built on the same assembly line the work process and parts change from car to car. For example a worker on the line could work on a base C6 and then the next car could be a ZR1. As with any modern automotive assembly plant the action at Bowling Green is a precisely choreographed mechanical dance that brings together components from far and wide. In the beginning there are multiple lines that run simultaneously. Each line has individual parts and sub-assemblies that are joined together to form larger assemblies. The products from the different lines continuously merge together along two primary lines, one with body assemblies the other with chassis assemblies. The most dramatic moment in the process is when the nearly completed bodies and the nearly completed chassis merge at a point called the "marriage". After the remainder of the assembly is completed the car arrives at the end of the line where the car is started for the first time. Our tour group was in position to witness the birth of a yellow coupe. The factory workers asked Sally from our group to come over and push the start button. She got in the car and with some anxiety gave it a push.....Vrooomm! It started right up. Sally was presented with a birth certificate to commemorate the new arrival. After the birth of the car it is driven to a station where the wheels are aligned, head lights aimed, etc. Then it's onto a dyno where every system on the car is checked. After that the car is driven into a room for a high pressure shower to test for leaks. Then on to the test track to check for squeaks and rattles. We were told that the plant manager selects at random one car per day to test drive for 20 miles. Rick, asked if they had any openings for that position, but alas, not at this time.

After the factory tour the group headed out on a Cheese and Winery tour via the scenic and winding back roads of Kentucky and Tennessee. Of course the maps from MapQuest and Dennis' trusty GPS were our guides. We drove for about 40 minutes towards Kenny's Farmhouse Cheese. The directions were very good up until the last ½ mile.....then they took us on another U-turn adventure. We finally stopped and asked a man who was mowing his lawn if he knew where Kenny's Cheese was.....he did, and we were there in a few minutes. Even though we didn't let them know in advance that we were coming, Kenny took the time to give us a tour of his place.



Samples were tasted and cheese was purchased.....really good cheese!!

We put the cheese on ice and headed down the road looking for a local restaurant to have some lunch.....of course the directions failed when we got close.....we asked a local who gave us directions.....but we still couldn't find it.....finally after 4 or 5 U-turns the group was getting testy.....hot, hungry and ready to eat anywhere.....when all of a sudden, while the cars were parked on the side of the road and maps were being tossed out and foul language was flying everywhere.....an SUV drove up and the woman driving led the group to her restaurant in Red Boiling Springs, Tennessee.....where we had a good lunch.....she even had to call in extra help to wait on us....but in the end we had fun and laughed about our adventures. The waitress gave us directions to find the winery which was only a few miles away. She said, "get on the highway goin' that a way (she pointed to her right) then go down in the holler and cross the new bridge, then up the hill and take your first left.....there is a sign but it's an itty bitty one that you can't hardly see" Well at this point these directions sounded better than MapQuest or GPS.....so off we went.

The waitress had in fact given us good directions and in about 20 minutes we arrived at the Red Barn Winery in Lafayette, Tennessee. We were greeted by Judy Clements, the owner, who was very glad to see us.



She has had Corvette groups come by many times. In fact she hosts a private party for one club every time they come to Bowling Green. Some of us sat in the shade and some of us bellied up to the bar and began tasting the wines. While we tasted the owner played a video slide show of the most recent private party by a Corvette group.



Several of us purchased some wine and we were ready to leave. The owner came outside to listen to the Corvette engines start up.....she really liked that. She told us that severe weather was in the area and that tonight could be bad. We had about an hour and half drive to get back to Bowling Green so we took the interstate going back to make better time. Back at the hotel we decided that wine and cheese, crackers, etc. would be the group dinner.....so the hotel lobby became our dining room for the evening. The parking lot at the hotel was full of Corvettes and all were concerned about the impending storm and possible hail. We were told to not park near any trees. Some of us received phone calls from friends warning about the severe weather and that we might want to protect our cars. Well later that night the storm did arrive.....there was lots of wind, lots of rain, lots of lightning, lots of thunder.....and for some lots of sleep.....and for others lots of stay up and watch the action. In the morning the sky was still cloudy, but the storm had done no significant damage. It was Thursday and we had a tour scheduled at the Corvette Museum for 9am.

We drove in a caravan the ½ mile to the museum and as it turned out we parked by the back door rather than the front door. We later were told that as a club we could have parked in the victory circle area and we will take advantage of that on our next trip. Inside the museum we checked in and were assigned a tour guide.



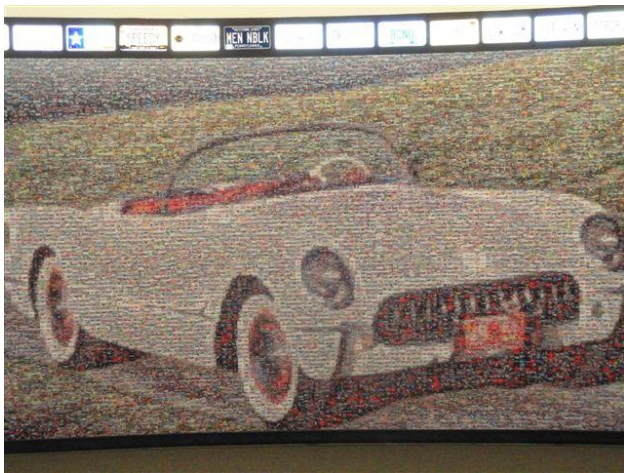
She took us over to the Club Room where we gathered to hear some of the details of about our agenda. The tour would last about an hour and a half.....then we would be on our own for a while.....then there would be a formal unveiling and dedication of our SCCC brick. For those that don't know the club purchased an engraved brick that is placed in a brick walkway area.....it is located right outside the Corvette store.....a great location and indoors so no weather issues. The museum opened in 1994 and is dedicated as an educational tribute to America's Sports Car. The facility is 115,000 square feet and has many exhibits plus a Corvette Café and a Corvette Gift Shop. Some of the cars on display are donated, some are on loan, and some are owned by GM.



The museum has much more to see than the tour time provides. Some of the areas that we toured were, Nostalgia Alley, where we got a glimpse of the early history and a few of us had our picture taken with Zora.

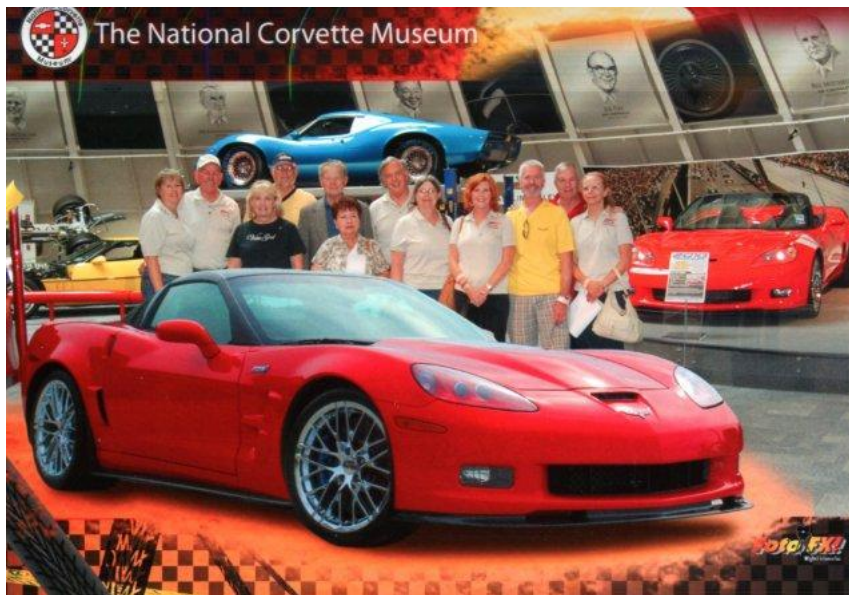


Next was Route 66, where all episodes of the TV show by the same name play continuously and cars used on the show are on display. Also, included are replicas of dealer show rooms and the St. Louis assembly plant. We moved on to the Performance Area where past and present Corvette racing exhibits such as cars and driver information, pictures and equipment are displayed. There are interactive pit crew challenges and driving simulators available. A Design and Development area shows cut away views of how concepts become cars. The Enthusiast area had a '53 Vette picture collage on the wall.....hundreds of small pictures of Corvette owners and cars placed together to form the '53.....very cool.



This area also had many vanity license plates and we tried to guess what the letters stood for.....the toughest one was WYAIFG.....which turned out to be "wrap your ass in fiberglass". The largest area in the museum is the Skydome area, it is 140 feet in diameter and has a 100 foot high glass ceiling. This area has a constantly changing group of cars, one exhibit we saw was all of the Indy Pace Cars. We were told about the 1986 pace car driven by Air Force general and test pilot Chuck Yeager. The pace car was a convertible that needed no modifications in fact it was the first street legal car, since the 1978 Corvette pace car, to pace the Indy 500. After the race the pace car was given to Mr. Yeager, which he was not expecting, but being a practical man he took the car to a dealer and traded in on two pickup trucks.

We had a group picture taken in the Skydome area and then we were free to roam.



There was a muscle car exhibit going on during the month of May, lots of fast cars from the past. Then everyone went shopping at the Corvette store. It was getting to lunchtime so we went to the Corvette Café for a bite to eat. The Café is decorated like a 50's style diner and the food is very good, especially the milk shakes!!! Next up was our SCCC brick dedication. Our tour guide rejoined us and started the informal ceremony. Our president, Jill Brake, said a few words about our club and our commitment to the Corvette life style and how proud she and we all were to be a part of a great club and have the opportunity to be a part of the dedication.



At this time an announcement came over the loud speaker that there was a group of 50 soldiers arriving from Fort Knox to attend the Wounded Warriors Military Appreciation Day. In fact that day there were also 50 soldiers from Fort Campbell arriving at the museum. The museum had arranged for 100 volunteers to drive their Corvettes to the respective forts and pick up the soldiers and drive them to and from the museum. What a sight to see.....50 Corvettes streaming into the parking lot of the National Corvette Museum.....each with a soldier who would attend a special lunch and then a tour.....shortly thereafter there was another 50 Corvettes streaming into the parking lot. These special caravans had police escorts to assist with the travel to and from the museum. Also, that day there was a drawing for an Inferno Orange Carbon Edition Z06.....the tickets were \$300 each and we were told that they had only sold about 200 tickets.....so a very good chance to win.....but you had to buy a ticket to win.....but the winner was not one of our group. They ended up

selling 505 tickets out of the 1000 they had allocated for this drawing. It had been a very busy morning so the group went their own ways during the afternoon. Some went shopping, some went sightseeing, and some went to see car collections.

It was our last night in Bowling Green so that evening the group decided to go to dinner in downtown Bowling Green at Mariahs. This is where Bob and Vicki had eaten lunch on Tuesday and had given it 4 stars. We had the hotel call and make reservations for the 12 of us. Of note, we made it to the restaurant without any U-turns....could we be getting better? Our table was ready for us when we arrived and we had a great meal together.



The next morning the group was splitting up. Rick and Jill were heading for Ohio, Dennis and Patty were heading for Illinois, Don and Judy were heading for Tennessee, Bill and Sally were headed to Pueblo but on a fast track to get their dogs out of the kennel, Burt and Sharon along with Bob and Vicki were headed to Pueblo via St. Louis where they were planning some sightseeing. The departure times were all different so the couples all said their good byes that evening. In spite of the many challenges along the way the group always managed to laugh and have fun. We all (well maybe except for Lucky and Jannett) had a great time and we are ready to do it again.....only the next time instead of the cheese and wine tour how about the Kentucky Bourbon Trail tour?.....Oh Yeah.....but without the U-turns.

P.S. To see more pictures of the trip go to the club's Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/pages/Southern-Colorado-Corvette-Club/165644620153311
You can link to the page from the club website.



Sonic Night Friday July 8th at the [Pueblo West Sonic](#).....meet there at 6pm.....we are staying there for dinner.

Corvette Club will go to the **Sky Sox** game on Tuesday July 19th. Meet at the new Love's Travel Center at exit 104 on I-25 at 5:15 for a 5:30 departure. The cost is \$2 for a ticket and \$2 for parking and \$2 for Coors beer. The Norings and the Adams are bringing children.....so we could have a big group.

The Jaco's are having a BBQ at their house on Saturday July 23rd at 5:30. The club is going to pay for hot dogs and burgers and everyone is going to bring a dish to pass. This has only been announced to the people who were at the meeting.

Missouri Days are in Fowler on Saturday July 16th. Meet at the Value Inn located at 2001 N. Hudson (intersection of Hudson/Bonforte and US 50 East) at 8:30am for a 8:45 departure. This also was only communicated to those who were at the meeting.

Royal Gorge Drive & Show on Sunday July 17th. For gathering info and times check our website. This is a great event for family and a wonderful way to hook up for a pleasant day with Vette owners from other clubs.

All events are on the calendar on the SCCC website, which allows you to also check on other club's events available to us, like the CSCC's awesome hillclimb on July 31st.

EPILOGUE ~

Dennis & Jill's article was a newsletter by itself, and understandably so. This was an event like this club has never taken on before and we needed to memorialize it with such a wonderful telling of the story, which approached saga.

Next month I'll take up again the continuation of featuring the Corvette models with the C3. I have not received a single story of any member's experiences or interesting information on C3s, so would ask again for something from you. Also, only one member responded with last month's request for thoughts on what Chevrolet could do to revive the Corvette's appeal and affordability for the future. Assuming there is no real interest in the club unless I do get some more thoughtful responses, I'll drop that.

And finally, I'd like to add my voice to the club's in welcoming our new members. It's encouraging seeing former members return!

Save the Wave!