



# The Accelerator

Sponsored by *Bill Stasek Chevrolet*

*Volume 8, #1; Spring 2014*

## **President's Message: "A Great Year Ahead"**

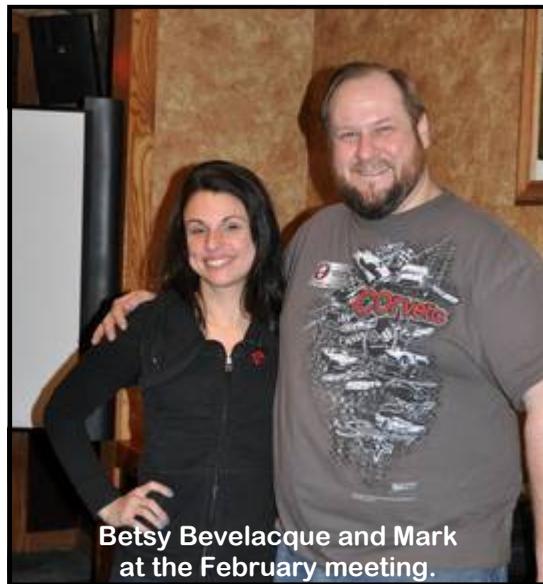
Well, happy spring everyone! The date may say it, but with such a long winter, the arrival of warm weather is more a question only time will tell. So as I sit here and write, it is of course, snowing out again today; I can only guess when we might be able to get the Vette out and start another fun season of driving and events. We have a wonderful year planned, so if you haven't been to the club's different outings, then make this the year you come out and enjoy being part of CNCC. We started 2014 off with a bang — a fun and entertaining night at the Members' Appreciation Banquet. It was a blast, and we heard nothing but glowing reviews about the evening.

While you all gave me the opportunity to lead this club, many (and you all know who you are) won't let me give up planning the big trips. Of course, the year will start with a trip to the National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green, KY, May 31 – June 3. While the devastating sinkhole in the Spire Room made national news (read about it on page 6 of this issue), rest assured the museum will be up and running as normal. We will have a scenic drive on the way down, then enjoy tours of the museum and Corvette plant. If you didn't make the last trip, just ask anyone who went about the fun.

We will also be taking a trip around Lake Michigan, beginning August 16 for 6-7 days. While I don't have all the details, it will be an amazing time. This trip will be limited to a small group due to accommodations of only 10-15 rooms per motel. We also have many other exciting events planned so check the website and come have some fun.

With the spring season coming fast upon us, it's time to think of all the things we need to do to get the Vette ready and

running. Many will just get in, turn the key, and hope for the best. While this might work for some, it isn't always the



**Betsy Bevelacque and Mark  
at the February meeting.**

way to go about it. So here is a brief check list to make sure you have a safe and fun year.

1. Check to be sure the battery made it through the winter, safe on the charger. (You did put it on one? Right!) Check for any leakage, bulging, or corrosion.

2. Check tires for the proper pressure. They lose pressure over the winter. Improper tire inflation is the biggest reason for their failure.

3. Fill the tank with fresh gasoline and use a great fuel system cleaner to keep your Vette happy.

4. Check to be sure all fluids are filled correctly. If not, it's time for servicing.

5. Finally, a nice bath will show off the best car out there. Remember, a clean car is a happy car!

I am happy to say that we inducted another most deserving person to our most

honored group of long-time members. At the members' banquet Judy Nelson joined George Sianis and Scott Wiscomb in having the title of Life Time Member. For those who do not fully understand the impact these three have made to the club, I would like to give you just a little insight.

George Sianis: The founding member and CNCC's first President. This was a job that George took to heart and still does today. He believes in this club whole heartily and wants nothing but the best for it. While his time is a bit more limited these days, he is always willing to help out wherever he can.

Scott Wiscomb: While also being a founding member, Scott works in so many different ways for the club. He does a lot of work behind the scenes and is more than just a liaison between the club and Stasek. Without the time he spends working to make this club great, we wouldn't be where we are today.

Judy Nelson: An original member, Judy "volunteered" to write the very newsletter you are reading now. From the start she knew that this was going to be done and done right. She works countless hours putting all this together. This is her baby and we are all better because of it.

So next the time you see any of these three, just remember to say thank you. I would just like to finish up by saying that it is honor to be your President; and with everyone's hard work, helping hands, and determination, I believe this club is on its way to being a top-level, elite Corvette Club.

Thanks again to all the volunteers who work to make this happen. If you would like to help out, please just let us know because we can always use some new help.

— Mark Hall

# Vette Talk



In February Paul and Sandy Kosiek, Marilyn and Al Schnider, Susan and Scott Wiscomb, and Ronnie and Bill Van Buren of CNCC attended the annual black-tie preview of the Chicago Auto Show, First Look for Charity. The event annually raises over \$2 million that is shared among 18 Chicago charities, including The Cradle Foundation and Clearbrook. Bill Stasek Chevrolet is a sponsor of The First Look for Charity.

## Clearbrook Fun Fest Is Here

Sylvia Walker announced that Clearbrook has invited CNCC to again participate in its annual Fun Fest, Friday, June 20, 9:00 am to noon at the Clearbrook Commons (parking lot), 3101 West Campbell, Rolling Meadows. CNCC has participated in the Fun Fest since 2010, giving Clearbrook clients the opportunity to once again see and enjoy our sports cars. More than 1,000 clients, staff, and family members are again expected to attend the event.

Clearbrook is a nonprofit human services agency committed to being a leader, innovator, and advocate in the field of intellectual/developmental disabilities. They support 3,400 children and adults diagnosed with autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, and other developmental disabilities.

## St. Baldrick's Fund Raiser

Eric Norlin recently participated in the St. Baldrick's Foundation's head-shaving

event at the HOME Bar in Arlington Heights to help raise research money in the fight against childhood cancers. St. Baldrick's began in 1999 when three colleagues, Tim Kenny, John Bender, and Enda McDonnell, looked for a way to give back to people in return for their own good fortune in business. They decided to shave their heads for donations to raise funds for children with cancer.

The first event in 2000 raised \$104,000 after 19 people had their heads shaved at a St. Patrick's Day party; by 2013 the organization raised over \$34 million in donations. Eric is Fire Marshal for the Lincolnshire-Riverwoods Fire Protection District and Vice-President of CNCC. Visit [www.stbaldricks.org](http://www.stbaldricks.org) for more information about St. Baldrick's.

## Night Ministry Volunteer

In December Patti Ross joined members of Edgebrook Lutheran Church's Night Ministry Project to distribute 120 meals to people on the streets of the Up-

town neighborhood in Chicago. The Night Ministry has provided housing, health care, and food to the homeless in Chicago since 1976. Edgebrook Lutheran Church (5252 West Devon Avenue, Chicago 60646) has participated in the program for seven years and last year served 1,500 meals in Uptown and over 300 meals at The Crib, a shelter that nightly provides a hot meal, a place to sleep, and breakfast for 20 people, ages 19-26. Visit [www.thenightministry.org](http://www.thenightministry.org).

## Banquet Hall Woes

Everyone on the CNCC Board agreed we had a great time at the Bristol Court Banquet Hall in Mt. Prospect for our Members' Appreciation Dinner. When Dee Norlin and Kathy Gargano, CNCC's special events coordinators, asked the Board if we could have a similar event there in 2015, everyone said yes.

Dee, however, could not reach a soul at Bristol Court when she called to reserve space for our group. It seems other people



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had similar problems. The *Daily Herald* reported that as of March 4 the banquet hall had disconnected its telephone number and website, leaving future brides, grooms, and other groups on the lurch. Many of these people had signed contracts with the hall and were now wondering if their deposits, many for thousands of dollars, would be returned.

By coincidence another banquet hall contracted by CNCC had an unexpected problem last year. Shortly after our 2013 banquet at Café La Cave in Des Plaines, a portion of the hall's roof collapsed on March 6 due to the weight of heavy snow.

### Effingham Funfest

Mid America's 21st Corvette Funfest 2014 will be held September 18-21 to honor the men and women who have served and are still serving our country. Vets and Vettes will celebrate America's Armed Forces and America's Sport Car.

The event begins with a Thursday night run and downtown party with some 500 Corvettes; Friday night includes a charity event hosted by Mike and Laurie Yager; and Saturday night features a free concert, "1964 The Tribute," with a Beatles tribute band, the Beach Boys, Red Speedwagon, The Guess Who, and more.

## CNCC Challenge *Know Your Trivia*

How well do you know your CNCC colleagues? What facts do you know about Corvettes? Take our first CNCC Challenge — *Know Your Trivia* and test your knowledge.

- #1 What is the greatest distance a CNCC family has to drive to The Village Bar & Grill for meetings?
- #2 How many Corvettes were made in 1953 when Chevy debuted the car?
- #3 How many cities/towns do CNCC members live in?
- #4 What legendary soul singer wrecked his Corvette the first time he drove it?
- #5 C3 Corvettes were the largest generation of Corvette ever produced. How many were produced?
- #6 Who are these two handsome dudes?



The answers will appear on CNCC's Facebook page, April 1, and in the next issue of "The Accelerator" **GOOD LUCK**

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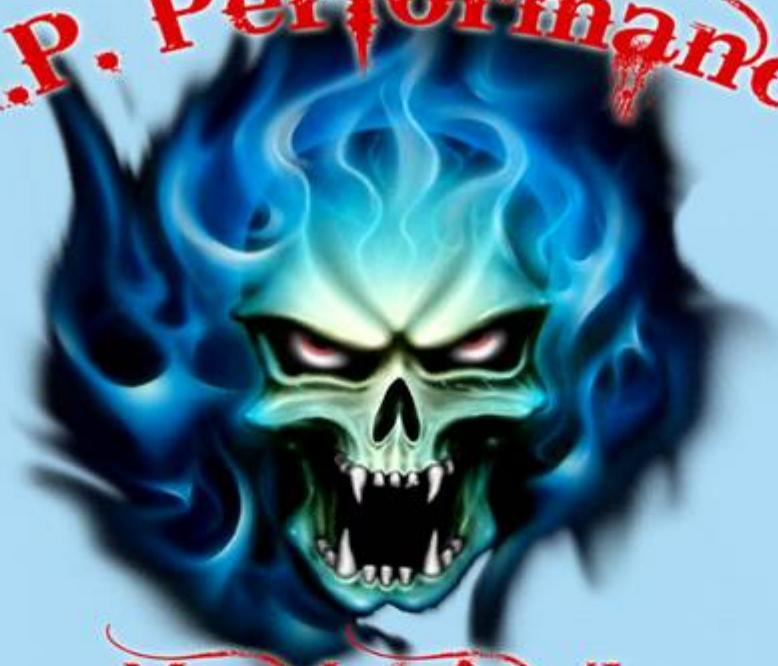
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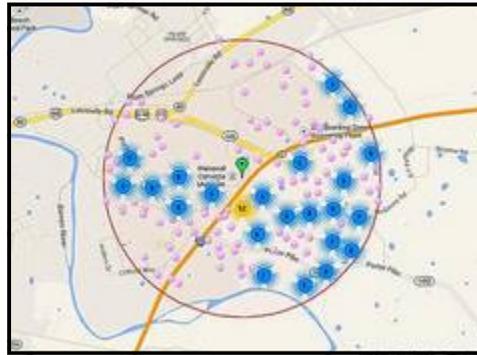
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# Corvette Museum Bottoms Out

By Barry Petrie



Sinkhole sites abound in Bowling Green



Courtesy, National Corvette Museum

The 2009 Blue Devil was the first Vette pulled from the sinkhole.

Bowling Green from across the United States and Canada. The museum also hopes to open the NCM Motorsports Park that week too. So every effort is being made to safely and efficiently have the construction completed for that event, August 27-30.

How is it possible that such a huge sinkhole could open up inside a building that has been standing for 20 years? As shocking as this seems to most everyone around the world, Mike Murphy, CEO of Scott, Murphy & Daniel Construction, said that sinkholes are common for this area. Indeed, a quick look on Plotscan.com brings up a startling image showing 257 sinkholes within one mile of the NCM. Dr. Jason Polk, professor of geography and geology at Western Kentucky University, thought the majority of the collapse has already occurred and that it was an isolated event. Polk said they should ultimately be able to determine the cause of the sinkhole, whether it was recent rain, damp weather, or something else.

As of this writing, five of the damaged Corvettes have been plucked from the sinkhole with surgical precision, and the Skydome and the Red Spire are being stabilized with 100 foot deep micropiles. Once this is completed, the other three Corvettes will be extracted. The NCM will have the “Great Eight” on display until June when they will be shipped off to GM for their required plastic surgery.

As members of the Chicagoland North Corvette Club, we have a great opportunity to view this site in person when Mark and Diane Hall lead a road trip to NCM and the Corvette Assembly Plant, May 31 to June 3.

So join us for this event and witness the destruction/construction of the infamous sinkhole. It will be an interesting and fun time with any number of side trips and plenty of great places to eat, drink, laugh, and show off our Corvettes. ●

The National Corvette Museum made international headlines on Wednesday, February 12 when a 40 foot wide sinkhole opened up inside the Skydome. Eight of the museum’s prized Corvettes fell 30 feet below with some of the cars completely buried under the rubble. Almost immediately after hearing the news, Corvette enthusiasts from around the world sent out messages of shock and sorrow on all the social media outlets. Major news networks spread the word showing graphic photos of the destruction that seemed too incredible to be real. No one was in or around the museum at the time. No one was injured.

The eight damaged cars, estimated to be worth at least one million dollars, were a 1993 ZR-1 Spyder on loan from General Motors, 2009 ZR1 “Blue Devil” on loan from General Motors, 1962 Black Corvette, 1984 PPG Pace Car, 1992 White 1 Millionth Corvette, 1993 Ruby Red 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Corvette, 2001 Mallet Hammer Z06 Corvette, and a 2009 White 1.5 Millionth Corvette.

In the days following the tragedy, Wendell Strode, NCM’s executive director, reassured the public that the remaining section of the Skydome as well as the rest of the museum were safe and stable. “Safety will be paramount, but we will also want to save the cars as fast as we can,” Strode said. “Every car has a story behind it. There’s been tears shed back there this morning.”

A huge sigh of relief came when General Motors announced it would oversee the restoration the Corvettes removed from the sinkhole. And museum officials hired contractor Scott, Murphy & Daniel Construction to evaluate all areas of the property, extract the Corvettes, and rebuild the damaged portion of the museum.

All of this couldn’t have happened at a more inopportune time. The year 2014 marks the 20th anniversary of the National Corvette Museum. To celebrate this milestone the NCM has organized the National Corvette Caravan consisting of thousands of Corvettes convoying to



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# Getting Ready for Spring

By Susan Frissell

As the weather begins to shift into spring, most of us are more than ready to bring that Corvette into the light of day. When you're gearing up to put your vehicle back on the asphalt, you should make sure it is ready to go back on the road. Here is a maintenance checklist that will ensure the best introduction to spring after a sleepy winter.

**Tires:** It's easy to dismiss the fact that during those icy winter months in storage, the tires still endured the cold. Low temperatures can have a negative effect on tire rubber and sometimes can even create cracks. Begin by checking your car's tire pressure and fill as needed. It may be a good idea to rotate the tires as well. You may consider filling your tires with pure nitrogen to maintain more stable pressure.

**Oil:** When your car sits in storage for the winter, the oil also sits. I suggest changing the motor oil before any spring driving. Remember to use the factory-recommended oil weight for your car so

that your vehicle performs at its best. As always, replace the oil filter for a premium one, and maybe a fresh air filter.

**Engine Coolant:** Depending on maintenance schedules for your particular car, spring is a good time to have the cooling system flushed. Whether your car was driven or stored during winter, there can be a buildup of grease and sediment in the cooling system. Also, drain the radiator and clean with a radiator flush product to remove any and all buildup. Re-fill the radiator with a 50/50 coolant mixture.

**Clean:** Cleaning up your Vette is always called for after any storage or winter driving. Begin by cleaning the interior: dashboard, carpets, seating, and trunk. Although most Corvette owners would never allow any bits



No doubt these two were as ready for Spring as Chicago area drivers were after the snow-dumping Winter of 2013-14.

of trash left behind, this is the time to spiff up the receptacles. Vacuum floors and trunk and shake out the floor mats to  
*(Continued on page 13)*

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# ***Fast Cars! Fast Dogs!*** ***Fast Life***

***Pausing for Coffee with Susan Frissell***

*By Judy Nelson*



Susan Frissell has been passionate about cars for years, even in high school when she voraciously read *Car and Driver*, *Motor Trend*, and other automobile magazines. Along with the dream of one day owning a car with a fast V8 engine, she loved writing human-interest stories. In the late 1980s she created “Women with Wheels, The Newsletter on Automobiles for Women.” Dining with a friend at Hackney’s, they designed the layout and idea on a napkin — something that would combine both of her special interests.

“I didn’t necessarily want to advocate that women do their own maintenance,” she says, “I wanted to create an informational, educational publication that would guide them, so when they took their vehicles in for servicing, they would know what to ask for. Does the car need a tune up? If so, what’s included in that? How do I find a mechanic I can trust? How do I know when I need to buy tires? What kind do I buy? The focus would be to educate women so they wouldn’t feel they were being taken.”

## **Women With Wheels**

That conversation led the women to launch “Women With Wheels” in 1989. It was a hard-copy newsletter that grew from 4 to 12 pages, and a yearly subscription cost \$20 to cover the cost of printing. Although the newsletter never became a magazine, some 500 people subscribed, including men who knew little about cars in addition to several libraries that kept it on their shelves. By 2001 Susan was editing and writing the newsletter by herself and decided to publish exclusively on the web. She also taught AutoSmarts classes for women. One thing just evolved to the next, she says.

“Through the newsletter, I made a variety of interesting contacts in the automotive world. I became a member of the Chicago area media group, MAMA [the Midwest Automotive Media Association started by the *Chicago Tribune* writer Jim Mateya], attended the Chicago and Detroit auto shows, and became active on committees. It was through my involvement that I started driving new vehicles

and writing reviews. At the time, I was one of the few female automotive journalists, so appearances on local radio and TV programs, such as *Steve & Johnny* [WGM radio, 720 AM], WGCI, and cable, as well as a guest on Paul Brian’s show were common.” Paul is a veteran Chicago broadcaster who for the past 19 years has been Director of Communications and spokesman for the Chicago Automobiles Trade Association.

“The male members of MAMA thought I wouldn’t last. But when I kept showing up at all of the organization’s meetings and events, they realized I was serious. People in the industry kept seeking me out, as one of the few women in the United States who wrote about cars, though I discovered a few years later that a woman on the West Coast started a magazine, *American Woman Motorscene*, at the same time I started my newsletter.”

## **Freelance Writing**

Susan was also a freelance writer for several automotive internet sites when the

web first became popular. She had a regular column, “Women With Wheels,” in the *Daily Herald* that ran for five years, and she wrote for the *Windy City Times*, an alternative newspaper in the city. “I also had a syndicated column for six years through *Motor News Media* that appeared in about 1,000 newspapers. It was the hay day of freelancing for automotive writers.”

Of her writing, she says, “While I like to write, I don’t cover all the technicalities about cars. I prefer human-interest

were stripped of anything that added weight, then outfitted with 800 horsepower engines. “On the day he met with the media, he talked about his background and how he got into the industry, and then went on to describe what a volunteer from our group would experience as he drove along in one of those souped-up Jeeps. ‘Ok, do I have any volunteers?’ he asked. ‘Ok, do I have any volunteers?’ he asked. So I stepped right up, ‘Me, me, me!’ And of course the men were going, ‘She’s nuts; I’m not doing it, she’s crazy. She’s not going to make it back.’”

life and thought I might really like a Corvette. I had driven them through the media fleet, but the first time I spend time in one was on the Chevrolet-sponsored ‘Return to the Road’ road trip over Route 66 to introduce the new C5. I thought it was the first comfortable Corvette I’d been in. That must have stuck in my head because I never thought it was a car I would want or buy or be able to afford, but now I own one!

“I knew I wanted a C5, maybe because of the Route 66 memories; I also had a

**Whippets  
Brinsley and  
Arlie in 2000  
before a trip  
on Rte. 66,  
left. Susan  
with her  
special pets  
in a Chevy  
SSR 2004  
press car,  
right.**



pieces, like the one I did about John Wood for “The Accelerator,” and articles that focus on helping consumers. With the upcoming intro of the 50<sup>th</sup>-anniversary edition of the Ford Mustang, my brother sent me information about the first Mustang sold in Chicago in 1964. It was purchased by a woman in Park Ridge — and she still owns the very same Mustang. I like those kinds of stories, and I love the people I meet along the way.”

### **Fast Jeeps**

“I’ll never forget the time Chevrolet invited the media to Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, where they were introducing and testing high-performance Chevy models: the Malibu SS, the Stingray, and the Camaro. There to teach us how to navigate the race track were such notables as Tommy Kendall, NASCAR driver, who took me around the track at Elkhart Lake in a convertible Corvette. I’ll never forget it.”

Jack Flannery was another driver. A high-risk guy, he liked to drive Jeeps that

“First I had to put on a fire-proof suit, and then Flannery’s assistants strapped me into this Jeep so tight I could hardly twitch. Then they attached a tube to my mouth for oxygen. I turned to Jack and said, ‘You will be prudent, won’t you?’ He said, ‘Awe, Susan, you won’t be scared.’ So we took off, and I’m telling you, he flew; I have a picture of myself in that Jeep up in the air, going over all those hills. It was off-roading at its most risky.

“Of course, when we got back all the men were saying, ‘I’m next, I’m next.’ It was such satisfaction for me as the only woman in the group to say I would go first. Had I known what it was like, I may not have volunteered, but it was really fun.”

### **Corvettes, Corvettes**

Corvettes entered Susan’s life partly through her sister’s high school boyfriend, who routinely drove to their home in a beautiful red 1960 Stingray. “I thought it was big and clunky, certainly not a girl’s car. Then about three years ago I was in the bucket-list phase of my

certain figure in my head as to what I could spend. After consulting AutoTrader.com (my very favorite website!), I drove seven or eight Corvettes at different dealerships, but some had too many miles or too many aftermarket additions; some were just too loud.

“One Sunday morning I saw an ad from Bill Stasek Chevrolet in the newspaper, so I called the dealership and drove out to Wheeling that afternoon. Bob Clegg, who really didn’t have to twist my arm, found the right Corvette for me. The experience was good, and Stasek made it happen for me finance-wise. Bob suggested I take the nice yellow C5 convertible home for the weekend, which is the most dangerous thing you can do to anybody. That following Monday, I bought the Corvette and have fallen in love with it. Now, I get what the excitement about Corvettes is all about.”

### **Rag Dogs**

In addition to fast cars, Susan fancies fast dogs — Whippets to be exact.

“People tease me about them all the time. ‘You would have fast dogs,’ they say.” In 1993 a friend introduced her to the breed, a dog that is part Greyhound and part Terrier. They are called Rag Dogs because they chased a rag as a lure or pretend rabbit. Susan’s Corvette license plate is *Rag Dog* to honor her whippets.

#### A Wilmette Girl

Growing up in Wilmette, Susan says her passion for automobiles came from her dad, who was a car buff. “In the 1950s-60s, it was exciting for the family to look at new cars at the dealership every September.

“The first car I remember was my family’s 1958 blue and white Ford Skyliner, which was the first hard-top convertible whose top disappeared into the trunk. Dad drove the car home from the dealership, only to get caught in the rain with the convertible top down, and he couldn’t get it back into the trunk. He was pretty exasperated. I remember I hopped up and down when I saw it, only to watch him turn around and head back to the dealership. I was eight at the time.

“At age 22, I bought my first car, a 1972 Mercury Cougar in medium ginger with a

medium ginger vinyl top and interior.

“I had the car about a year, when my sister drove it to work one day and someone hit her; the car was totaled. I was devastated. Luckily, she was fine, but I needed a new set of wheels — another Cougar, of course. This time I upgraded to an XR-7, white with a ginger top that I drove for seven years.”

#### A Loyola Education

In her professional life, Susan is a psychologist who earned her degrees, including a Ph.D., from Loyola University in Chicago. She was always a good listener and interested in people and their stories. She believes it was natural that she would gravitate toward the counseling field because even as a child she had a lot of empathy for people. “I remember feeling sorry for people who were standing waiting for a bus. I think you are born with that kind of compassion for others.”

Susan was not always a good student and remembers when she graduated from New Trier High School, her mother thanked her advisor chairman for allowing Susan to graduate. “I ended up at Monticello College for Women, a two-year school in Godfrey, Illinois that I

chose because it had horses and a beautiful campus. Actually, I never rode once the entire time I was there. Four of my friends decided to attend Monticello, and as you might imagine, we had far too much fun, and I ended up on academic and social probation.

#### That Great Writing Gig

These days Susan continues to update WomenWithWheels.com as new data comes in. “Now, I’m back to driving fleet vehicles so I usually add a new review to the website at least once a week. It depends on what’s going on.

“When it comes to working with car manufacturers and critiquing the performance of new vehicles, a lot of people ask, ‘How do I get that gig?’ When I think about it, I’ve been very lucky. It all started with a small four-page newsletter. Through “Women with Wheels” I’ve met people I wouldn’t have otherwise met, and I’ve gone places I wouldn’t have traveled by myself. Further, the auto manufacturers trust me with their shiny new cars and trucks, to drive them and write critiques. What could be better than that? When I look back over the years, it’s been an amazing experience.” ●



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## Getting Ready for Spring

Continued from page 8

loosen dust. You will probably want to give your car a light wash as well as a wax coating to provide a layer of protection from rain, dirt, and pollen.

**Battery:** Properly re-install battery cables if disconnected over the winter, and check for battery corrosion, then fully charge the battery. Replace as needed.

**Belts and Hoses:** Due to fluctuations in temperature, the on/off status of your car can be rough on the hoses and belts.

Check for cracks, bulges, and loose connections (and don't rule out mice!).

**Wiper Blades:** Recommended replacement for all wipers is six months-year, particularly when they begin to chatter and scrape across the windshield. An easy DIY fix.

**Air Conditioning:** Sitting dormant for so many months, your car's A/C unit may have lost fluid and needs a check-up. After several years a flush is recommended.

**Safety Kits:** Hopefully, you carry some kind of safety/survival kit. If so, spring may be the time to take a look at the items included and/or missing. Flashlight, flare, rags, blankets, etc. are all useful. ●

## More Ways to Get Ready for Spring

### Oil Change and Cleaning

I used to drive my Corvette twice a month during winter, but this year I lost the garage space I had and put the Vette in storage. I put fuel stabilizer in the gas in the fall, so when I drive it home in April, all I do is change the oil, put in a little fresh gas, and clean it.

— Tom Pettinger

### No More Moth Balls

As a part of getting my Corvette ready for winter, I put moth balls and fabric softener sheets in the engine bay, around the wires, and in the interior by the dashboard, console, and on the carpet. I also lift out the ash tray to open the compartment to the air, and set an open box of *Arm & Hammer* in the interior and leave the windows open. Next I wrap moth balls and fabric softener sheets inside sheets of tin foil and stuff them into the side pipes to keep any mice out.

Of course I wash and wax the car, drive it on to wooden planks, and put it on a charger. When spring arrives, I simply remove all the moth balls and fabric



**Invest in knee pads! You'll use them the entire season.** — Paul Plotnick

softener sheets and take it off the charger. I'm ready to go. — Mike Decker

### Would You Believe It?

I take the snow tires and chains off.

— Ron Lerner

### Shiny Chrome Wheels

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— Sharlene and Al Wayman



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## **Ray Sorenson— Race Team Manager**



*Editor's Note: Blackdog Speed Shop operates as two divisions under one roof: Blackdog Racing is a professional racing team led by Team Manager Ray Sorenson and Blackdog Speed Shop is the customer side of the business that Director of Marketing Jeremy Kaluzna oversees (an interview with Jeremy will appear in a future issue of "The Accelerator").*

*Under the expertise of Ray Sorenson, Blackdog Speed Shop won the 2013 Pirelli World Challenge GTS Championship. Their award winning No. 10 Chevrolet Camaro was displayed at the Illinois Camaro Club booth of the Chicago Auto Show in February.*

*What brought you to Blackdog Speed Shop?*

Tony Gaples, the owner of Blackdog Speed Shop, hired me to run his racing program about 11 years ago. I had already managed teams in the Indy Racing League and the American LeMans Series. It was Tony, myself, and Joel Justus, who now manages the Speed Shop. I started my racing career in 1985 with a local SCCA (Sports Car Club of America) team. In 1998 I was chief mechanic for Michael Andretti.

*For how long did you know Tony before he asked you to work for him?*

Just a couple of days. Tony was looking for someone to run his team, and a friend

knew I wanted to work and live where I grew up. Tony made me an offer, and I've been here ever since. Today my primary work is with the race team, but I still oversee the speed shop. I supervise every aspect of the racing team, all the engineering sides of it, the direction we take, and how the race team gets laid out. I set up travel arrangements to get Blackdog to each race and do everything from setting up the cars correctly and coordinating the team members to securing hotel rooms, flights, and even ensuring that everyone's frequent flier points are accounted for. On race weekends I also engineer Tony's race car.

*What is the horsepower of your race cars? Tell me more about them.*

Chevrolet Camaros, the current Blackdog race cars, run with LS3 motors (6.2 Liter V8) making about 440 HP unrestricted. The racing series issues sonic

intake restrictors that reduce airflow to the motor in order to keep racing competitive. This, of course, reduces actual engine output. The now-retired Corvette race car motors were also built on the LS3 platform but produced approximately 580 horsepower unrestricted.

The torque of our race cars is about 360 lb/ft in the Camaros and 450 lb/ft in the Corvettes, unrestricted; and we use 98 Octane Sonoco Race Fuel and Mobil 1 oil. The weight of our Camaros is approximately 3,000 pounds dry/empty (no driver, no fuel), and the Corvettes are approximately 2,650 lb dry/empty.

The Pirelli World Challenge mandates the use of Pirelli tires. As such, we run Pirelli PZERO Slicks and Pirelli PZERO rain tires when conditions require them. Sizes are 305/660-18 Front and 305/680-18 rear on the Camaros. Slick tire sizing is generally width (in mm) x diameter (in mm) x wheel size (in inches).

### *How many people are in a race team?*

The number of people varies from shop to trackside. We have five full-time people on the race team whose sole responsibility is to build and maintain the race cars, transporter, and all other associated equipment. It's a full-time job year round. At the racetrack we grow to 10 people plus our two race car drivers. The team includes a transport driver, mechanics, and engineers. Between the talents of our crew, we can fix almost anything that happens trackside unless it's catastrophic.

We run two race cars, which is a year round commitment as we are always building, rebuilding, or developing new things. Right now we are running a team of ZL-1 Camaros in the Pirelli World Challenge GTS Class, which is more of a stock-based class. We raced C5 and C6 Corvettes in the GT class for 10 seasons in the same series before switching to the Camaro where we get a little help from GM. It's nice to have some support from the manufacturer.

### *Which races are you in?*

We race across the entire United States and Canada. This year we start in Florida at the St. Petersburg Grand Prix, March 28-30; this is in conjunction with the IndyCar Series, the premier open-wheel racing series in the U.S. and Canada. Next is the Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach, April 13, one of the biggest and most well-known road races in the country. Barber Motorsports Park in Alabama follows, April 27, then the Detroit Grand Prix is on June 1.

Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin is June 19-21, which is like a home race for us. The Toronto Indy is July 20, then it's on to the Mid Ohio Sports Car Course on August 3, followed by the Sonoma Grand Prix, August 24. We wrap up the season at the Utah Grand Prix, Miller Motorsports Park, September 14.

NBC Sports Network broadcasts all our races a week or two after the race, and [www.world-challenge.com](http://www.world-challenge.com) streams the races live on the internet. We are going to try to put together a caravan up to our race at Road America in June with a group from the clubs that support us. We are just starting to organize that.

When asked about sponsorship, if someone has a company that would like to sponsor a car, we are always interested in speaking with them, or if people just like to come out to watch and support us, we appreciate support in any way.



*Ray Sorenson is Race Team Manager for Black Dog Speed Shop. His career began in 1985 as a mechanic and transport driver for C.S.K. Sports; the following year he moved to Olsson Engineering where he worked as a mechanic and fabricator for three seasons of Sports Car Club of American competitions. Racing his own car during this time, he also was a teammate to Walter Payton when he began his racing career.*

*Sorenson was Chief Mechanic for Elite Autosport when Dave Tenney won SCCA Spec Racer champion in both the Central Division and the SCAA National Runoffs.*

*In 1990 he was mechanic and pit crew member for Newman/Haas Racing with drivers Mario and Michael Andretti. In 1998 he became Chief Mechanic for*

*Michael Andretti. In 1999 he was the chief mechanic and race team support for Team Xtreme (Indy Racing League) at the Indianapolis 500, and was test team chief mechanic and race team support for Patrick Racing (CART). In 2001 he returned to the IRL with Team Xtreme as Team Manager.*

*In 2002 he was the Team Manager and crew chief for Orbit Racing (Porsche) in the ALMS and chief mechanic for Groff Motorsports in the Baja 1000 with drivers Mike and Robbie Groff and Jimmy Vasser. He has also worked with Brumos Racing and Samax Racing in the Grand Am Road Racing series.*

*By 2003 Ray met up with Tony Gaples of Blackdog Speed Shop — and the rest, they say, is history.*

### *Do women ever race cars?*

There are a few women who race, and a few who do auto-cross, but it's more of a male-driven sport. We have one customer who has a real-life Barbie hot-pink Corvette! Another customer built her C5 Z-06 into a full roll-caged track car.

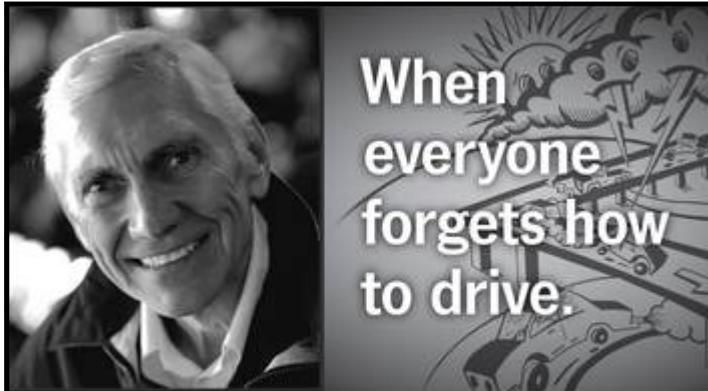
### *What gives you the most satisfaction about your job?*

First, to see how the Speed Shop has grown from it's beginnings as a 2,300 square foot shop in Lake Bluff to a 20,000 square foot facility here in Lincolnshire. Helping people achieve their goals with their own cars on both the street and on track — that's been pretty rewarding. Second, our success trackside and winning the 2013 Pirelli World Challenge GTS Championship is immensely satisfying.

I've been lucky to win championships on several levels, including Indy cars, so when you bring something like that to a small organization, it's huge. It's great to accomplish such an achievement with the people you work with.

Overall, we won the Driver's Championship with driver Lawson Aschenbach, The GTS Team Championship, the Manufacturer's Championship for Chevrolet, and I won the Zimmerman Cup, which is awarded to the Best Crew Chief of the series. Blackdog was named Team of the Year; it's a great award because all the teams in our class voted on it. That's satisfaction at it's best and a year that will be hard to top.

I've been doing this for 30 years. Racing has been the focus of my entire career, and I've been very lucky to do it! ●



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Dee and Eric,

Congratulations on your 32nd anniversary — and on that new Vette.

— Larry

Ken and Joyce,

Congratulations on your beautiful new home! Please save me a spot when you build that two-story garage!

— Barry

Marie and Vic,

How exciting to hear that you are going to be first-time grandparents in June. I understand it will be the first girl in the family in many generations.

— Patti

My Dear Kenny,

I just wanted to acknowledge your monumental birthday. It was one of those zero birthdays (I won't divulge the first number). In addition, I would like to impart his motto and words of wisdom to the rest of

the CNCC members, which is, "NEVER GIVE UP!" Happy Birthday, Swede! (That means Sweetie in English).

— Much love, Joyce

Judy,

This our shout out for being a trooper through your treatments. Our prayers and thoughts are with you during your Corvette road to recovery.

Thank you for all you do for the club. The time you devote is greatly appreciated by all. We all enjoy the company of you and Larry as well. *Zoom Zoom!* Hope you have the energy of a C7 soon!

— Sandy and Paul

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Send your Personal Messages for the Summer 2014 issue of "The Accelerator" by May 15 to [CNCCEditorial@ChicagolandNorthCorvetteClub.com](mailto:CNCCEditorial@ChicagolandNorthCorvetteClub.com).

*Don't criticize  
the coffee!—*

**You may be older  
and weaker  
some day.**



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