



Southern Oregon Corvette Association

December 2025

Newsletter



December 2025 NEWSLETTER

Club Social

The Club Social is the Christmas Party on December 13 from 5-10pm at 1440 Parkdale Drive in Grants Pass. For more information, see the “Events” section (page 5) and the “Activities” section (page 9) for details.

Upcoming Meetings

General Membership Meeting, Wednesday, January 7, 2026, **6:30 p.m.** at the Rogue River Community Center, 132 Broadway Street, Rogue River.

Visitors are always welcome!

Why Join SOCA?

- Promote *esprit de corps* among Corvette enthusiasts.
- Create interest in the Corvette as a true dual-purpose sports car.
- Provide a means of technical information and service to members.
- Encourage dealer and manufacturer cooperation.
- Organize and promote events of a social nature and provide social gatherings for enthusiasts with common interests.
- Sponsor or participate in activities to benefit the community through recognized charities as selected by the members of the Association.

SOCA Logo Apparel

Competitive Athletics, 105 NE 7th St., Grants Pass
(541) 479-1001

OFFICERS:



Elected Officers

President: Ron Howard
Vice-President: Wayne Shelford
Secretary: James Johnson
Treasurer: Cathy Cardoza
Sgt-at-Arms: Larry Weiner
Membership: Charles Simons

Appointed Positions

Sunshine: Sandee Anderson
Activities: Kim Moore
Communications: Gar Stevens
Internet Site: Sharon Hook-Martino, Elaine Ellis
Parade Coord: Kerry Razza
Natl Corvette Museum: Len Atlas
Facebook:: Tammi Moore
Newsletter: Rob Hill

BIRTHDAYS AND
ANNIVERSARIES:



December Birthdays

Bob Bruton
Nena Herrera
Rita LeBlanc
Dave Siddon
Kati Speaker
Larry Stefanick
Teresa Thompson
Larry Wiener
James Weldon

December Anniversaries

Stan & Shannon Czerniak
Tony & Nena Herrera
Ron & Patty Howard
Scott & Elaine Redd
Robert Stockton
Robin Fliegel

EVENTS:



2025 Southern Oregon Corvette Association (SOCA) Events

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Club meeting (Wed.)	8	12	5	2	7	4	2	6	3	1	5	3

All dates below are Saturdays, except as noted ... The dates shown are tentative and subject to change or cancellation.

- *Dec 3rd – Membership Meeting at Rogue River Community Center at 132 Broadway St, Rogue River, 6:30pm
- *Dec 6th. – The Torpedoes Band at Corvette Bar & Grill, 1831 NE Sixth St, Grants Pass, 8-11pm
- *Dec 13th – SOCA Christmas Party at Fruitdale Grange at 1440 Parkdale Drive Grants Pass 5-10pm

For additional events, information, and links ... see the SOCA website “Events Page:” <https://www.sovette.com/events>

Remember to take photos at SOCA events, send them to Sharon Hook, and selected photos will appear here on the sovette.com website!



PHOTO GALLERY



WWW.SOVETTE.COM

106 NW F St. # 222, Grants Pass, Oregon 97526
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SOCA members went Caroling in Grants Pass on Dec6



Techin & Toolin

You Can't Always Get The Mechanics Shop You Want



You Can't Always Get The Mechanics Shop You Want

I've got to fire my local auto-repair shop. I had high hopes for them after some reconnoitering visits showed a helpful customer-oriented culture and the presence of good tire-changing and balancing equipment. But my desire for a close-by shop to assist with my tire fetish may have blinded me a bit.

Yes, I saw the immobile armada of inoperative vehicles parked behind the main shop, but I chalked that up to good sense: With land cheap and the nearest wrecking yard an hour away, keeping a couple of worn-out Chevy three-quarter-ton pickups close at hand seemed wise. You never know when someone's really gonna need a steering knuckle or some other hard part that could easily be scrounged from the stockpile.

However, with the clarity born of personal experience, that field of inert vehicles now seems more like a stack of abandoned machines, given up in the face of expensive or risky repairs needed—or worse, the debris resulting from some attempted repair.

I'd better get my disclaimers arranged before I go further. I'm not an ASE-certified wrench, nor do I hold an Airframe & Powerplant license. My high school didn't have an auto shop, it offered instead something more suited to its community: Agricultural Mechanics. Learning how to fix a main PTO bearing on a combine or weld hard-surfacing onto the blade of a sweep took precedence over fitting new brake pads on an M3. On the other hand, I *have* worked on Navy jets, helped assemble big turbofan engines for civilian aircraft, and spent many hours in the company of professional mechanics. I know what precision and attention to detail look like.

You Can't Always Get The Mechanics Shop You Want

I'd selected two test jobs for my initial work at this shop. The jobs were simple enough: Turn a pair of brake rotors and swap some tires from one set of rims to another. I hear you asking, re-machine brake rotors? Who even does that anymore, with new parts so cheap?" But these were beefy Brembos from the front of the JCW Mini - easy enough to find, but new ones are listed at \$236 each. That same beef made them good candidates for re-machining.

The shop acknowledged those facts, and although their own turning machine had been retired, they subcontracted the work to a vendor farther down the subcontractor line. The brake rotors came back in fine shape for a reasonable price: One point to the local shop—and on to the tire swap.

There were two pairs of studded Hakkapeliittas, one pair slightly wider than the other. The destination rims were likewise in two pairs, one slightly wider than the other. When I arrived to pick up the wheel sets, I saw that they'd mis-matched the staggered tires on the staggered wheels, putting the wider tire on the narrower rim and vice-versa—but only for two of the wheels. The other two were correct. With an apology, they quickly remedied the tire-to-wheel association and I watched as they balanced the correctly mounted tires to 000. I also grimaced while they dropped one of the balanced wheels onto its finish side; "Maybe they're more used to steel wheels," I thought. I loaded up and decamped for home.

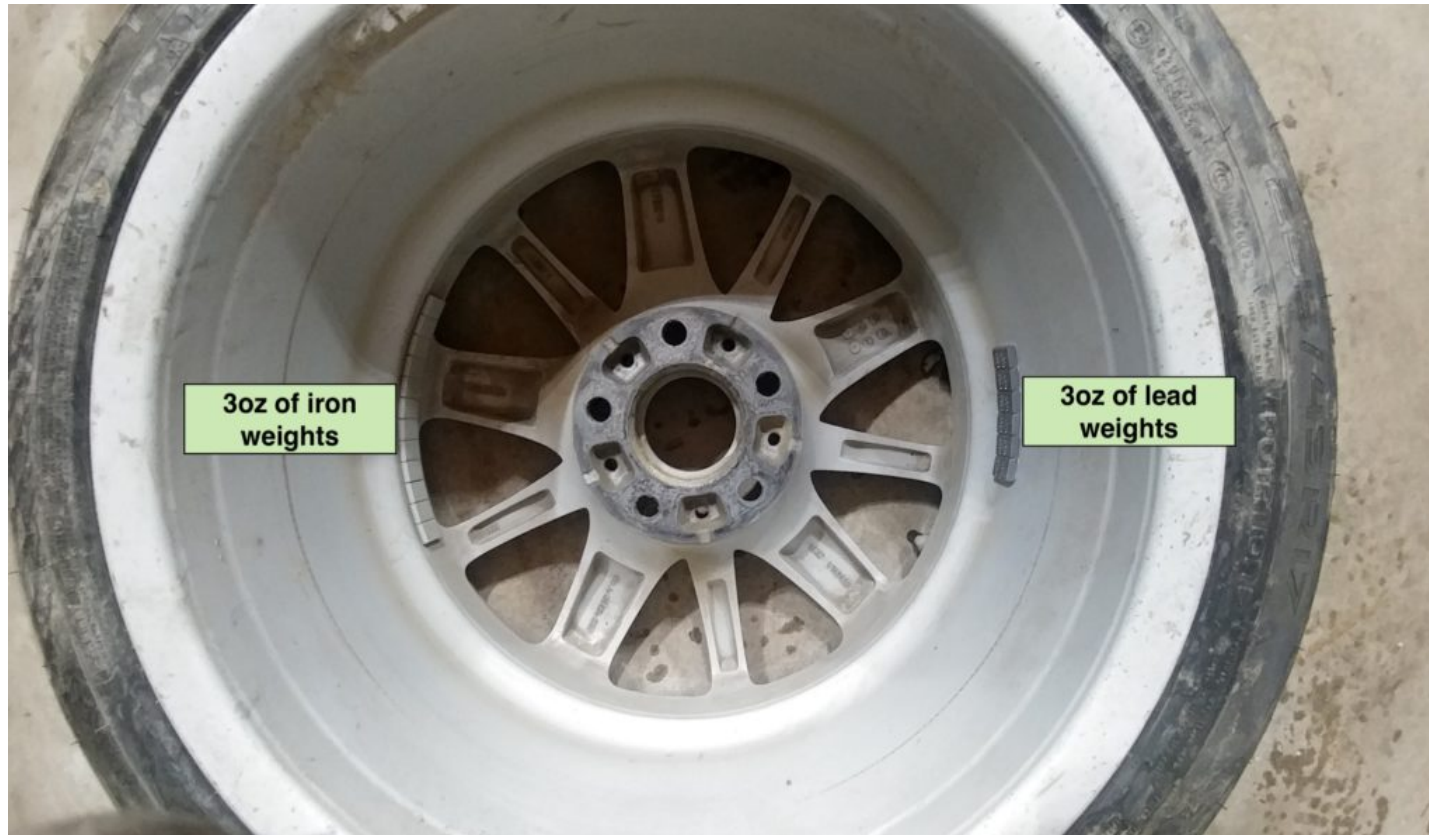
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At my garage, a few more nits came to light. They'd misplaced the square silver valve-stem caps that come on the TPMS units, instead installing a mix of used caps in various colors. Then the strange stuff started: Yes, they'd used a high-end automatic balancer to get good balance on the freshly-mounted tires, but they installed the stick-on weights in locations that interfered with both the front and rear calipers—this, despite having removed the previous stuck-on weights that were installed in the correct location. Even with the remaining gum from the mounting tape visible as a guide, they'd attached the new weights closer to the wheel centerline, and the new weights hung up on the brakes when I test-rotated them.

I shifted the new weights laterally to the correct location. No harm, really; it was a move of perhaps an inch more outboard.

Then I got to the last wheel. It was carrying three full ounces of new lead, which seemed like a lot compared to the weight installed on the wheels I'd already adjusted. Widening my gaze, I saw the cause: 180 degrees from the new lead weights sat *the previous iron weights*, those that were installed when the old tires were balanced previously. The local shop had neglected to remove that iron set, and the “balance correcting” weights they installed were essentially nullifying the weights already on the wheel.

You Can't Always Get The Mechanics Shop You Want



A “balanced” wheel/tire setup, with almost perfectly opposing sets of weights.

Techin & Toolin

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I laughed... because that response keeps my blood pressure down.

It was about this time that I saw the derelict cars parked around the shop in a new light. They had me reflect on what I saw while waiting for the tires to be re-mounted, a certain surreptitious connection between the two apprentices doing the work. I fear that those novices are from a tribe where showing ignorance is a weakness, and pointing out another's ignorance is an insult. With those taboos in place, knowledge can come only through communication from an authority or through individual exploration when you're alone. Whatever the cause, the tire-changers missed several clues to the *right way* to deal with these wheels and tires, and I wound up doing the rework at home.

Maybe I'm just spoiled. Really good mechanics make complex or tricky repairs seem easy, and I've been fortunate to know folks like Portland's Garth Ankeny. In the tire/wheel/suspension world, he hath no equal. Vast experience lets him multitask most jobs, and watching him bring the focus of an eagle upon some unexpected condition or not-quite-right sound is impressive. The objects that leave his shop can't be improved upon - not by me, at any rate. I might as well try to refine that Formula 1 wheel-retention system.

And a man's got to know his limitations