



WWW.SOVETTE.COM

P.O. Box 865 • Medford, Oregon 97501
501(c) (7) Non-Profit Organization • Federal Tax I.D. #91-1819589

Newsletter June 2017

2017 Directors

President: Tony Herrera
Vice-President: Ron Howard
Secretary: David Allen
Treasurer: Juanita Gillaspey
Sergeant-at-Arms: Patrick Smith
Past President (2015): Ron Howard

Appointed Positions

Historian: Group Effort
Photographer: Group Effort
Sunshine: Sandee Anderson
Activities: Group Effort
Event Reminder: Pat Dobson
Membership: Robert Thiel
Webmaster: Cathy York & Sharon Hook-Martino
Parade Coordinator: Nena Herrera
NCM Ambassador: Len Atlas
CORVETTE Weekend: Ron Howard
(Refer to Membership Roster for contact information)

July Birthdays

Chris Meneley 7/8	Sharon Martino 7/21
Judy Axling 7/10	Jerry Bayles 7/26
Ron Howard 7/16	Scott Lloyd 7/28
Dave York 7/19	Geoff White 7/28
Marlene Bozarth 7/21	

July Anniversary

Stephen & Mary Clark
Gene & Candy Walker



Contact Tony Herrera

Next Club Social

June 17, California Dept. of Forestry Training Center
Redding, Ca. Travel times TBA

Please RSVP to Pat Dobson @
pdobson0503@icloud.com or 541-664-4506

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 interest.
- ✚ Sponsor or participate in activities to benefit the community through recognized charities as selected by the members of the Association.

- SOCA Constitution -

Upcoming Meetings

General Membership Meeting, July 5,
7:00 PM, Rogue River Community Center.
Visitors are always welcome!



Great day and drive to the Collier Logging Museum!



Events & Activities

June 17- SOCA Cruise & Social. Redding, Cal. Tour of the Calif. Fire Air Attack Training Center which includes Planes, tanker trucks, helicopters and an informational lecture. Details TBA. Redding Corvette Club has been invited to join us.

June 18 – Father’s Day, Schmidt Winery “Wines & Wheels” event. This is a Sunday event. Additional info. in the business section below.

June 21 – SUMMER BEGINS!

June 24 – Rooster Crow Parade, Rogue River. Drive to Shady Cove and Mac’s Diner after the parade. NOTE: This is a candy throw. Do not bring candy that will melt.

July 4 – Eagle Point Parade. Details TBA. This is a Tuesday parade.

July 5- SOCA General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Rogue River Community Center, Rogue River

July 14 – 15 CORVETTE WEEKEND!

August 2 – SOCA General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Rogue River Community Center, Rogue River

August 12 – SOCA Cruise & Social. Trees of Mystery Cruise. Details TBA

OTHER EVENTS: Sept. 16 – Lake of the Woods Car Show & December – Grants Pass Christmas Parade. Details TBA

For additional events, information and links, go to the S.O.C.A. website Events Page
<http://www.sovette.com/default.asp?pg=activities>



Techin & Toolin 

Commemorating 50 Years of Corvettes and Astronauts

Charlie Robertson - GM PR - 5-05-2011



DETROIT - On May 5, 1961, Alan B. Shepard became the first American to travel into outer space. When he returned to terra firma, Shepard got behind the wheel of a Chevrolet Corvette and the legends of America's favorite sports car and spacemen have been intertwined ever since.

On May 7, 2011, approximately 30 of America's surviving astronauts are expected to gather at Cocoa Beach, Fla., where they will participate in a parade commemorating the 50th anniversary of Shepard's historic sub-orbital flight. Fittingly, they will be driven in Corvettes representing all six design generations built since the famed sports car's 1953 debut.

"Each astronaut will ride in a Corvette from the generation current at the time of their mission," parade coordinator John T. R. Dillon III said. Dillon, a Safety Engineer at the Kennedy Space Center, is also a Corvette owner and member of the Cape Kennedy Corvette Club, which counted four astronauts among its original membership when it was founded in 1967.

"All of the astronauts were test pilots back then; they flew performance aircraft and they moved into performance cars with a well-honed appreciation for handling, acceleration and so forth," Dillon said. Shepard brought along his 1957 Corvette when he reported for Space Program training in April, 1959...he would own at least 10 Corvettes in his lifetime. His enthusiasm for sports cars was shared by several of the other adventurous and dedicated young men who would train with him to become America's first astronauts.

Shortly after Shepard's historic flight, then General Motors Executive Edward N. Cole presented the astronaut with a new, white, 1962 Corvette. The car had been outfitted by GM designers with a customized space-age interior. As GM did not routinely give away cars, the Corvette-astronaut connection might have become totally coincidental in the years that followed, had not Florida Chevrolet dealer Jim Rathmann stepped into the picture.

After winning the 1960 Indianapolis 500 as a professional racer, Rathmann opened a Chevrolet-Cadillac dealership at Melbourne, Fla., near the Space Center, in 1961. Sensing that most of the



spacemen were at heart Corvette types, Rathmann negotiated a special lease arrangement with Chevrolet to put them into the sports cars. Six of the Mercury astronauts would take Rathmann up on his Corvette offer. Stalwart family man John Glenn opted for a new Chevrolet station wagon instead. Glenn's wagon reportedly proved just the thing for those occasions when the seven astronauts needed to travel together.

During an interview in 1998, Rathmann said, "Al Shepard was a racer...he was always wanting to be the fastest guy. "That ambition was shared by fellow Mercury astronaut Virgil "Gus" Grissom. The two-lane blacktop duels fought by Shepard and Grissom in their big block-powered Corvettes would truly become the stuff of legend. In his quest for a competitive edge, Grissom had his last Corvette, a 1967 convertible, specially geared and modified to accept extra-wide rear racing tires.

When Apollo 12 astronauts Dick Gordon, Charles Conrad and Alan Bean ordered new 1969 Corvettes through Rathmann, they asked that the identically equipped 390-hp 427 Stingray coupes be custom finished in a special black-accented Riverside Gold color scheme designed by Bean. A unique red, white and blue insignia was also added to the front fenders. NASA administrators reportedly fretted that a subsequently published LIFE Magazine photo of the space-suited Apollo 12 astronauts and their matching Corvettes could be misconstrued as a forbidden product endorsement.

Even so, another photo of a trio of American astronauts with their Corvettes would appear in LIFE, during June 1971. Apollo 15 lunar mission crew members Jim Irwin, Al Worden and Dave Scott had been photographed with their Corvettes and a training version of the battery-powered Lunar Rover Vehicle (LRV) they would deliver to the moon. The "moon buggy," as it was also called, utilized a mobility system built by General Motors. The Apollo 15 crew Corvettes were each a different color...red, white and blue. Dual racing stripes on each car rounded out the American flag colors.

The enduring association with America's astronauts has contributed greatly to the legend of the Corvette. "In the 1960s, astronauts were the American heroes that every child idolized and every adult respected," said Corvette historian and former Corvette Quarterly editor Jerry Burton. "That so many of them drove Corvettes really helped to establish Corvette as America's sports car."

Released in 1979, author Tom Wolfe's bestselling book, "The Right Stuff," recounted the beginnings of America's space program. The book's success sparked a revival of interest in the original Mercury 7 space heroes-and their Corvette adventures.

"Prior to that, astronaut-related Corvette stories were just kind of folklore...I think that it is thanks to Tom Wolfe that the Corvette is today so solidly cemented to the legend of the pioneering astronauts," said Burton.

That association continues even today. The 1995 movie "Apollo 13" featured two era-authentic Corvettes, one of them used in a key scene featuring Tom Hanks as astronaut Jim Lovell. The 2009 movie "Star Trek XI" opens in the year 2245, with a 12-year old James T. Kirk driving a 280-year old 1965 Corvette Sting Ray.

These stories, both fiction and non-fiction, contribute to the persistent urban legend that astronauts have owned more Corvettes than any other kind of car. That is likely a timeworn legacy of the first decade of the American Space Program. It is probably fair to say, however, that more astronauts have had more fun behind the wheel of America's Sports Car than in any other automobile.

For more information about the heady early years at the Cape, see Wally Schirra's biography, "Schirra's Space." For more information on the historic connection between astronauts and Corvette, see Corvette Quarterly stories from 1989 and 2006.

