

MICHIANA CORVETTE CLUB HISTORY

Bob Ruth, Sales Manager of Gates Chevrolet, our sponsor, had been in contact with Joe Pike, Chevrolet's Sales Promotion Manager & Editor of Corvette News, in early 1957 about starting an enthusiast group at the dealership. With the support of the dealership's owner, Van Gates, Bob took the bull by the horns and started contacting local Corvette owners about such a group.

Michiana Corvette Club (MCC) was founded in South Bend, Indiana in June, 1957 by local enthusiasts with a love for Americas Sports Car, the Chevrolet Corvette. This love of the car has not changed one bit over the past 52 years as our group has grown to as many as 140 members at times.

In 1960, the MCC was the 8th founding members of the National Council of Corvette Clubs (NCCC). When NCCC recognized Charter Members in 1975, MCC was honored to have five members selected. They are Van Gates, Fred Goss (deceased), Gene Lewis, Bob Ruth and Terry Tetzlaff.

Our meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month with the winter months convening at the same location. For many years the five summer months meetings were held on the run (MOTR), cruising to the restaurant within 20 to 40 miles of our home base and sponsor, Gates Chevrolet. This year we have reverted back to our original policy of meeting at a common location year round and have selected St. Paul Retirement Community Meeting Room. (As with NCCC's advancing medium age, this may be a more appropriate location than any of us want to admit!) There is a second evening set aside for a Social Meeting on the Run during the five summer months. For those more into the "nuts & bolts" of their Corvette, we hold a monthly "Shop Talk" meeting where members can discuss and ask for assistance in maintaining their cars.

Club events though the year include a swap meet on the campus of Notre Dame University, group attendance at the Wagon Wheel Theater in Warsaw, Indiana, Our Seven Event NCCC Competition Weekend in August, and Christmas Awards Party. Until two years ago, MCC had supported the Northern Indiana chapter of Spina Bifida for the previous twenty five years with charity contributions from our swap meet. We currently support several charities who's goals are more relevant to individual members own life experiences.

Participation in the Cavalcade of Wheels Car Show at Notre Dame University was one of our major events during the 1990's. Building Club displays gave our members the opportunity to work on team projects that were first place winners in the "Club Competition" category for five of six years in a row. The displays have been highly successful in putting the clubs name in the public's eye and attracting new members.

(2)

Past years displays have included a four decades of Corvettes layout with a car from each period; an old barn with the proverbial '54 Corvette covered in straw and chicken droppings and a beautiful original '54 outside in a before and after motif; and ice cream drive-in, complete with curb service under a lighted canopy covering six cars. Next came a Western Saloon with split rail fence, a fifties Mobil gas station with restored pumps and the Corvette Cinema showing but what else- Corvette Summer.

The 1997 edition featured a "Route 66 Corvette Diner" designed and coordinated by display maker extroidinar, Mike Metcalfe. Mikes superior ability to concept eye appealing presentation with the ultimate in fine detail has been honed by years in the accounting field. The "Diner" came with counter, stools, checker table clothes and floor. Many of the interior decoration was loaned to the club by longtime Michiana drive-in restaurant chain Bonnie Doons.

This display was chosen by NCCC to represent the organization during 1998 as the center part of a multi-Corvette display at the National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Participation in at least five (5) local parades including the Annual 4H Fair opening presentation of the King & Queen have become a more important part of the Clubs activities. Another activity that has generated increased attendance in recent years is the long weekend road trip to a summer vacation spot such as Put-in-Bay in Ohio and Door County in Wisconsin. These trips have been in the 3 to 4 hundred mile travel range. This year the Club is expanding its sights with a Fall Color road trip to Burlington, Vermont & on to Bar Harbor, Maine.

Jim Bartuska, July 14, 2009 Revised September 8, 2009
Michiana Corvette Club Governor, IN008; 1978 – Present
File: Michiana Corvette Club History draft