

Yakima Valley Corvette Club 35th Annual Vette-A-Bratton by Dee & Duncan



We won the poker rally at the 35th Vette-A-Bratton! We won the poker rally! Talk about finally beating the house odds. We've been rallying since Corvettes had solid axles, and we have never even *come close* to having a winning hand on a poker run event. (Try "one of a kind, deuce high," our usual best effort.) And this time we drew all 4 aces plus the 4 of spades. Sent everyone else home on the trailer, we did! Actually, we owe it all to Dee's brilliant poker strategy: give up hope and just take the top card off whatever the checkpoint

worker sticks in the navigator's window. Even those of us who slept through our class in Probability & Statistics 101-102 know that sometimes the Fates just smile on you. We shan't push our luck any more, thank you very much, and our winnings will go into a donation to the local fund raiser for victims of Domestic Violence.

This event started as a comedy of errors for CdeO. First, tour leader Jon was scratched because of a business meeting. Meagan was did-not-start due to a sick child. Miranda & Eric would be late starters caused by some appointment. So we lashed together a Friday 2-car run to go over White Pass with potential CdeO members Kathi & Mike (red C6 coupe) and us in "Vermont II" (LeMans blue C5 roadster,) but then snow on US 12 the night before set us scrambling for the alternate lower-altitude route over Snoqualmie Pass. We also tossed out some warm weather clothes and filled the trunk space with umbrellas, parkas and fleece vests. Smart move. The trip was incident-free, but rather like an unlimited hydroplane race given the heavy rain, which lasted all the way to Ellensburg. There was a huge number of State Patrol cars headed westbound on I-90; explanations included everything from a major force redeployment to hackneyed old jokes about Krispy Kreme stores, but whatever, a lot of troopers were going somewhere together. Our little tour opted to get off the freeway at Canyon Road (SR 821,) the old highway down in the valley by the Yakima River. Great curves, very scenic this spring, and always interesting bird watching there, but the road has an annoyingly slow 45 MPH limit, which we observed strictly (as did the natives!) so as not to aggravate the Local Authorities.

We rolled into the Yakima Clarion Hotel in semi-sunny weather and who should be there doing business but Soupy and Jan Campbell, enjoying the Corvette lifestyle before Soupy heads into chemotherapy and radiation for his pancreatic cancer. That won't be fun. The Yakima Valley Corvette Club hosts insisted that Jan and Soupy's own white C4 roadster be featured in the custom graphics on the event shirts this year. It's an honor, of course, but they've trimmed out the car nicely and it later trophied in the judged car show. We unloaded, headed to Starbucks for a caffeine jolt, and then amused the hotel spectators with our tag-team car washing act: Dee hoses it down, Duncan washes, Dee rinses, both dry, both detail.

The first evening activity was a Corvette cruise-out right down the main drag to Miner's Drive-In, a classic hamburger stand which somebody needs to nominate for that "Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives" program on TV.

The huge and tasty entrees are a "food hangover" going somewhere to happen.

From there we migrated cross town to a McDonald's to join their run-what-ya-brung Friday night cruise-in. "Vermont II" parked next to



a nicely-done early Chevy II sedan-delivery, made by crossing a 4-door wagon body with a lot of sheet metal and welding rods plus the wide doors from a 2-door sedan, and mixing well with a 4.3 liter Vortec V-6 from a Blazer. Down the way we found an unrestored 1923 Model-T touring car, showing a lovely patina from several generations in one family. Cool! So was the evening weather, so we retired. Saturday morning the weather was full sun, but coolish, and a good desert wind blowing. The detail shops opened at 0700 for car prep, but we settled for a quick wipe-down on our daily-driver. We remembered how to find Sarge

Hubbard Park (go to Wal-Mart, then look around for a field of Corvettes) where a very pleasant lady in an orange coat was greeting everyone and sending us to the right area on the lush lawns. More events should have a



greeter like that, who really cares about the participants. The parking directors had pieces of colorful foam tubing about 4 feet long (like kiddie-safe light sabers, maybe, or pipe insulation) that they held up to indicate spacing between cars. Worked slick! After parking who should we meet but Bob Holter, former CdeO member, now moved to Ellensburg. Bob's C4 pace car was in the show and is for sale if you need one for your collection. The usual frantic prepping activities went on until "Rags Down" sounded and the judges went to work while the rest of us went to lunch (featuring bbq sandwiches this year, don't tell Weight Watchers about this event.) This is a big show with 60-something Corvettes on the field, and the vast majority are now in the super-popular C5 and C6 classes. We don't envy the task of judging who has the fewest specks of dust on a given lug nut! Seriously, nowadays all operators of judged shows could well consider having a parallel "Display Only" class (without awards, kind of like time-only runs in autocross) for those of us who are out there only to join the fun, so the judges could ignore us and really throw their effort into the fancy cars which have true trophy potential. When all was said and done, Miranda & Eric's black coupe "Samantha" cleaned up (oooh, great pun) by winning the Modified division. The trophy announcer handed his microphone to Eric, in the driver's seat, and he took the moment to praise his wife for all her effort in working up the car for its win. True class always shows.

Side note: Sarge Hubbard park is not a city park! It's part of the Yakima Greenway (<http://www.yakimagreenway.org>) which is a volunteer private land trust creating and operating parks, trails, and lakes around the city for everyone's use. And Sarge the namesake was a local member of the Salvation Army. What you don't discover when you ask around.

Then it was time for the Winery Run, apparently shortened a bit because the car show ran late. Everyone went to Agate Field and Piety Flats wineries, plus a few ducked around the corner to Silverlake to sample their products and buy a few to take home. The Yakima club does indeed know how to find the best (curviest) Corvette roads through the hills and valleys to connect the tour points! Fun! And the tour leaders ran at an easy pace, so the Corvettes in the back would-

(Continued on page 6)