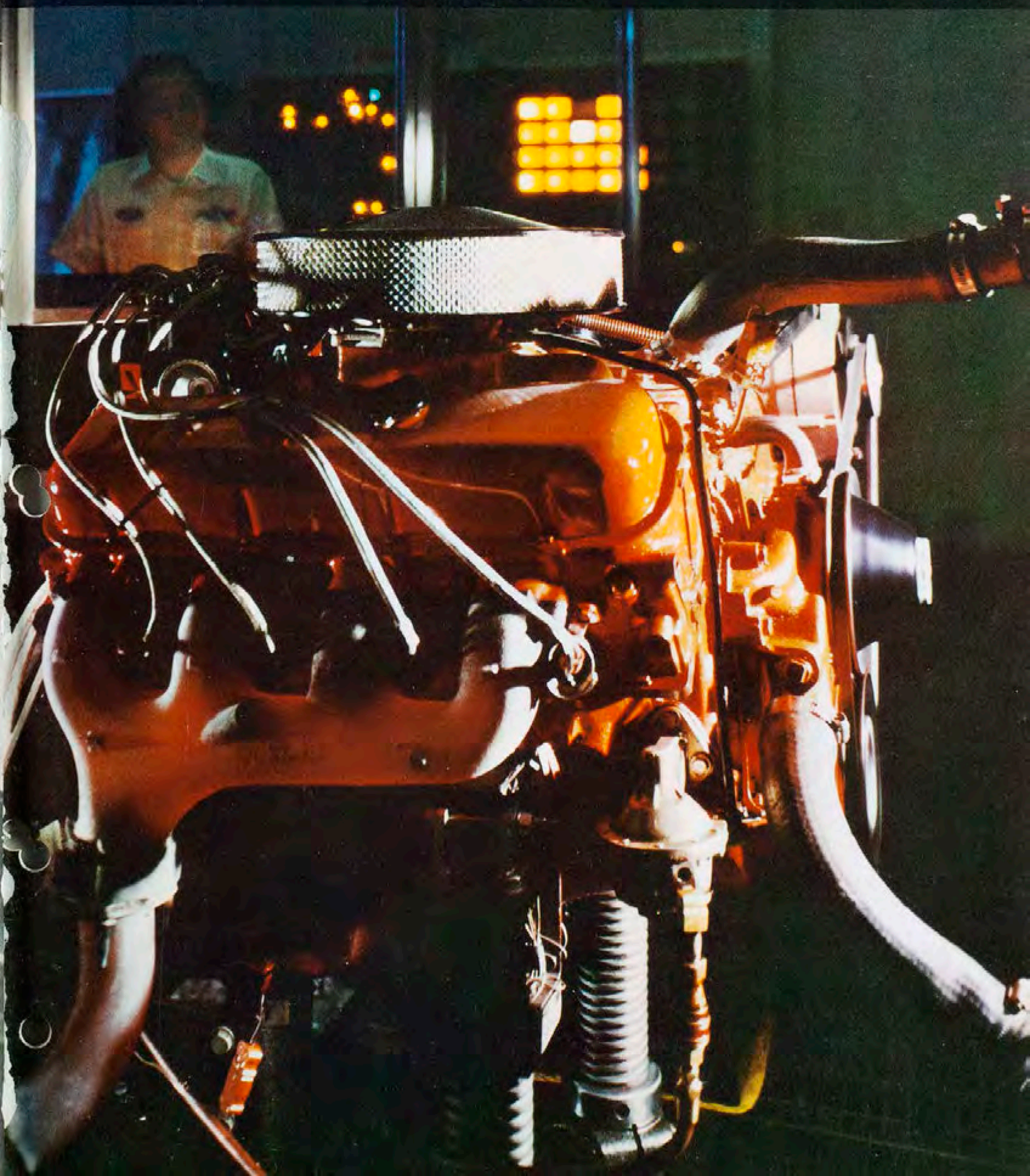
CORVETTE NEWS

Vol. 8
No. 3

FOR CORVETTE ENTHUSIASTS



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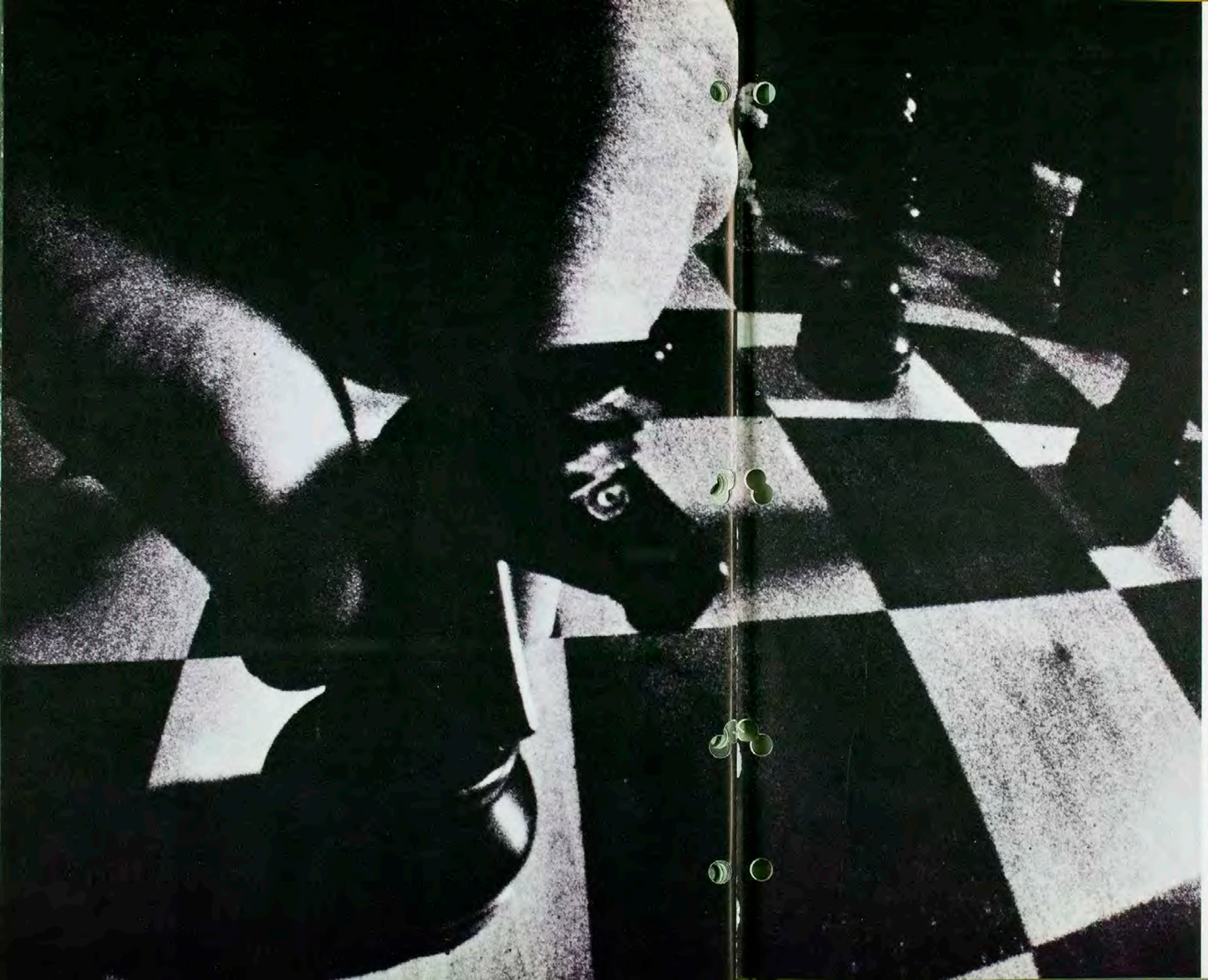


CORVETTE MOVES OUT WITH 425 BRAND NEW HORSES

Another new power plant has recently joined the line-up of '65 Corvette engines. Dubbed the 425-hp Turbo-Jet 396, it adds nearly 70 cubic inches of potential to the Corvette performance story. Because of its big-bore design, along with a multitude of other efficiency inspired features, plus the Full-Transistor Ignition System, this engine promises to raise a lot of eyebrows in the brute-power department. And another point: the brand-new Corvette V8, with 425 horsepower from 396 cubic inches, far surpasses the one-horsepower-per-cubic-inch concept which seemed so unattainable a few years back. Incidentally, Corvette V8 was *first* to break this "barrier" when it advertised 283 horsepower from 283 cubic inches during 1957.

Utilizing the most up-to-date design concepts, the new engine features high volumetric efficiency and special components for high-speed durability. In

its basic design, it shares no components with any previous Chevrolet engine. Displacement of 396 cubic inches comes from a bore of 4.094 inches and a stroke of 3.76 inches. Compression ratio is 11.0:1; a special camshaft and mechanical lifters are used. The engine is available only with the 2.20:1 low gear 4-Speed transmission and Positraction in any of the six Corvette ratios offered.

CYLINDER BLOCK—Cast of high-chromium iron, the new 396's cylinder block has the significant feature of extra-strong crankshaft mounting. New wide-base bearing caps, together with strong bearing bulkheads, provide for greater support and firmer clamping than on other production engines. Four (instead of the usual two) hold-down bolts are used for each of the five bearing caps.

CRANKSHAFT—The five-main-bearing crank has extra fatigue resistance built in by a special hardening process for both main and connecting rod journals. Main and connecting rod bearings reach a new high in durability with materials and design that give them better conformability and embedability. Journal diameters and the crankshaft thrust bearing are larger than in other '65 Corvette engines.

CYLINDER HEADS—Quite unlike any previous design, the cylinder heads include many porting and valve train refinements. Intake and exhaust ports are individually spaced and valves are positioned to produce optimum flow characteristics. Inlet valves are actually tipped toward the inlet port to minimize the amount of direction change the incoming mixture must take. To a lesser degree, the exhaust valve is tipped away from the inlet valve and toward its extra-large radius port. This, as with the intake valve, also results in a more gradual direction change for optimum flow.

This individual porting and the versatility of the independent rocker arm system make it possible to derive still another benefit. Stems of inlet and exhaust valves within the same chamber tilt away from each other so as each valve opens, its head moves away from the adjacent cylinder wall, rather than parallel to it. This is called "unshrouding" and further improves incoming and outgoing flow. In effect, "unshrouding", along with the other refinements, increases the volume of combustible mixtures that can be drawn into cylinders for each cycle.

Combustion chambers are of a modified-wedge type, designed with an excellent mixture-cooling ability. Spark plugs are centrally located for an even flame travel. Thermal efficiency within the chamber is increased by reducing the ratio of chamber surface to chamber volume. The compact design results in extra piston durability by reducing the amount of piston-head surface which is exposed to the high temperatures of combustion.

Also, inlet and exhaust valve guide inserts are used for optimum valve stem sealing and durability. Hardened-steel pushrod guide plates are located near the pushrod upper ends for better alignment at all engine speeds.

PISTONS—Pistons are of the impact-extruded aluminum type. Piston pin bosses are moved inboard, strengthening the piston itself as well as affording extra pin rigidity. Thermal-expansion control is accomplished with a barrel-shaped piston skirt, eliminating the need for slots below the oil control ring. Elimination of the slots strengthens the piston head and makes the upper skirt more rigid. It also allows improved cooling by permitting heat flow around the entire piston circumference. Low-inertia narrow-face compression rings allow exceptional comformability with the cylinder wall for more efficient oil control and compression sealing.

CONNECTING RODS—Extra-heavy lower ends and long attaching bolts are used. Bolt bosses are extended upward and reinforcing ribs are added between the connecting rod flange and bolt boss head. These factors increase metal thickness in high-stress areas.

FUEL SYSTEM—The carburetor is a high-capacity unit to handle the large engine displacement. It features a similar type of dual float chamber arrangement as on the 365-hp Corvette V8. A permanently sealed fuel pump is used which is simpler and more durable than previous designs. Because of its high-capacity fuel handling characteristics, hot weather engine operation is improved by the rapid dissipation of hot fuel vapors.

LUBRICATION SYSTEM—All oil passages are wholly within the block and cylinder heads; a full-flow filter is used. Main bearing journals are cross-drilled to provide 360° oiling for connecting rods. Engine oil capacity is five quarts, not including the filter. Oil pump durability is enhanced through a method of hydrostatically balancing the pump drive gear. This balancing eliminates the uneven hydraulic pressures that act perpendicular to the pump drive shaft.

COOLING SYSTEM—A series-flow system is employed, with full-length jackets cast around all cylinder bores. This type of system allows the coolant to flow from the front of each cylinder bank to the rear, then upward into the cylinder heads and forward to the thermostat outlet. The flow pattern is broken only at the spark plugs, where small circular holes permit parallel, vertical flow from the cylinder block to the heads. The entire flow pattern gives a uniform and continuous flow around spark plug mounting bosses.

Along with wide coolant passages, a compact high-efficiency water pump is used for uniform heat distribution. Cooling system is pressurized and has an aluminum crossflow radiator and a 15-pound pressure cap. The fan is of the thermostatically controlled type with five blades.

IGNITION SYSTEM—In keeping with the efficiency-through-design concept, the Full-Transistor Ignition System (RPO K66) is used with the new engine. This ignition system includes a three-transistor ignition-pulse amplifier which handles almost twice the current of conventional breaker-point systems and results in improved ignition, especially at higher engine speeds. With the ignition-pulse amplifier, an electrically matched coil is used, along with a magnetic-pulse distributor (without breaker points) and two resistors. Also available at extra-cost on 350-, 365- and 375-hp Corvette engines, this ignition system is covered in complete detail in *Corvette News*, Volume 7, Number 5.

425-HP TURBO-JET 396 ENGINE TUNE-UP SPECIFICATIONS

Shown below are specifications for the new 425-hp Corvette engine. Tune-up procedures are spelled out in detail in the *1965½ Corvette Interim Shop Manual Supplement*. Periodic maintenance recommendations are spelled out in the *Corvette Owners Guide* furnished with each new Corvette.

SPARK PLUGS	NORMAL RANGE COLDER RANGE GAP	AC 43 N AC C42 N .035"
RECOMMENDED IDLE RPM		700
DISTRIBUTOR	PART NO. BREAKER POINTS ADVANCE SYSTEM BREAKER ARM SPRING TENSION POINT GAP CAM ANGLE (DWELL) SPARK ADVANCE INITIAL TIMING (BTDC—Vacuum line disconnected—hole plugged) CENTRIFUGAL ADVANCE START INTERMEDIATE MAXIMUM VACUUM ADVANCE START MAXIMUM	1111093 NONE VACUUM & CENTRIFUGAL (NONE USED) 10° 0° @ 1000 ENGINE RPM 15° @ 1800 ENGINE RPM 28° @ 4600 ENGINE RPM 0° @ 8 INCHES HG. 15° @ 15.5 INCHES HG.
VALVE LIFTER TYPE		MECHANICAL
VALVE ADJUSTMENT (CLEARANCE)	INLET EXHAUST	.020" (HOT) .024" (HOT)
COMPRESSION PRESSURE		160 PSI (Maximum variation between cylinders—20 PSI)

99% of the road signs were correct

BY DELMO JOHNSON

EDITOR'S NOTE: The famed Mexican Road Race was reinstituted two years ago after a seven-year lapse. This North American classic was often compared to the Mille Miglia (1,000 miles) race in Italy for daring, skill and the law of "survival of the fittest" as applied to racing cars. Delmo Johnson, well-known Corvette pilot, tells of his experiences in the 1964 running.

The Mexican is a wild road race. Every inch of the road is a complete challenge, because practically none of the participants knows the roads in Mexico. Even if one did know the road 100%, he still couldn't predict the elements. When the weather varies from 100-degree heat to snow, fog and rain, and when the road surface changes about 30 times from beginning to end—from loose gravel to near superhighway—it makes the Mexican unpredictable, and one of the greatest races around.

We decided to enter a team of three cars—one Corvette Grand Sport and two Renault R-8's. I planned to drive the Corvette. All three cars were entered as a team from Snuffy Smith's garage in Dallas, Texas. When we crossed the border, we experienced great difficulties, long delays and even a necessity for gratuities. So did all 20 other American entrants.

We finally convoyed our trucks to Schwabie's Garage in Mexico City, and unloaded our cars on Thursday, November 12. Friday morning, the 13th, we got up very early and drove the cars from Mexico City to Veracruz for the start. On the way down to Veracruz we were detoured down an alley in the town of Jalapa. The President of Mexico was speaking to the people in that town, and our unmuffled Grand Sport would have been a little unseemly for such an occasion. The alley was very rough, and had a lot of rocks in it. We scraped bottom so hard on some of the real estate that we tore the oil filter off of the Grand Sport. This stopped us immediately.

My station wagon, the tow car, was following me, and we were able to hook a rope to the car and pull it through town. We had a little problem towing the Grand Sport through town because of the President and his guards. We located a taxi driver who led us to the Chevrolet dealership there. Naturally, it was closed because of the siesta in the afternoon. We were unable to get the parts manager or any of the personnel up out of bed. When the taxi driver saw our plight, he went right back to his taxicab garage and got us a used oil filter they had pulled from a six-cylinder cab. We cleaned it up the best we could and put it on the car. At that point, we were about 40 miles from Veracruz. We had to run over a lot of gravel and detours—again, because of the President—and en route, one of the rocks came up and broke the oil cooler on the differential. I was unaware that the oil cooler had been broken, and we were driving down the highway about 100 mph when the rear end locked up.

And this was all happening on Friday, the day before the race. Well, we left a guard with the Grand Sport, took the station wagon the rest of the way to Veracruz and borrowed a trailer from Billy Sprowls (ultimate race winner in a Dodge). We went back to the car, utilized enough manpower from the crowd that had gathered to lift the rear wheels onto the trailer, and towed the car the rest of the way into Veracruz. The car finally made it to our garaging area about 8:00 p.m. We had sufficient spare parts to replace the rear end and the broken oil line by 7:00 the morning of the race. I was slated to start at 12:15 that afternoon.

I started the race, third from last, at 12:15 p.m. Saturday, November 14. My car number was 1215, coinciding with my starting time. The race started at 10:00 the same morning, with the slower cars first, leaving at one-minute intervals. Immediately out of Veracruz, my oil pressure dropped to 18-20 pounds and I stopped in a filling station to put in four quarts of oil. This, of course, was an unscheduled pit stop. I also thought ahead and bought an additional four quarts of oil to carry with me in the cockpit. I made one other stop to replace lost oil between Veracruz and Puebla.

The first large town we went through had very narrow streets. The crowds were lined up about five or six deep, leaving a roadway path some six feet wide to drive through. The crowd completely filled the street when there were no cars. When a car came through, the people backed up to let the car pass. We came along at about 130 to 150 miles per hour—any slower and the kids would throw rocks at you. Quite frequently, some of the townspeople reached out and tried to touch the cars as they "passed" through the town. I suppose this was for luck, although I don't know whose.

We finally got to Puebla and by this time I had worked my way up to third overall. We had a scheduled pit stop in Puebla for 30 minutes. We put in a little more gasoline—about 10 gallons—and some more oil. With the 10 gallons, we had about 50 gallons in the tank for a 305-mile run. Since the

roads out of Puebla were going to be very rough, we spent some time jacking the suspension up about six inches in order to get road clearance and to keep from bottoming. Sure enough, the roads were very rough and finally, in one of my unscheduled pit stops (for oil, naturally), I removed a portion of my rear fender to keep the wheels from hitting and causing so much smoke inside that I could hardly see where I was going. About halfway between Puebla and Mexico City, the road smoothed out and I was able to go quite fast.

When we reached the limits of Mexico City a police escort took us to Schwabie's Garage in the center of the city. It took about 2½ hours to get there! At Schwabie's we found that a bad bump had broken one of the rear

shocks and a rear hub carrier where the lower stabilizer connected. Both had to be repaired, of course, and at this point my chief mechanic decided that if we were using oil, there was nothing that could be done. His thought was essentially this: if we had made it some 300-odd miles continuous driving, we probably could make another 300 miles, and we couldn't correct the situation in 2½ hours anyway. So we repaired the immediate damage and took the car to the impound area. There, race officials sealed the car with masking tape and locked the gates. We got the Grand Sport to the impound area at three minutes before eight o'clock. At eight sharp they locked the gates. If we had been late, we would have been disqualified.

At 8:00 a.m. on the 15th, we left the impound area, again with police escort, and went to the Cuernavaca highway at the city limits. My starting time was moved up from 12:15 to 11:27 because some of the cars between hadn't made it to Mexico City. When I left Mexico City, I was third overall and first in my class.

The trip from Mexico City to Cuernavaca is through mountains the whole way, over the older roads, and it was a pretty fast leg. Cuernavaca was one of the larger towns we went through, and we had another mandatory 30-minute stop there. This time we changed tires, added some gasoline—and checked the oil. Between Cuernavaca and Taxco, we ran second overall behind Billy Sprowls' perfectly functioning Dodge. We had to make two stops en route to replenish the oil. One of the highlights of the tour to Taxco was the "soapy" road.

There is a stretch of road, perhaps 40 to 50 miles long, that has maybe 1,000 or more curves in that distance and is regularly travelled by diesel trucks. The diesels spew some of their fuel oil out of their tanks onto the road. The roads were so slick in that stretch that I stopped again and again to check the tires. The diesel oil on the road made the car handle like all of the tires were going flat. And just to add to the fun of the situation, we had a report that some kids had spread tacks on the road. This rumor turned out to be false. The oil was enough of a problem.

At Chilpancingo, some of the Mexican kids were trying to be very helpful, so we let them put oil in the car. As luck would have it, one of them got pretty excited and poured about a quart of oil on top of the engine. As we pulled out of Chilpancingo, all the oil heated up and blew off of the engine—right up on the windshield, making visibility marginal at best. Then it started raining and we had to stop and wipe the windshield off. We didn't get it all off, and we had to stop a few miles farther down the road and wipe the windshield again. I say "we," because I had picked up an American who had dropped out of the race because his car had broken. Don, the American, said he lived in Acapulco and claimed that he knew the roads we were going to travel on. As it turned out, he drove mainly on the expressway, while we were racing on the old road. He advised me on a few corners—which way to turn and how fast to go through—and he was right the first few times. Then he started guessing wrong, and we came up to a very slow corner going very fast. It got kind of anxious for a while, braking down, gearing down, sliding sideways and trying to keep from going over the side of the mountain. I told Don to just enjoy the ride; I would trust my luck to the Mexican Government's road signs. Ray Crawford, who won the Mexican once, told me to put all of my faith in the placement and direction shown by those road signs. As I found out, the placement of the sign post was exactly the right shutoff point before going into a corner, and indicated to me whether it was fast or slow. In 99% of the cases, the signs were absolutely right. In the other 1%, they were wrong. Which made for some more anxious moments.

We were about halfway between Chilpancingo and Acapulco when we needed some gas. Don decided to play it real smart and order it in liters, since he could speak Spanish. After we left, he got thinking and confessed that he had miscalculated and had only put six gallons in when we should have had ten. So we thought we might run out of gas before we reached Acapulco (and the finish), but we didn't. We had planned to have a reserve of maybe six gallons, just to play it safe. (At the finish, we had about three gallons left.)

The oil problem got worse, both from the remains of the oil spilled on the engine and increasing blowby. By the time we got to Acapulco, we couldn't see the left-hand corners. And we could just see the right-hand ones. Anyway, we rounded the last turn, came out of a tunnel and turned on real strong for the finish line. That put us second overall and first in class. The lead car beat us by 30 minutes; we guesstimated that if we hadn't had to stop, we would have at least beat him on the last leg, and maybe overall. We averaged about 100 miles an hour, and our total elapsed time was six hours, 13 minutes and 26 seconds. If we deducted about 30 minutes for pit stops, our elapsed time would have been within three minutes of the winner's.

Overall, I had a ball. If they had decided to re-run the race starting that same day, I would have been ready to go. I enjoyed it that much.

We also took the team trophy with the Grand Sport and our two Renaults. It's quite an informal race—some of the cars took along soft drinks, sandwiches and things like that.

The affair is put on by the Automobile Club of Mexico, which only has about 26 members. Each of these men is in the top echelon of business, government and social life, and by any standards all are millionaires. They're also dedicated sports car people and work very hard to put on this race. They had things so well coordinated and timed that every town along our route was prepared for the onrush of race cars. Over 40,000 Mexican soldiers along the route guarded the cars, people and livestock. An interesting note here: in our pre-race instructions, we were told to ignore an animal—even a person—who might chance out onto the road in front of you. Their theory was quite simple—if you tried to avoid the single obstruction, you might lose control and really wreak havoc. Better to wipe out one than a whole town was their theory. Fortunately, I never had that decision to make. Neither, to my knowledge, did any other driver.

A tow truck and ambulance followed the last race cars, and one unusual incident resulted from that operation. One of the boys drove off a mountain about 40 miles from Acapulco and the ambulance picked him up. Instead of taking him to the hospital, they took him to the car impound area! He kept telling them that he was in the wrong place, and finally the ambulance crew decided to load him into another car to take him to the hospital. About that time, someone showed up with some free beer, and everyone—except the injured—drank beer for a while before they left for the hospital.

I think this race can be driven extremely fast. I drove it only moderately fast. The car, with a 377-cubic-inch Corvette-based V8, behaved extremely well with the 3.55:1 rear axle ratio. We had planned to run a 3.36:1, but that's the one we blew on Friday. We had a close ratio four-speed, and second gear with the 3.55:1 rear axle was an over 100-mph gear. In fourth, we clipped along hugging the two-century mark on occasion. I've already told how we "slowed down" for the towns.

A surprising thing to me was how well the smaller cars did in comparison to our "big iron." When I got to thinking about it though, my 30 minutes of unscheduled pit stopping, plus the fact that the smaller, lighter cars can accelerate and decelerate better in the mountains, explained their apparent outstanding times in comparison to mine.

Now, just the other day I was watching something on television called the African Safari Rally, and that kind of appealed to me. It looked like as much fun as a road race. Now let's see . . . if we can gain some extra clearance on the Corvette for those rutty roads and protect that oil filter...

il bene a volte viene anche ai buoni!*

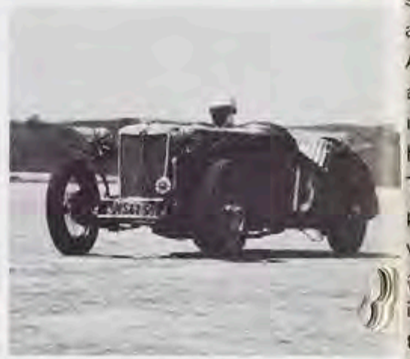
FRANK DOMINIANNI

*or, nice guys sometimes win!

In October of 1964, *The New York Times* published the names of the ten sports car drivers nominated by knowledgeable sports car writers for a "Man of the Year" award. Looking down the list, you could hardly argue about the selections or the winner eventually picked. Named as candidates for the honor were: Bruce Jennings, Frank Dominianni, Ed Lowther, Tom O'Brien, Art Riley, Peter Sachs, Don Sesslar, Bob Tullius, Hans Zereis and Lake Underwood. When the final ballots were in, Ed Lowther, a top Corvette, Genie-Ford and Cobra competitor for many seasons, was voted this well-deserved distinction. And we couldn't agree more heartily.

But, we got *our* favorite for '64 here at *Corvette News* and there ain't nobody gonna tell us different! *Viva* Dominianni . . . the nice guy that finished first!

Upon what do we base such brash favoritism? Well, there is the fact that Frank is a delightful person and a real credit to sports car competition. There's also the fact that upon returning to SCCA's B Production competition Frank took home the National Championship driving a well-prepared Corvette. And that was no mean feat. Lined up on the starting grids at the SCCA Nationals races, Dominianni usually found himself in company with such worthy opponents as Don Yenko, two-time B Production champ, Bob Mouat and John Bushell. Against this kind of competition, Frank's B Production championship performance was all the more impressive. During the Memorial Day races at Bridgehampton, Long Island, Frank placed first in B. In the Mid-Ohio at Mansfield, Ohio, he won his class again. The June Sprints at Elkhart Lake saw him running second to Don Yenko. Frank was runner-up once more at Danville, Va. After that, he was invincible at the Watkins Glen 500 Mile

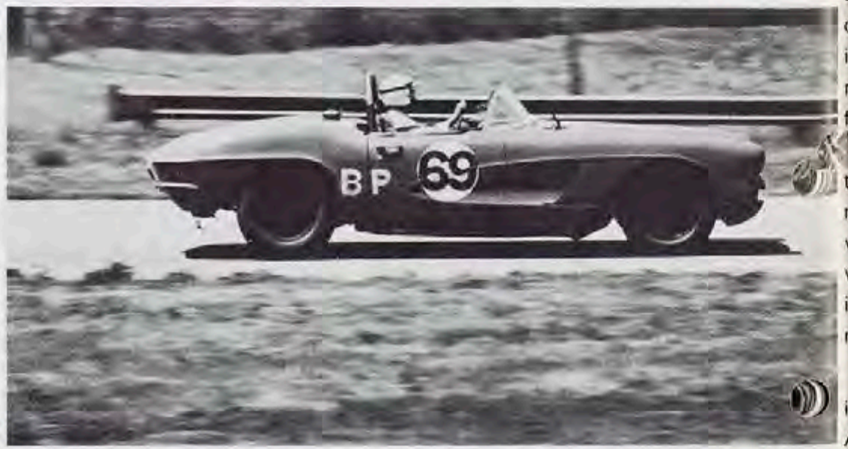


Top: After a tour of the underbrush (check the prow), Dominianni wheels his Elva around the Marlboro twister.

Above Right: Frank at the helm of his ancient blown MG on the Suffolk airport course.

Left: Caught without his pipe during a friendly Corvette discussion.

Below: How to run second at the Elkhart Lake June Sprints, 1964, and still be Class B champ.



(teamed with Bob Grossman) and the Thompson, Connecticut Nationals.

Of course, Frank Dominianni can hardly be considered a novice among sports car drivers. For instance, in the early years of SCCA growth, his senior competition license number carried the number 94. (SCCA currently lists almost 5,700 licensed drivers.) And he has campaigned over the years in such diverse machinery as the following: Crosley Hotshot, MG-TC, MG-TD, Allard, D & D Special, H Modified Giaur, Formula Jr., EMC, Elva and earlier Corvettes. During the 1963 season, Frank made faithful appearances at the Nationals behind the wheel of his A Production '61 Corvette. But, he readily admits that his car was outclassed by the new Sting Rays and he seldom placed higher in the standings than fourth. Theorizing that B Production was the proper habitat for the pre-Sting Ray versions of Corvette, Dominianni dropped a beautifully set up 283-cu.-in. engine in his 'Vette and set out for the Class B tilts. The wisdom of his decision showed in his winning performances.

Like many topnotch sports car drivers, Dominianni is an expert about what goes on under the bonnet of his marque. As he puts it: "I'm one of those lucky guys whose daily bread is his hobby. We're in the business of performance vehicles. At our Hi-Speed Power Equipment Company in Valley Stream, N. Y., we do engine modifications, we fabricate special performance cars and we distribute automotive racing equipment. I'm sure it's safe to say that we are one of the pioneers in racing equipment on the East Coast. Anyway, when we come up with an idea that will help a car go (within the rules, that is), we have the chance to prove it—the next time we race."

Frank found his hobby and his career in what can be termed the classic manner. As a youngster, he discovered that something on wheels will travel quickly when going downhill. And he built soap box derby racers. Then model airplanes. And racing model cars. And on to homemade midget cars where the racing began in earnest. Frank was attending school for aircraft engineering when WW II came along. After three years combat infantry duty overseas, he returned to school in 1945 and obtained his aircraft and engine licenses. This prompted a decision to go into automotive engine development in 1947. Frank now enjoys the fruits of that decision when he looks around his shop; it's loaded with the latest automotive development and testing gear of all kinds, including a chassis dynamometer and engine dynamometer. With a business like this, Frank says, "The proof of the pudding lay in the actual racing of the machine developed, which led me into joining the SCCA and other competition clubs to test our engines and our techniques."

And this, Dominianni has been busily doing for about 17 years. In 1950, when many people were blaming every motoring accident on the "decadent young hot-rodders," Frank was building up high-performance engines at his Valley Stream shop and defending hot-rod activities in newspaper interviews with intelligent statements of fact: "The phony hot rodder is not interested in the machinery of the automobile. What he wants are the thrills. He puts squirrel tails and reflectors on the fenders. He chops off the mufflers, gives the automobile a flashy paint job. Then, he's ready to careen through the streets playing his own version of dodge 'em. The legitimate hot rodder is a man who loves cars and motors for their own sake. He's a man who'll invest from hundreds to thousands of dollars to get a motor of unusual power. Sometimes he races as an amateur. Sometimes he's a professional. Sometimes he doesn't race at all. But he enjoys riding in a car that is different from that owned by his friends and neighbors. He likes the feeling of power underfoot." Fifteen years hasn't diminished the truth, has it?

In 1952, Frank and his crew could be seen at the Watkins Glen Grand Prix, rolling their hairy-looking D & D Special up to the starting line, ready to compete with the likes of John Fitch and Phil Walters. The major hill climbs in 1955 were not complete without an entry list that included Frank Dominianni driving his Giaur. An early booster of Corvettes as racing machines, he was described in 1959 by Frank Blunk of *The New York Times* as one of the top three Corvette chauffeurs whose spectacular performances made the B Production class one of the most interesting of the season.

Frank's keen interest in business and hobby has not interfered, however, with his devotion to family. With his wife Catharine, he makes his home in Valley Stream, N. Y., where a full crew of bambinos—Joseph, 14; Valerie, 12; Renee, 11; Lisa, 7; and Beth, 3—keep things on a lively basis around the house.

Earlier, quite a bit was said about Frank Dominianni being a "nice guy." This is an easy tag to hang onto anybody, but in Frank's case, you'll get universal agreement. He shows up at the race course sporting two trademarks—a corncob pipe and an engaging smile. He turns the smile on anyone who speaks to him. And although he certainly belongs in the ranks of the "old pros," Frank is self-effacing and always seems more interested in the other fellow's problems than his own. His longer conversations are often salted with quotations and proverbs in Italian, which make a point without making enemies. Compared to some of the poseurs presently in the sport, Frank's demeanor is all the more refreshing. And, at a young 40 years of age, we can probably look forward to seeing Frank Dominianni around the pits and tracks for some seasons to come. *Buono!* says the *Corvette News.*

american road race of champions

Without question, more Corvettes have raced in events sanctioned by th Sports Car Club of America than in the races of any other sanctioning bod That club's road-racing events have a history that stretches back to th early days after World War II, when road racing was frankly struggling fo survival in the United States. Since 1956, Corvettes have played a l in the SCCA entry lists. Accordingly, Corvette News was quite interested to see a new racing program getting underway this year that is truly nation in scope. We went to Riverside, in effect, to see if national racing is going work. It appears that it is. The SCCA is to be congratulated.

"The American Road Race of Champions" held at Riverside this pa November fulfills a long-standing dream of road-racing enthusiasts in th U.S. For the first time, a nationwide representation was there to me toe-to-toe. The question of which area of the United States produces th best cars, or drivers, could be finally tested openly. Vaunted West Coast or East Coast—superiority could be either demonstrated or proved fals

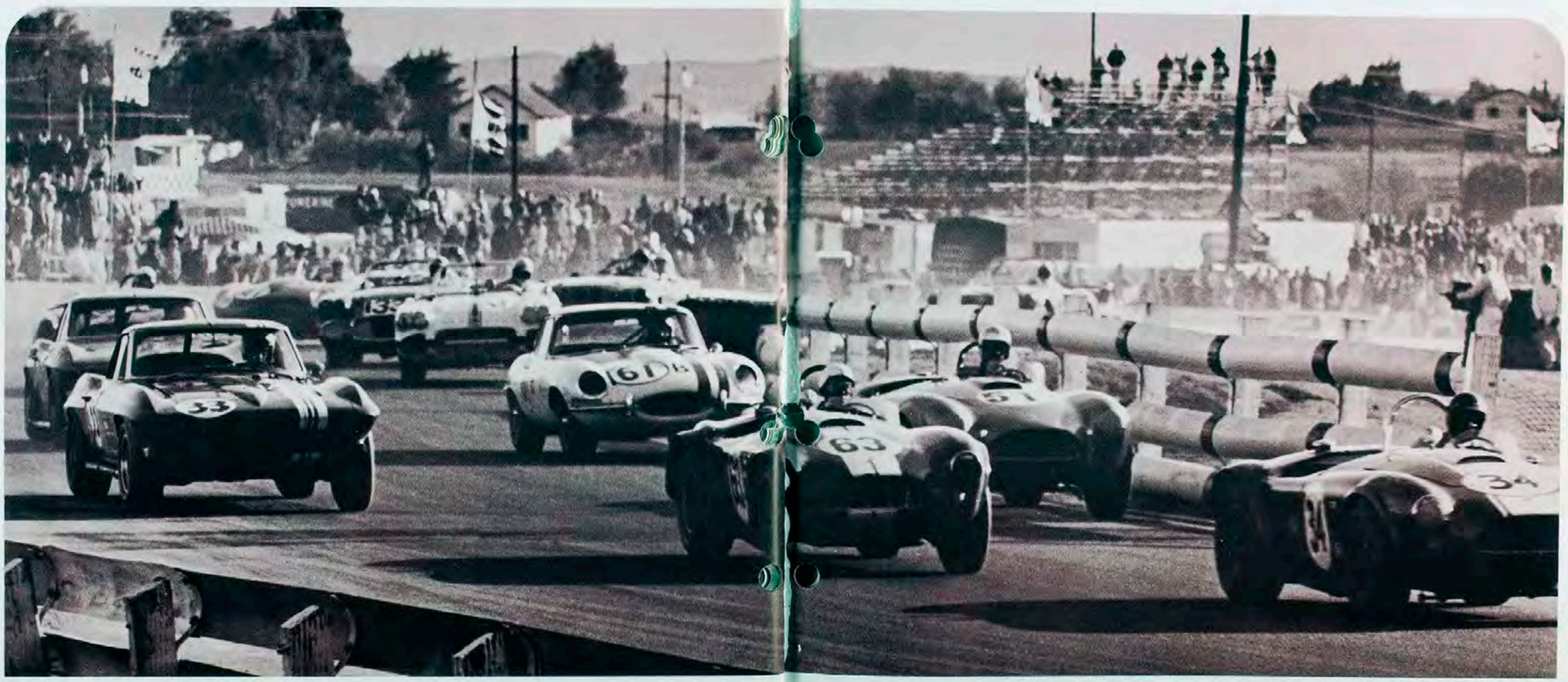
But more important than the settling of any narrow regional question American amateurs from all areas of the U. S. could meet, compare note serve driving styles, study car preparation, and become friends.

In the past, peculiar geographic problems have kept the SCCA's racing program from becoming a national affair. The East Coast location of club headquarters, the location of suitable racing sites, and the great distances involved in transporting racing cars all combined to torpedo attempts to run a national program. Racing activities gradually split into two distinct bands of red-hot interest: in the northeastern half of the country and along the West Coast.

To provide national championships based on this split was extremely difficult, if not impossible, but the SCCA tried. The right to hold "National Races" was awarded to interested regional organizations of the clubs, with some attempt to spread the events over as large an area as possible. But while the eastern regions were eager to hold "Nationals," which drew large entries and more spectators, the western units of the club weren't having any. A national event held on the West Coast wouldn't draw eastern cars; enough events were held in the East for a driver to win the championship, so there was little necessity of hauling all the way over the mountains. Therefore, a West Coast National wouldn't draw any different field of entries or many more spectators than any other kind of West Coast race. A West Coast driver attempting to compete for the national championship had to resign himself to traveling east several times a year to get in enough races to win. A larger proportion of national-level events on the West Coast—making it necessary for eastern drivers to attend to win a championship—looked like a possible solution. But such a procedure seemed an injustice to the eastern drivers—who were in the majority in the club.

In an effort to solve the problem, offer national championships with more meaning and upgrade the entire racing program, the SCCA began at the grass-roots level. The club has 96 regions—separate organizational entities capable of holding racing events. These regions are divided into six divisions, and the SCCA's method of attacking the problem was to offer divisional championships. After a couple of years of holding divisional championships and getting experience solving the organizational problems that were involved, the SCCA was ready to move.

In 1964, at every divisional championship race (50 such races were held),



Photographs by Gordon Chittenden

a portion of the driver's entry fee was forwarded to the national SCCA headquarters for a "war chest." At the end of the divisional program, when all the divisional champs and runners-up were determined, the first three place-winners in each class from each division were invited to attend the divisional run-off. This made a total of 306 drivers eligible for the race, with truly national representation. The "war chest" money was used for, among other things, helping to defray the expense of getting cars to Riverside, on a mileage basis. And so plans were laid for just about the biggest SCCA race of all times.

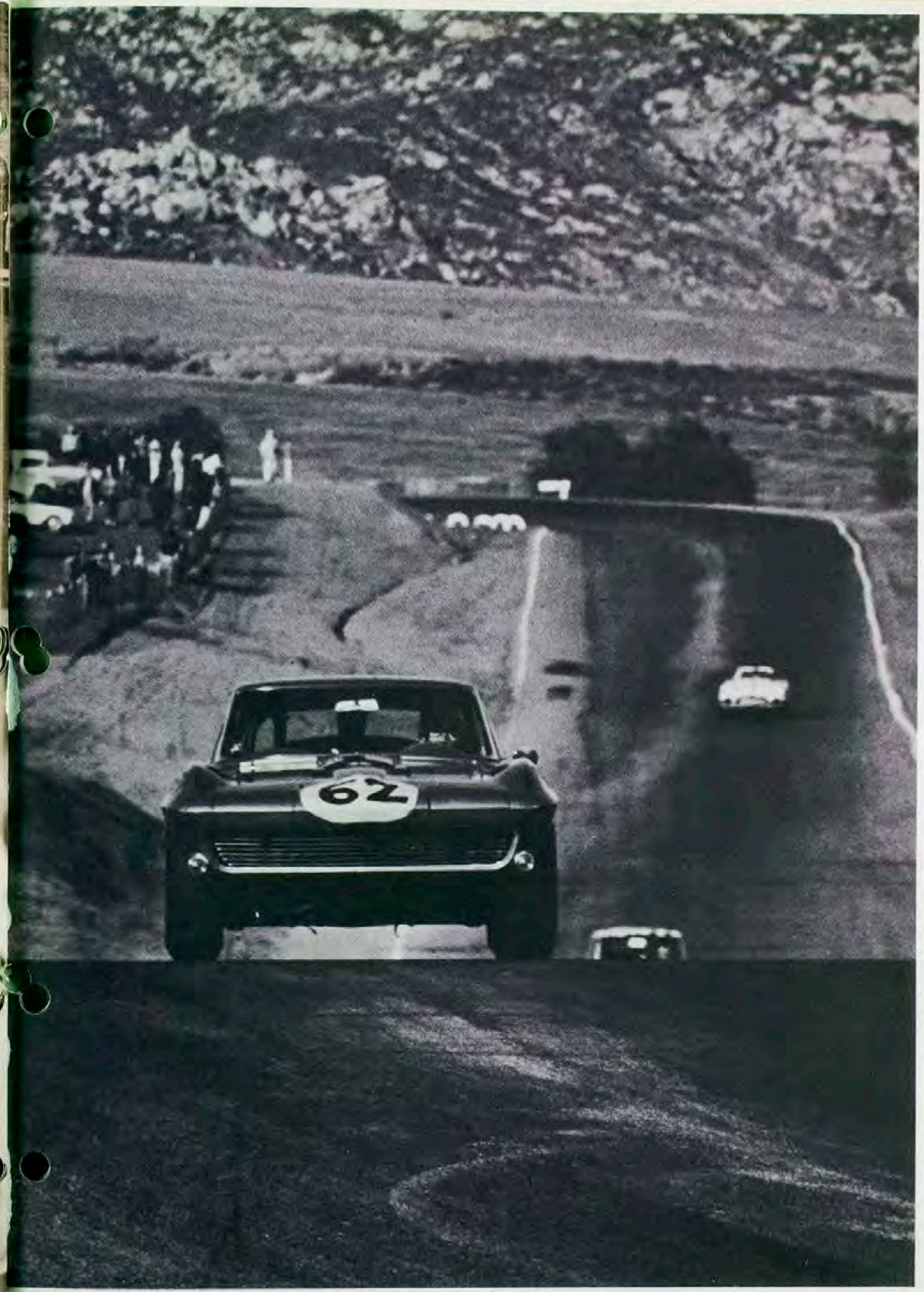
It should be emphasized that national championships had already been decided in the traditional fashion, using results from a season-long campaign in National Races. What was decided at the "American Road Race of Champions" was just what the name implies—who, among America's SCCA divisional champions, was best.

The final entry list for the race consisted of about 65% of the more than 300 drivers eligible. The Northeast Division had 28 drivers present; the Southeast 16; Central, 35; Southwest, 30; Midwest, 31; and Pacific Coast, 51. No expense money was paid to Pacific Coast entries, but that division still had an easy majority. The results showed it: drivers from west of the Mississippi River won 12 races, from east of the Mississippi only five. Splitting the results even further, and awarding points on a 9-6-4-3-2-1 basis as in Grand Prix racing, the West would have to be counted the winner with 217 points to the East's 166. And as it happens in the way the Divisions were set up, the Pacific Coast Division was easily the highest scoring, garnering more places than the rest of the Divisions combined.

Such an accounting of points, however, is precisely in opposition to the most important point that the Road Race of Champions offered: no areas of the country are markedly better than the rest in preparing cars or driving them. More West Coast drivers placed because there were more West Coast drivers there. That fact, plus a natural "home court" familiarity with the Riverside Raceway's 2.6 miles, explains most of the results. All of the races were extremely close; all Divisions represented had drivers placing in the first three in some race or another. Road racing for sports and formula cars can't get much better than was to be seen at the Road Race of Champions.

Corvette drivers, alas, fared not much better at the divisional run-offs than they've fared all season long. It is significant that in the Divisional Championships, 13 Corvettes garnered enough points to be eligible for the run-off. Eleven made it to Riverside. In Sting Rays, there were Gary L. Morgan from Webster, New York; Dick Lang from Xenia, Ohio; Dick Guldstrand from Manhattan Beach, California; and Scott Briley from Vista, California. In B Production Corvettes, honors were defended by Don Yenko, Canonsburg, Pa.; John Bushell, Beverly, Mass.; Paul Canary, Footville, Wis.; Brad Brooker, Wichita, Kans.; Jerry Henderson, Lawton, Okla; John Coyle, El Sobrante, Calif.; Fred Sutherland, Los Angeles, Calif. It's been a while since so many Corvettes have been on one grid at one time.

Dick Guldstrand's Sting Ray Convertible was protested because although he had left the windshield frame intact, he had replaced the glass with a small plastic windscreen. Rather than argue the point, the night before his race Guldstrand and crew dismantled engine, transmission, and front and rear suspension from the roadster and slipped all the mechanical parts into the body of a borrowed Sport Coupe. He drove the car to third overall and third in class in the combined A and B Production race. Paul Canary was the highest placed Corvette in B Production, taking second in class.



Top Left: Top finisher in B Production Corvettes, Paul Canary, of Footville, Wisconsin, leads Brad Brooker of Wichita, Kansas, into Riverside's Turn 7.

Bottom Left: The road to the Road Race of Champions was a long one, and the contestants were all veterans, as these tech inspection stickers testify.

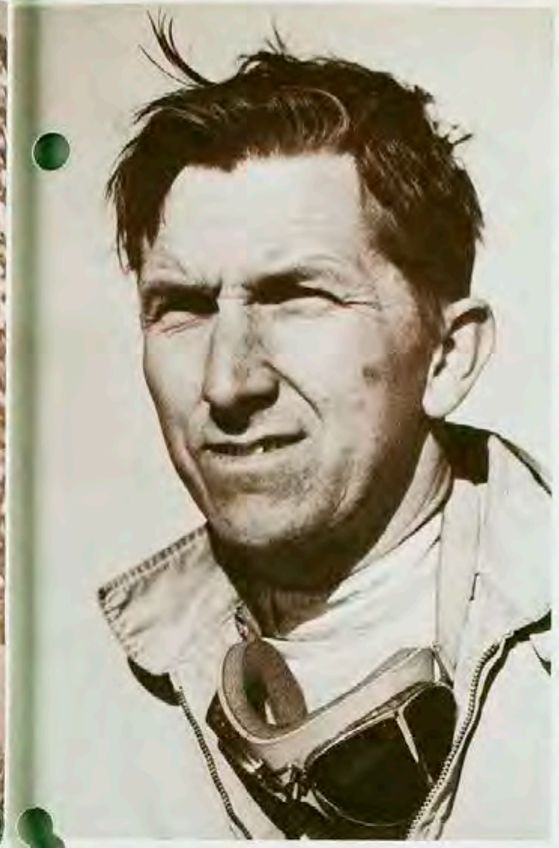
Right: Best-finishing Corvette of the weekend was driven by Dick Guldstrand, of Manhattan Beach, California, here cresting the rise before Turn 7.

Perhaps the most exciting race of the day was the C and D Modified event. Ralph Salyer in the ex-Cheetah Chevrolet-powered Cro-Sal Special, Dick Doane in the Chevrolet-powered Chevette, and Bart Martin in a short-wheelbase Chevrolet-powered Cooper figured to make a race of it. They reckoned without Jerry Titus in the tiny Coventry-Climax-powered Webster Special. Doane took an early lead, but yielded to Martin after the first few laps. Martin was on his way to what looked like an easy win, when, on the 14th lap, he found his transmission wedged in second gear. A quick pit stop repaired the trouble and put him back in fourth place, behind the Salyer car. Titus had meanwhile moved up to challenge Doane, using the small car's superior handling to good advantage, and grabbed the lead. Martin got by Salyer, closed on Doane and passed him with two laps remaining in the race, and set out after Titus. On the straight before the last turn of the last lap, the Cooper passed the Webster; Titus thereupon went under the Cooper in Turn 9 and pulled alongside for the short drag to the finish line. But the superior torque of Martin's car enabled him to hold off Titus and take the race by a half-length. The Doane car caught fire on the last lap, was quickly extinguished, but did not finish the race after maintaining third or better for the entire distance.

Freak weather for the Los Angeles area brought hard, cold winds and pit misery to Riverside, keeping spectator attendance down. Despite the scanty gate, however, the Road Race of Champions was a definite success, heralding a coming of age for SCCA racing in the United States. Next year's event is already being planned. The location hasn't been announced, but you can be assured that with expense money being paid and—next year—new and exciting National Championships at stake, competition for qualifications is going to be hot and heavy all year long.

DIVISIONAL RUN-OFF CHAMPIONS

CLASS	DRIVER	CAR	HOMETOWN	DIVISION
HP	Fred Salo	A-H Sprite	Detroit, Mich.	Central
HM	Dan Parkinson	Dolphin Abarth	La Canada, Calif.	Pacific Coast
GP	Ed Barker	Triumph Spitfire	Hermosa Beach, Calif.	Pacific Coast
GM	Charles Barnes	Merlyn	Dallas, Texas	Southwest
FP	Richard Hull	Volvo P-1800	Lansing, Mich.	Central
FM	Ralph Wood	Elva-Porsche	Orinda, Calif.	Pacific Coast
EP	Alan Johnson	Porsche	Los Angeles, Calif.	Pacific Coast
EM	Rick Muther	Lotus 23B	Laguna Beach, Calif.	Pacific Coast
DP	Bob Tullius	Triumph TR-4	Alexandria, Va.	Northeast
DM	Jerry Titus	Webster Spl.	Canoga Park, Calif.	Pacific Coast
CP	Earl Jones	Morgan SS	W. Los Angeles, Calif.	Pacific Coast
CM	Bart Martin	Cooper-Chev.	Hayward, Calif.	Pacific Coast
BP	Merle Brennan	Jaguar XKE	Reno, Nevada	Pacific Coast
AP	Ed Leslie	Cobra	Monterey, Calif.	Pacific Coast
FV	Lew Kerr	Formcar	Niantic, Conn.	Northeast
FJr	Ron Herrera	Lotus 22	Los Angeles, Calif.	Pacific Coast
FL	George Alderman	Cooper-Alfa	Newark, Del.	Northeast

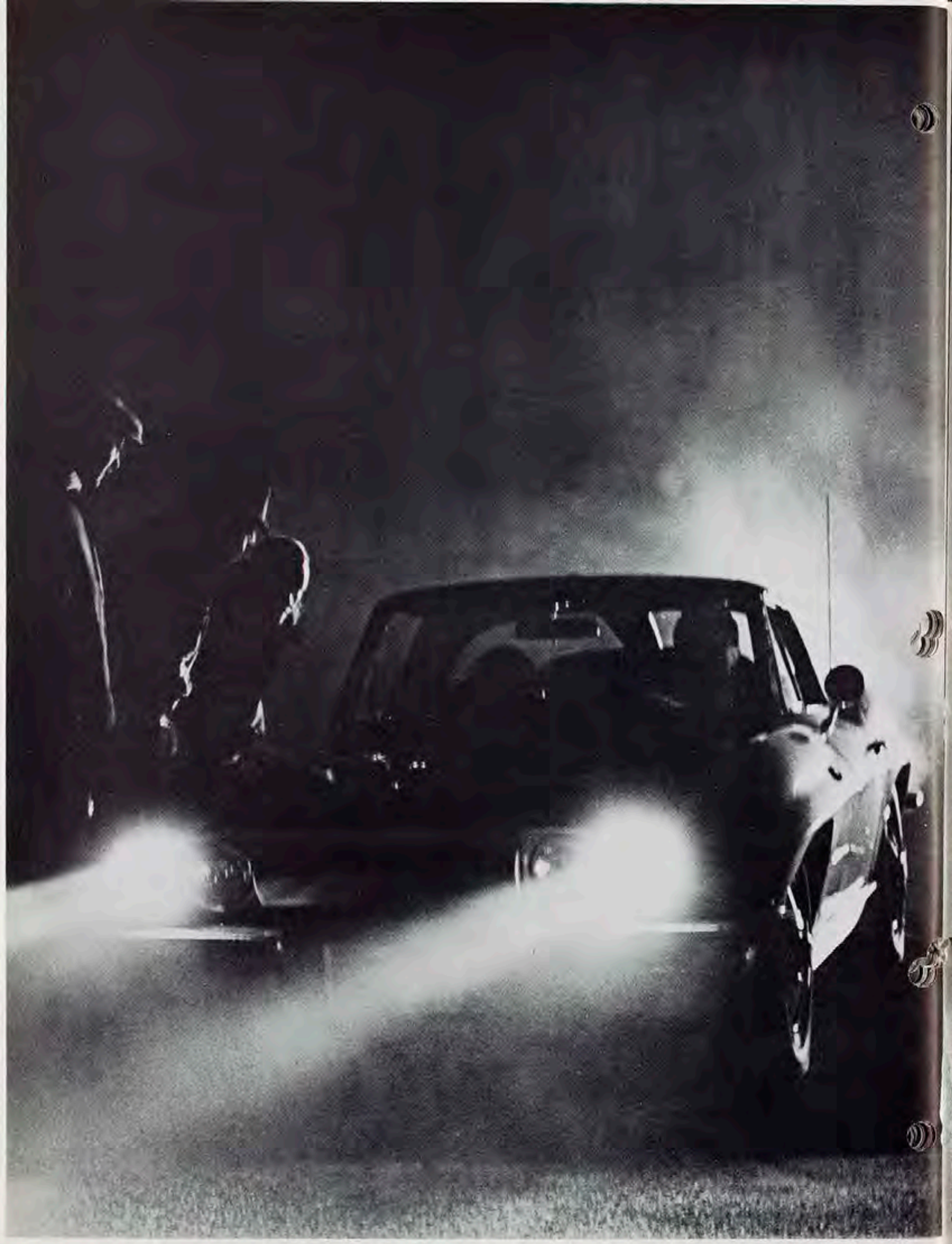


Left: Dick Doane's Chevette leads an unseen Webster Special, driven by Jerry Titus; the Webster got by and led until the last lap.

Center: Dick Guldstrand was protested because his Sting Ray had no windshield; he countered by running his own engine and suspension under a borrowed coupe.

Upper Right: John Christy, editor, and Jean Calvin, editorial assistant, of Sports Car Graphic magazine watch the show. Graphic was co-sponsor of the event.

Lower Right: James T. Crow, of Road & Track, interviews the Executive Director of the Sports Car Club of America, John M. Bishop, about the future of ARRC events.



a night full of fog & frustration

T an all-night rally, one missing instruction w , a good gimmick and fog so thick it seemed a somnambulating cropduster was really laying it on you. Take these ingredients, put 'em in your pepper-grinder and you've got a mix-up that stands as the most frustrating Dawnbuster Rally ever run by the Detroit Region of the Sports Car Club of America.

As the rallymaster explained it from the security of his analyst's couch, it wasn't planned to have everyone go astray, it just happened that way. Everyone knows that the elements sometimes delight in having a little fun with a well-organized rally. Why, it wasn't too many years ago that these same Dawnbusters were victimized by another natural phenomenon. How could anyone know that the night the rallyists were to make their way across the bridge connecting Detroit and Windsor, Ontario, would also be the night the smelt would start running at Pt. Pelee on Lake Erie? And when the smelt run, so do the fishermen. Right for the bridge . . . miles and miles of them for hours and hours.

As for this latest Dawnbuster Rally, this eleventh annual event held November 7-8, it should have gone like WWV clockwork. The route was programmed to stay away from main highways, sleeping towns and dirt roads. Provisions were made for stops at all-night gas stations. The Michigan State Police were sent SCCA-approved letter making a plea for u standing of these serious-type sports car fans, non-leather-jacketed husband and wife teams, slow-driving rallyists "from among the ranks of physicians, lawyers, business executives, bankers and engineers" and assorted nuts who have been looking forward to a sightseeing tour of Southern Michigan at night.

Sure the rally committee threw in a little trick as part of the plan, but the entrants were pros. The Detroit Region was making it a Divisional Rally and the best were expected from other SCCA groups as far away as Chicago, South Bend, NE Ohio and all parts of Michigan. Those who came were serious contenders, used to a little fun and games. And it was clearly explained right there in the General Instructions: "A Stop sign is a red octagonal shape containing the word 'STOP'."

What happened to this precisely planned rimage from Ann Arbor west through the h lands north of I-94, down south between Battle Creek and Kalamazoo, then back east to the starting point? What happened was that there was a lot of unplanned action and activity between the first and second checkpoints. Seems there was this red octagonal sign that looked like a Stop sign, but had red tape over the word "STOP." Tch, tch. Also, a word was inadvertently erased from one instruction. The mi ing word was "RIGHT" and the missing t changed the direction and the complexion of the rally. The best way to describe what happened is to say that most entrants went into a holding pattern, circling the area, following cars that were following cars. One driver later complained that he wanted to give up and go home but didn't have room in his garage for the six or seven cars dogging his every move.

Then the drivers began to notice the fog. Just a little mist at first in the low spots. "Oh look," said Jane, "Isn't the mist pretty!" Soon it closed in so that you thought you were in a perpetual low spot. "Did you see the sign at that road?" said Dick. "What road?" said Jane. And then it thickened and permeated. "Are you still over there in the driver's seat?"

The hopeless helplessness of the situation caused some to drop out and go home or back to the motel where the rally was to wind up. Still others knifed on, looking for the first gas station or some other clue in the instructions —which deliberately left out road names.

Some of these found the gas station between Checkpoints #6 and #7. It was touching the way the lost sheep wandered in and innocently bolstered each other's morale by all agreeing that, so far, there had only been one checkpoint! When this gang of about ten cars departed, the station manager sent home the day crew he had called in to handle the big load of sports cars he was told would tool in. He was more sorry for those who were lost than he was for the lost business.

Other ingenious types noticed that the instructions did include the name of one town —Richland, Mich. It was past the gas station, just before Checkpoint #7. So this group of stalwarts—hours late, lost for half the rally and not sure anyone would be waiting for them at the upcourse checkpoints—rallied on. All told, 19 cars reported at Checkpoints #8-11 and finished the rally.

Dawn did not come up like thunder, heralding a victory party. Dawn came up with a whimper. And the whimper rose to a choking cry of anguish from those who gathered at the motel to await the rallymaster or his effigy. When he arrived and had heard from everyone who was still awake, it was decided to postpone the awards presentation. Who wants an award with blood all over it?

Throw the rally out? Run it over? Count only the first checkpoint? Even more wisely, the rally committee decided that those who were guided by the cardinal rally commandment—Don't Give Up—constituted a large-enough group of finishers to proclaim a winner. The rallymaster apologized publicly for the missing word, sympathized with those who forgot what an official Stop sign was and offered the entry fee back to anyone who scratched.

First place went to driver Lloyd Loring and navigator Jerry Straf who brought a Porsche from the South Bend SCCA. The only team entered finished the rally and qualified for the team prize. The three cars in this team from the Chicago SCCA individually finished third, fourth and fifth overall.

The rallymaster? He was last seen standing in line for a bus. But he'll be back next year with the other participants in the Dawnbuster because it's a good test for rally folk. The thing to do next time, however, is give a sleeping pill to the crazy cropduster.

11:45—Rallyists go through Hell to Checkpoint #1. It got worse after that. 5:40—Dawn came at last and the fog receded so one could sightsee at least. 9:00—Rally round the rallymaster, tell him your tale of woe!

ASHTABULA REVISITED:

WHERE CORVETTE BODIES ARE BUILT AND CLUB BANQUETS ARE HOT

It was mostly all treat and no trick this past Halloween, when 14 Corvette Clubs congregated in Ashtabula, Ohio, for the sixth annual tour of the Molded Fiber Glass Body Co.—fabricators of the Corvette body shell. The treats included a plant tour, refreshment hour and an evening banquet with Roger Penske as after-dinner speaker. The tricks were less attractive: a small fire at the banquet resulted in steaks well done and then some (theme song for the night was "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes"); and clinging, itching filaments of fiber glass were picked up on the plant tour ("I've Got You Under My Skin").

Corvettes started drifting into Ashtabula along about noon and headed for a school yard staked out for parking. They came from Indiana, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and even as far away as Toronto, Canada. By 2:30 or so in the afternoon, some 61 Corvettes were lined up in the school yard, their drivers and shot-gunners being bus-shuttled to and from the plant site. Groups of about 20 persons were guided through the facilities by personnel from Molded Fiber Glass.

Areas of particular interest were the assembly plant (where the body parts are actually formed) and the laboratories. In the physical lab, Richard Ackley provided insight into the many qualities of Corvette body material. Ed Humphrey in the endurance lab demonstrated strength-testing equipment. And Mrs. Grace Moore emceed the groups through the weathering lab, where the body materials undergo accelerated climate changes.

The tour over, everyone was bussed back to the Swallows Restaurant, there to be met by flashing red lights and slick-garbed firemen heroically quenching a kitchen fire. The wags were laying it on with such quips as, "Sure you want your filet rare." And, "Just what I always wanted . . . Jello soup." No joke to hungry folk.

Anyway, the smoke didn't stop the stalwart clubbers. Before you could say, "And make it dry, please," 185 parched people were blasting the bartenders with orders for their favorite potables. This lasted for about an hour; then it was time for solid stuff.

Downstairs in the banquet hall, tables were set for supper. The little conflagration hadn't hurt the food after all, and soon conversation gave way to the clatter of knife and fork on china. After the home-baked pumpkin pie had been washed down by a second cup of coffee, Dave Ulmer, treasurer and co-ordinating director of Corvette-Cleveland, introduced Ron Gumm, president of the host club. Ron then introduced R. S. Morrison, president of Molded Fiber Glass, who gave a warm welcome on behalf of his company. Mr. Morrison then turned the mike over to Joe Pike of Chevrolet, who in turn called upon Roger Penske to give the main address.

Roger talked on something he knew a lot about: Corvettes and racing. He went into his success with Vettes and hybrid Vettes on various circuits; how he got started in the business of driving; and how Corvettes stack up against other sports cars and pseudo-sports cars. A question-and-answer period rounded out his informal but informative talk.

It was still early in the evening when the banquet broke up, and though some of the visiting firemen (club members, this time) had decided to spend Saturday night in Ashtabula, many strapped themselves in and headed for home. It had been a different kind of Halloween for most than most, and not many would soon forget little Ashtabula.

TOP LEFT/A Corvette convert component press fascinates a tour group.

TOP CENTER/185 clubbers lend their ears to Roger Penske.

TOP RIGHT/In left-to-right order, Messrs Penske, Gumm and Morrison during presentation activities.

LEFT/A frost-on-the-pumpkin morning and Corvettes Ashtabula-bound.

Roger Penske receives checkered flag, congratulations, champagne toast and victory kiss from high official, spectators, teammates and wife Lisa, in that order.

PENSKE PULLS THE NASSAU HAT TRICK

ROGER WINS ALL THREE MAJOR RACES WITH CHEVROLET POWER

EDITOR'S NOTE: As any hockey fan knows, three goals in one game is called a "Hat Trick." When Roger Penske scored first in all three big events during the Bahama Speed Week—on a wet course that was as slippery as a hockey rink—that's called "unprecedented" because no one else has ever accomplished this feat.

In the Tourist Trophy Race, Penske came in first, and fastest ever, with a Corvette Grand Sport at 93.025 mph. In the Governor's Trophy event, he corralled Jim Hall's Chevy-powered Chaparral and brought it in first. The Nassau Trophy almost slipped away from Roger's steady grasp when he broke the Chaparral's front left ball joint and had to stand on the sidelines until the 23rd lap. Then Hap Sharp turned the second Chaparral in the team over to Roger who went on to win.

Penske is a mild-mannered, modest young man and very serious-minded about racing and competition. We re-affirmed this in our interview with the 27-year-old Pennsylvanian. We also found out some behind-the-scene bits about the cars he drove, the Nassau events and some big surprises in his future.

CORVETTE NEWS: Nassau should be one of your favorite courses after your big week there in December.

ROGER PENSKE: Nassau always has been one of my favorite courses. I've participated in the Speed Week for the past five years. In 1960, my first trip there, I had been running in California during the fall and had not done very well. I was upset about my poor performance and took the month off prior to the Nassau events. I went to the island early in Decembe rented a car and spent an hour every morning and afternoon driving around the course. I stoppe along the course, looked at spo where I might run off and surveyed from every vantage. By the day of t race, I really had the line on t course. I finished third in my ow Porsche RS 60 and specifically re member beating Bonnier who wa driving a factory RS 60. In 1961, took my Cooper and finished secon about 40 seconds behind Gurney i a Lotus Climax. The next year . . . tha was in 1962 . . . I won the GT rac with the Ferrari GTO and beat Inne Ireland and Bandini, the factor drivers. Then I went back in '63 wit a lightweight Corvette and finishe third, behind Rodriguez in the proto type Ferrari and Foyt in the Chevy powered Scarab. In the big race drove the Cooper Chevy and led f the first half, but then the water hos came off and I went out.

This year, of course, I felt that I h a good chance because I knew circuit so well. I turned in the f lap last year, had driven the light weight there before and was ex tremely confident of my car. The ca came off the boat late Saturday an on Sunday there's hardly enoug time to sort out race cars before mai be 15 or 20 minutes of practice. Bruc McLaren, who was slated to drive on of the Ford GTs, had never run i Nassau. Phil Hill, who drove the othe Ford GT, had only been there five o six years ago when the track went th other way. I was able to turn lap right away that were faster than th Fords and the production Cobras. kicker, the real surprise, was

Shelby who brought down a new Cobra prototype with a 427 in it. We found out that this was the real competition.

CN: How did the rain affect your performance?

RP: The rain was just terrible! I don't profess to be one of those drivers who isn't affected by the rain. I think today's speeds make auto racing tough enough without adding another hair-raising variable like water on the track. At Nassau, the hazard was increased by the oil that was being squeezed out of the new surface. It was like driving on ice.

CN: How did the rain affect speeds in general?

RP: When the big rainstorm dropped, I had to slow to 30 or 35 miles per hour for the last two laps in the Corvette. It was so slippery that I would lose rear wheel traction every time I took my foot off the gas. You see, the engine drag slowed the wheel rotation to a point where the wheels couldn't rotate as fast as the car was moving forward because they couldn't grip the road. During acceleration, the slight lift of the front end combined with the normal pressure of the pads of the front wheel disc brakes would make the front wheels lose their bite and they would just plow

right out. These are rare phenomena and they indicate the slippery condition of the course.

CN: When did you decide which car you were going to take?

RP: I decided to take the lightweight a month or so before the race. I felt that if we had a good chance, we'd make the trip. Personally, I wanted to show what an independent could do against the best factory teams from the U.S. and Europe.

I purchased the Corvette Grand Sport from Jim Hall last year. Bill Scott did an admirable job of preparing the car in his shop at Newton Square, Pennsylvania. Traco Engineering in Culver City, California, had gone through the engine so we knew it would be in top shape. The Chevrolet engine is a de-stroked 377-cu.-in. cast-iron affair with forged pistons and Engle roller cams. It has four side-draft Weber carburetors, a horsepower rating of 485, and 435 pound-feet of torque at 4000, which is really tremendous. The Grand Sport weighs in at about 2,100 pounds, but ours is a lot lighter because we've taken things out of it, trying to lighten it up as much as possible.

After the Elkhart 500 we went over the car from nose to stern to make sure it was ready for the Nassau event. We tore the gearbox apart, completely disassembled the rear end and installed a new ring gear and pinion, rebuilt the brake calipers, and took the suspension off and magnafluxed it to make sure there weren't any cracks in it. We magnafluxed the wheels, put on new wheel bearings and new spinner knock-off nuts. We found the threads were worn on the old ones and that was why we were having a problem losing the wheel. To reduce weight, we took out the automatic jacking system which we use for long-distance races such as Sebring or Elkhart 500 and we removed our pressure water system.

CN: Were you satisfied with the car's performance in the race?

RP: Oh yes, it performed very well. It was ideal for the course which has a high average speed and a minimum of real tight turns. There's room for all that power . . . room to accelerate.

CN: How about the Chaparral and its automatic transmission?

RP: I feel this automatic transmission is the greatest innovation in auto racing, today. It started at the drag strips where they realized that Torqueflite transmissions were able to outaccelerate standard-shift versions of the same car or of competitive makes.

As for road racing, we thought at first it might be a problem because of the wear on brakes when you can't use your engine for braking. However, with the breakthroughs in brake technology and the better cornering power of the new tires, you can go into the corners faster without losing control. With an automatic you don't get involved in quick shifts. You can keep both hands on the wheel and go into the corner as deep as you want. You can use left-foot braking and save time between the start of braking and the return of your foot to the gas pedal.

If my left foot is resting on the brake, I'm going to have a quicker reflex than the man who has to bring his foot from the gas pedal to the brake. This is really something in road racing where you're trying to shave off tenths of a second. If I can pick up a tenth of a second on braking, in fifteen or twenty different corners around a track, I'm going to pick up a second or two on everyone else. And if my brakes are designed so they can take the extra heat and the extra load, I'm going to have a real competitive car.

Jim Hall has done an excellent job on the Chaparrals and has perfected the transmission to where it is very reliable. His transmission gives the engine increased life of 50 to 100% because there are no downshifts where you might have a chance of over-revving the engine when you're accelerating out of a corner. You don't wind up and then drop down . . . wind up, drop down . . . then wind up until you finally get it in high gear. With the automatic you have consistent rpm climb. There is no quick acceleration of rpm unless you hit oil or water on the course where it will make the wheels spin. As long as the wheels aren't spinning, you have a constant application of torque and horsepower to the rear wheels and the engine does not have a wide variation or fluctuation during acceleration in the rpm range.

CN: Everyone wants to know the details on the transmission, but Jim Hall remains rather secretive. How does he handle questions about it?

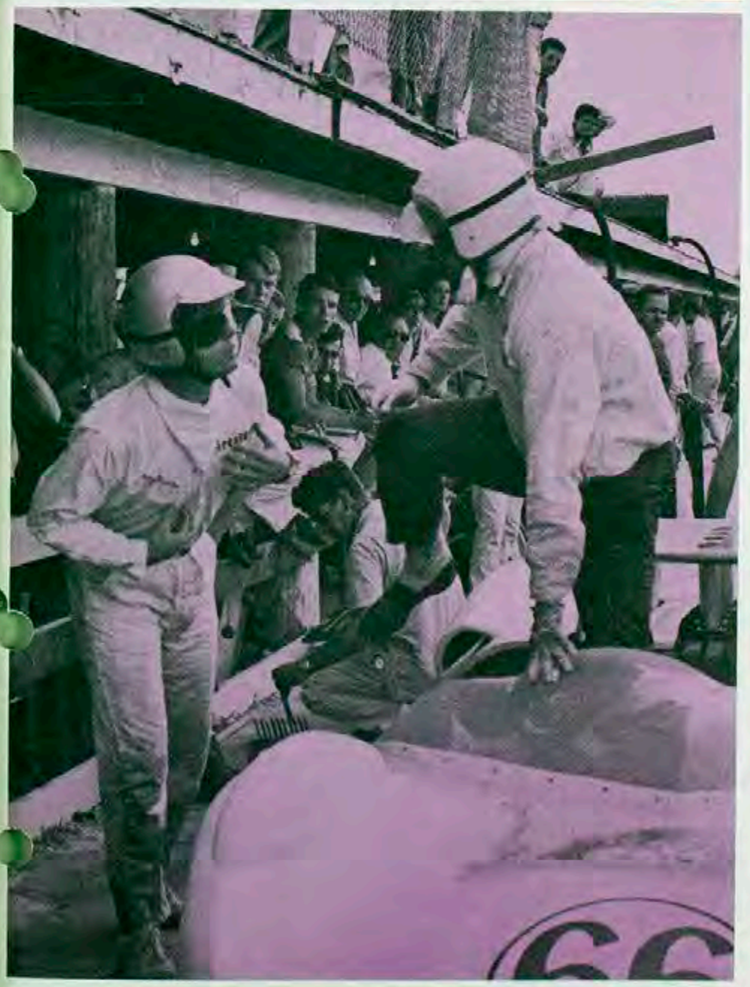
RP: Usually with a Cheshire cat grin. I've heard him say that the big advantage of the automatic is that it lets the Chaparral driver use his left hand to wave at the other drivers as he passes them. Jim says that this creates an atmosphere of cooperation and courtesy that saves seconds a lap when working through traffic on the course.

CN: How did it feel to be the first man ever to win three races during the Bahama Speed Week?

RP: It was a great feeling, of course, but there's one thing that many people overlook and that I'd like to emphasize for your readers. It was a team effort. The Traco people and Bill Scott worked hard on the Corvette Grand Sport. Jim Hall did an outstanding job on the Chaparrals. And Hap Sharp deserves the lion's share of the credit for our team's win.

It was a tremendous move on his part to realize that after the rain dried up he was still driving cautiously, not really knowing how dry the surface actually was. He had been hanging in there, but was naturally cautious because of the rain. He felt that he should turn the car over to me because I had turned the fastest laps during the dry part of the race. Thus, I might have an advantage over the other drivers who had also slowed down because of the rain. I was able to live up to his expectations and started picking up six seconds a lap on Gurney and McLaren. Gurney and I both passed McLaren, then Gurney had to make the required pit stop and I took over the lead because we had made our pit stop.

Another point I would like to make is this: not only were we a team, we were an independent team. All of us are staunch Chevrolet boosters because we feel that Chevrolet products are superior. We believe we can modify Chevrolet production components in our own way and be independently competitive with all the other factory teams who are spending millions on their team cars.



CN: Roger, you came out of 1964 with a big win in the Monterey GP and the Hat Trick at Nassau. What are your plans for '65?

RP: My plans are these. Right now I'm in the process of assuming ownership of an automobile dealership in Philadelphia, so most of my time and effort will have to be devoted to business. However, I would like to campaign a Corvette Sting Ray in 1965. I don't plan on driving myself, but will try to get a top driver, one who is capable of taking the Sting Ray and making a good showing with it against the Cobra.

And I feel that with Chevrolet's new 396 engine and our experience running the lightweight and other cars the last five years, I think we can continue to be a thorn in the side of the factory teams. I'm waiting to see the final specs on the 396 before I enter the Sting Ray, but if I can't run it at Sebring, I will try to run it in the first USRRC race.

TOP: Corvette Grand Sport pulls ahead to lead and win the Tourist Trophy Race. *OPPOSITE PAGE:* Roger keeps pace with pack during rain, but eventually goes out when the Chaparral runs over mushroom-shaped concrete course marker and breaks ball joint. *BOTTOM:* An appreciative Penske gets a second chance in the Nassau Trophy Race when Hap Sharp turns his team Chaparral over to Roger.

CORVETTE CLUB DIRECTORY

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