



CORVETTE KALEIDOSCOPE

-- EDITORIAL --

(Editor's Note: - As you will note upon reading the following Editorial, we have parted from the usual "Run Of The Mill" routine and handed the writing of this month's Editorial to another individual who, in the opinion of your Editor, has far outdone himself on a most important subject.)

"In a moment of unexampled weakness, Sandy has turned over the Editorial reins for this issue. So I'll let fly on a topic near and dear to my heart: The Future Of Production-Car Road Racing, and particularly how it is hinged to the line drawn between Production and Modified Categories.

This line is drawn by the racing club, but it is largely enforced by the drivers through that immensely unpopular device known as an Official Protest over the condition of another car's set-up. That it is so unpopular is extremely unfortunate, for its lack of use can kill road racing!!.....How? Well, let's start by establishing the general attitude towards protests. Here is a quote from Tom Wilson in the June issue of the SOCA newspaper, THE WHEEL:

The tenor of the Tracy Road Races were (sic) somewhat strained by a protest against a very hot and skillfully driven Corvette. Now we are not about to decide the merits of this particular beef. We do know that it created an air of suspicion and somewhat dampened the festivities.

The reference, of course, is to the protest entered by Bob Nix against the Porterfield auto. The theme seems to be that it's not nice to criticize or point an accusing finger because of the "festivities."

More generally, the protest seems to be linked with regimentation and authority, and I suppose by slighting it people are taking a good whack at some farther image (shades of Freud!). Or, again, maybe the end is seen to justify the means, Many persons like a winner, no matter how the win. And especially so if they are chauvinistic concerning their breed of puddle-jumper (Corvette and Jag drivers were more irritated by Bill Love's AC Bristol than any other AC owners or drivers.)...

Whatever the reason for the protest's unpopularity, the fact exists. Wilson says that the protest at Tracy "somewhat dampened the festivities." The "festivities" are going to be a lot more dampened if roadracing becomes extinct! And here is how this childish attitude towards the protest may ruin the sport:

There are four general essential ingredients for amateur (Latinamare: to love) road racing: Organization, local, drivers and cars. The first three are not terribly difficult to find. But cars? It's the long green that's in short supply, my friends. Rod Aya, Treasurer of the SOCA this year, recently told me that it costs \$6,000.00 to throw a race for 125 cars. He was dead wrong! The cost is actually \$51,000.00!! That extra 45 grand is shelled out by 125 car owners each donating a minimum average of \$360 apiece to keep the family flivver and driver in fighting trim for each race. (Take Sandy's word: It's more for a Corvette) Now consider the season over. Our Hero Driver has contributed 2,880 smackers for the privilege of tooling around his Showroom Special in some eight races. But has he even one third-place trophy to make his girl friend just a bit more amorous? Not on you life! The top three spots were grabbed off by the "smart" jokers who have juiced up their jalopies on the sly, hurting the Production Category rules only a "little bit."

Editorial, cont'd

And has Junior officially protested against these chaps? Not in the present climate of opinion; unless he wants to buck the tide; not unless he wants to be a "bad" loser; not if he knows the average cooperation he will receive from the race officials; not unless he is an exceptionally strong individual.

What shall he do? Hop up his own auto in violation of the rules? Hardly. Is he morally wrong to do so? (although I would not say morality is the forte of the sports car crowd) The deciding factor will more likely be the added cost and inconvenience of modifications. The season costs roughly three thousand bucks, and our friend is not interested in adding on another \$500 or \$1,000. Instead, he just isn't back next season.

Now we can trace the connection at which I have been aiming: To discourage protests is to encourage modifications, which is to increase costs and driver dissatisfaction. This means fewer entrants, which, in time, results in no more amateur races.

The next time you hear of a driver entering a protest, think of him as saving and encouraging the sport. And, above all, remember Thoreau's statement: "Any Man More Right Than His Neighbors, Constitutes A Majority Of One."

Jim Mannon

Editor: The above was published - verbatim - in the interest that all members of this organization, and any others who may be of interest, be allowed to read and review what one individual feels and has the forcefulness to 'say' openly. Not all may agree in total with what has been printed here. But, it is our opinion that most everyone, in effect and in idea, will agree.....A great writer, whose name escapes me now, once wrote: "...and man said unto the Universe: 'Sir! I exist!' Whereupon the Universe replied: 'I recognise the fact that you exist. But, that does not necessarily obligate me.'"Bearing this in mind, does Thoreau's 'One Man Majority' have to attempt at being the Guardian of the Universe only to have his own little Universe acknowledge him as above??.....Can a majority of one win a war? or put over a point?

Does it possibly appear that the one organization in the U.S. that controls, at the present time, all amateur racing in the land (and this includes we members) does not feel "obligated?" Could it come to pass that the drivers, who are - after all - the mainstays of racing, could become the whipping boys of the very sport they strive to support? With Jim's Editorial in mind, this is entirely possible, as many drivers are right now being "bought" right out of racing simply because they cannot swing that extra \$500 or \$1,000. This is witnessed by the large driver turnover which is so predominant this year.

We are not here to criticize; we are here to construe. We make no attempt at dictating policy to those more experienced and adept than we when it comes to the staging of races, judging of protests, etc. However, if the Red Book, which is the Bible of Racing, states what may or may not be done to a Production machine, why shouldn't we all, as a man, be made to conform?

The easiest thing to do is to sit back and criticize; to sit back and point fingers. This is done daily to, around, about, and regarding the officials of the SOCA. Would it not be better to come ~~xxx~~ out, as did Jim Mannon, and honestly say what bothers us? Then, and only then, will any and all complaints be ironed out to the ~~xxxx~~ satisfaction of the membership.....We here in the NCCA have somewhat the same problem with many who stay in the shadows, saying nothing audible to the Club officers, but still complaining about anything and everything....It would appear that we must be sure our own front yard is clean before we take the privilege of calling another a poor gardener. Inasmuch as we have the honor (?) of sharing ~~xxx~~ some little limelight and much contempt by not being 'imported', let us set the example.. But, don't look around for praise if we do set such an example..It won't be forthcoming. You will be lucky to gain a moment's recognition.....Your editor, being no exception to the average, has criticized many times; perhaps unjustly, But, for the future, "Let He Who Has Never Sinned Cast The First Stone....."

Miniature Grand Prix of Nurburgring: The few of us who were there know the story; the many who didn't show up read on....Count them: Some 225 cars showed up at this event, which proved to be one helluva brain child as developed by the Altman-Craven combine. Surely the fastest we've staged yet. All the comment overheard by your editor, or as addressed directly to him, was favorable. A couple sedan drivers found the course a bit too much for their cars (3a La Vie!) but, all in all, it was a tremendous success. The day ended with dinner at Pappy's for some 26 odd tired ole Corvetti hustlers. Upon arriving at said local, the illustrious and unparralleled James Milton Mannon III led the way to that long flat object sometimes referred to by the lower class as a "bar" but henceforth and evermore to be known as a "Lounge." As one man, the entire caravan began a contest in toasts. We toasted the stars, the cars, the bars, ourselves, each other, and so on until a lovely young waitress broke up the soiree by announcing the dinner, which had long since been forgotten, was ready. At this point, we retired to the Banquet room (formerly named 'dining room') and proceeded to eat Pappy out of everything this side of Sac. Needless to say, we succeeded. I imagine everyone made it home o.k. (??) Tuesday's Chronicle showed Alka-Seltzer had gained six points.....The only complaint of the whole day is---quite naturally---the same old one. But, this time it's worse...The amount of help that showed up in the way of faithful N.C.C.A. personnel was so ridiculous it almost borders on the sublime..... Sure, the treasury is getting bigger..but how?? Because, as Sir Winston Churchill so aptly phrased it:"Never before in history have so few done so much for so many." Need we elaborate???

Socials: The last one, very finely staged by the Netton-Netton Corvette team, was a knockout. We went to Londonside, the most fantastic bar-bar-b-que grounds-swimming pool (Pacific Ocean size) etc. this side of Madagascar. John Tonin demonstrated the art of race diving with built-in belly-flop; Jack Smith and Jim Mannon schooled us in poolside supervising...w/beer; Flambard taught us all how to float (??) in an inner-tube after this guy learned how to get upside down in one; and more and more--all to much to relate here. Those of you who didn't make it missed a first class ball.....too bad.....As for the next social, its a weekend trip to Stateline. But, reservations closed July 20th....Perhaps its not too late..See Fred Netton. The dates are Aug,16-17.

Did any of you people catch Bob Nix playing carpenter at Vaca Valley?? No....Well, as we looked down the pit-lane, there was Bob, with the rear end of his car jacked up, busily applying the hack saw to his tires. This is known as "crosscutting" without the benefit of a tire shop. Apparently, it helped, as Bob went like a man possessed.

If you get a chance to get up to the Nevada Grand Prix the 2nd & 3rd of August, you'll indeed be luckey. This will be a race and a half with a 4.3 mile course, 14 turns, and five----(yes, 5) straight~~xx~~--aways ranging from 2000' to 3700'...Also, one 2000' ~~xxxxix~~ straight leads into and 80-plus m.p.h. turn then on to a 3400' straight. Looks like all the cars will be flat out.

Congratulations to: Bobbie & Fred Netton, who are celebrating the FIRST anniversary Aug. 5th...atch out Fred..The honeymoon's over. Jim Joseph, on a recently past birthday. We won't state his age...Why intentionally loose friends? Dick Beronian and Ray Altman (Iarge Altman too) for being the epitome of patience. Ted Newby, who along with Parker Adams, is gaining recognition as top Corvette mechanic in these here parts, pardner.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: GM is now busily engaged in 'Project X' which composes itself of a four cylinder OPPOSED engine presently running around L.A. in a Porsche body; under going severe tests.....Air cooled too! ...Ford Motors, working on a 100" w.b. car to compete with those 'little foreign cars.' ..Chevrolet, burning the midnight oil on a small in-line four cyl. car to compete with Ford's 100" car, who is competing with "those little foreign cars"....Chrysler, apparently a bit behind the other two, working feverisly on a small car to compete with Ford, who is competing with Cheve, who is competing with "those little foreign cars" More food for thought: Cheve...only 6 or 8 percent off '57....Ford, 38% off '57 and x some 6 million dollars in the RED for the 2nd quarter of '58.....Ford stock, which originally opened around \$77.00, now down to \$39.00 or thereabouts.....Chrysler Motors, with two of their cars (Dodge & DeSoto) off more than 60% from 1957.....Rambler, almost doubling sales. As one anonymous individual put it: "When you double 2,000, you get 4,000....so what have you?".....Packard, stopping production permanently..changing over to "those little American cars."

Thanks to Ross Connell, the instructor from the G.M. Tech Center, who came to our last meeting and gave a well prepared talk of fuel injection. This inaugurated our first semi-monthly tech meeting. Thanks to Hank vonder Mehden for doing the arranging.

SORRY TO LOOSE: Bob Bent, who's very fast fully prepared Corvette is up for sale. Bob is taking a job with B.M.C. selling for them, plus racing another fully prepared car...This time an Austin Healey. Good luck, Bob. Don't make yourself a stranger. You can always be my guest at the meetings.....Cloyd Gray, who has departed from his famous bronze Corvette, and now the proud owner of a new Jaguar XK-150-S. Being an old time Jag driver, Cloyd will certainly let the Corvette drivers know he's in there.

IDLE CHATTER: (is there any other kind?) John Flambart self-fibreglassing his mashed front end.....Ed McCarroll wearing a pair of Sherwood's trunks at Londonside. Bill says his dept. of war and finance picked them out and he won't wear them. "Look too much like a dish-towel." Mannon (again!) buying wine for the whole table at Pappy's--toasting everything until he ran out. Then he toasted a toast to a toast!!.....SG, getting a lesson in liar's dice. ..Altman, becoming a do-it-yourself mechanic. ..not thru choice....Ron Craven, scrambling from Oakland to Hamilton A.F.B. and back, and forth, and back, etc. to preserve his "Draft-Dodger" status.....Lenz and Lemasney taking part from their Corvette for the married-man's Impala pastures.....Zeh, abandoning the last social in favor of the beck and call of an auto-cross. ...The Janstall's sharing their Corvette with their poodle....Pofahl with a 290 on order, a new house in Sunnyvale, and Irene coming along fine.....Red Feris, talking about trading in his wife's Imperial on another Corvette; giving her the old one ('58) and racing the new one...(do I hear wifely noises similar to those as emitted by a 155m/m???.....A new find!!!! AC-44-S plugs - hot-tip - great for street driving.....Fred Wetton again placing in the money at our last Corvanna.....Jim Joseph, now 'shooting' for Dick Cooks's Sports Car World. ...Sports Car Highlights, Sports Car World, Sports Car Pictorial and the Wheeler all covering the last Corvanna.....Definition of a midget: "Sprint-Car with thyroid trouble."Phil Hill of Santa Monica co-driving the winning car at LeMans.....more modified cars running in 'Production' than in 'Modified'. ...Not one SCCA officer running for office next year....SCCA banning CCC events.....

SUMMING IT UP: Our year is more than half over now, and the amount of cooperation we have achieved so far has been fine for the most part (Corvannas excluded) but now comes the time for all of us to get together and give some serious consideration to next year. In no time at all, it will be the end of the year and time to elect new officers. As things stand now, two or three of the present officers will not be running next year, ???regarding the balance....Now is the time to get to talking with each other and decide who you want in what office; whether or not we should have a nominating committee; if ~~xx~~ the present set-up regarding election is agreeable; whether or not we should vote by mail so all members can vote, etc. (Did I hear someone say 'If a member isn't interested enough to come and vote, the hell with him'??) Be sure you don't read this, forget it...We have a wonderful organization that has made us many good friends, given the Corvette a fine reputation in the area, become quite solvent in a short time which is no easy trick, and so on. Bearing these items in mind, the whole picture is much to serious and important to be cast aside..We need good leadership next year just as we have needed it in the past. We don't need people who want 'IN' for the sake of Notoriety only to let the Club suffer as has happened in other organizations during past years. Talk it up!! Let's find out who wants office next year, who we want, and really work up a good slate of officers..

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This appears to be the season for birthdays. ...Jean Mannon - July 23rd. Your so-called Editor - July 29th. Mary Sherwood, on or about July 26th (forgive me for not remembering the exact date) and a few others I can't remember PERIOD.

Before closing, I want to formerly apologize (!!!) for the manifold errors that have seemingly interwoven themselves into this manuscript. I'm typing to the tune of 'The King and I,' 'Hungarian Rhapsody,' 'The Rachmaninoff Prelude #2', 'Sounds of Sebring 1957' and a couple others. Anyone who can type errorless to that variety of musical composition can step right up and receive one 5¢ see-gar....Incidentally, the hi-fi offered for sale a couple issues ago is hereby withdrawn.

Last note b4 closing: John Hilton...since I can't find you personally, this is to inform you the treasury owes me \$2.00 for stamps to mail this poor-man's Harper's Bazaar....

Sandy Greenblatt