



The Gas Cap

December 2024



A Monthly Publication of the Corvette Club of Delaware Valley

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope everyone had a great and Happy Thanksgiving with their family and loved ones. Would you believe Christmas is coming upon us next.

The month of **November** was a lot of fun and enjoyable. For the **9^h** consecutive year our club was represented in the **Philadelphia Veterans** parade. Again, I drove the Grand Marshal, **Albert El**, who is in my **82nd** Airborne Division local chapter. The club had a total of **10** Corvettes in the parade and **ABC** did a great job of showing all the cars and announcing our club. I want to thank the following members for giving up their time and car to be in the parade. They are **Roy Adams, Al Depue, Bill Nichols, Candy Merlino, Chris Merlino, Denny Matlock, Steve Baker, Jack Blumenstock and Rick Bagshaw.**

The **November** General Membership meeting was the best November meeting I ever hosted as President of **CCDV**. It was more than just recognizing our veteran members, but it was also a very patriotic meeting. I invited professional Entertainer/Singer **Peter Venneri** to the meeting whose girlfriend is **Carol Vagnoni** a member of our club since **1994**. **Peter** started the meeting with the **Star-Spangled Banner** followed by **America the Beautiful** and later ended the meeting with **God Bless America**. Starting the meeting that way really got everybody in the spirit. During the meeting I asked the members who are veterans to stand up to be honored as they spoke into the mike and stated what branch of service they served in and their place of deployment and rank.

There was no need for an election as nobody was nominated from the floor

As in the past there is no **December** General Membership meeting. But there is the annual Holiday party in which we sold all **63** tickets. As always, we will have a great time and an enjoyable evening. I'm looking forward to the event.

I hope everyone has a safe and happy Holiday this month.

I wish you and your families the best

Ed



WELCOME NEW CCDV MEMBERS!

Welcome!!



(No new members this month – spread the word)

Total Members to date - 293!!

Member Name Tags

**\$20.00 Each - Must Pay at Time of Order
Contact: Candy Merlino (215) 779-9454**

CCDV BOARD MINUTES



HIGHLIGHTS FROM CCDV BOARD MEETING

November 14, 2024

General Membership Meetings start at 7:00pm.

Activities – Activities – Joe P./John B. / Candy M.

Upcoming events:

- **Sunday November 10th** - Philadelphia Veterans Parade
- **Saturday, December 7th** – Holiday Party @ Spring Mill Country Club
- **Sunday, December 15th**, - Breakfast at Lancers Diner

Membership – • Total number of members – 293

CCDV Name Tags

Please contact Candy Merlino – cmerlino.ccdv@yahoo.com

New Members – get your name tags.

New Car - get your new name tag.

Tags are \$20.00 each, at least three orders are needed to send to the Company.

CCDV License Plates

Anyone interested in purchasing a Club License Plate,

please contact: Jeff Kauf - kauf.jeff@gmail.com

Regular CCDV Plate - \$38.00; Personalized CCDV Plate - \$166.00

CCDV BOARD & COMMITTEES

Club Leadership:

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Ed Bonk (267) 253-7460

Vice President:

Tom Weigand

Treasurer:

Jeff Kauf

Recording Secretary:

Candy Merlino

Corporate Secretary:

Dennis Trayes

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Jacques Etkowicz

Rose Ferrante

Ang Grippo

Zach Hamada

Kerry Duke

Caryn Fischetti

Silvio Tino

Gas Cap Editor:

Evan Stone gascap@ccdvd.com

Public Relations:

Dennis Levitt & Rose Ferrante

Website:

Tom Weigand webmaster@ccdvd.com

Committees:

Activity Chairperson:

Joe Parente

Cavalcade Chairpersons for 2024:

Candy Merlino & Tom Weigand

Club Store Chairperson:

Frank Kitchen

Cruise Night Chairpersons:

Candy & Chris Merlino

Nametag Chairperson:

Candy Merlino

National Corvette Museum

Ambassador:

Jack DeLong

Technical Chairperson

Joe Parente

Membership Chairperson

Tim Simmons (215) 582-6750

CCDV Roving Breakfast

Join Us for BREAKFAST!

Sunday, December 15, 2024

At 9:30 AM

Lancers Diner

858 Easton Road

Horsham, PA

Rain or Shine

RSVP by 1 PM on 12/13/24 to
Johnny (Bacon) Benischeck at (215) 208-6620

OR

Respond on the CCDV Website's Forum

A big thank you and a "Tip O' The Hat" to **Denny and Eileen Matlack**
who recommended this eatery!

Hope to see you there!

Johnny Bacon!

CCDV 2024 Wall Calendar



2025 CCDV Wall Calendars are now available for purchase (\$15.00 each).

Calendar measures 18" high x 12" wide, when open.

You can buy one at our next General Meeting in January.

HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS!



First name	Last name	Date
Debbie	Haeussler	3
Karen	Sinn	3
Shirley	Blumenstock	4
Linda	Houser	4
Chris	Harmon	5
Nick	Cione	6
Marlene	Etkowicz	7
Steve	Woodland	10
William	Washnock	13
Tim	Simmons	14
Lynne	Harnish	16
Sue	Fellman	17
Bill	Cmorey	18
John	Benischeck	18
Nancy	Hale	19
Robert	McCrumn	20
Russell	Bentman	23
Dave	Peterson	23
Carol	Batejan	23
Allan	Lane	24
Bill	Huey	27
Jim	Naylor	27
Nick	Dautel	29

CCDV Holiday Party

See You on the 7th!

2024 CCDV HOLIDAY PARTY
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2024

6 pm to 10 pm

SPRING MILL COUNTRY CLUB

80 Jacksonville Road, Ivyland, PA 18974 (215) 675-6000



It's that time again to start thinking of the Holiday Party.
Come join us for a fun night out, dinner, trivia, DJ & dancing!!

Your choice of dinner:

Chicken Marsala, North Atlantic Salmon w/ lemon dill sauce on the side, or Roasted New York Sirloin- Sliced with Bordelaise Sauce on the side, Apple turnover dessert



Hors D'oeuvres 6 pm - 7 pm

Sit-Down Dinner 7 pm - 8 pm

Rose's & Dor's Trivia Game 8 pm - 8:30 pm

Dancing 8:30 - 10 pm

CASH BAR

We are limited to 70 people, so reserve your spot early!

Payment Due by November 20, 2024

Mail checks payable to CCDV to:

John Benischeck - 15104 Dahlia Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19116

Chicken Marsala - \$35.00

North Atlantic Salmon - \$43.00

Roasted New York Sirloin- \$49.00

Name _____ Free Choice _____

Name _____ Entree Choice _____

Payment Amount Enclosed \$ _____

If you have any questions, contact John Benischeck at 215-208-6620. Payments may also be handed in at our monthly membership meetings.

SOLD OUT!



NEWSWORTHY

Philadelphia Veterans Parade

The club had 10 cars participating in the parade with great TV coverage by ABC and announced the club when dropping off the Grand Marshall.





NEWSWORTHY

Philadelphia Veterans Parade





NEWSWORTHY

Hatboro Veterans Parade

Attended by Denny Matlack, Chris Merlino, Ken Woods, Al Depue, Barbara Cooper, Dave Urbanek, Candy Merlino and Steve Baker.





NEWSWORTHY

If you are not a member of the NCM, consider joining and supporting the mission of the museum. If you love to travel, plan a visit today! If you have questions, our very own NCM CCDV Club Ambassador, **Jack DeLong** will gladly answer your questions at any of our general membership meetings.

(All NCM links and images appear with permission from the NCM)



<https://www.corvettemuseum.org/>

<https://www.corvettemuseum.org/membership/>

<https://www.corvettemuseum.org/pop-culture-and-corvette/>





NEWSWORTHY

LOOKING FOR CLUB EVENTS?

**Check out the CCDV Club Calendar on the Club's
website here:**

<https://www.ccdv.com/ccdv-events/>



NEWSWORTHY

Dinner at Panache



My Corvette Story

Jack DeLong 1966 Corvette Coupe

ONLY TWO PAIR OF HANDS IN ITS' HISTORY – OUR 1966 CORVETTE COUPE

Forty-four years ago, in 1980 while sitting in a lounge while our wives went shopping, I bought a 1966 Corvette coupe the deal sealed by a handshake and a glass of beer. My friend across the table owned a speed shop in Thorndale, Pennsylvania, and had a car dealer's license and he specialized in muscle cars predominantly mid-year Corvettes especially big blocks and fuelies. He mentioned that he 'was going to roll' a very basic 1966 Corvette coupe in my favorite color Nassau Blue; he was not at all interested in such a basic car as the only options were a 4-speed manual transmission, posi-traction, AM/FM radio and tinted glass.

Buying this car was a pure unadulterated spur of the moment decision; I knew little to nothing about Corvettes and had always looked at them as something for the 'well to do', certainly not Dor and me in 1980. Dor came back from shopping and showed me her new acquisition, shoes, and then I told her of my new buy. She said, "I guess that's OK"! Wow did that whim purchase change our lives to this day. At first the '66 was a fun weekend driver, then came some car shows mostly Bryner/CCDV shows, and it judged very well except for the undercarriage. That dirty undercarriage led to membership in the National Corvette Restorer's Society, a complete three-and-a-half-year body-off restoration, and a lot of learning by doing. The car was apart for over three years scattered throughout our home and mom's also at times. The project came together in 1985 just in time for the CCDV Car Show and it was awarded Bryner Gold and first in class – not bad for a daily driver to a large steel can factory near Pittsburgh. I still call her my 'Steel Mill Queen'. She was never pampered believe me; this Corvette coupe was a daily four-season driver and that included cinders, salt and snow too.

One evening in the spring of 1985 I decided to sort out all the bills and receipts by putting them in date order and get all the records and hundreds of photographs and personal notations in three ring binders for the historical record. While doing this I looked at some of the original paperwork that came with the car and that included a carbon copy of the original dealer's order form with the buyer's name, signature and seven-digit telephone number – remember there were no area codes in 1966. I wondered if the number was still in service and where it was located. In those days you could talk to a living human being – a Bell

My Corvette Story

Jack DeLong 1966 Corvette Coupe

Telephone operator which I did, and she told me the number including area code was still in existence in the Pittsburgh area of Pennsylvania. I immediately called the number, and an elderly lady answered my call, you could tell by her voice that she was elderly. I asked her if she knew anything about a 1966 blue Corvette and there was a long period of silence and then she answered my question with words I'll never forget. This is what she said: "That was my son's, and he hated to lose it". I asked if I could talk to her son, and she told me that her son no longer lived with her. One aspect of that conversation that I'll always remember was her reference to "her son". It was her son-in-law but to her, Ron was her son. She gave me Ron's telephone number which I immediately called.

Ron answered the phone, and I told him that I owned a 1966 Nassau Blue Corvette, and he almost immediately said that I should talk to his wife Ginny; you see Ronnie, as his wife always called him, was not a talkative person and that's Ronnie. So, I talked to his wife Ginny for quite some time certainly well over an hour and she told me of their marriage while she was still in high school and Ron six years older drafted into the Army for two years and both of them living with her mom to save money. Then there was that fateful trip in May of 1966 to the local Chevy dealer to buy an Impala a family car as they expected to have children. It was during that trip to the Chevy dealer while they were on the showroom floor that Ginny said to Ron: "Ronnie, if you don't get that Corvette now, you'll never have one". But we don't have the money said Ronnie. Yes we do! I've saved every penny for years and it will cost no more than the Impala. That is how this 1966 Corvette came into their family; it was their daily driver even for vacations with a young daughter behind the seats of the coupe. It took Ginny to the hospital to give birth to daughter Noel and hauled building materials for many home projects including an elevated second floor deck- yes, the lumber carried on the roof of the Corvette with blankets for protection. As many of us remember, Pittsburgh steel mills and related businesses were going through difficult economic times including layoffs in the late 1970's and I know that house payments and a roof over the family's head were the number one priority for Ron and Ginny. At one point Ronnie was doing two part time jobs plus taking in mechanical repairs for friend's cars. What could be sold? The Corvette had to go. In a matter of months and after several dealer trades, I became the new owner of

My Corvette Story

Jack DeLong 1966 Corvette Coupe

this 1966 “Steel Mill Queen” as I named her after learning years later of her early history. My purchase was in the spring of 1980.

From that first conversation in April of 1985 Ginny and I became close friends and every year at Christmas we exchanged Christmas cards, caught up on our families and I always sent photographs of the car with a brief description of what we had done with it that year. This personal contact between Ginny, Ron and I took place every year from 1985 to this date: December of 2021. I wondered what was wrong, we always hear from them. And Dor and I had visited Ron and Ginny at their home near Pittsburgh; Ron in person was a wonderful host, and Ginny and I always talked several times a year by phone. But in year 2021 there was no Christmas card from Ginny and when we eventually spoke in January Dor and I were informed that Ron was in very bad medical condition. Ginny was the primary caregiver with help from their daughter Noel and granddaughter both so special to Ronnie.

Then came the telephone call from Ginny; it was July 1st 2022 and I immediately knew the news was not good. Ronnie had passed away that morning and Ginny wanted us to know just three hours after Ron’s passing – Dor and I the second owners of that blue Corvette and a friendship now spanning 37 years bound by a special blue ‘66 Corvette. I was moved to tears. I don’t ever recall a phone conversation with Ginny that didn’t last for at least an hour. We talked about so many things but mostly family and all the stories about how that 1966 Corvette changed our lives, one Corvette and two families forever intertwined. Only two sets of hands, Ronnie and me, had ever driven our 1966 Corvette!

Ginny had assisted Ron for four years and we spoke several times in the subsequent days of how difficult it was for them, how her daughter supported her and of their love for that Corvette, “Ronnie if you don’t get it now you’ll never have one”, and how she felt it was God’s will that we, Dor and I, had become the second owners and restored it back to its’ original condition a task that they had wanted to do but never could.

My Corvette Story

Jack DeLong 1966 Corvette Coupe

As I thought after one of our extended phone conversations after Ron's passing it occurred to me that only two sets of hands have ever driven this car in 57 years, only two Ron and I. Dor and I sent a card of our condolences on Ron's passing and included with the card was of course a most recent photograph of the blue '66 Corvette. And I can never forget Ginny's words repeated to me over the years so many times: "Drive it, that's what we did, Ronnie and I".

Just months after Ronnie's passing Ginny and I were having one of our extended conversations and the subject came up: 'what is going to happen to this special '66 Corvette?' I had initially approached the National Corvette Museum in 2012 to determine if they had an interest in our Corvette after all it was a pretty basic Corvette just one of over 27,000 made in 1966. When I told them of its' seven three ring binders of documentation, all the original paperwork, its originality, all the awards and the love story of a high school girl, her husband in the Army and saving penny by penny, the response was immediate: yes, we are interested in your Corvette. Incidentally, I never called this my Corvette; it was always our Corvette, Ginny and I.

I approached the NCM after a long conversation with Ginny in early 2023 and met with the NCM staff in charge of Collections at the NCM in April of 2023. After hearing my story and viewing just a few of the photographs and awards, they said they were interested but the final decision would be made by a committee of experts whose names are confidential for obvious reasons. It didn't take long to get an answer. The NCM definitely wanted to add this Corvette to its collection and even better their collection did not have a 66 Corvette coupe. So the decision was made; the Corvette would go to the NCM in October of 2023. It went by enclosed trailer was accepted and staged in the dome for the official transfer of ownership. What a day! The car looked so good and when the time came for the transfer ceremony it was announced by loudspeaker throughout the NCM and so many people, many visitors to the NCM that day, came to watch and just the spectators were several rows deep. After the ceremony, the '66 was driven to the front of the Museum and staged with our three previous donations: a 1988 that was with us for 22 years, a 1992 that was with us for 22 years and our 1998 a tribute to the late Dale Earnhardt that was part of our family for 23 years.

My Corvette Story

Jack DeLong 1966 Corvette Coupe

In the summer of 2024 I received a call from the NCM, actually a courtesy to me as they now owned the Corvette: “would it be OK to use your car on stage for the 2024 Corvette Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony”? Hall of Fame Inductee Richard Prince, Enthusiast Category wants that car on stage. Of course, but I never could have imagined it would be center stage and highlighted between the new 1,000 plus horsepower ZR1 and an historic race winning Corvette C7. Our “Steel Mill Queen” daily driver Corvette center stage between Hall of Fame inductee Corvette Chief Engineer Tadge Juechter and Corvette Racing Drivers Oliver Gavin and Jan Magnussen! I am still in awe and Ginny when I told her of the recognition, she just cried her eyes out over the phone. As she said more than once in our conversations over the years, “there were times in our life when Ronnie and I had nothing, but we had that Corvette”.

Was the donation the right thing to do? Absolutely. This ‘66 has gone from a daily driver the sacrifice of a young couple to NCRS Topflight recognition to my decision to finally listen to Ginny’s words of wisdom in the late 1990’s, “drive it, that’s what Ronnie and I did!” Ginny was right and we put an additional 20,000 miles on the odometer. Nothing will ever come close to the sound of a healthy small block and side pipes on a weekend breakfast run. Best of all, our ‘66 is now a part of Corvette history to be seen by many and the story preserved for as long as Corvette is a part of American culture. And to be staged in front of the Museum with our other three donations, well she is in good company with old friends.

Jack DeLong, November 2024.

Founding Member: National Corvette Museum, NCM Lifetime Member, NCM Duntov Society and Spire Society

My Corvette Story

Jack DeLong 1966 Corvette Coupe



My Corvette Story

Jack DeLong 4 Donations to NCM

Here are our four Corvette donations, total years with us 110 years.

1988--22 years with us, 1992 --22 years with us, 1998 23 years with us years with us and the 1966 43-1/2 years with us. All were driven, for example the 1998 had 84,000 miles when it went to the NCM. The 1966 of course had more controlled driving, but we still put some 20,000 miles on her.

Here is living proof that you can drive your Corvette and keep it in as delivered condition. And not always do things go right, for example the '98 was rear ended near Boston hit hard enough that a section of the frame had to be replaced, but you would never know it, perfect repair done locally too.

Jack DeLong



JOEL'S JOLLIES



"I realize Christmas is over, but it took a long time to find you. Here's my list of accessories I want for my Corvette. Can I get a ride home?"

Appears with permission from Corvette Blogger

The next page is a flyer that all club members can print & provide to non-club members.



Please consider yourselves as "Goodwill Ambassadors" that invite other Corvette Lovers to join our club.

Please Consider Joining Us!

Corvette Club of Delaware Valley (CCDV)



We participate in a wide variety of Fun-Filled Activities:

Breakfasts, Car shows, Charitable Events, Monthly Membership Meetings, Monthly Cruise Nights, NCM Events, Parades, Picnics, Dinners, Tours, Trips & more...

Established in 1958, we've donated over \$600,000 to dozens of local charities.

With over 255+ members, you're bound to have a great time while making new friends who share your Corvette passion.

If you have any questions, please contact us.

Website: www.ccdv.com

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FOR SALE

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https://gemmotorsports.com/products/savini-sv-f2-wheels-20x9-20x12-for-corvette-c8?_pos=2&_psq=savini&_ss=e&_v=1.0

The tires are 255/35ZR20 on the front and 315/35ZR20, K1 Ferrari on the rears with 2500 miles on them.

Asking **\$4,000 OBO** for the set.

Reach out to Chad C @ chad.caulkins@gmail.com
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K1 Ferrari
Sidewall: Blackwall
Load Range: XL
Serv. Desc: (110V)
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2

Remove | Save for Later

SUB-TOTAL: \$1,781.96

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CLASSIFIEDS – FOR SALE

FOR SALE

2017 C7 ITEMS

They are for a 2017 C7 Stingray.
The lift off Top is a clear see thru.
Nice for Winter Days.
Weather Tech Custom cut mats.
Also, grey all-purpose mats.
And there is a grey car cover.
\$1,000 for all items.

Contact - Denise Lewis (215)356-9218



CLASSIFIEDS – WANTED

#1 - Wanted - no longer wanted trophies - to be repurposed for Cruise Nights and special Cavalcade awards. Bring them to the monthly meeting or arrange for drop-off/pickup.

#2 - Wanted - Fabric, zippers, batting and sewing notions in good conditions. Calling sewers/quilters/crafters - to go through your stash and pass along items you no longer have/plan to use - for projects like zippered pencil cases, backpacks, and tote bags, as well as softies (think small stuffed animals) - to be donated for Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes.

Contact **Candy Merlino** @ either cmerlino.ccdv@yahoo.com or 215-779-9454 if you have any questions/items to donate.

CLASSIFIEDS – WANTED

The **club** is looking for **Gas Cap Newsletters from the 1990s, 1980s, 1970s, & 1960s**

If you have a few laying around- send them our way! We will scan them into a digital format.

You can mail them to our Club PO Box or bring them to a club event.

CCDV
Box 397
Willow Grove, PA 19090

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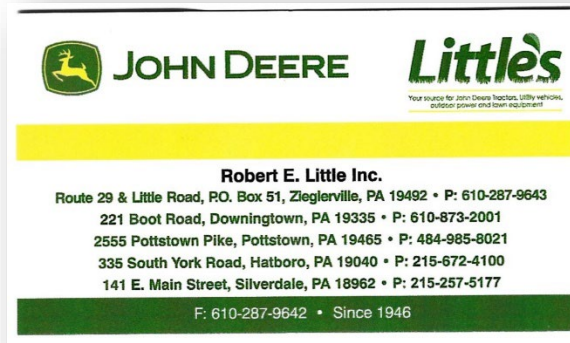
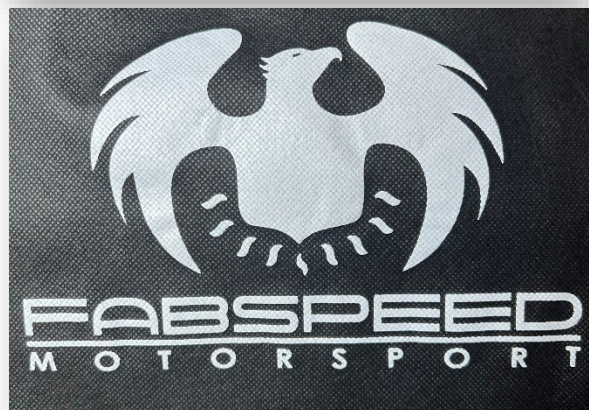
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Attention CCDV members

Do you or a family member have a business that you'd like to promote? We can list that business on our club's website & newsletter. Send an email with a business card or website address to: webmaster@ccdvd.com

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Click on the links below to join us:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ccdvpa>

and on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ccdvpa>

Keep up to date on upcoming activities and events!

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