



SERVING NORTH &  
SOUTH CAROLINA

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president@solidaxle-carolinas.org

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vp@solidaxle-carolinas.org

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Treasurer  
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# Axle Grease

The Newsletter of the Carolinas Chapter of the Solid Axle Corvette Club

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

WINTER 2010



### December Meeting Highlights

The December Meeting was broadcast as a Webinar from Shawn Gaither's house in Raleigh. The new format was a bit trying, but we managed to get it done. Minutes are on our website.

- \* We are now 28 member families strong. Shawn has sent out new rosters to all members. Please send pictures of and feature articles about your solid axles for our website.
- \* We are also looking for folks outside the Raleigh area interested in hosting meetings next year. Charlotte: Shelton's Vineyards Show in May? Myrtle Beach: Corvette Week in June?
- \* The 2011 Board was elected with Mike O'Donnell as our new treasurer. A HUGE THANKS goes out Bob Harper for his service as our 2010 Treasurer!!!
- \* On line store is still on hold; we expect to be back on this soon after the holidays.
- \* \$5 patches and \$1 decals are now available through Steve Pelchat, our membership director.
- \* Anyone interested in attending the SACC annual convention in Kissimmee, FL, Please contact Fred Rice for details and planning.

## Carolinas Solid Axles Website

Our club website is becoming one of the main sources of information about our club. North and South Carolina are rich in Corvette related activities. There are many Corvette clubs in North and South Carolina, so there are many places to visit on the web, but this is the only one specific to solid axle Corvettes. It is more than just an electronic brochure. The site chronicles our activities. It reports and archives club documents including our newsletter, Axle Grease, and minutes of club meetings. Our website is an important point of contact for communication to our leadership,

a starting point for prospective members and a referral point to our national solid axle organization.

A favorite feature is a "Members and their Corvettes" section. Send your pictures to Shawn and visit us at:

<http://www.solidaxle-carolinas.org/>



*'Twas the Night before Christmas*  
*a revision by Shawn Gaither*  
*(with sincerest apologies to Clement Moore)*

*'Twas the Night before Christmas and all through our street,  
 Not an engine was stirring; there was no one to meet.  
 Driving gloves were there by the back porch door,  
 In hopes to make use of that four on the floor.*

*Our babies were nestled, all snug in their garage,  
 While visions of racing formed a wondrous mirage.  
 And mamma in her jammies and I in my sweats,  
 Had just settled down with a few mild regrets.*

*When out in the street I heard a noise grow,  
 I sprang to my feet, it was no time to be slow.  
 Away to the window I raced with great haste,  
 Ready to rumble, there was no time to waste.*

*The headlights cast a shadow of a tree on my eyes;  
 Tonight of all nights, what a wonderful surprise.  
 And what to my wondering eyes would by met,  
 With a body this awesome, it must be a Vette.*

*With a ghost of a driver, as small as an elf,  
 I knew in a moment, it was Zora himself.  
 Then I smelled rubber as he pulled second gear.  
 And behind him I soon saw more Vettes appear.*

*"Now, Zolo! now, Lennant! now, Gateen and Ermine!  
 On, Snowcrest! on, Cascade, on Sportsman and Roman!  
 To the end of the circle! To the front of the drive!  
 Our time is a wasting, so let's all look alive!"*

*The leaves from our street flew around and about,  
 Sucked forth by the power all those small blocks put out.  
 One by one to our drive, the Corvettes they came,  
 With drivers so famous, you'd know them by name.*



## *'Twas the Night before Christmas (continued)*

*And then, in a moment, my mind became lost,  
With rumbling and popping of each car's exhaust.  
As I turned my head, the engines went mute,  
Doors slammed shut, drivers began to salute.*

*Harley Earl was there, and Ed Cole of course.  
Bill Mitchell and many others completed their force.  
With keys in their right hand, and tools in their left,  
These ghosts were true racers, their minds were quite deft.*

*Their bumpers – how they sparkled! their 'glass – how it shined!  
Their rubber smelled beautiful! Their leather, so refined!  
Each car a bit different, from fuelies to dual quads,  
Powerglides to sticks – they were a hell of a squad.*

*And some had four headlights, and some had but two,  
Some wore tuxedos, for others, one color would do.  
A few had six cylinders, but most had a full eight,  
But no matter their arrangement, they all were quite great.*

*They were all quite stunning, with but a singular purpose.  
To win over our hearts, to quite simply usurp us.  
With a wink of their eyes, those ghosts got back in,  
The doors all slammed shut, on their faces, a grin.*

*They said not a word, the engines did the talking,  
Another race to be run, it was no time to be balking.  
Then turning their keys all at once made such a sound,  
That I'm sure they'd be heard for miles around.*

*They took to the streets, they went off like a rocket.  
And I felt a fresh set of keys in my right front pocket.  
The new '53 they had left made me beam,  
"Merry Christmas to all – and to all, dare to dream."*



## *Mission Impossible*

*by Steve & Laura Pelchat*

I've always wished I knew more about the background of my 1960 Corvette. As a sixteen year old I didn't pay much attention to the details of buying it, I can just remember how excited I felt when the garage door popped open & I saw the rear end of the car. I didn't care about the hole in the fiberglass or rip in the canvas. Looking back, I have no idea where the owner lived, but remember exactly what the house looked like. Over the years I have tried to add documentation for the car. Many times I have told my wife the story of buying the car, and she figured it would be a good Christmas present to track down the ad for me.

She called The Detroit News to find out if they archived their old classifieds, and was told that the Detroit Library was the only place that had them. A follow up call to the library determined that they were only at the main library downtown, and on microfilm, not available online, so it would require a visit. This was no longer something she could do as a surprise for me, since we live 600 miles away in Charlotte, NC. So she told me what she had found out, and we decided to make a trip to Michigan after Thanksgiving, since we had Friday off of work.

The library was only open 10-6 on Saturday, and we were there first thing looking through old classifieds on the microfilm. After going through several Sunday papers, I found the ad. Luckily it was distinctive - "Corvette '60 1<sup>st</sup> \$500 takes it" and the phone number. It was exactly as I remembered it. We printed it out, I was so excited, I finally had what I wanted. We were feeling pretty good, and Laura suggested that we cross reference the phone number to find the name & address, so I'll finally know where I bought it. Would the information be available from 1970? Laura worked as a reference librarian assistant in college, and assured me that all the info is there, you just have to know where to look and have patience.



The librarians at the Detroit Library were extremely helpful. We looked up the info in Bresser's Criss Cross, but needed the Dearborn-Downriver version, not the Detroit volumes. The librarian checked online and found the Henry Ford Centennial Library in Dearborn had the 1968 and '73 version, but not the 1970 version. We hoped the previous car owner lived there for at least a few years. The library was only open until 5:00, and we only had that one day to be able to research it this trip. We were excited and on a roll!

## *Mission Impossible (continued)*

We took Michigan Ave all the way to Dearborn and found the library. Another helpful librarian took us to the Bresser's Criss Cross, and we lucked out again. The 1970 version **was** there. We were joking that we hoped the previous owner would have a distinctive name, not Robert Smith, so that we might even be able to track down the man. I opened the 1970 directory, found the exchange, followed the column of numbers, and there it was – name & address! We looked in the '75 and '80 volumes and he was still listed. Finally we took a chance and looked in the newest volume they had, 2007, not really thinking we could be lucky enough to find him at the same location. Sure enough, there he was! After getting the current area code, I called and was able to talk to the guy I bought my car from, 40 years ago. It wasn't Robert Smith, but the name wasn't very unusual. Thomas Day was 73 years old and had lived in the same house for 45 years. I found out I was only the third owner, which surprised me. Thomas remembered he bought the 'Vette from a guy that owned a gas station. He didn't remember his name, but knew that he now has a trucking company in the area. We chatted for awhile about cars, Thomas currently has a 1981 Corvette in the garage. I should have asked him if he'd take \$500 for that one.

The story still isn't over, now that we have a lead regarding the first owner, we plan to try to find him. Next year we're taking the car to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary meet of the VCCA and 100 year anniversary celebration of Chevrolet in Flint. I asked Thomas if I could come by his house to show him the car and get a picture of him in it, and he agreed. We'll let you know how that turns out.



## *The "Basket Case" '62 Corvette*

*by Mike O'Donnell*

For many years, I had wanted to get a nice "driver" solid-axle Corvette. I was reasonably flexible on which model year, color and options with only two restrictions – I wanted an eight-cylinder model with an automatic transmission. The transmission choice was due to the fact that I wanted my wife to be able to drive it and she has never learned to drive a manual transmission (she believes a manual transmission is best suited for "farm equipment"!).

My hunt for a solid-axle had never reached a point of serious focus, and in the meantime I had acquired a number of other classic cars including several mid-year and later Corvettes. However, one day a good friend of mine mentioned that he knew someone, who knew someone, who knew someone who had a solid-axle with a Powerglide transmission. All of a sudden, I was serious as the verbal description of the car sounded exactly like what I wanted.

On possibly the hottest July day in 2004, my friend and I went out to a farm in Alamance County NC to see the car. What I didn't expect was that to "see" the car, we had to visit several outbuildings and the basement garage. The fellow who owned the car had acquired it in 1976 with the intent of restoring it fully, but got busy with life and never got around to doing anything beyond tearing it apart, removing the engine and transmission, taking the body off the frame and doing a few small restoration projects to the suspension. This is the condition of the "basket case" 1962 when we first pulled it out of the barn!



Well, needless to say, I was a bit discouraged. My friend, who had already restored several better-preserved cars for me had vision, though, and convinced me that this was a unique opportunity to own a numbers matching solid-axle and have a good story to tell when it was all over! Whether it was that vision that inspired me, or heat exhaustion, I agreed to a price and we spent two days hauling the "basket case" back to Raleigh. I took it directly to my friend's shop, as I didn't want to take a chance of my wife seeing it before I had at least hosed it off, cleaned out the mice and bird's nests and assembled all of the parts and pieces in storage in some sort of order.

## *The "Basket Case" (continued)*

As I had several other cars already in the process of restoration, the "basket-case" solid-axle sat in storage for a couple of years while I saved my pennies and purchased all the anticipated parts that I thought I would need (I didn't even come close to getting everything needed). As I had never had a car that needed absolutely everything done to it, I had no idea what I was getting into. Although the car was painted dark blue when I bought it, the original color code was "Fawn Beige", which, frankly, I wasn't too excited about as I had in my mind a bit more of an exciting color.



Once the project started, my enthusiasm quickly rose, as I had purchased a truly clean, unmolested (except for mice and birds), undamaged and very complete car. From the initial steps of organizing, cleaning and cataloging all the parts and pieces, through the engine rebuild, frame-blasting, body refinishing and repainting, I could see the vision start to become a reality. Once the first coat of paint was sprayed, I was absolutely smitten by the Fawn Beige color.



As with many projects as complex as this one, all the final details to finish the restoration are what makes it really stand out, but also seem to take the longest time.

## *The "Basket Case" (continued)*

Finally in February 2007, the final steps were taken and I carefully and nervously drove the car home from the shop (top down in 30 degree weather, because of course, that is how I think the car look its best!).



We have taken the car to many, many car shows and events across North Carolina, and in spite of its perfect restoration, I don't hesitate to drive it everywhere I've taken it. I've managed to keep it in top condition by being careful and spending a lot of energy and time cleaning it top and bottom. I did commit the common mistake of leaving the hood up in the sun at a car show in Oxford NC and the reflection off of the air cleaner cover melted the hood from underneath and bubbled the paint on top of the hood. Although I was horrified, it was quickly and easily repaired. The "basket-case" Corvette now turns a lot of heads and has won numerous awards at judged events.

For me, there is no great pleasure than seeing the collection of solid-axle Corvettes from the SACC winding down country roads together, or parked in a row. These cars are great nostalgic pieces of art from a much simpler era that have survived the ravages of time and circumstance to bring pleasure to current and future generations of gear-heads!



**SOLID-AXLE CORVETTE CLUB  
CAROLINAS CHAPTER  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**



Chapter and National membership year  
is the same as calendar year:  
January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2010

CHAPTER DUES ARE \$15.00 YEARLY. (No matter when you join.)

Please return this chapter application form with a check for chapter dues made payable to:  
CAROLINAS CHAPTER-SACC or (CC-SACC).  
1800 Starbrook Drive  
Charlotte, NC 28210

We will never share your personal information with anyone other than SACC members.  
If you do not want your info shared with SACC members please check here. \_\_\_\_\_.

SACC National Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_ (Number is on mailing label)  
Chapter members must be members of the National Solid-Axle Corvette Club.

Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Co-Applicant (same address, H/W, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address or Mailing Address  
\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to serve in the chapter? Officer, Coordinator, Writer, Event Volunteer, etc.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What events would you like to see our chapter host? (Shows, tours, seminars, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How many regional events would you like to see our club host? \_\_\_\_\_

How far would you travel for a regional function? \_\_\_\_\_

How many local city events would you like to participate in? \_\_\_\_\_

How far would you travel for a local function? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you prefer overnight or single day events? \_\_\_\_\_

Year(s) of Corvette(s) owned. \_\_\_\_\_

*Owning a Solid-Axle Corvette or any Corvette is not required for membership.*

My Corvette(s) is original, modified, a race car, show car, etc? \_\_\_\_\_

The Solid Axle Corvette Club is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, care, history, and enjoyment of 1953 to 1962 Corvettes. You do not need to own a Corvette to join.

If you seek membership in the Solid Axle Corvette Club®, fill out this application and mail it with payment to the following address:

(You will need to copy and paste to a word application)

SACC  
PO Box 2288  
North Highlands, CA 95660-8288

SOLID AXLE CORVETTE CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Renewing Member Number \_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Co-Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_ Work \_\_\_

Phone #2 \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_ Work \_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Solid Axle Serial #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Solid Axle Serial #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Solid Axle Serial #3 \_\_\_\_\_

Solid Axle Serial #4 \_\_\_\_\_

Solid Axle Serial #5 \_\_\_\_\_



## *Safety First—Updating your Taillights*

*by Fred Rice*

When I first got my '58 Corvette in 2005, I was constantly aware that the tail light/brake lights were not very bright. Each time I would come to a stoplight I would nervously look in the rear view mirror to see if the driver behind me was acknowledging my actions. The fifty year old technology just wasn't cutting it in today's driving environment. With other drivers attention being distracted by phones, texting and I-pods, it is truly a jungle out there. After a few close calls I decided to do something and investigate solutions for my quest for a brighter bulb.

How do you make sure that the driver behind your classic Corvette knows what you are doing? Usually they are so mesmerized by seeing an old Corvette they do not pay attention to what it is doing! A very bright brake/turn signal similar to what many of the newer vehicles are using was the answer... but where do you get that technology for our older Vettes?

I had used a set of Ron Francis "Brite Lights" on my '68 Olds 442 with good results. They increased the brightness factor approximately 25 per cent. Not exactly a wow factor but definitely better. For the 58 the "Brite Lights" just did not seem to cut it....maybe the way the tail light is recessed into the body where the Olds was a flat panel, I am really not sure. My search continued.....

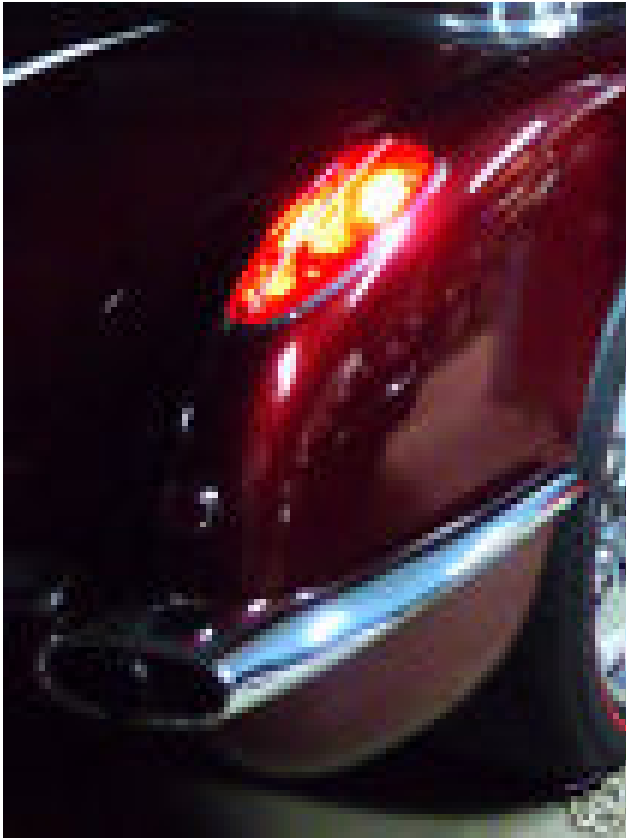
The solution that I found was actually quite simple. LED lighting for the rear of the Corvette. That's right... LED. That is an abbreviation for Light Emitting Diode....., electronics comes to the rescue! These little diodes when grouped together create quite a bright light!

I had seen many examples of LED **bulbs** and while they were OK (with about 10 to 12 LED's ) they were still not as bright as I wanted. I wanted something as bright as the LED tail lights on a Cadillac Escalade.

One day while I was on Ebay, I searched for "58 Corvette LED taillights" and BAM.....there they were. A pair of original looking taillights but LED taillights, that's what I was looking for!



## *Updating your Taillights (continued)*



These tail light assemblies are visually the same as what the factory supplied but have a pigtail that comes out of a sealed LED board. These units are water proof as the back of them are sealed with a clear rubbery type substance. The pigtail is basically a plug-in to the socket where your bulb is currently located. Brings a new meaning to the term “plug and play”.

These tail lights are sold by a company called Ohio Vette and the ones I bought were easy to install. Took all of 15 minutes to install and the cost was under \$60.00. This upgrade will probably be the “easiest install, most bang for the buck” that you will ever do on your Corvette. The units have between 15 and 20 LED’s which create a VERY bright light...just what I was looking for!

Since having installed these light assemblies, I have watched in the rear view mirror to see their effect on the driver behind me and I see that they do get the drivers attention. They look great and retain the stock appearance of the Corvette.

### SOME INTERESTING INFO ON THESE LED LIGHTS: (from the eBay site)

- \* 100,000 HOUR LED LIFE WITH LIFETIME WARRANTY
- \* VERY LOW VOLTAGE DRAW, OPERATING RANGE IS 10.85 +/- 3.15 VOLTS  
VERY LOW CURRENT DRAW.
- \*FUNCTION PERFECTLY DOWN TO 40 DEGREES BELOW ZERO
- \* INSTANT ON, AT HIGHWAY SPEEDS THESE LEDS LIGHT UP 18 FEET  
BEFORE A 1157 TAILLIGHT
- \*LEDS AND ELECTRONICS ARE POTTED IN CLEAR EPOXY  
AND ARE TOTALLY WEATHER PROOF
- \*SUPER RELIABILITY WITH GREAT SHOCK, VIBRATION, MOISTURE  
AND CORROSION RESISTANCE
- \*POLYCARBONATE LENSE RESISTS IMPACT





Minutes of Carolina Chapter Solid Axle Corvette Club

Meeting Date Dec 19 2010

Meeting was Via Phone/Internet (Webinar)

1. Meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM by President Fred Rice.
2. Members in attendance:
  - Roger Hulslander
  - Pat Hulslander
  - Fred Rice
  - Ella Rice
  - Shawn Gaither
  - Angela Gaither
  - Steve Pelchat
  - Laura Pelchat
  - Bob Harper
  - Sharron Harper
3. Treasurers Report:
  - It was reported that there was \$442.73 on hand.
4. Membership:
  - Steve Pelchat reported that we have 28 members as of today.
5. Unfinished Business:
  - a. On hold for T Shirt logo's at this time. Issue will be addressed after 1<sup>st</sup> of the New Year.
  - b. Steve Pelchat has guy in Charlotte that will do items by the piece.
  - c. Members need to send in Photos of their cars.
  - d. Store – Shawn Gaither needs to talk to Brad Bean, Florida.
  - e. Roster to be sent to all members.

6. New Business:

- a. Elections to be held.
- b. Trip to Florida for National SACC Convention
- c. Wes Schrom – Board Nominations as a whole, everyone with the exception of Bob Harper who requested that he not serve another term. Mike O’Donnell said he will accept the nomination as treasurer
- d. Shawn Gaither asked if there were any other nominations. None were put forward.
- e. Pat Hulslander suggested that since there were no new nominations, we should go ahead and vote on the nominations that were submitted.
- f. All members agreed and voted unanimously that the candidates nominated be re-elected to their positions.

1. President: Fred Rice
2. Vice President: Shawn Gaither
3. Treasurer: Mike O’Donnell
4. Secretary: Roger Hulslander
5. Membership: Steve and Laura Pelchat

- g. Trip to Florida for SACC National Convention – 30-Jan to 2-Feb 2011. Fred needs to know who plans to attend. Tentative to attend: Fred and Ella Rice, Steve and Laura Pelchat, and Roger Hulslander.
- h. Submit information on each member and cars for inclusion on the web site to Fred Rice.
- i. Steve Pelchat has new information on his car and will submit it to Fred this week.
- j. Sharon Harper suggested that we need to plan for next year’s meetings. If we can find a person to suggest or co-host a meeting.
- k. Fred Rice suggested planning a corvette meeting during Corvette Week in June at Myrtle Beach, SC.
- l. Laura Pelchat suggested looking at membership applications and see if people have an interest in hosting a meeting.
- m. Laura Pelchat said that there will be a Corvette show Memorial Day weekend at Shelton’s Vineyards on Interstate 77 near Charlotte.
- n. Fred Rice said the newsletter would be sent out by Friday, 24 Dec. 2010.
- o. Christmas luncheon at Pinehurst was attended by 7 members. Great food; the weather was rainy.

7. No Announcements.

8. Motion to adjourn by Shawn Gaither; second by Fred Rice. Meeting adjourned at 4:30pm.

## Tail Pipe

The Carolinas Chapter is an affiliate of the national organization, SACC. Our purpose mirrors our national organization. The Solid Axle Corvette Club (SACC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, care, history and enjoyment of the 1953 to 1962 Corvettes. Ours is a family oriented club with membership covering all members of your family. You do not need to own a Corvette to join. The Solid Axle Corvette Club invites you to share our enthusiasm and dedication to the Solid Axle Corvettes, and to enjoy the fellowship of our members.

<http://www.solidaxle-carolinas.org/>



SACC - Carolinas Chapter  
1800 Starbook Dr.  
Charlotte, NC 28210  
704-552-5325

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*January 26-29 Kissimmee, FL  
NCRS Winter National*

*Jan 30 - Feb 2 Kissimmee, FL  
SACC National Convention*

*April 23 Lake Wheeler, NC  
Fun in the Sun Charity Car Show*

*June 4-5 Myrtle Beach, SC  
15th Annual Corvette Show*

*June 23-26 St. Charles, FL  
39th Annual Bloomington Gold*

*July 14-16 Bowling Green, KY  
National Corvette Homecoming*

*Aug 26-28 Carlisle, PA  
Corvettes at Carlisle*

*Sept 1-3 Bowling Green, KY  
NCM 17th Anniversary Celebration*

## Thank You

### *a few thoughts from the Editor*

*As we pass our first year, I would like to look back at how amazingly far we have come! January started out as but a small meeting of fewer than ten people with a singular goal: to start the Carolinas Chapter of the Solid Axle Corvette Club. In our second meeting, we had ten people and appointed a board. We have since grown to 28 member families. It is only with your support as members and your generous gifts of time that we can thrive, so it is at this time that I would like to thank a few individuals for their gift of time.:*

*To Fred & Ella Rice for getting the ball rolling and always keeping it rolling*

*To Bob & Sharon Harper for volunteering to help when no one else would*

*To Steve & Laura for always being there, friendly and eager to meet new members*

*To Pat & Roger for your amazing participation and help (what a boat, by the way)*

*To Ron & Sandra Kirby for an amazing start to the Axle Grease publication.*