

National Corvette Museum Report for May 2020 - ECC

By Kevin Wilson

Eastside Corvette Club joins the NCM as a Club Member: The leadership of the Eastside Corvette Club (ECC) recently enrolled our club as a member of the National Corvette Museum (NCM). They've asked me to be the NCM Ambassador for the ECC, to which I've humbly agreed. What that means is that I will represent the ECC to the NCM, and I will represent the NCM to our ECC membership. Most every month I will submit a report that explains some of what is going on at the museum, and why it is important for us as a club to support the NCM.



Why should our club be an NCM member you might ask? There are a number of reasons. First off, the members of our club are Corvette Enthusiasts and we enjoy the excitement and camaraderie that goes along with owning America's only true sports car. The Corvette has been in continuous production for 67 years and through 8 automotive styling generations. Every generation of Corvette is represented in our club, and we want to insure that interest in Corvettes gets passed on to future generations, which is why we support the Mission of the NCM which is:

“To celebrate the Corvette's invention, and preserve the legendary automobile's past, present, and future. The museum will serve as an educational and research model for all to enjoy.”

THE MUSEUM WILL:

- Promote the restoration, preservation, and conservation of America's only sports car.
- Be a repository of, and preserve, printed technical materials and historical information on the Corvette automobile.
- Enhance the knowledge of the general public regarding the design, development, construction, and history of the Corvette automobile.
- Provide information to the general public, collectors, and automobile historians about the Corvette automobile.
- Provide a facility to house and display the Corvette automobile for public exhibition, and for research in the areas of the automotive sciences and automobile mechanics.
- Provide historical literature and memorabilia on the Corvette automobile, from its development to the present day, for the general public and collectors.

The National Corvette Museum opened its doors on September 2, 1994, right across the freeway from the General Motors Corvette Assembly plant in Bowling Green Kentucky. It was exactly ten years and two weeks after Terry McMannon, a National Corvette Restorers Society (NCRS) member stood up at Copper Mountain, Colorado and proposed a Corvette library. That trickle of support which began with the NCRS had become a flood of Corvette enthusiasts and supporters from within Chevrolet and the Bowling Green area that together raised the National Corvette Museum. It was a divergent group of people who all believed the same thing at the same time — a powerful idea that is still growing. Over the coming months I will explain in more detail what the museum is comprised of today.

As a Club Member of the NCM the ECC also gets a few 'perks' which include:

- A listing on the NCM Website
- A plaque identifying our membership for display
- Advertorial in NCM eNews one time per year (over 75,000 subscribers)
- Discounted pricing on ads in America's Sports Car magazine
- A subscription to America's Sports Car magazine
- Publicity for our club
- Six free annual passes to the museum
- Discounts on facility rentals

So, there are many reasons for our club to support the NCM, and the NCM will continue to support and entertain us, the Corvette clubs, the Corvette owners, and Corvette enthusiasts through the activities undertaken by the National Corvette Museum. Here is some of the latest news out of the NCM:

NCM response to Corona Virus: The repercussions of the Novel Covid 19 virus continues to impact many of our daily activities and short-term plans, as well as limiting our opportunities to get together for Corvette related fun. The only good thing happening here locally is we've had some fabulous early Spring weather here in the Pacific Northwest. Hopefully you've had some time to enjoy your Corvette, whether on a nice drive, washing it up, or modifying it with additional goodies. Gas is relatively cheap; the traffic is fairly light so it's been a perfect time to socially distance yourself with a cruise in your Corvette.

With "stay at home and avoid other people" directives in place, many of us have turned to technology to help us stay active and engaged in our communities. It's very easy to stay engaged with the Corvette Community through the Internet and I've enjoyed seeing so many photographs of and reading various articles about beautiful and unique Corvettes. The National Corvette Museum (NCM) is no different than we are in these challenging times and is adapting to the realities of our current situations. The NCM closed to the public effective at 5pm Wednesday, March 18 and is still closed. This closure does NOT affect the R8C Museum Delivery program for new Corvette owners picking up their cars, and there is still a lot going on at the museum. Here is some of the latest news from our friends at the NCM.

Museum Debuts Free Educational Video Series': With many children and families spending time being 'healthy at home,' the National Corvette Museum has debuted a free video series, offering educational and fun content for all ages. **Vettecademy** offers topics related to Corvette, the Museum and other automotive areas with a new video debuting each weekday on the Museum's Web page: (<https://www.corvettemuseum.org/explore/educational-programs/vettecademy/>) and on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5Syfif2eF-NmzTLVdEHmSUZozO8RvN27>)



"Many museums across the country are offering free virtual content to stay engaged with their audience while attracting from new fans," said Dr. Sean Preston, President and CEO of the National Corvette Museum. "As a nonprofit foundation, our mission is to educate the public. We developed these videos to not only provide educational content, but also be entertaining and engaging." Thus far, topics for the episodes have included Corvette Generations, the Museum's Sinkhole and ME-chanics: How to Change a Tire. While the series is geared towards school-aged children, adults are encouraged to tune-in, too. Episodes go live Monday through

Friday at 10am CT, and past episodes are available on both platforms, as well as embedded on the Museum's website.

For Corvette enthusiasts wanting even more deep dives into the history of America's iconic sports car, the Museum is launching a second video series entitled **Fully Vetted**. The series debuted on Tuesday, March 24, and features Museum Director of Collections/Curator Derek E. Moore and Museum Historical Media Coordinator Bob Bubnis who will 'decode Corvette history.' "Our Fully Vetted series is designed to provide a digital touch-point to Corvette fans worldwide while also offering educational and entertaining content for those wanting to soak up as much Corvette information as possible," shared Sean. "Derek and Bob will share in-depth stories, the lore behind the brand, and a behind the scenes view of America's Sports Car."



Fully Vetted was originally planned to be a fee-based series but has since been deemed as free content. "We decided to give the content away as a 'thank you' to those who have supported the Museum, but definitely welcome tax-deductible donations to help us continue providing educational content through these challenging times," added Sean. Currently, Fully Vetted will have new episodes on Tuesdays and Thursdays around 4pm CT. Museum members can log into their account to view the videos, and non-members can sign up for a free account on the Museum's website to view the content.

National Corvette Museum Held Online Car Show in April:

Celebrity judges, sponsors, trophies and more bring the fun of car shows to those sheltered in place. With spring car shows, races, and other automotive events having been cancelled or rescheduled, the National Corvette Museum pulled together resources to offer then next best thing – an online car show. "Being a 501c3 nonprofit foundation we started brainstorming ways to keep our audience engaged and the idea of an online car show emerged," said Dr. Sean Preston, President and CEO of the Museum. "We created a number of categories that people entered including the opportunity to share a little extra about their car – so rather than have judging like a typical car show, it's fun, celebrity choice awards."

Corvette elite through the generations were quick to jump on board with the idea. Joining the line-up of celebrity judges include retired Engineers and Chief Engineers Gib Hufstader, Dave McLellan, Dave Hill and Tom Wallace, Designers Peter Brock, Jerry Palmer and Tom Peters, racers Tony DeLorenzo, John Heinrichy, Andy Pilgrim and Johnny O'Connell as well as Racing Program Manager Doug Fehan, past and present GM Corvette Plant Managers Kai Spande, Jeff Lamarche, Dave Tatman, Wil Cooksey and Paul Schnoes, Corvette Hall of Fame inductees Reeves Callaway and Mike Yager, Corvettes at Carlisle's Lance Miller, and Museum President Sean Preston.

A total of 33 awards were given (out of 1668 entries), including one for each Corvette Generation (1041 entries), Corvette Race Cars (44 entries), Best Story (381 entries), Most Unique/Personalized (202 entries), Plant Manager's Choice, President's Choice, People's Choice and a Club Participation Award to the Corvette Club

with the highest percentage of participation. For the C8 award (11 entries), Ralph White has donated two Next Generation Corvette Counter Stools with backs. Honorable mention certificates will also be awarded.



“We encouraged all enthusiasts to enter, even if they don’t normally enter their car in shows. We created categories that give everyone a fair shot at walking away with some recognition,” shared Sean. “One category focuses solely on the story behind the car and we loved reading the submissions!”

Corvette enthusiasts entered the show on the Museum’s website from April 6 – 12. The cost to enter was \$10 per car, with the option to add on additional judged categories for \$10 each. Enthusiasts could enter more than one Corvette by using a separate online entry form per car. Each household that entered received a commemorative dash plaque. All entries, and the winners, are posted on the Museum’s website (<https://www.corvettemuseum.org/onlinecarshow/>), judging occurred the week of April 12. The Museum posted a video announcing the winners on Thursday, April 23. Awards were mailed to each winner or are being held for pickup at the Michelin NCM Bash, currently slated for May 28-30.

“During these uncertain times the Museum has worked hard to keep as many of our staff employed as possible. The car show is not only a fun way for people to get involved in the car hobby at a ‘social distance’ but will hopefully generate a little revenue for the Museum while we are closed. We are excited for everyone to fill our website’s pages with images on their beautiful Corvettes!” added Sean.

The awards were made possible through the generosity of several businesses, Clubs and Corvette Store partners, including Artisan’s, Callaway, Custom LED Service LLC, Dana Forrester, Huntington Sheet Metal, Kim’s Gold Dust, Mid-America Motorworks, NCM Fighter Squadron, Ralph White, Ready Motorsports, Titan Lifts, Vince Con Corvette, Volunteer Vette and Zip Corvette. “We sincerely thank those businesses who jumped on board with this endeavor. We realize budgets are tight for a lot of companies, so it means a lot that they choose to support what we are doing and to help keep the car hobby alive,” said Sean.

Avanti II: Donated Car with Corvette Components: The NCM is all about Corvettes and that includes gathering a collection of other vehicles that have a significant tie to the Corvette story. There are a number of these non-Corvette vehicles in the museum’s collection and from time to time I will feature stories on some of these unique vehicles, Here is one:

Like many auto enthusiasts, Bernard “Mike” Hammer had set his sights on his dream car decades before he’d have the opportunity to actually own it. It was 1962, and his stepfather was in the market for a new car. “He took me with him one, to keep me out of the mischief that I always seemed to find, and two, because he didn’t know the difference between a crankshaft and a camshaft. I had just stuffed a small block in a Sprite, and that thing was quick!”

The duo found their way to a Studebaker dealer, and Mike shared with his stepfather that the Lark was the Indy Pace Car that year. While his stepfather was looking at the Lark, a Gold Avanti caught Mike’s eye across the showroom. The Lark was the Pace Car, but the Avanti was given to the winner of the race, Roger Ward. Later, Andy Granatelli took three Avantis to Bonneville and set 29 world speed records in a gold one. “Here I was, standing next to a gold Avanti. My mind could see Andy getting out of it and saying, ‘Your turn, kid.’ I did my

best to tell him that was the car,” remembers Mike. “Nope, he ended up getting a Buick Special station wagon. That gold Avanti hit the top of my bucket list.”



1977 Studebaker Features Corvette Engine and Fiberglass Body

It wasn't until 2017 that Mike's path would again cross a gold Avanti. “My wife of 40 years passed away, and having nothing else to do, I'd drive around and see the country.” Mike was in San Jose, CA, about 300 miles from home, when he passed a speed shop that had a 1977 Gold Avanti II parked out front. “The business was one that put people that own race cars together with people who drive race cars, and the owner had the car outside as a sort of calling card. I asked him ‘do you ever drive the thing?’ and he said, ‘very seldom,’ so I said ‘well, I'll just buy it from you then.’ I trailered it home, fixed it up and the only show I ever put it in, it got first place.”

After purchasing the car, Mike went to work on it. He rebuilt the engine and cleaned the car up. The interior was in good shape to begin with, and it had very low miles. “When the Avanti II came out, they were essentially handmade, and they were made to order. You told them what you want, and that's what you got. The original owner wanted it gold, with gold shag carpeting, and even gold shag carpeting in the trunk. The gold leather seats have velour inserts, and Avanti even threw in a pillow for the back seat.”

Mike had only owned the Avanti for about two years when he came to the decision to do something else with the car. “Vietnam gave me two Bronze Stars for valor, a Purple Heart for combat wounds, and Parkinson's. The medals were put in a frame by my wife and left alone. I wish that the Parkinson's was that easy. It is getting along, and I can no longer enjoy working on cars.” Mike shared that while he enjoyed having the car, he wanted to preserve it. “When you've got Parkinson's, you shake a lot. I was outside washing it and I broke the radio antenna. It just happened that I got the Museum's magazine that said they were looking for cars that had Corvette components, and this was made with a Corvette engine, so I go ahold of [Derek] and he said ‘yeah, we'll take it.’” Not only does the Avanti have a Corvette engine, the fiberglass body is manufactured by the same company that has made the Corvette body since 1953.

Mike is not only an Avanti fan, he's also a Corvette enthusiast. Having owned three Corvettes Mike also has a 2020 Torch Red Corvette on order. “The Corvette I had when I married my wife was a C3 – a 1971 Convertible. And then you have kids and they don't like to be tied to the roof, so you get a series of four doors. When the youngest got married and moved out, we went car shopping. I decided we'd look at the new Pontiac GTO that had just come out. The guy opened the hood and said, ‘it's got a Corvette engine’. My wife said, ‘that's nice, but it's ugly.’ So, we looked at the Cadillac. The guy opened the hood and said, ‘it's got a Corvette engine.’ My wife looked at me and said, ‘if everything's going to have a Corvette engine then let's just get another Corvette!”

Mike ended up buying a 2004 Magnetic Red Corvette in 2005. The couple tuned in to watch the debut of the C7 in 2013, and Mike's wife was on board with getting another. “She looked at me and said, ‘do you think they have that in the same color as ours?’ And I said, ‘I don't know.’ And she said, ‘if they do, get one.’ If your wife

tells you to go buy a new Corvette, you don't hesitate!" Mike ordered a 2014 Crystal Red Corvette in March 2013 and took delivery in October – the Friday before their wedding anniversary the following Monday. Sadly, Mike's wife passed away in 2016. Mike drove the car in her memory in the 2019 National Corvette Caravan, offering the passenger seat to a Corvette enthusiast from Australia. He's looking forward to taking delivery of his 2020 later this year at the Museum. Thank you to Mike for helping tell the story of other vehicles with Corvette components!

Current Corvette Raffles: The Corvette raffles at the NCM are a major fundraiser that helps to keep the museum operating. All you need to do to enter a raffle for a chance to win one of these fabulous Corvettes is go to the NCM Raffle web page: <https://raffle.corvettemuseum.org/>, click on “download an Order Form” which will enable you to open or download and print the latest form. Just fill it out & send it in to the NCM with a Credit Card number, and they will purchase the tickets for you and enter it into the raffle drawing right there in Kentucky! Also please note, there is now an “Enter Interactive Mode” button you can use to print out a form that has your Credit Card number scrambled, if you are queasy about mailing your full credit card information. To use the Interactive mode you must have a user ID and Log in to the NCM site. Either way, please jot down on the bottom of the form “Ticket sold by Kevin Wilson NCM Ambassador” so our club gets credit for the order. Also, please let me know if you send in an order (kevinwilson@q.com). Here is the current Raffle line-up:



2020 Elkhart Lake Blue Corvette Coupe
Limited to 2000 Tickets
Price: \$100
Drawing: May 29, 2020 2:30 PM

Current National Corvette Museum Events: The NCM is busy adding (and right now postponing and cancelling because of the Corona Virus) more great adventures, both on the road (Museum in Motion events - MiM) and at the museum (NCM) for the year. So be sure to keep an eye on this space for upcoming trips to consider for your future vacation planning purposes. Registration is open on some of these events now and they fill up quickly. You can find more details about them and sign up here:

<https://www.corvettemuseum.org/explore/events/>. These are the events currently posted by the museum:

- The C-4 Gathering @ NCM: May 14-16, 2020 (**CANCELLED**)
- MiM Branson Experience: May 26th –30th, 2020; Branson, MO (**SOLD OUT/Waitlist**)
- Michelin NCM Bash @ NCM **Re-Scheduled to** May 28–30, 2020 (Registration open)
- MiM Bash Tail of the Dragon Run & Biltmore: **Re-Scheduled to** May 31–June 3, 2020, Biltmore Estate NC (**Registration closed**)
- MiM Colorado Springs: July 12-17, 2020; Pikes Peak Drive (**SOLD OUT/Waitlist**)
- MiM Northeast Ohio: August 2-7, 2020 (Registration opens Spring 2020)
- 2020 Le Mans Viewing Party at NCM: **Re-Scheduled to** Sept 19-20, 2020; (Registration open)
- 2020 NCM-MiM Le Mans Tour: **Re-Scheduled to** Sept.11-22, 2020. England & France (**Sold Out**)
- MiM National Parks Tour: Sep 20-26; AZ & UT; (Registration opens Summer 2020)
- NCM 26th Anniversary Celebration & Hall of Fame Induction Sep 3–5, 2020 (Reg open late Spring)
- MiM Lap of Kentucky tour 1: 9/28-10/3 (Registration opens Summer 2020)
- MiM Lap of Kentucky tour 2: 10/12-10/17 (Registration opens Summer 2020)
- MiM Lap of Kentucky tour 3: 10/19-10/24 (Registration opens Summer 2020)
- MiM Michelin Corvette Racing Weekend @ AACA Museum, 10/23-24, Hershey, PA (Spring Reg)

- MiM Lap of Kentucky tour 4: 10/26-10/31 (Registration opens Summer 2020)

Did you know: The Discovery Channel debuted a new DRIVEN TV series on Monday, March 30? The series features Galpin Auto Sports' President Beau Boeckmann, custom car builder Dave Shuten and customization specialist "Mad Mike" Martin (best known for his appearance on MTV's Pimp My Ride"). The series focuses on saving automotive history and rescuing 'car culture from oblivion.' The trio will uncover historic and one-of-a-kind cars to rebuild and reintroduce back into the automotive history books. **The National Corvette Museum** will be featured on the Wishbone episode, set to air on May 11 at 8pm CT (check local listings).

That's all for now – Save the Wave!