

Bowling Green Trip – July 22 - 24

Friday started early, about 4:30am for most of us. Outta the house about 5:30am and on the way to Breakfast at Bob Evans on exit 99 of I-65S. Greg & Donna B met Dick & Bonnie P at the Shell station at 96th and Meridian. Dick pulled in a few minutes early on the north side of the station and began his wait. After a few minutes, Bonnie said doesn't that guy waving at you from the south side of the station look a lot like Greg? And so it began...

As they pulled out onto Meridian Street, Dick could be heard checking his radio and asking if Greg & Donna could hear him. They could. However, that was the last they heard of him as Dick pulled up alongside Greg & Donna while they were going around I-465 and shook his radio to indicate the dang thing just wasn't gonna work. Don't worry Dick, we all know people like that.

About 6:30am Greg, Donna, Dick and Bonnie pulled into Bob Evans and met up with Tom S and his grandson Thomas, Susie H and her friend Dana S, Brent and Betty W and Greg T. Dick took this opportunity to show Greg his failed radio and Greg recognized the channel number would dim when keyed and said this is easy your batteries are dead. Dick said no he just put brand new ones in the night before and that couldn't be the problem. Greg, not wanting to miss the chance, asked Dick if he left it on last night so it would be already to go this morning? Dick just shook his head but if you listened carefully you could probably hear Bonnie giggling.

All had a good breakfast and please note, as this is important, Tom got to eat. About 7:30am they saddled up to ride and Randy & Sherry S met them in the parking lot and 7 shiny Vettes were ready to pull out onto I-65 and head south to Bowling Green. Would you believe 6 shiny Vettes? As we began going through the light the traffic was a little congested and Randy had a better idea. Greg pulled over on the access ramp to let the Vettes regroup but was missing Randy. Sherry telephoned and said they were taking a short cut to the next exit south and would meet up with us as we cruised by. We started down I-65 and as we approached the next exit Donna called Sherry who said they weren't quite through with their short cut and we should go on ahead and they would catch up. So we did. Soon we got another phone call and found out Sherry & Randy were on I-65 and were driving hard to catch up and were only 9 miles behind. Randy's shortcut sounds like one of Greg's shortcuts... If you listened carefully then you might have heard a noise that sounded like Sherry giggling.

We cruised smoothly along on cruise control for several more miles with all 11 of us still sound asleep. Finally Greg was sufficiently refreshed that he woke up and pulled the group off the highway for a scheduled rest area stop at mile marker 22. This rest stop was made famous by a former CCCC member, Gary Stapleton (may he rest in peace). Gary had specifically stopped there after telling everyone that his wife requested it by saying on the radio "Dottie has to pee!" Then after we stopped Gary could be seen jumping out of the Vette and sprinting madly to the rest room. Gary was a super guy but had a small bladder and the saying "Dottie has to pee" was often heard on Drive N Dines and trips! By the time we got to the rest stop, Randy had been charging hard and driving fast, and had drastically closed the gap he was behind to only about 7 miles! We stayed long enough for him to rejoin the group and after a few minutes in the rest area we finally pulled onto I-65S with 7 shiny Vettes!

The rest of the trip to Bowling Green was pleasantly uneventful. Randy & Sherry had previously helped to time our Louisville arrival and we missed rush hour traffic and snuck right through downtown without even slowing down. We made 1 final pre-planned rest stop at exit 60 in Kentucky and the drove on to our exit 28. Once off the interstate we hit the Shell station for gas and drove the remaining 2 blocks to the NCM. Randy led us in because he knew a shortcut and we parked around the entrance circle in front of the museum. There we took pictures and then hoofed it inside where it was a bit cooler.

The NCM was expecting us and they had decided to grant us the special tour rate and that was even cheaper than using the \$2 off coupons Greg B had spied at the advertising stand at the exit 60 rest area. We spent an hour or so touring the museum and spending a few pesos in the gift shop and then we burnt rubber for the Corvette Café and lunch. After all we hadn't had anything to eat since breakfast! (That is if you don't count the cookies and bagels and other snack food some had brought along for the long caravan across the Indiana and Kentucky landscape.) The food was good and we found 10% off coupons in the previously mentioned rest stop booty. After lunch it was back to the NCM for a final look and another crack at lightening our purses in the gift shop. Some of us proceeded to do this better than others. Tom was rumored to have dropped about 400 clams and then he went back to get Thomas something. We finally wore ourselves out, some stopped for pictures on the infamous CCCC sponsored wooden bench, and then we climbed back in our chariots for a short spin down I-65 to the Drury Inn.

We had planned to eat at Smokey Bones that evening about 7:30pm but we all sat down for happy hour at 5:30pm and after a few drinks and a lot of the hot food the hotel supplied we belched a couple of times and asked if anybody really wanted to go out after that and eat? No one did except perhaps the Toms who had done a better job of restraining themselves but they were sports and just dove into the hot dog basket and grabbed some chips and cheese sauce. Still one had the feeling Tom had been looking forward to a nicer dinner but didn't get it. After the chow we took a short spin down the Street to a Friday night Cruise-In at Brusters Ice Cream shop. We parked the Vettes together and popped the hoods. At that point Tom confessed he had not opened the hood since he bought the Vette and didn't even know how. Greg B showed him where the release was and opened the hood. Think very dusty! No, you're not thinking near dusty enough! Tom closed the hood. We drew a crowd of friendly folks saying "Hi y'all". The accent down there is catchy. Greg's mom was born and raised in Louisville (say lowelville) and when he would go down and spend the weekend at Grandma's when he was little he would say "by y'all" and talk "southern" fer a dadburn week! Anyway, we made some new friends while we were there as the folks displayed that famous southern hospitality and were very friendly. We also met some members of the Bowling Green Corvette Club and some officials of the Somernites Power Cruise that we were participating in the next day. They were nice enough to help us out with some information and even promised to help make sure we got to the right places the next day. Real nice folks!

Saturday morning started with a group breakfast again but this time it was provided courtesy of the Drury Inn. Not bad really, hot and cold food and plenty of drink assortments. . There were almost no complaints about breakfast except one of our group, the name was omitted to protect the guilty, said it's too bad they didn't have a toaster that worked! A gentleman was nearby, overheard the comment, and replied that the toasters were working now. He was asked how he

got them working and we were told, "I plugged them in." Yeah, he had to get all technical on us! A few courtesy belches later we dusted off the Vettes and headed them towards the NCM about 8am. The NCM was the staging area for the Somernites Power Cruise where muscle cars, hot rods, Vettes, vintage cars and yes even a few Mustangs gathered together and then take about a 2 hour cruise behind a pace car to Somerset, KY. Caravans of cars come to Somerset from Louisville, Lexington, Bowling Green, Cincinnati and Nashville, TN and all converge on Somerset where they open up the downtown area for a mammoth cruise-in that has had as many as almost 1900 cars. We got our cars parked and staged. Then we found our new friends from Friday night and got the scoop that staying close to the front of the pack and the pace car would reduce our driving fatigue and decrease our wait time getting parked in the Cruise-in at Somerset. Once we got this information and our Cruise-in packets we headed for the cool air inside the NCM, a last crack at the gift shop and the miracle called a "rest room".

About 9:15am the pace car pulled out and Greg let it pass and then pulled out to "block" for the other Vettes. With a little radio encouragement all 7 of the Vettes managed to pull out together in a tight little group only about 2 cars behind the pace car. Quite a sweet maneuver actually and we were all rightfully proud of ourselves for pulling this precision stunt off! We began the cruise down the highway to Somerset and it was really an impressive sight to see what was probably well over a hundred special cars all caravanning by. It was neat to drive in it too although being in Vettes we would have preferred a slightly higher pace. The only negative that we heard was if they were gonna allow seniors to attend these Power Cruises they should stop at a rest area about halfway through it! You know, Dotties gotta pee! Eventually we arrived in Somerset and true to their word we were able to quickly get parked all together. After we parked the ensuing scene reminded us of the book titled "The Race to the Outhouse" authored by Willie Makit and Betty Wont.

With the book deal outta the way we headed off with a sigh of relief to see what the various vendors were selling. Greg bought a much needed "Dad's Garage" sign with the captions "If it's broke, call DAD" and "Open 24 Hours". Susie got some posters and others just looked at the cars. All of us had one thing in common, it was HOTT! HOTT is even hotter than HOT. It was definitely HOTT! Donna did a little prompting and Greg went off to find someplace cool for lunch. He soon discovered that there was only one place open that day nearby, a little café and ice cream shop called "Life is Sweet". He raced over to it and snagged a table while several people were placing their orders and then guarded the turf until everyone arrived. Soon all 13 of us were seated in the welcoming A/C and placed our orders. The bad news is the service was slow. The good news is the service was slow. They took our orders quickly but the cook was WAY, WAY, BEHIND! Tom won the lottery as he patiently waited about an hour and a half for a specialty order, "one hot dog please". After they called number 24 and he still hadn't gotten his #18 hot dog he went up to inquire. We're not quite sure what happened but Tom and Thomas were both good sports about it. They may have lost his order but Susie swore she heard them call #18 so maybe some enterprising person with more guts than bread grabbed the dog by the buns and said "thank you, thank you very much!" Regardless, the longer you waited for your food the longer you got to stay inside in the only a/c around so there wasn't any real complaining.

After we ate and took up space in the a/c for about as long as we figured we could milk a good thing we headed back outside. Did I mention it was HOTT? Well by now it was HOTTT! The

Toms and Greg T showed their superior intelligence and beat a path back to their COOL hotel rooms in Bowling Green. If Thomas was disappointed that they were leaving early it was soon forgot as Grandpa let him make use of that beginner's permit and drive the Vette and he went "whee all the way home"! Dick, Bonnie, Randy, Sherry, Susie, Dana, Greg and Donna took one last look at a couple of vendor tents (just to get outta the sun), glanced at a few more cars and headed for their Vettes. Not sure how to get outta Dodge. as they drove by the entrance tent Greg explained to the guard that we were just some Indianer dummies trying to get back to Bowling Green and asked "could y'all please point us in the right direction?" Well southern hospitality once again rose to the top and the policemen not only explained how to do it but also said "if y'all will follow us we'll lead you to it". So 4 high horsepower Vettes proceeded on a low speed chase of two policeman in a golf cart and those nice gentlemen guided us out of the show area and got us headed in the right directions. We should pray that after their kindness they don't ask for directions in downtown Indy sometime and take some "nice greenwalls" home with them! While the 4 Vettes mentioned above enjoyed the cool a/c on a leisurely cruise back to Bowling Green we did have 2 very brave souls that were left behind to soak up some afternoon sun. The Power Cruise was giving away a crate motor but you had to be present for the 6pm drawing to win it. Brent apparently really, really, really wanted this motor so he and Betty braved a possible heat stroke and sure death and stuck around. Some of us pitched in our tickets and wished him luck before we bolted for arctic air. Unfortunately we didn't wish hard enough. Sorry Brent, we were routing for you!

With breakfast and lunch out of the way we did what all good Corvette people do and started thinking about dinnuh! Since we had aborted the planned Smokey Bones trip on Friday night that became our plan A. A went to B though when someone pointed out that if we walked across the parking lot to either Olive Garden or Outback we could preserve good parking spots for the night. That kind of logic shouldn't be argued with so Greg B called Olive Garden but was informed that they would not take reservations, they would not take call ahead seating and with a party of 13 they could guarantee us a wait of at least an hour or more. (Sounds like they were willing to work real hard for our business!) Greg informed them that was great and it would give us plenty of time to talk and get reacquainted so we'd see them later! Next he called Outback and they also would not take reservations but they would take call ahead seating and they said they prided themselves in getting everyone seated in 20 minutes or less. They went on to say that a party of 13 would be more complicated but with 2 hours plus notice they should have sufficient time to minimize our wait. Greg left his name and told them we were mostly senior citizens but since we were meeting in the lobby at 7:30pm (and Corvette people are usually on time if food is involved) he thought we could limp across the parking lot in 10 minutes so expect us at 7:40pm. We actually arrived at the Outback at 7:30pm, a little early. As Greg was approaching the entrance a waitress was greeting people outside as the restaurant was full and the lady ahead of him asked for a table for two and was told there would be at least a 45 minute wait. Greg said "excuse me", stepped into the restaurant, walked up to the "table master" and told her the Corvette group was there and she said "please follow me your table is ready". WOW, nice start! The table was indeed ready and the waiter took drink orders immediately, brought out lots of bread and butter without prompting and soon took food orders. So life is sweet at lunch and life is good at dinner. Except, remember Tom? Tom ordered a simple Cobb salad and he waited and waited and waited some more. If you listened hard you could hear everyone giggle. Man, don't sit next to this guy when you go out to eat! After some of us had finished eating and Tom is

fending off good-natured ribbing because still no Cobb, the manager went to check and found the order hadn't ever been given to the kitchen. Oops! Greg accused the manager of being prejudiced against Tom because he must have known that Tom was a USC graduate. That backfired because the manager used to live in California and he and Tom quickly bonded and Tom soon after got his salad. Good food, good company and a good time and then after a short waddle across the parking lot it was time for goodnight.

The next morning it was time to head home but food somehow had to be involved. We hit the breakfast bar and then assembled in our Vettes and lined them up ready to leave. We did a quick count to 5 and then went looking for Greg T and Brent & Betty. Greg was ready and waiting in the lobby. Betty was checking out and said Brent went to load the Vette. About 7:15am we pulled out and Brent got on the radio and sheepishly said "you meant 7 ISH, right?" Betty explained that we needed to tell Brent 6:30 if we really meant 7. Now we know!

We went north towards Indiana but probably on a route that no man has gone before. A nice simple jump on I-65 and we'll be there in a flash could have gotten us to the food quicker but Greg B chose KY185N to KY79N to KY105N to KY261N to KY269N to KY144E... pant, pant... to KY376E to KY144E to KY79N to KY1051N to KY448S to Coleman Lane to BFE Street... It didn't start out promising though because Greg missed a turn and couldn't even find KY185N. A short stop, quick conference and look at Randy's map and Brent's GPS and we turned around and picked up the road to KY185N a scant 2 or 3 blocks back. Greg was worried though. He had heard Sherry tell a story about a farmer and his new bride going home after the wedding in their covered horse and buggy when the horse made a wrong turn. The farmer yelled at the horse and told him he only had three chances to get this right and yelled "that's one!" A few minutes later the horse goofed again and the farmer yelled "that's two!" Then a little while later the horse made yet another mistake and the irate farmer yelled "that's three" and suddenly pulled out his gun and shot the horse dead! The new bride was stunned and for a moment she couldn't say anything. Finally she started in on the farmer and told him there was just no reason for him to shoot the poor horse and started to explain just what she expected of her new man. The farmer looked at her for a minute and then said "that's one!" Greg was worried because he thought someone on a radio had said "that's one!" Not sure if that's a true story or not but if you listened carefully you could hear Donna giggling. Greg did get his act together and we took some wonderful curved roads through the Kentucky backcountry. The Corvette was designed with this kind of driving in mind and it is pure joy to run the car through these roads. We didn't ever even get close to approaching the limits of our cars but it was a lot of fun. Grandpa had given Thomas the keys for the ride home so he took the back door where he could drive at a more leisurely pace and in a few hours Thomas went from a young man with a beginner's permit to someone comfortable in guiding a Vette through the curves. Tom said that Thomas had claimed "it was even more fun than a video game!" All was not always well though. You may have heard that Greg B has said he sometimes develops a squeak in his car that appears to be coming from the passenger seat? A funny phenomenon is that the faster he goes the louder the squeak gets! Well Dick's car must have a similar component. He got on the radio and said that he could not take another turn as fast as the last couple he had taken because the squeak was becoming unbearably loud! We made a pit stop at a gas station soon after and Dick decided to drop to the back of the pack and slow down on the curves and catch up on the straights as the noise didn't seem to be so bad on straight sections of road. While we were stopped, the women headed inside for the

restrooms and there they met the Sunday morning good ol' boys club just hanging out, having coffee and a smoke. The ol' boys perked right up when they saw the women and the Corvettes and were probably a little disappointed when they saw there were men with them too. A couple of them seemed to keep their hopes up though when they saw Susie was actually driving her own Corvette. At the very least we gave them something to talk about the rest of their Sunday.

Finally we arrived at a Bed & Breakfast place called the Doe Run Inn in Brandenburg, KY. They serve a breakfast buffet from 8am to noon and a dinner buffet starting at 11am. We arrived so we could park our backsides down about 11am and partake from both menus. We arrived about 15 minutes early, and after some of us checked out the guest rooms in this very old building we proceeded to take full advantage of both menus for the next hour. Good food and many of us ate way too much!

Back on the road again after brunch we escaped into Indiana with echoes of Jim Nabor and "Back Home Again" playing in our heads. From there we took SR135 which is a great driving road in southern Indiana with hills and curves and good pavement and turns into pure delight as you approach and go through the Brown County area. We made a brief stop just before reaching the best parts of the road to study the weather and the Tom's elected to take the speedy route home and head for cover. The rest of us decided to plunge on and enjoy the road. A storm was threatening and it worked to our advantage as it scared the motorcyclists away and they had all headed for shelter. Cyclists love these roads but their rides are no match for Vettes on the curves and they can slow their 4 wheel brethren down. We all squealed through the curves, some of us with delight and some of us with da fright! The storm held off and we reached SR46. At this point we prepared to take what could be considered some of the more fun driving roads in Indiana. A back way through the woods with plenty of curves, bends, dips and hills and a stop sign conveniently located every 10 miles or so. We ran the first leg and stopped with grins on our faces so we could regroup and then we discovered that Dick had decided to refuel and then bolt out SR46 headed for lighter sky and the speed of I-65, probably to get his baby to bed sooner so those nasty ol' rain drops didn't hurt her. He missed some good driving but probably helped Bonnie recover the color in her white knuckles sooner. Brent did his best to scare Betty and possibly succeeded. Greg's passenger seat was doing that thing again. Dana kept her cookies but we think she might have been out cold for much of the trip. She did ask Susie at one point if they could go back and get her stomach but Susie said not to worry it would catch back up in a little while. Greg T just seemed to be having fun! Sherry was heard to comment that she thought maybe this kind of road was easier on the driver then it was on the passenger and she proposed we schedule a future trip south where the guys drop the gals off at Edinburgh to shop and then go play on the back roads until the gals have spent all the gas money. Sounds like a possible win, win? We finished the first leg of this road at a pretty good pace and then backed off the throttle a little for the last couple of sections as the rain finally found us. Nothing heavy, just enough to make the road a little wet and make spirited driving a little slicker.

A lot of driving on this trip. Dick logged 768 miles. We did some Interstate cruising, some Power Tour cruising with a lot of interesting and neat cars, some relaxed and fun driving on the back roads and some more spirited driving on the bendy roads. We got to enjoy the capabilities of our cars and share a memorable time with friends. Thanks to all of you for riding with us!