

# **Road Report, SACC National Convention July 30-Aug 1, 2022. Carson City, NV.**

## **An epic journey....by Eric Hershkowitz**

My wife and I headed out of Bakersfield bright and early on July 28, over the Tehachapi Mountains and into what weather predictors promised, was an epic heat wave. We're already feeling nervous. Our '59 Corvette, fortunately didn't bear the burden, weight and convenience of that unnecessary air conditioning, so we were loaded with every imaginable cooling device, stored conveniently in an ice chest between the seats.

Originally, we planned to leave on the 29th, however, we decided to join Bob Brown and Fred and Barbara Kokaska who were driving from San Diego County. That was a wise decision as it is always more fun to travel in a group and, I know from experience, that Bob Brown is the ultimate wagon master. He always knows and appreciates a scenic route, plans adequate rest stops and photo opportunities, is mechanically adept and is just a great guy to be around. (But don't let him hear the last comment there...I will never hear the end of it)

We met the others at a little "store" and gas station where Hwy 395 meets Hwy 14, called Brady's. If people around you are much too cheerful and getting on your nerves, I would recommend that you stop there for a healthy dose of Sourpuss. Picture the clerk as suitable for "Night of the Living Dead". That was the last unfriendly face we had to suffer for the entire trip.

Bob and Fred had planned to make the first leg to Mammoth Lakes and spend the night, and we thought that sounded like a good idea. At over 7000 feet elevation and 103-degrees air temp, the fuel-injected '59 was running like a well-oiled...hmmm well, unlike any machine I've ever come across. We did make it to the Alpenhof Lodge parking lot where we slid into a spot and "let her die". One thing that those without Rochester fuel injection don't get to enjoy is the treasured experience of fuel percolation, and the art of coasting into your parking spot where the car will stubbornly remain until the next day...you can count on it. The hotel, of course, was not air conditioned because it never gets over 80-degrees in Mammoth...or so they say. It was very fortunate that a brewery was located within walking (or staggering) distance from the hotel.



(pic.1)

Shortly at the hotel, a fourth Vette arrived to join our caravan. It was Don and Denise Eckhart in their '58. They were on the road all the way from Dallas. You meet some really resilient drivers on these trips! They put us "around-the-blockers" to shame.

Mexican food for dinner, adult beverages (what else?), a nice walk and back to the hotel. "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray by morn' the '59 will be cool enough to creep".





(pic. 2)

Friday morning all the solid axles were purring like tigers (no...wait, that's a Ford product?) as we headed out of Mammoth and hit the open road for a very scenic drive towards Nevada. Ahh, that cool morning air feels refreshing at 90-degrees!





Photo opportunity along the Walker River



Our merry little group of four...

(pic. 3,4)

At Markleeville, three of the four decided to have a short rest stop and Fran and I headed across a construction zone then pulled over to wait for the group. To let the heat escape, I raised the hood which



attracted the attention of a passing Highway Patrol woman who stopped to check on us. When I explained that we were fuel injected, she completely understood our predicament and felt so sorry for us that she offered us a donut! That is absolutely true. I have never experienced the irony of being offered a donut by a cop. She was very nice and had two boxes from which to choose our favorite sugar-infused fat-fried delicacy. The others found Cutthroat Brewing back in Markleeville, so we returned and enjoyed a hearty and boisterous lunch....on top of our free donut.

Out of Markleeville the journey was very scenic with some winding roads. At least I think the road was winding. It was hard to see outside as we had the misters going in the car. They really helped, but it probably looked like we were riding in a swamp cooler.

No more donuts were encountered as we made it to the host hotel, Gold Dust West Casino and Hotel in Carson City.



(pic. 5)

Rested up for a little while until we got the call to duty. Head to the Casino bar! There we met up with more new friends, Al and Mary from Oregon. I have to say, we enjoyed the company of everyone so much. They were all a blast, and we got along very well. Bob seems to attract a joyful bunch...hey, we're a perfect example! Dinner at the hotel restaurant, a good night's sleep, complimentary breakfast at the same location on Saturday and we're ready to roll again.

Today's plan, head to Virginia City, only about a 25-mile drive. As the SACC convention was being held the week before Hot August Nights in Reno, there was a special event and car show in Virginia City. The backdrop of the old western mining town contrasted against all of the gleaming machines lining the main street. Today was a cool 103-degrees and the Vette, again, was running like a.... never mind. Fortunately Virginia City has a bar, well, in those days they called it a saloon, in fact there are many. But I have to tell you they work just like a bar.



(pic. 6a)

We spent the better part of the day there, in Virginia City that is, not the bar. Back to the hotel for more relaxation and a welcome reception where we met many more Solid Axle owners and some nice people. Well, you know, what I mean is, they're the same thing.

Sunday brought the option of tech sessions or a tour of Virginia City. I hadn't signed up for the tech sessions, because I already know all there is to know, however, shamed by my male comrades I decided to change my plans. And I am glad that I did. While Fran and Barbara took a steam train ride to more adventures in Virginia City I found out that, apparently, I didn't know all there is to know. A very informative and enlightening tutorial was presented by Jim Lockwood on Rochester Fuel Injection and fuel percolation. Now, why would I care about that? I was really impressed by Jim's data collection methods and scientific approach to this problem which, of course, I don't have. I came away from that presentation with a plan.

The other speaker was Joe Calcagno, with whom, I am very familiar. I have heard Joe speak on several occasions and actually purchased a '62 from him years ago. He's a very informative expert and has extensive knowledge about almost every aspect of our vehicles. Joe brought a very interesting, actual front suspension/steering assembly with multiple cutaways to allowed inspection of the internal components.



# Joe Calcagno's steering and suspension study model.

**(pic. 6b)**



In addition, Joe is a super nice guy and very willing to share his experience and knowledge. That evening we enjoyed a delicious dinner and fun gathering with the entire convention, at Red's BBQ. Fran and I really enjoyed the company of Joe and Karen Calcagno during the dinner. I don't know how they felt about me, however, probably the same way most folks do. Monday was planned for the road tour.



(pic. 7)

We enjoyed another complimentary hotel breakfast, picked up our box lunches and joined the Caravan to our first rest stop, Genoa, the oldest settlement in Nevada. It was a scenic and pleasant drive, made even more striking by the long line of classic Corvettes strutting down the highway.



(pic. 8)

This is really the best way to enjoy vintage motoring!



**Beautiful countryside...Solid Axles still improve the scenery!**



**(pic. 9)**

We walked our way around Genoa and, remarkably, found ourselves at a saloon (or, some may call it a bar).





Arrival and rest stop in Genoa, NV



What can I say?...bars have good seating.  
Bob is...you guessed it....behind the Camera.

(pic 10, 11)

I don't know how these things keep happening, but there seems to be some sort of twisted pattern here and I swear, it's not my fault.



After additional countryside driving, we had a pleasant stop for lunch at a county park.



(pic. 12)

A lot of people were enamored by our Vettes, and some were amazed that the fuel-injected one could make it all the way from Bakersfield. I was amazed too.

The drive back to the hotel took us along Lake Tahoe and more fantastic scenery.



(pic. 13)

During this leg, Fran and I were enjoying the sight of a very large buck prancing in the woods near the highway. As we passed, I watched it in my rear view when the buck decided to prance across the highway right in front of Jack and Candy's '61. Holy cow!!! (But that's not what I said). The deer hit their windshield, bounced off, hit the road and miraculously got back up and limped away as Jack swerved into the oncoming lane. That was really bad, but it could have been really badder! Nobody was hurt except the buck (a little) and Jack's windshield. No problem there, we all know how easy it is to replace and re-frame a windshield on a Solid Axle Vette. Remember my description of the clerk at Brady's? Jack and Candy didn't even look as sad as that guy after the accident. They were definitely counting their blessings and the fact that they had a trailer to take their car back to Pleasanton.



**This is what happens when you hit a deer...if you're lucky!**



**(pic. 14)**

That evening we attended the banquet and business meeting. Don and Denise, rightfully, received the long-distance award. I won the “who-could-stack-the-most-food-on-their-plate at-the-buffet” award. We bid good-bye to all of our new and old friends with many thanks for the joyous company and camaraderie on the road.

We left Carson City at 7:15 am on Tuesday and arrived in Bakersfield at 4:00 pm, enjoying one more heat-soaked, water-mist-surrounded, fuel-percolating drive through Bakersfield’s 100-plus-degree climate. Not surprisingly, we coasted into the driveway with a heat-worn and tired starter solenoid that quit at the same time as the engine. The end of our trip was punctuated by us pushing the ’59 into the garage.

Bob, Fred, Don and Denise attended Hot August Nights that Tuesday and headed to home on Wednesday. Bob arrived safely in spite of a rear axle (is that a “solid” rear axle?) nearly void of lubricant due to a rear wheel bearing which decided to disassemble itself. At least it got him home. Now all of us are turning wrenches and getting ready for the next trip. We may not be smart, but we’re tough.





**This is what happens when you fry an axle bearing...if you're lucky. Bob is behind the camera...and the wrench.**



**The we-drive-Corvettes to lunch bunch. Our unanimously-appointed wagon master, Bob Brown is now in front of the camera! He is at the head of the table, because he gets the check.**



(pic. 15, 16)