

The Santa Clarita Valley Contemporary Car Club Newsletter



Rich Soto
Newsletter Editor
Contact at:
(661) 263-9397
richsoto@attbi.com

Words from the President

By Dick LaGrasta, President

Hello there fellow car club members....

Notice anything different about this newsletter? Okay, a hint might help. This month's newsletter is the news of February and March combined into one. The reason for this is quite simple really. As a club, we usually do not do too much in the way of cruising during the winter months. This gives your president and the newsletter editor/webmaster a chance to get some other things done pertaining to the website and some changes that are being contemplated within the car club. These changes will hopefully allow us to do a little more this year in the way of cruising to various places, some new shows and cruise spots are also being considered.

The first big (well for the high desert anyways) car show is the one in Palmdale at the Burger King in the Rancho Vista area. This show is usually an interesting one to go to, but you have to be aware of two things. First, you have got to get there early if you want a spot that won't leave you parked, "way in the heck out there someplace!"

It is a very popular show with all of the people in the Palmdale/Lancaster area and they promote this show well. They have a lot of car people show up and everyone has a good time. Now, I said there were two things. The other reason is (yeah you guessed it right) the weather can be a real downer sometimes. I have been to this show when it has been so bitter cold, with unbelievable winds that can whip up in such a short time and really blow everything all over the parking lot. I have been there in the summer time when there was no breeze and you just cooked like an egg in a frying pan with temps approaching well over one hundred degrees (I saw 110 there one time...oh my God!). Then were days that were oh so perfect with a balmy evening that you just did not want to go away. Take your pick. It is a crapshoot once in a while, but we have enjoyed this show in the past and maybe we can start to enjoy it again. We'll just have to wait and see.

I know there are mixed emotions about going to the Auto Spa Show, as a club. I guess, I can understand some of the hard feelings. But, this one is here in the SCV. On a good summer's night, this show too, can be fun for club members. It is close by enough, that if you did not want to travel far, you might consider it.

I guess the Route 66 Car Show is not going to need an intro to any of you who have been there before. It is going to happen on the same time schedule as it



"There is nothing like getting behind the wheel of your very own vehicle and "putting the pedal to the metal"; and changing the ozone level..."

Volume 3, Issue 2

February/March 2003

Cruise Nights:

- **Auto Spa**—
First Saturday
- **Route 66**—
Second Saturday
- **Burger King**—
Fourth Saturday
- **Fuddruckers**—
Every Saturday

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Words from the President (Continued)

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has been for the last couple of years. I am assuming that most of us might want to show up and just plain have a good time, mingle with some old friends and listen to the band. Again, this might not be too bad a deal for anyone that may be a little "low in the gas tank" and may want to go to a show that is close by and in the SCV. This show has lots of fond memories for most of us. For others, well what can I say; we tried something new and did the best we could. We put Canyon Country on the SCV map as "the place to go" on a Saturday night. You couldn't ask for more than that.

These were the places this club used to visit on a regular basis and these were good times for us. But, the times have changed and I guess we are going to seek out new places to visit that should be fun. With the price of "The Good Gas" going way, way up this summer, I can see we are going to have to choose where we go carefully. Perhaps, we can vote for the places we feel we'd enjoy the most. So please, plan on attending as many monthly car club meetings as you possibly can. Maybe you'll be the one that comes up with a really great car show that we will all enjoy going to!

On a personal note, I want to thank all of you wonderful people who took the time to contact me and express your concern for "The First Lady's" condition! In March, Cheryl (my lovely wife) suffered a heart attack and was laid up for almost a month. Her condition has improved enough that she has returned to work (though not with a smile, but it was the doctor's and her decision) and we'll just have to wait and see how things go. She suffered a "low grade" heart attack that was

thankfully caught in time and did not require an operation. It is being treated with medicine, diet control and an exercise program.

Anytime you have a condition as serious as this, you want make sure that you take care of yourself and most of all...be thankful for all of those wonderful people that wish you well and say a prayer for you. Friendship and fellowship are really what life is all about. Cheryl would like to express her thanks to all of you for your cards and letters. You touched her heart deeply and she appreciates each and every one of you for your concern. Thank you all, once again.

I hope to have my car up and running by spring-time, because I am getting "cabin fever." On a nice weekend, I can see a few of you getting the bug and pulling the "hot rod" out of the garage for a few "warm up laps" around the Santa Clarita Valley. Oh, what a neat sound that is! How beautiful those vehicles look with the sun glaring off of those sharp paint jobs! It does not matter who your loyalty goes to: GM, Ford, or Mopar. There is nothing like getting behind the wheel of your very own vehicle and "putting the pedal to the metal"; and changing the ozone level, just by opening up that sweet American V-8 power plant's throttle to "wide open" for a few seconds and listening to the sound of freedom unleashed. Let's roll!

Sincerely, Dick

Board Member Contact List

Name	Position	Home Phone	E-Mail Address
Rich LaGrasta	President	(661) 263-9848	ibiltem@aol.com
Phil Arnold	Vice President / Sgt. at Arms	(661) 269-8115	pjsbaby57@aol.com
Dave Zelman	Tour Chairman	(661) 513-9886	trifivelvr@attbi.com
Dwight / Jodi Emerson	Co-Treasurers	(661) 296-6541	dwightemerson@earthlink.net
Rich Soto	Newsletter Editor / Historian	(661) 263-9397	richsoto@attbi.com
Eileen Keating	Secretary	(661) 296-7424	keating@earthlink.net

It Was Just a Matter Of Time - Part 3

By Dick LaGrasta

Hello everyone and welcome to part 3 of a segment of the newsletter that is going to show our readers the progress being made so far on my '62 Chevy 409 engine. Getting all the parts needed for the rebuilding of the 409 is taking a little bit longer than I anticipated. But, I have planned for this and have found other sources that have been real good about finding those certain parts that make this "bastion from the past," such a unique engine to rebuild. So, sit down for a spell and I'll try to fill you in with my text and of course some pictures that you may find interesting to look at.

Photo #1 is a shot of the new 409 crankshaft that has been worked over by micro polishing the journals, deburring the crank throws and then having the rotating mass balanced.



Photo #1

This crankshaft is a forged steel "hi-performance" crank that was used for the solid lifter 409's and has larger holes drilled thru for better oiling. They have been chamfered on this crank. It has been turned 10/10 and will work in unison with the new connecting rods, and other internal parts. My old crankshaft that was in the engine was also a forged original 409 unit, but it had not been balanced or cleaned up. I figured I would spend almost as much going through the crank (in labor) as I would have

getting a crank that had already been set up and almost ready to install. By the way, I won't mention prices here. Because if I did that, even I would have to sit down and question my sanity redoing this engine!

Photo #2 is a close-up of the eight new forged aluminum "Ross Manufactured" pistons that are thirty thousandths oversize and run an extended skirt with special provisions on top for the intake valve (you'll see this in the next photo) clearance, which my other pistons did not have. It will use a "Moly" set of rings designed for the 409. Yes, they are special too, but available upon request from certain manufacturers that still make them for the 348/409...lucked out again!

As you might recall, my other set of pistons were of the cast steel type with no provision for the intake valve and ran a very low compression ratio, 7.50 to 1 to



Photo #2

be exact. These new pistons are of the OEM type and run a high compression ratio of 11.00 to 1. (yes, I know, that is pretty high for the street. But I have a plan here and I think that it is going to work out okay.). These are going to be balanced and polished.

Photo #3 shows the topside of those "Ross Pistons" with the relief cut out for the large intake valve and after these have been balanced and polished. I will be receiving a set of rings and the floating wrist pins



Photo #3

will be set up to accept the waiting connecting rods. Finding a manufacturer that makes pistons for the dated 348/409 engines is not the easiest thing to find, but there is "Ross" (reasonable priced...sort of). Or, you can have them made by "Venolia" and of course you might want to take out a small business loan to purchase these "hand made" beauties, which can set you back about \$250.00 each! This is way out of my budget!

Photo #4 is most interesting because there on the work bench is a bunch of parts that took some time to get, but nothing compares to the eight new forged and blue printed "409" connecting rods. They may look a little dirty, but these have been sitting a spell and will be cleaned up and dressed up with all sorts of neat stuff;

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It Was Just a Matter Of Time - Part 3 Continued

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Photo #4

from bearings to balancing; from polishing to resizing. All of this will have to be done before they are ready for the bottom end. These are getting fairly hard to find. If you want to stay close to stock, you want to make sure these rods are properly taken care of before they are installed in the block, so that they will last for a long time.

Photo #5 is a shot of the one part of this engine that could not be bored out, until this part was attached to the top of the block. Because, this block's deck height is 17 degrees higher than a small block (this makes up



Photo #5

the combustion chamber in the bore...squelch area instead of in the cylinder head) or any other 90 degree V-8 configuration, a special plate had to be made to sit on top of the block. This is so the boring machine can get a straight shot at the cylinder bores. These plates are getting very hard to find. Although some shops have had them "stashed away" for the day when a 348/409 owner rolls in to the shop and says, "Here is my 348/409. Can you bore this engine out for me?" Then he hands the mechanic a (urser) and the fun begins. Anyways, you get the idea. I was very lucky that this one was found and was "on loan" from Don's friend

(Cheryl's brother), who just happened to have one!

Photo #6 is the portable boring machine in all of its glory. Although I had to rebuild the rebuild, I was very fortunate that the 8 cylinder bores had very little



Photo #6

or no taper to them (lucky again). To take this block only thirty thousandths over was a "piece of cake" because the bores were freshly honed during the first rebuild. These were in very good shape and posed no problem getting them oversized and cleaned up. Having a "heavy duty service block" seems to have helped this "old dog" stay within specs over all these years. That means hopefully this engine will live again and

stay together for a long time!

I am figuring that a thirty thousandths overbore on all eight cylinders will change the cubic inch displacement from the original 409 cid. to approximately 412 cid. or very close to that. This is not a big jump in cubes, but this was done not so much for power but mostly just to keep everything in sync and balanced for longevity.

Photo #7 is a close-up shot of the portable boring machine "doing its thing" on the engine's number 7 cylinder bore. This machine is really a trip to use and can work wonders on engines that have not been damaged badly, but just need "cleaning up" and some light bore work. If this engine had needed a sleeve installed (maybe due to a crack in the block) and had a lot of light cracks that would have been found by magnifluxing, then it might have gone into a shop to have that sleeve or any other component properly installed. Then, the



Photo #7

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It Was Just a Matter Of Time - Part 3 (Continued)

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block would be rechecked under a black light for any more stress cracks in the block, or other problems like a bad set of mains or maybe an align bore (at the crank) concern. Lucky for me, I had no such problems on this block, whew!

Photo #8 shows the bottom side of the block with

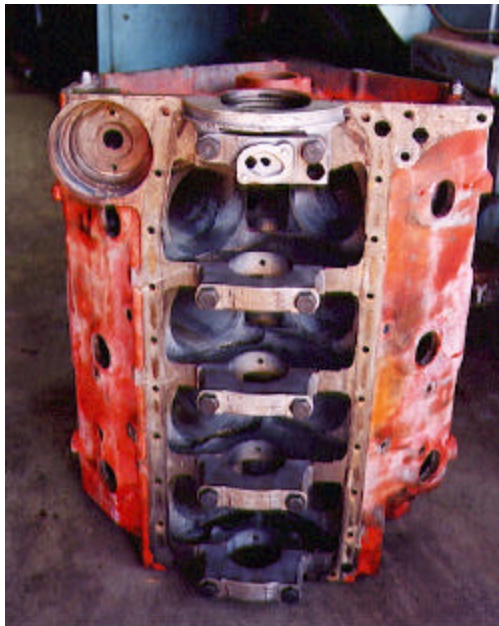


Photo #8

the mains attached, so that it could be handled and put into the "hot tank" after boring the cylinders. The honing process will then be done; the bore sized and rechecked for no bore taper, then a re-hot tanking and block cleaning (removing all paint and loose metal filings inside the blocks passages). The block then will be cleaned again with soapy water and a sponge and of course a blow dry. All specs will be measured once again just to make sure that all those "409 OEM parts" are going to be "happy" in their new home for a while and live together in harmony while making a decent amount of horsepower.

That will hopefully take place early in the month of April, where I hope to be able to have pictures of the completed bottom end and some pictures that will show the heads and all of their new "stuff" getting ready for assembly. So, stay tuned everyone and we'll hopefully see you all next month for a report on those crazy looking heads that have sat on top of those "W" engines since they were released in 1958. They were updated many times over the years to accept bigger and better parts, as the race to build faster street stock machines from the manufacturers was just starting to get hot, back in the summer of 1962.

February Meeting Minutes

Coco's Restaurant
February 26, 2003
By Eileen Keating

The meeting almost didn't happen as the restaurant had given out our meeting room to an art club and the art club wouldn't leave. So, before we "walked out," they threw some tables together out in the regular restaurant area, where all the public could hear our President tell his jokes. Hopefully this won't happen again, as this is the second time it has happened and we don't want a third time. They ended up giving us baskets of bread to hold us over until we got our food.

The meeting was called to order and started with Old Business: (1) The Financial Report was given and we are again solvent for another month. Next on the agenda was "What is needed for 2003." It was asked if anyone needed to order any items such as the laminated car club sign, with placards, shirts, or ID cards for the car club members. So anyone who needs to order any of the above-mentioned items, contact Phil & Janet at pjsbaby57@aol.com.

New Business: (1) The first discussion was about events to be put on the Clubs calendar, with the Cal-West Open

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February Meeting Minutes (Continued)

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House, which is Friday, February 28, as part of the events. Next was the Burger King Palmdale March 1st, which is their first show of the year. Then there was Boomers Classic Car Show June 14th, from 12 to 5 pm at Camarillo Airport. We also have a flyer available on the Boomers Classic Car Show, if needed by anyone. There is pre-registration, which is \$25 and includes concert and activities. The event benefits the Carl Wilson Cancer Foundation. There will also be the 1st show of the year for the Route 66 Car Show set for Saturday, March 15. It will be set up for the 3rd Saturday of the coming months. No new business needed to be discussed. We closed at almost 8 pm and Eileen Keating (Me) was the lucky winner of the Chrome 50/50 pot (\$9.00) for the evening. The meeting then came to a close.

March Meeting Minutes

Coco's Restaurant
March 26, 2003
By Eileen Keating

The meeting was called to order and started with Old Business: (1) The Financial Report was given and we are again solvent for another month. (2) Some of the members went to the Burger King Show in Palmdale. It was the first of the season. They now have a new setup for the cruise. (3) It was also heard that the Route 66 wouldn't be starting until possibly May. (4) The Jewel City Kiwanis Car Show was attended by some of our members, but they weren't here to talk about it.

New Business: (1) The first discussion was about the sale of club shirts at discount to club members. The shirts will be 20% off and the price list and quantity will be sent out by e-mail. So, if anyone is interested, contact Phil Arnold. (2) There was an announcement for anyone who would like to be the Cruise director as Dave Zelman will not be able to continue as the Cruise director for the time being. (3) There was suggestions for a cruise for the coming month of April. Nothing was decided, as of the end of the meeting. (4) Future cruises were discussed with the Titanic Artifacts display at the Science Museum in Exposition Park. It has replicas of the main staircase; first and 3rd class cabins are on display; plus a piece of the Titanic. Also, the Tom Sparks Tour was brought up. It is a private collection of cars that is in North Hollywood. (5) Camarillo Airport will be having a car show on June 14th from noon to 5 pm. It's called Boomers Classic Car Show & Spring Fling. They are hoping to attract 1000 cars with all the room they have at the Airport. There is a Car Show in Simi Valley in the Santa Rosa area. If anyone in the club has any suggestions for future cruise destinations, please contact our President, Dick LaGrasta. (6) The October weekend tour was brought up asking for suggestions of where to go. Palm Springs was brought up and suggested it be on the motorcycle weekend, like last time.

Howard Stanke was the lucky winner of the Chrome 50/50 pot (\$8:00) for the evening and Cliff Huffman won a pen from Mike Novins' Cal-West Radiator. The meeting then came to a close.

SEMA Action Network Legislative Alert

URGENT LEGISLATIVE ALERT (UPDATE) Old Car Emissions Exemption Remains Threatened in California:

As you are aware, legislation has been introduced in the California Senate to repeal the state's current rolling emissions test exemption for vehicles 30 years old and older. The original S.B. 708 repeals the current pro-hobbyist exemption

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SEMA Action Network Legislative Alert (Continued)

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and replaces it with an exemption for vehicles that are 45 or more model years old commencing January 1, 2005.

SEMA is being told that the bill's sponsor, Sen. Dean Florez, may have plans to amend the bill to retain the 30-year rolling exemption but add a qualifying mileage limitation. In other words, if you drove your older vehicle over a specified number of miles, the exemption would no longer apply and vehicles of all model years would be forced back into the Smog Check program. **SEMA REMAINS OPPOSED TO S.B. 708!!!**

We Urge You to Contact Senator Florez Immediately to Oppose the Imposition of a Mileage Limit on the 30-Year Exemption. The arguments remain the same:

- Existing law in California exempts all pre-1974 vehicles from emissions testing until 2003. After 2003, vehicles 30-years old and older are exempt from emissions testing.
- California's current emissions testing exemption recognizes the minimal impact of vehicles 30-years old and older on vehicle emissions and air quality.
- Vehicles 30-years old and older constitute a small portion of the overall vehicle population and are a poor source from which to look for emissions reduction.
- Antique and classic vehicles are overwhelmingly well maintained.
- Vehicles 30-years old and older often serve as necessary low-cost transportation for low income Californians, the elderly, students, etc.

Legislators and regulators are feeling the heat from a failed effort to meet air quality goals and are looking for a convenient scapegoat. The old car hobby should not carry the burden of their mistakes!

Please phone, fax or e-mail Senator Florez to express your continued opposition to S.B. 708. Senator Florez can be reached at :

916/445-4641 (Phone)

916/327-5989 (Fax)

Senator.Florez@sen.ca.gov (E-mail)

Visit us on the Web @
www.
ContemporaryCarClub.
org

