

2018 NCRS Convention

By Paul Pollock
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The National Corvette Restorers Society (NCRS) held their annual convention in Las Vegas NV July 15 thru 19, 2018.

It's a custom that for each convention, Corvettes that are 50 years old are celebrated; so for 2018, it was the "Year of the '68". This would make attendance at the 2018 NCRS National Convention a must do for Francie and myself for two reasons: Our Corvette is of 1968 vintage and we love to visit Las Vegas.

The NCRS is quite an organization and I recommend its membership to anyone who owns a vintage Corvette. They are serious about Corvettes that you'll see if you attend a convention or one of the regional meets.

A lot of the NCRS activities involve judging for the various Flight, Duntov, McLellan and other award categories.

Judging at NCRS is taken very seriously. The thoroughness and attention to detail is quite remarkable. The NCRS offers comprehensive training seminars, some of which were available at the convention.

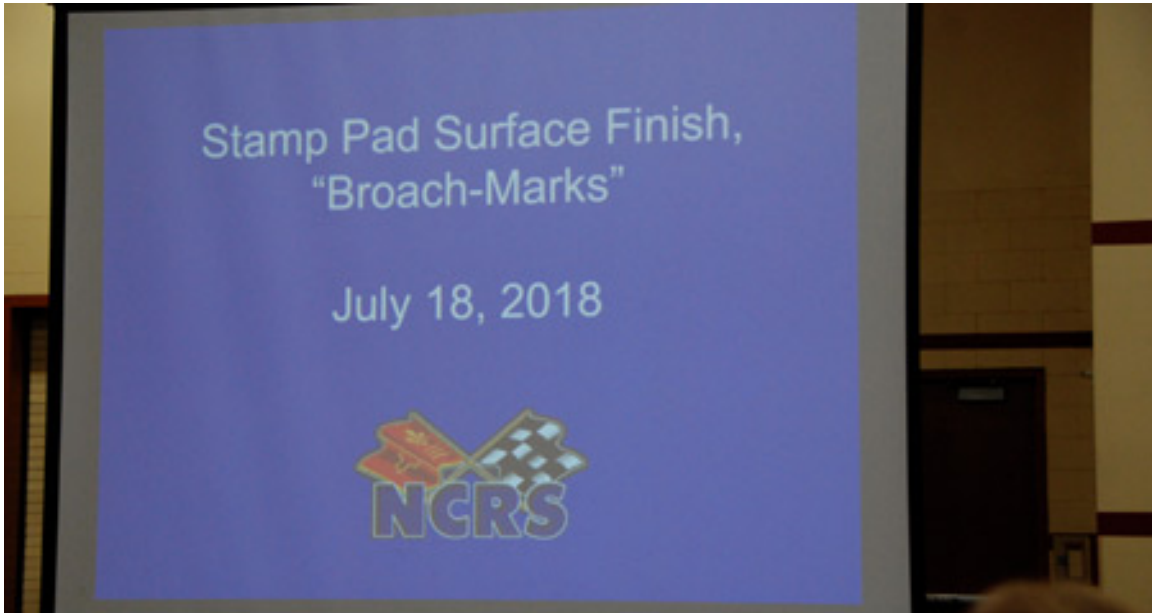


Judges work in teams and spend a lot of time with the car and its owner. From what I saw, professionalism was in evidence as judges point out details in the Corvette, its presentation, and owners taking the comments respectfully.

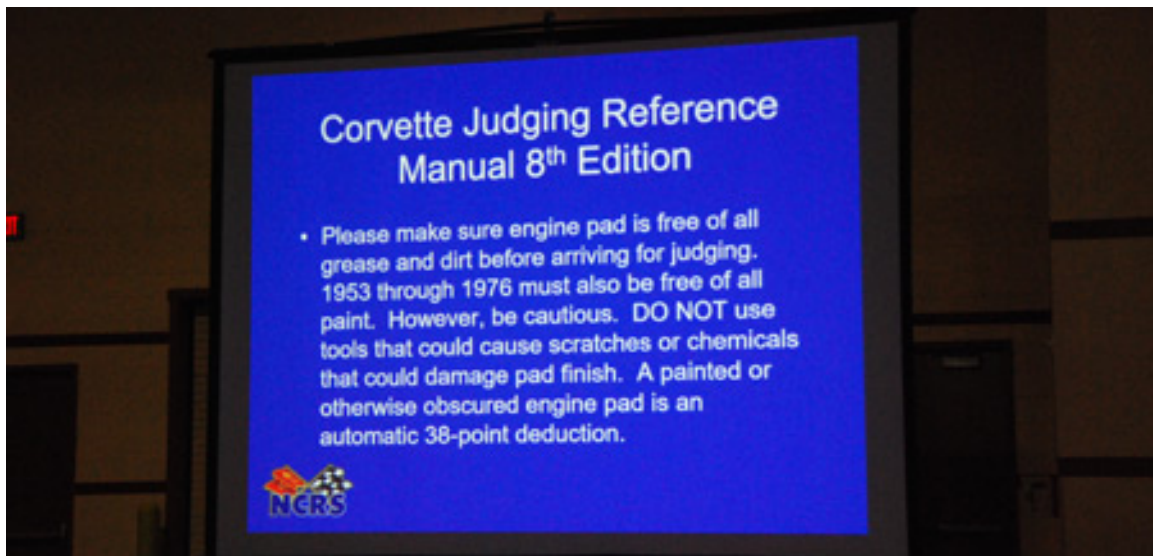




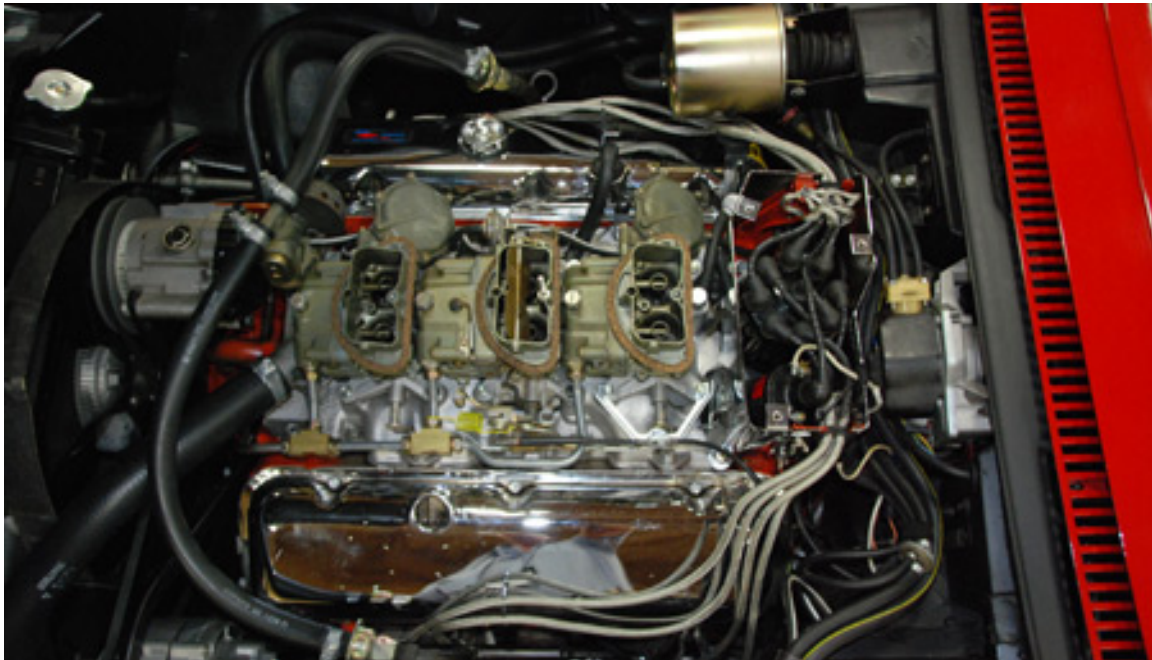
Two lifts were available to enable the judges to get a good sustained look at the underside of the cars.



There is occasional fraud in the Corvette collector car world, a situation exacerbated by rising prices and the fact that official records for Corvettes built in St Louis (model years from 1954 to mid 1981) do not exist. This has resulted in a situation, where, as the joke goes, "mid year big block production continues to rise". A lot of the content of the seminars involved detecting the fraud and, conversely, pointing out what might seem suspicious is actually normal production practice of the day.



The seminars also provided a glimpse into social/economic norms of the day. We might think of the Corvette production workers in St. Louis as dedicated craftsman building future icons but that is a skewed viewpoint. Working conditions were hard and production and quality procedures were different from what we find acceptable today. There was even one case where the documentation of a Corvette indicated that it was a convertible when it was actually a coupe! The line workers were mostly interested in their shift finishing or the upcoming weekend and management did not enforce high quality and production standards.



At most car shows you get to see the engine but not the carburetor. At an NCRS event you'll be exposed to all sorts of carburetor details as the air cleaners are removed to facilitate judging of the details. Above is a 1968 Corvette equipped with an L71 engine.



Dave McLellan (left) and Dave Hill, both past Corvette chief engineers, gave a popular and interesting talk.



“Man and woman does not live for Corvette alone.” Somebody once told me that but I’m still not convinced. Maybe that was the reasoning behind the other activities offered, including a deluxe Hoover Dam tour. I had wanted to visit the historical landmark for a long time and finally got the chance at an excursion during the NCRS convention.



During the 1960s, Carroll Shelby and his legendary Cobras were fierce Corvette rivals, both on the racetrack and the street. Time seems to mellow us all and a tour of the Carroll Shelby Heritage Center was on the NCRS convention schedule. It was a fascinating look at an American icon and his amazing cars.





This was a real treat for your author. During their bankruptcy blues, GM released six fully federalized 1989 prototype Corvette ZR-1s to the public. They are recognizable as 1989 model year with the covered wheel bolts – 1990 ZR-1s featured exposed wheel bolts. To me, the C4 ZR-1 is one of the most interesting aspects of the [Corvette Story](#). On display at the NCRS convention was two of the '89s and it was a real treat to discuss their provenance with the owner.





More evidence of the 1989 ZR-1 unusual pedigree: The flat dash and a steering wheel without an airbag. The '90 ZR-1 had a more curvaceous dash and the steering wheel featured an air bag. Also note the "valet key" on the horizontal surface.



This 1953 – sn 298 – was another highlight. The owners were there and it turned out they had owned it since 1971. I thought that they might be the longest term single owner for a 1953 but they said no, that there were at least six and maybe as many as a dozen people who had owned a '53 for more than 47 years. Remarkable.



GM did not sell hardtops for 1953s but aftermarket suppliers did. This is a nice funky example.



Monday morning (4:30 AM!) there was a meeting of all the owners of Corvettes that were to be part of the display. We then waited our turn to be escorted into the hall. For some it was a four+ hour wait, not a comfortable task during a Las Vegas heat wave. We had to have less than two gallons of fuel onboard, a fire extinguisher, the fuel cap taped up and the battery disconnected.





Finally made it to the display hall. Time: 8:30 AM. Francie earned many wife points.



Always a great sight: A set of '67 big blocks with opened stinger hoods lined up.



A nod and a tip o' the hat to the classic Vette parts vendors that make keeping and restoring the Corvette possible. There is no doubt that many would be rich in another endeavor but are dedicated to the Corvette hobby.



Some parts were on display along with a 1967 chassis.





One of my upcoming projects for our '68 convertible is the installation of shoulder seat belts. Convertibles of the day did not come with them and I got some valuable information on the upgrade from the parts vendors.



1963 Coupe with a heater – defroster delete. This is a rare option, RPO C48 and 124 (0.58%) 1963s were so equipped. This would be a typical selection for a car intended as a race car.



*Paul Pollock
Year of the '68*



For being in the show we got a “Year of the ‘68” plaque. You can think of it as a participation award! It is nicely done and appreciated by us. What I got a kick out of was the inclusion of the VIN, such an NCRS thing to do.



